

Session 3: Digital Merrill

Shannon Davis is Digital Library Services Manager at Washington University Libraries and has eight years of digital library experience. Over the past two years, she has provided guidance on digital imaging, XML encoding, and digital exhibit development of the James Merrill Digital Archive.

Shannon's presentation is "The James Merrill Digital Archive: Process and Product."

Annelise Duerden is a PhD candidate at Washington University in St. Louis. Her area of specialty is English Renaissance poetry, and she is currently completing her dissertation, titled, *Mortal Verse: Embodied Memory in Early Modern Poetry of Love, Grief and Devotion*. She earned an MFA in poetry writing before coming to Wash U. Annelise spent the summer of 2013 scanning in the pages of the materials related to the *Book of Ephraim* for the JMDA (with the aid of an undergraduate student). She began the original curation of the digital exhibit, and wrote the introductory materials for the archive. Annelise's presentation is "Admittedly I have failed: Re-vision in the Merrill Archive."

Heidi Lim is PhD candidate in the English department, working on Victorian fiction and masculinity studies. She is currently working on her dissertation on enervated male protagonists and the masculine plot from Dickens to Conrad. Heidi's presentation is "To Tag or Not to Tag: The Digital Markup Process as a Form of Reading."

Tim Materer is professor emeritus of English at the University of Missouri. He has published four critical books, including *James Merrill's Apocalypse*, two editions of Ezra Pound's letters, and has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Guggenheim Foundation. Tim's presentation is "The Poem as a Netscape."

Shannon Davis – The James Merrill Digital Archive: Process & Product (presentation notes)

Intro

- The James Merrill Digital Archive provides digital access to the James Merrill Papers housed in Washington University's Special Collections
- Work on the archive began in summer 2013 as part of the Humanities Digital Workshop's annual summer workshop

Process: Collaboration

- During this six week workshop, undergrads and graduates work on faculty digital humanities projects
- Scholarly Publishing has been collaborating with HDW on workshop projects for several years
- Students receive basic training in many areas of DH, including data entry, XML encoding, data visualization, and research
- This training, along with supervision and input by Scholarly Publishing, allows us to leverage their skills to develop forward thinking projects

Process: images + metadata

- During the 2013 summer workshop, one undergraduate and one graduate student (Annelise) began work on the Merrill Archive
- Students made significant progress on digitizing Merrill's papers, scanning hundreds of pages
- The students also processed the images after scanning and created metadata based on the Manuscript unit's finding aid for the Merrill collection

Product: the digital exhibit

- While the students were furiously scanning, I set up the online exhibit using Omeka digital exhibit software
- Students were then trained to ingest the images and metadata in the software
- Considering input from the project team, we created the structure of the online exhibit, creating sections to display the entirety of the collection of Ouija transcripts and drafts, notes, and galley proofs relating to the Book of Ephraim. Annelise also created a section titled Merrill in Process to document Merrill's writing and revision process.
- This was the bulk of the work accomplished in summer 2013

Process: encoding + guidelines

- Though some small tasks were undertaken during the 2013 school year, work really resumed on the project during the 2014 HDW summer workshop with two graduate students, including Heidi Lim
- The next logical step for the project was to encode the manuscripts in XML for better functionality and searchability
- Scholarly Publishing provided a TEI document model and the students got to work encoding Section A of The Book of Ephraim
- As you can see, this was a very tedious and involved process because of Merrill's writing and revision style
- The encoding at the top represents two lines of a poem, with associated notes

- Determining how best to encode these unique documents and creating the encoding guidelines were the students' major contributions to the project that summer
- They also experimented with Juxta collation software to display various drafts side by side to see the differences in Merrill's work
- Currently galley proofs for letters A through Z have been encoded and are publicly available
- Section A is completely encoded and also available on the website

Product: image zoning + magnifier

- With a significant number of documents encoded, we began work on how to display these in the digital archive
- Steve Pentecost at the HDW developed an image viewer with magnifying functionality and zone highlighting to display the encoded transcripts

[Go to website here]

- Show Merrill in Process/The Merrill Archive and Ouija Transcripts sections with book viewer

[Go to website here]

- Show image viewer/magnifier

Next steps

- The project team has a wishlist of features for the website, short and long term and other plans for future work
- We will also continue encoding materials for sections B through Z in hopes of presenting a comprehensive overview of Merrill's work towards The Book of Ephraim



The James Merrill Digital Archive: Process & Product

Shannon Davis, Digital Library Services Manager
Washington University in St. Louis

