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The James Merrill Digital Archive: Channeling the Collaborative Spirit(s)

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The James Merrill Digital Archive:
Channeling the collaborative spirit(s)

CONTENT

THE BOOK OF EPHRAIM

• Merrill's first epic poem, part of his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, Divine Comedies

• Chronicles the Ouija sessions in which Merrill and his partner converse with the spirit, Ephraim
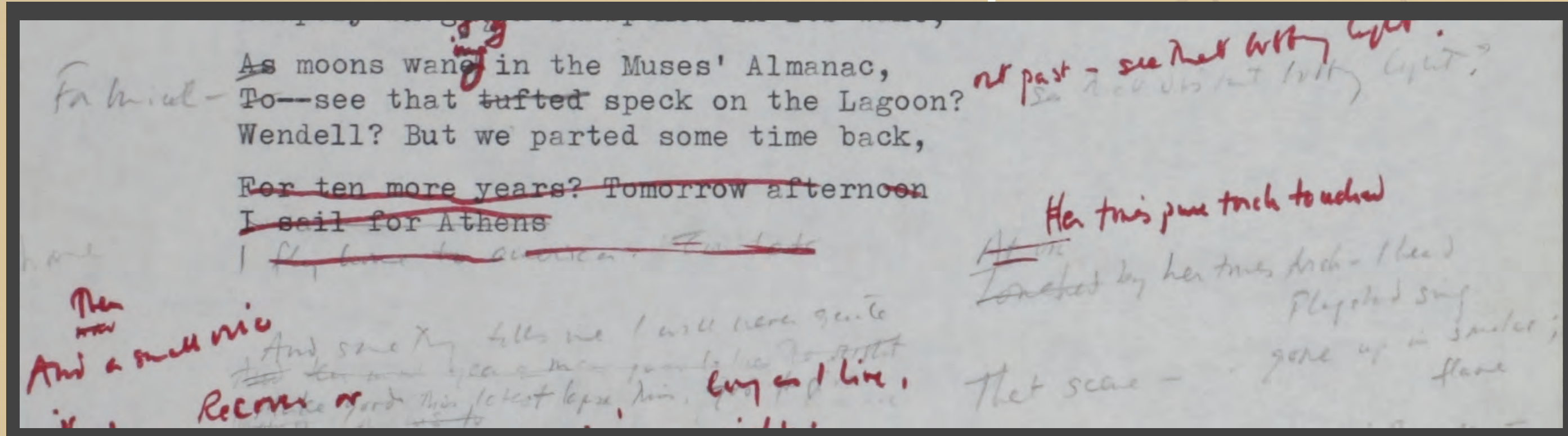
OUIJA TRANSCRIPTS

• Merrill transcribed each Ouija session by hand, as it happened, then typed the transcripts up later for use in his poetry

• The James Merrill Papers hold over 500 leaves of transcripts, all available in the James Merrill Digital Archive
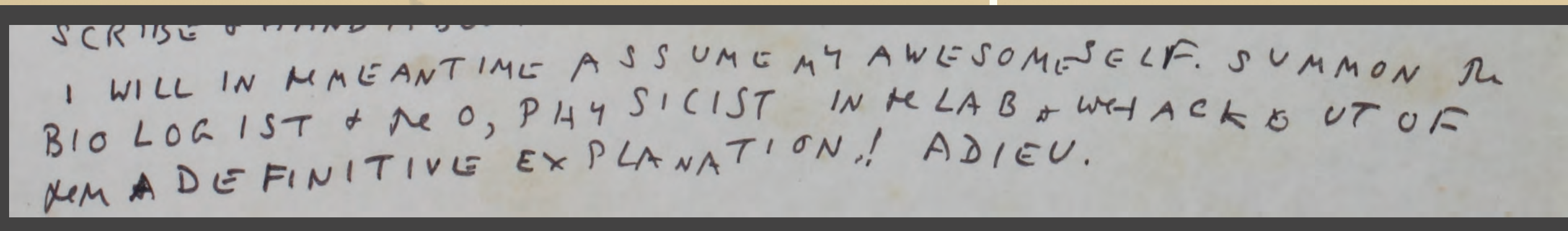
MERRILL IN PROCESS

• Notes, manuscripts and typescripts documenting the development of each section of the poem

• Curated by Washington University graduate students – a work-in-progress

CODING

```
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cil"/>
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     <subst>
      <add place="superlinear">the very</add>
      <del rend="strikethrough"><unclear/></del>
     </subst> individuality</l>
    <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>
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tion="#pink-marker"/>
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scend.</l>
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<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>
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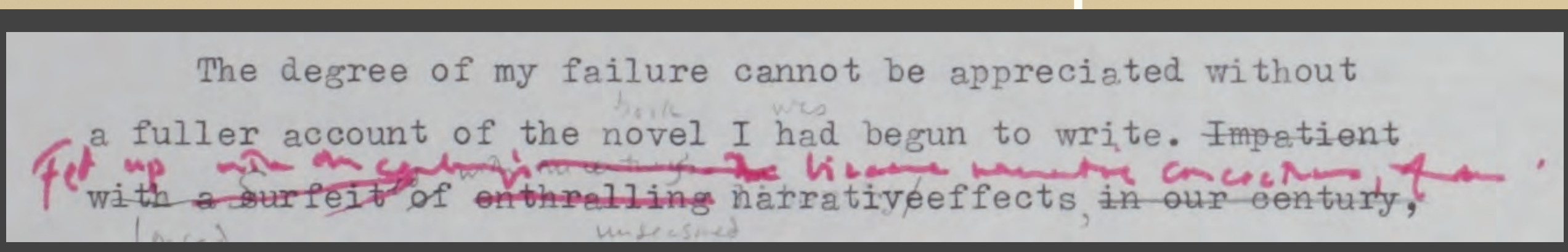
COLLABORATORS

FACULTY

• Provided initial direction for project
• Help set priorities
• Recruit undergraduate and graduate students
• Liaison with Merrill's literary executors

STAFF

• Organize and provide access to paper materials
• Train students on scanning, transcription, and encoding
• Create TEI XML document models for transcriptions
• Oversee creation of Omeka digital exhibit, including design, custom JavaScript coding for navigation, and configuration of Omeka plug-ins

STUDENTS

• Digitize transcripts, drafts, and other materials (over 1,700 pages so far)
• OCR and transcription work on typeset drafts with handwritten notes (Section A done so far)
• TEI encoding of all typescript drafts (Section A done so far)
• Set up comparison of draft versions using Juxta collation software

COMING UP...

• Transcription of handwritten notes, possibly using Omeka's Scripto plug-in
• Move section-by-section through the poem to OCR, transcribe, and encode drafts in TEI
• Demonstrate comparisons between versions using Juxta collation software
• Add content from other drafts in the James Merrill Papers
• Add content from Yale University's Stephen Yenser Papers Relating to James Merrill