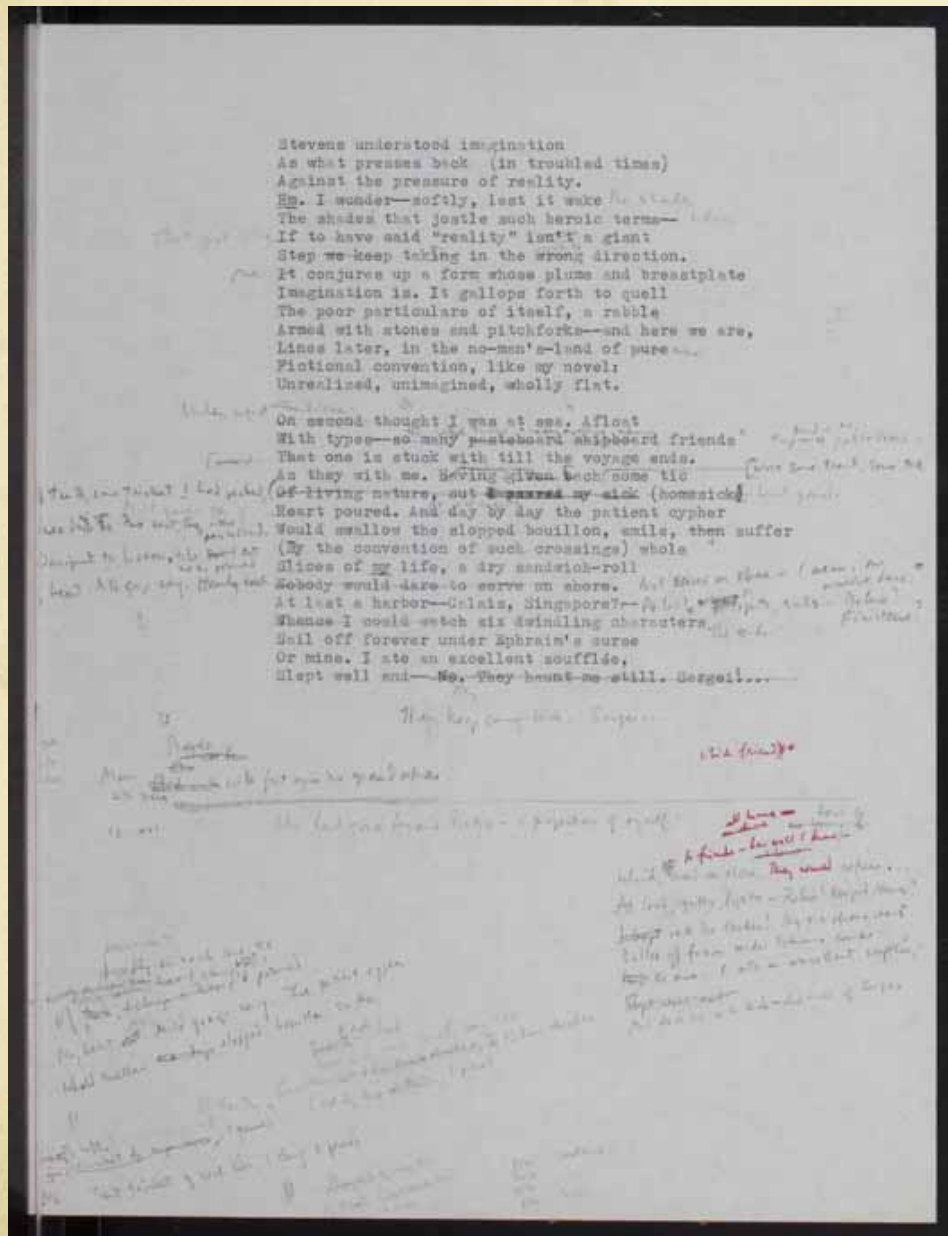
Process: the project team



Summer Workshops: Each summer, the HDW organizes a summer workshop



Process: images + metadata



Manuscripts Digitized Items - MSS083

Title:
Divine Comedies - Typescripts/manuscripts - "The Book of Ephraim"

Creator:
Merrill, James

Contributor:

Publisher:

Date:
undated

Subject:
Merrill, James, 1926-1995--Divine Comedies

Description:
Typescript draft--recto only; Each leaf of draft has a holograph (page) number in the upper lefthand corner of recto; pencil is used for corrections to draft; Greek inscription in red pen by Merrill to Manos Karastefaris on title page, June 12, 1975.

Insert item

Source:
James Merrill Papers (MSS083) folder 5394.2

Coverage:

Physical Format and Extent:
60 letter-size leaves of draft. Recto only.

Digital Format and Extent:
60 jpeg images. 600ppi

Genre Type:
Manuscripts

Format Type:
TEXT

Language:
English

Product: the digital exhibit

The screenshot shows a digital exhibit interface with a parchment-like background. At the top left is a small photo of two men at a table. The main title is 'The James Merrill Digital Archive: Materials for The Book of Ephraim'. A central menu lists: 'Merrill in Process', 'Ouija Transcripts', 'About Merrill's Work', 'About the Digital Archive', 'Merrill Resources', and 'Contact & Credits'. The background features a large, faint Ouija board with the alphabet and numbers arranged in a circle. The words 'AND WITH WAS' are scattered across the top, and 'YES' and 'NO' are written in the corners. At the bottom, there is a footer with metadata, the Humanities Digital Workshop logo, and the Washington University in St. Louis logo.

AND WITH WAS

The **James Merrill** Digital Archive:
Materials for The Book of Ephraim

YES NO

ABCDEF GHIJK LMNOP QRSTUVW XYZ

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Merrill in Process
Ouija Transcripts
About Merrill's Work
About the Digital Archive
Merrill Resources
Contact & Credits

Last Modified: 08/07/2015 08:03:55
Page maintained by: Digital Library Services
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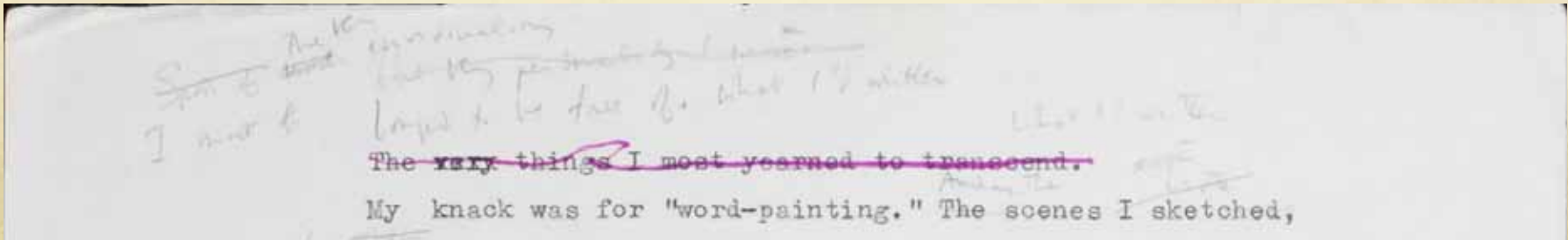
Humanities Digital Workshop

washington university
digital gateway

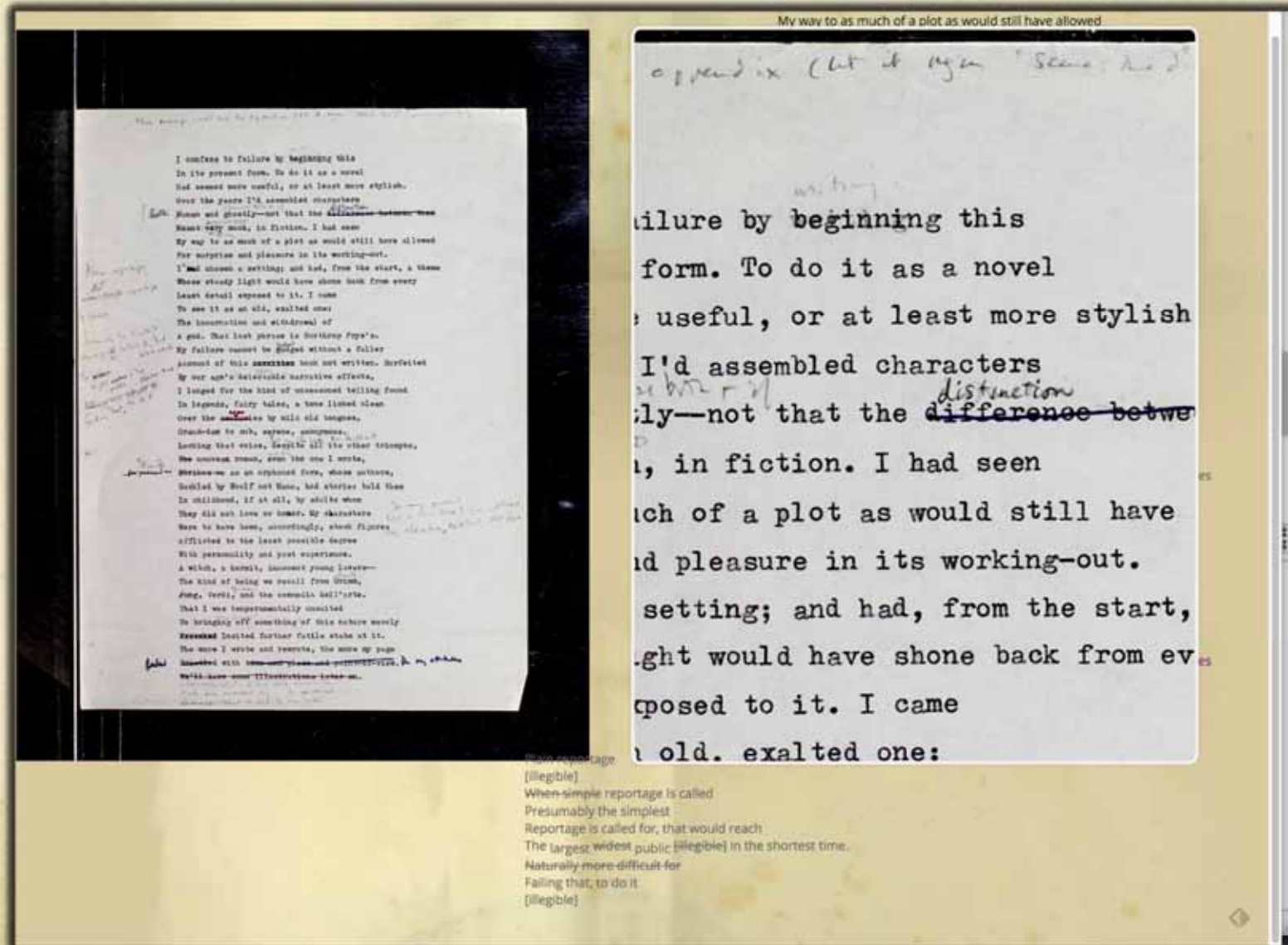
Washington University in St. Louis
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Process: encoding + guidelines

```
<pb facs="MSS083_5398_TheBookofEphraimDrafts_120.jpg"/>
  <addSpan xml:id="a_5402_237_5398_120_05" spanTo="#a_5402_237_5398_120_06" place="headmiddle" rendition="#pencil"/>
  <del rend="strikethrough"><unclear reason="illegible" quantity="4" unit="chars"/>of</del>
    <subst>
      <add place="superlinear">the very</add>
      <del rend="strikethrough"><unclear/></del>
    </subst> individuality</l>
  <del rend="strikethrough">The very personality I <unclear reason="illegible" quantity="2" unit="words"/></del></l>
  <l>I most <unclear reason="illegible" quantity="1" unit="chars"/></l>
  <l>longed to be free of. What I'd written</l>
  <anchor xml:id="a_5402_237_5398_120_06"/>
  <note type="authorial" place="marginright" rendition="#pencil">What I'd written</note>
  <delSpan xml:id="a_5402_237_5398_120_07" spanTo="#a_5402_237_5398_120_08" rend="strikethrough" rendition="#pink-marker"/>
  <l>The <del type="instant_correction" rend="crossed out" rendition="#typewriter">very</del> things I most yearned to transcend.</l>
  <anchor xml:id="a_5402_237_5398_120_08"/>
  <substJoin target="#a_5402_237_5398_120_05 #a_5402_237_5398_120_07"/>
  <note type="authorial" place="marginright" rendition="#pencil"><del rend="strikethrough">drafts</del></note>
  <l>My knack was for <soCalled>"word-painting."</soCalled> <subst rendition="#pencil">
    <restore rend="strikethrough" rendition="#pencil"><add place="superlinear">
  <unclear reason="illegible" quantity="3" unit="words"/></add></restore>
    <del rend="strikethrough">The scenes</del>
  </subst><del rend="strikethrough" rendition="#pencil">I <subst rendition="#pencil">
    <add>wrote</add>
    <del>sketched</del>
  </subst>.</del></l>
```



Product: image zoning+ magnifier



Questions?

ssdavis @ wustl.edu

Annelise Duerden, Washington University in St. Louis

~~“Admit it Arguably A priori Admittedly I have failed”~~: Re-vision in the Merrill Archive

When looking at a finished poem it's easy to forget what has come before it. The printed page announces itself so crisply and cleanly, it is as though it always has been finished. Then one enters the archive [IMAGE 2]: “How can we see you?” is scrawled in purple pen at the end of the typed lines. A page from the end of section L of the *Book of Ephraim*, this portion of the poem layers the memory of past lives (and deaths) with the images of a room, and reflections in a mirror (86-87).¹ Ephraim himself, the poem unfolds, takes his place in their circle by requesting a mirror propped in a “facing chair . . . silver-hearted guest,” Merrill describes in the poem, “we saw each other in it. He saw us” (50). From this draft it is clear Merrill sees each word as an-Other, reflected backwards in the capital letters of Ephraim's responses he transcribed on the page. In its unfinished form here, Merrill teases out the ideas in lists of words at the bottom of the page, returns to rewrite lines in faded red, and then purple. He reflects the word MEDITATE backwards, as if in a mirror, at the bottom of the page, underlining “TIDE”—shifting the letters, the images, the ideas, the language. In the archive the poem is not settled, not finished, not finite—it is constantly slipping from word to word, shape to shape, direction to direction, form to form. This is only one of many pages from the treasure trove of notes and drafts that are preserved in the physical archive housed in the Washington University Libraries Department of Special Collections, and now in *The James Merrill Digital Archive: Materials for “The Book of Ephraim.”*

¹ This and all subsequent quotations taken from James Merrill, “The Book of Ephraim,” *Divine Comedies* (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 47-136.

One of the striking aspects of the current Digital Archive is the sheer volume of the materials for “The Book of Ephraim.” As I had ample opportunity to observe—sorting and scanning each piece of paper currently in the archive—Merrill relentlessly revised his work. The digital archive provides opportunity to participate in the process behind Merrill’s finished poem: from the Ouija transcript where Ephraim takes credit for James’s loss of the earliest manuscript pages which Merrill had drafted in the form of a novel, to the original design of the poem sketched out with sections corresponding to a Ouija board, to the few pages of unlineated verse capturing some of the language that would later launch section A of the finished poem, finally to the galley proofs—still covered in Merrill’s penciled in corrections (see image 15). I propose to briefly map some of the territory of Merrill’s revisions, with his unwavering attention to capture a form suitable to his evenings with David Jackson and their familiar spirit. “The Book of Ephraim,” even in its final draft, openly states its own errancy. In the digital archive, Merrill’s multi-colored, multi-directional lists and rewritten stanzas commemorate a mind constantly striving to transcend the limits of language.

The finished poem opens with apologizing for its present state: “Admittedly I err by undertaking / This in its present form” (47). As he continues to describe (playfully and elliptically) at the beginning of the poem, in 1970 Merrill had started planning to write a novel about Ephraim, his spirit contact from his séances, and he began to work on the novel in 1972. He was carrying a manuscript of the first few pages of the novel, in a bag that was left in a taxi and lost. You are familiar with the story—as was I, when I stumbled on the following typescript of a séance in Merrill’s papers [IMAGE 3, TOP]: These are images of the transcription of a Ouija conversation with Ephraim about the event. “Ephraim, do you know about the bag I lost, with the ibis and Mss?” Merrill queries. “I DID IT,” Ephraim corrects, and describes the faults of

the manuscript he claims to have lost.² Merrill's admission of error at the outset of "The Book of Ephraim" invites his reader into what has been a private conversation between himself, his partner David Jackson, and Ephraim. The opening of the poem mirrors this conversation's continuing concerns with the form, the atmosphere, the fairy tale magic of the encounter, the pressing passage of time—as well as the fear of loss and misrepresentation that ripples throughout the rest of the long poem. [IMAGE 3, BOTTOM] "FAIRY TALE IT WILL SEEM," Ephraim admits here, "AS A PIECE OF NEWS IT MUST BE. TIME, MY DEARS, IS SHORT." Merrill echoes in the second line of his poem, "The baldest prose / Reportage was called for, that would reach / The widest public in the shortest time" (47). The absent agent of that sentence, who called for the "baldest prose reportage," it transpires, is Ephraim—who guides and inspires the production of the poem. The Ouija conversation with Ephraim revises Merrill's loss of the novel as more than happenstance, and defines the aspirations of Merrill's work as simultaneously urgent and cosmic.

Of course, the Ouija sessions do more than provide content, philosophy, and backdrop for the poem: they literally provide its shape [IMAGE 4, BOTTOM LEFT CORNER]. On a draft page of some of the later lines from section A, Merrill sketches his concept that his poem will map itself onto the form of a Ouija board, "28 sections, letters A-Z and Yes and No." Merrill eventually reserves sections "yes and no" for *Scripts for the Pageant*, and his "Book of Ephraim" shapes itself to letters A-Z. His poem drafts include the broad conceptual design for his book—it's pace, timing, themes, scenes, and characters. Section A is the apology, B the setting and first contact, C the first conversation, etc. [IMAGES 5-6] His revisions and drafts shift from the broad concepts to the particular, revisiting each with care and due consideration. The same page that

² This conversation with Ephraim is also recounted by Merrill in "The Will," a shorter poem in the first half of *Divine Comedies*.

contains the concept of the Ouija board sections fusses over the words, appropriately enough, to describe Merrill's own habits of "word-painting" (see IMAGE 3): "futile stabs at it," the draft begins. "My downfall was 'word-painting': Peekaboo [no, yes] Peekaboo / clauses unfurling for flushed limbs [scratch that] Of rosy limbs [scratch that] flushed limbs [insert] seraphic plumage and flushed limbs . . ." While in the corner he lists: "rhetoric, clauses, plumage, verbs, nouns, parse." At the bottom of the page his "angelic secretariat" toys with the notion of being a "plutocrat, aristocrat, or proletariat." This officious sounding word, stable in its final sound, might be seeking—not an exact rhyme, but—an echo of the meter and sound of his "exquisite"—penciled in near "peekaboo" earlier on the page, and ending up as the final word 6 lines above the "secretariat." "stabs at it . . . exquisite . . . secretariat." "Where I sat," perhaps inserted for the same reason. A subtle percussion enters and begins to make shape and time of these scribbled lines. Every word is measured, sounded, replaced, replaced again, continually rewritten across the pages of his drafts. I suggest that the very habit of *re-vision* underlies the entire concept of the poem.

Ephraim instructs some of these revisions, evidently, as he informs Merrill: "YOU BEGAN IN YOUR POEM WITH HINTS, A SHY ALLUSION. NOW BE FORCEFEUL AS YOU CAN" (see image 4). And, indeed, a more combative draft of the Book of Ephraim opens "Admit it. I have failed." Then, reconsiders other "A" words: "Arguably," "A priori," settles on "Admittedly"—in this earlier draft admitting outright "failure," rather than the more guarded "err[or]" of the final copy [IMAGE 7]: Perhaps the earliest version of the poem's opening lines, dated in his own notation from Oct. 26, 1972, try to find their footing in casual prose. You can see where he returns to adjust the phrasing in red, then rewrite in pencil (working out his pun on being suckled by Woolf not Mann, etc.), and even begins to break it into lines of verse at the

bottom of the page. This is a poem written across the course of several years, and reminiscing over—ostensibly—a few millennia. Even in its final state, it is a poem interested in its own revision [IMAGE 8]: If you would like to see Merrill’s attention to revision in a vague sprawl of images—his “word paintings,” as it were—here is a series of pages, archived in Merrill’s own hand with dates, where you can see the growth of the final section of the poem from day to day. The typescript expands, the penciled in lines are added in type the next day, revised over and over again in pencil, in pen, doodled on—making faces in the margins. These pages are dated Jan 31- Feb 1, 1975 (with a note in brown pen adding lines from a notebook dated Dec. 24 for comparison), the next two pages date from Feb. 2, then Feb. 4, Feb. 5, Feb. 6, Feb. 7, and Feb 8-9 [IMAGES 10-14]: He writes, revises, writes again, revises again, and again . . . While this poem may be preoccupied with inspiration, it is hardly a “*spontaneous* overflow of powerful feelings” even were it “reflected in tranquility.”³ This is a poem of re-writing and re-vision.

Section X of “The Book of Ephraim” opens with the “X rays of *La Tempesta*,” uncovering concealed figures, explaining the repainted and overpainted foreground. “All of which lights up,” the poem explains, “as scholarship / Now and then does, a matter hitherto / Overpainted—the absence from these pages / Of my own mother. Because of course she’s here / Throughout, the breath drawn after every line, / Essential to its making as to mine” (127-128). Forever a book about beginnings and rebeginnings, revelations and revisitings, “The Book of Ephraim” is a book of archive. The word “archive” itself is wrapped simultaneously in *commencement* and *commandment*, from the word *arkhē*.⁴ And the imperative sense of commencement underlies the writing of “The Book of Ephraim”: discovering the terrain of

³ From William Wordsworth’s famous opening to *Lyrical Ballads*.

⁴ See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995), 1.

words, shaping the territory of the esoteric. The archive, and the digital archive (which can “reach / the widest public in the shortest time”), are ripe for the experience of re-vision underlying the Book of Ephraim.

Heidi Lim – To Tag or Not to Tag: The Digital Markup Process as a Form of Reading (presentation notes)

Hello. My name is Heidi Lim, and I worked on the Merrill Digital Archive for two summers, last year and this year. I picked the project up from where Annelise had left us, with the goal of digitally representing the breadth and depth of the Ephraim manuscripts, spanning from the early prose drafts to the final galley proofs for the entirety of sections A through Z. Our goal was to present not only the scanned images of the text, but also searchable text transcriptions, and ultimately a representation of the revision process for each section of the poem. One of the things I worked on to accomplish these goals was creating digitally marked up files. And I wanted to talk a little bit about that process today.

[slide 2] Digital markup of literary texts is something that scholars have been working on for at least two decades now. One of the landmark events in digital markup in the humanities was the launching of the Text Encoding Initiative, commonly known as TEI, in 1994. TEI continues to release updated guidelines for scholars in the humanities to use when translating their texts and data into machine-readable formats. This is an example that demonstrates how this process works.

The example that I have given you here is actually a pretty simple one, as TEI markup goes, although it might look complicated at first glance. In our markup process, we divided the functions of the markup into two categories: structural markup and content markup. In the structural markup process, we use tags to indicate structural elements such as stanzas and lines of verse, and also authorial revisions and notes. I'm going to over explain a little bit here, in case some of us aren't familiar with the idea of tags and markup, so if all of this is familiar to you, please bear with me a little bit. Tags are used in computer coding to indicate to computer programs how to properly process information. They use what is called a nesting structure, where elements are nested inside of tags, indicated by angle brackets. For instance, if I wanted to tell a computer program that what we are looking at is one stanza, I would enclose the contents of that stanza within stanza tags, which would be the `<lg>` tags you see here at the beginning and end of the stanza we are looking at. This tells the computer program that everything between `<lg>` and `</lg>` is one stanza. But within this stanza, we also have multiple lines, which are nested within the stanza structure. So, each line of the poem gets enclosed in line tags, as you see here. When Merrill makes revisions, we use appropriate revision tags, like the `<add>` here, to indicate revisions. And we indicate Merrill's marginal notes with the `<note>` tag, marked as `@type="authorial."` So, basically, tagging is a way of putting information into neatly labeled containers.

Now, we just saw the structural tags, but we also have content tags. This is the great thing about the markup system that TEI uses. The XML coding language allows us to use tags that can mark a wide variety of information for humanities research. For instance, in the example we see here, we have tags that indicate person names, titles, and dates, and there are many, many more tags that are available. In fact, you can even make up your own tags if you need to. And while this flexibility built into the TEI guidelines is great, it does lead to a lot of decision making on the part of the individuals involved in the project, especially when working with text as unique as Merrill's.

Marking up Merrill's manuscripts, we've found, comes with its own set of challenges. I wanted to share a few of those with you today, because I feel that the way a text is marked up is in itself a process of reading and interpreting text, and it also impacts the reading experience of users of our digital archive. Here is one example. [slide 3] We have here a pretty complicated textual example, with lots of marginal notes, revisions, even a doodle, in several different writing implements. What this got turned into in our digital archive is what you see here [slide 4], the computer's approximation of what is on the manuscript page, based on the structural tags that we have added to the transcription of what is on the page. You can see how our structural tagging decisions added [point to each part] color, formatting, editorial descriptions, as well as the text of the manuscript to our web display. This is one way in which our digital markup can be interpreted by the web browser. However, there are different ways of interpreting even the exact same markup. For instance, we use a program called Juxta Commons to compare clean copies of each draft. [slide 5] The exact same file that we made from the image that you saw earlier can also be interpreted in this way, representing only the very basic textual elements of the manuscript page. So, as you can see, we have the ability to create very different reading experiences of the same document, based on our digital markup.

[slide 6] Another piece of the way in which markup is related to the reading experience has to do with the content markup. Since all of you here are familiar with Merrill's work, you will understand when I say that his poetry presents very unique challenges when one tries to put things into neat little boxes. Take, for instance, the issue of people's names. TEI suggests the tag `<persName>` to indicated places where people's names are presented. But, in *Ephraim*, Merrill often uses abbreviations of names, such as JM or E. We are able to use tags to provided the abbreviated names in expanded format. This way, it becomes possible for a reader to search for instances of Merrill's own name in the poem but get all the different versions: James Merrill, Merrill, Jimmy, JM. Our goal in doing this was to make it possible for scholars and readers of the poem to be able to search the text for all of the instances where the text mentions a certain person. We can see how this might be an interesting way to read the poem. It could lead to analyses of the way Merrill uses person names in his poetry.

What we quickly found, though, when trying to create categories for the person names in the poem, was that they follow a logic that is a little different from most literary texts. In the poem, "fictional" personages such as Ephraim and "real" people such as W.H. Auden share the same status as "characters" in the world that Merrill presents to us. They both speak to him as spirits. Then, there are people who do not appear in the text as "characters" but are still mentioned. These can be divided into "real" people such as Wagner and Freud, and literary allusions. So, in our markup process, we came up with three types for `<persName>`: intratextual, extratextual, and allusion. But because of the way Merrill mixes "history" and "fiction" in *The Book of Ephraim*, we started encountering instances where our markup was doing more interpretive work than I personally was comfortable with. For instance, in the poem, Merrill talks about Ephraim's personal history, which involved historical figures such as Tiberius and Caligula. So, do these figures count as intratextual characters because of their connection to the character Ephraim? Or are they extratextual personages because they do not actually appear in the action of the poem? Is it our place as curators of the archive to make that call? Or should that be left to each individual reader?

A related problem would be that of place names. Do Heaven and Earth count as place names? Shouldn't they be differentiated from geographical place names like Macon and Venice? And how do we indicate places where Merrill draws on the page, as it frequently happens? The Beckett Archive, which the Washington University Libraries are involved with, actually allows users to do a search for just the doodles in Beckett's manuscripts. What is the value of that kind of reading? And what counts as a doodle? Merrill seemed to make a big deal about distinguishing between all caps and small caps, so how do we indicate that? These and many other issues are still in the process of being mulled over in our markup process, and show that digital markup is in itself a process of interpretation that also invites new ways of reading and interpreting the text on the part of the users of digital archives.

[slide 7] In conclusion, our digital markup process involves both a faithful representation of the manuscripts and the transformation of the texts that could potentially inspire new and exciting readings of the poems. I hope you will follow along with our progress on the digital archive as we engage in the practice of digitally reading and interpreting the uniqueness of both Merrill's works and the range of material that we hold in our archive.

To Tag or Not to Tag: The Digital Markup Process as a Form of Reading

Heidi Lim
PhD Candidate in English
Washington University in St. Louis

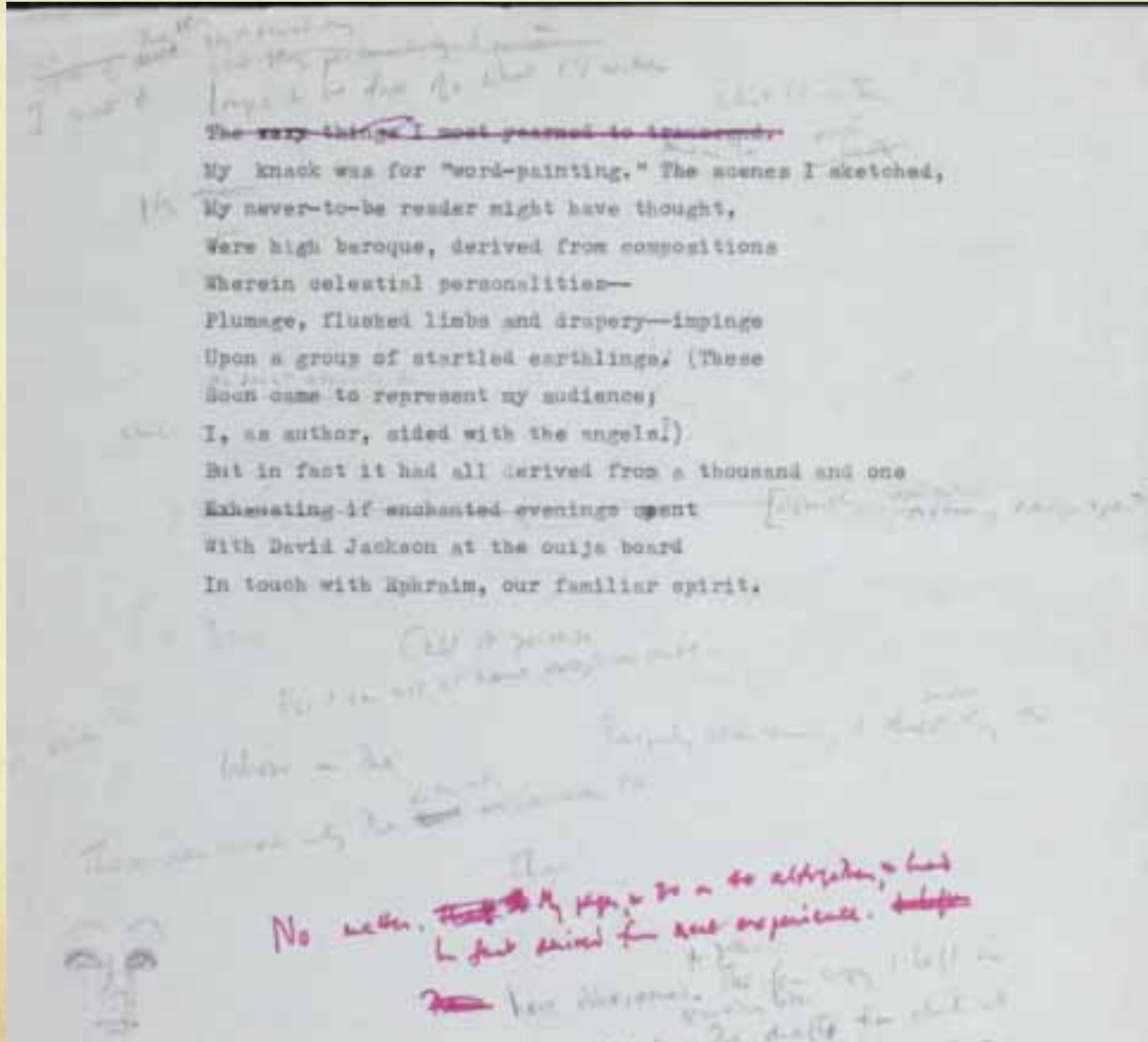
Digital Markup

- **Text Encoding Initiative (TEI)**

- **Example:**

```
<lg facs="z_624_322_1486_754">  
  <l>And I alone was left to tell my story,</l>  
  <l>Since time-the grizzled washer of his hands</l>  
  <l>Appeared to say<add place="inline" rendition="#pencil">,</add>  
within a spectrum-bezeled</l>  
  <l>Space above hot water-time would not;</l>  
  <l>Whether because it was running out like water</l>  
  <l>Or because <date type="textual">January</date> drew this bright</l>  
  <l>Line down the new page I take to write:</l>  
  <l><title type="alt" part="I">The Book of a Thousand and One Evenings  
Spent</title></l>  
  <l><title type="alt" part="M">With <persName type="intratextual">David  
Jackson</persName> at the <name>Ouija</name> Board</title></l>  
  <l><title type="alt" part="F">In Touch with <persName type="intratextual"  
>Ephraim</persName> our Familiar Spirit.</title></l>  
  <note facs="z_362_678_476_738" type="authorial" place="marginleft"  
rendition="#pencil">64</note>  
</lg>
```

What (Not) to Tag



Reading via Tagging (1)

[illegible] of the very [illegible] individuality

The very personality + [illegible]

I most [illegible]

longed to be free of. What I'd written

The ~~very~~ things I most yearned to transcend:

What I'd written

My knack was for "word-painting." [illegible] The scenes I wrote sketched,

drafts

Its

Their ~~My~~ never-to-be reader might have thought,

Were [(alternative) Was] high baroque, derived from compositions

Wherein celestial personalities--

Plumage, flushed limbs, and drapery--impinge

Upon a group of startled earthlings: (These

No doubt standing for ~~Soon~~ came to represent my audience;

While

I, as author, sided with the angels?)

But in fact it had all derived from a thousand and one

~~Exhausting if enchanted~~ Evenings spent

[Agreeably domestic ordinary evenings spent

with David Jackson at the ouija board

In touch with Ephraim, our familiar spirit.

53 En

Call it perverse

from inside the

But I am not at home except in verse Whom in the Properly clear hand, I shall [illegible] try to

There remained only the ^{actual} [illegible] expence to

[Image, footleft

here, in pencil: authorial sketch of face with upturned eyes.) Thru

What Remained only the truth,

No matter: that ~~My~~ My pages, ~30 or 40 altogether, -had

the ~~real~~ experience

real experience I had ~~in fact~~ derived from real experience. Heft

been so [illegible] & [illegible]

[illegible]

The [illegible]

the [illegible] of all these hours

I lack the Roccinfe

Reading via Tagging (2)



Author:

Date:

XML Template: TEI Default | [View XSLT](#)

Ephraim A Draft 01

[Content View](#) | [XML View](#)



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Page Break

the very individuality

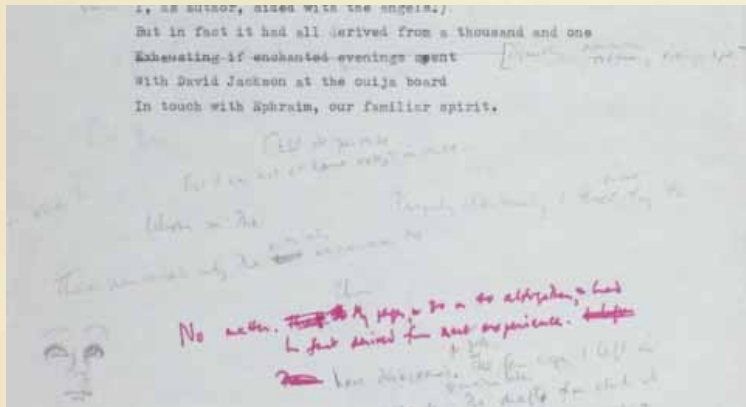
I most [gap: illegible]
longed to be free of. What I'd written

My knack was for "word-painting."
Its Their never-to-be reader might have thought,
Were [(alternative) Was] high baroque, derived from compositions
Wherein celestial personalities--
Plumage, flushed limbs , drapery--impinge
Upon a group of startled earthlings (These
No doubt standing for my audience
While I, as author, sided with the angels.)
But in fact it had all derived from a thousand and one
Agreeably domestic evenings spent
with David Jackson at the ouija board
In touch with Ephraim, our familiar spirit.

Tagging/Reading *Ephraim*

- `<persName>`
 - `@type = "intratextual" vs. "extratextual" vs. "allusion"`
 - `<persName type="intratextual"><choice>`
 - `<abbr>D</abbr>`
 - `<expand>David Jackson</expand>``</choice></persName>`
- `<placeName>`
 - `@type = "geographical" vs. "nongeographical" (e.g. Macon and Venice vs. Heaven and Earth)`
- `<figure>`
- `<hi>`
 - `@type = "small_caps" vs. "all_caps"`

Markup as Reading



```
108 <del>In fact it had all derived from a thousand and one </del>
109 <del>Exhausting-if enchanted-evenings spent </del>
110 <del>with David Jackson at the ouija board </del>
111 <del>In touch with Ephraim, our familiar spirit. </del>
112 <del>I am not at home except in verse </del>
113 <del>There remained only the actual experience </del>
114 <del>There remained only the actual experience </del>
115 <del>The real-experience </del>
```

I most [illegible]
longed to be free of. What I'd written
The ~~wee~~ things I most yearned to transcend;
My knack was for "word-painting." [illegible] The scenes I write sketched;
Their my never-to-be reader might have thought
Were [(alternative) Was] high baroque, derived from compositions
Wherein colonial personalities
Plumage, flushed limbs, and drapery-impinge
Upon a group of startled earthlings. (These
No doubt standing for soon-came-to-represent my audience
While I, as author, sided with the angels.)
But in fact it had all derived from a thousand and one
Exhausting-if enchanted-evenings spent
with David Jackson at the ouija board (Agreeably domestic ordinary evenings spent
In touch with Ephraim, our familiar spirit.
Call it perverse
But I am not at home except in verse Whom in the Property clear hand, I shall [illegible] try to
There remained only the actual [illegible] experience in
here, in pencil: authorial sketch of face with upturned eyes.)
What remained only the
The real-experience real experience I had
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

juxta commons™
Signed in as H. Lim | A

Author:
Date:
XML Template: TED Default | View XSL? |

Ephraim A Draft 01
Content View | XML View

the very individuality

I most [ggp: illegible]
longed to be free of. What I'd written

My knack was for "word-painting."
Its Their never-to-be reader might have thought,
Were [(alternative) Was] high baroque, derived from compositions
Wherein colonial personalities
Plumage, flushed limbs, and drapery-impinge
Upon a group of startled earthlings (These
No doubt standing for my audience
While I, as author, sided with the angels.)
But in fact it had all derived from a thousand and one
Agreeably domestic evenings spent
with David Jackson at the ouija board
In touch with Ephraim, our familiar spirit.

Notes for Timothy Materer's "The Poem as a Netscape"
James Merrill Symposium, Oct. 23, 2015

Poems are usually print on paper, but to appreciate them we discuss them with our friends and our students. And in our discussions, we put them in context with other poems and other writers. If we are teaching a poetry course, we might require our students to attend poetry readings so they can hear the poet's voice and experience a personality. Sometimes our textbooks include images of a poet's manuscript to remind us about the work of revision that goes into a poem. Mona Van Duyn thought that the purpose of Washington U.'s poetic archive was to reveal the "genesis and process" of a poem

In other words, we try to create a network of ideas and perceptions that illuminate poems, which are themselves, in a traditional image, a net of words. The websites I'll show you provide such networks or, in cyberspace as they are, netscapes. They lay out manuscripts of Merrill's poems, but in partial contrast to the WU archive, they are designed specifically with a classroom in mind. For example, I used a site devoted to "The Broken Home" in a senior seminar that used the manuscripts of Merrill, Eliot, and Plath.

If you will look at my handout, it will show you the three sections that are up so far. The purpose of handout is to indicate the site's address and its contents. The Scalar site is provided by the U. of Southern California for scholarly projects.

The contents vary, but always begin with the copyright notice. I am indebted to the executors of Merrill's Estate and, over the past 20 years, to Special Collections for essential permissions and help. Special Collections, and in particular Joel Minor and Sarah Schnuriger, provided the manuscript scans you will see.

--The first site on the handout is for "The Black Swan." It includes both the 1946 and 1983 versions with the variations noted. Of the manuscripts, I'll show you only the yellow lined paper the 19-yr old Merrill wrote as he worked out the rhyme scheme.

--The Scalar site is ideal for long-distance collaboration; the "For Proust" site was constructed in collaboration with Eric Kao, who is here with us now. She drafted the notes and criticism sections and contributed throughout, especially through her knowledge of Proust.

A highlight of this site is the unpublished poem "For Proust" Another person here today, Tamara Taylor, has written a valuable analysis of the poem in her Washington University dissertation on Merrill and Proust.

Thanks to Tamara's research, the "For Proust" section shows some of Merrill annotations to his copy of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* when he was

an Amherst College student. The section on Merrill's masks is particularly interesting with their images of Egyptian and Greek masks and Merrill's own death-mask as well as the life-masks of Keats and Kimon Friar that Lanny Hammer discusses in his biography *Life and Art*.

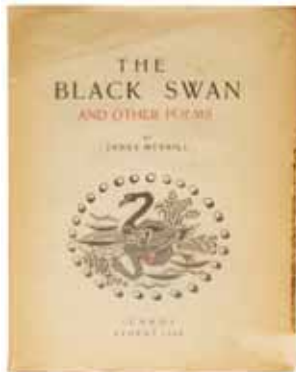
--"The Broken Home" site is the only one where I discuss the order of the manuscripts and the development of the poem (item 7). It contains not only the manuscripts, as listed in the WU finding aid, but also the earliest drafts of the sequence in Merrill's journal for 1963.

Finally, we look at Merrill's first poem, recorded in his mother's hand, "Looking at Mummy," which is echoed in the middle poem of "The Broken Home" sequence. The self-portraits and images of his mother from the poem's manuscripts (see handout) also indicate the centrality of his mother to the poem.

Handout for "The Poem as a Netscape"

Title pages from <http://scalar.usc.edu/works/james-merrill-poetry-manuscripts/index>

"The Black Swan"



This website provides readers and students of James Merrill with an introduction to James Merrill's poem "The Black Swan." It includes two published versions of the poem (1946 and 1983), manuscripts, and editorial notes. The sections of this site are indicated by the list of paths below. All material is [copyrighted](#).

For questions, or to join the James Merrill discussion list, contact [Timothy Materer, University of Missouri](#).

1 [Copyright Statement](#)

2 [Text of "The Black Swan" \(1946\)](#)

3 [Text of the "The Black Swan" \(1983\), excised passages, and list of variations and printings](#)

4 [Notes and Background on "The Black Swan"](#)

5 [The Black Swan, Kimon Friar, and Merrill Interview](#)

6 [Possible Sources: Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Valéry, Tchaikovsky](#)

7 [James Merrill Reading "The Black Swan"](#)

[Manuscripts of "The Black Swan" \(select images and use your browser to enlarge the texts\)](#)

"For Proust" and "For Proust, II"



This site provides teachers and students of James Merrill with an introduction and background to his poem "For Proust" and his unpublished poem "For Proust II." It includes the poems, manuscripts and editorial notes. The sections of this site are linked to the paths indicated below. All material is [copyrighted](#).

For questions, or to join the James Merrill discussion list, contact [Timothy Materer, University of Missouri](#).

1. [Copyright Statement](#)
2. ["For Proust" from Water Street \(1962\), Text and Notes](#)
3. [Manuscripts of "For Proust" & "For Proust, II" \(select images and use your browser to enlarge the texts\)](#)
4. [Transcription of and Manuscript Page of "For Proust, II"](#)
5. [James Merrill Reading "For Proust"](#)
6. [Typescript of "Impressionism in Literature," Merrill's Amherst Senior Essay](#)
7. [Merrill's copy of Proust with Annotations](#)

8. "James Merrill's Translation of Proust" by Erica Kao
9. James Merrill's Masks Criticism of "For Proust"

"The Broken Home"



For questions, or to join the James Merrill discussion list, contact [Timothy Materer, University of Missouri](#).

This site provides teachers and students of James Merrill with an introduction and background to his sonnet sequence "The Broken Home." It includes the poem, two early related poems, journals, manuscripts and editorial notes. The sections of this site are linked to the paths indicated below. All material is [copyrighted](#).

For questions, or to join the James Merrill discussion list, contact Timothy Materer, University of Missouri, materert@missouri.edu, or Erica Kao <ericakao@gmail.com>.

1. [Copyright Statement](#)

2. "The Broken Home," Text and Notes
3. "From 'The Broken Home'" (1971)
4. "Looking at Mummy" (childhood poem)
5. Home and Parents, Photographs
6. Merrill Reading "The Broken Home," Washington Univ., 1968
7. Notes on the Manuscripts
8. Manuscripts of "The Broken Home" (select images and use your browser to enlarge the texts)
9. From the Manuscripts of Merrill's 1963 Journal (select images and use your browser to enlarge the texts)