

A Sampler of Mississippi Authors

January 18
through
December 9
2022

Archives & Special Collections
University of Mississippi Libraries

For more information
please contact
archivesdept@olemiss.edu

A Sampler of Mississippi Authors

January 18 - December 9, 2022

Archives and Special Collections
University of Mississippi Libraries



The exhibit was comprised of four display cases, each devoted to a particular genre, with samples from several Mississippi writers from the 20th and 21st centuries. The materials are from the collections of the Department of Archives and Special Collections in the University of Mississippi Libraries and have not been digitized.

For questions about the materials from this exhibit, please contact the Department:
archivesdept@olemiss.edu



1. Mississippi Poets

- Charles Henri Ford, 1913-2002
- Beth Ann Fennelly, 1971-
- Sterling D. Plumpp, 1940-



Charles Henri Ford

1913-2002

Born in Brookhaven, Mississippi

Featured items, left to right:

- Poems for Painters (1945)
- Blues: A Magazine of New Rhythms (1929)
- The Half Thoughts (1947)
- The Garden of Disorder (1938)

Described by one scholar, as not “a southern writer in the traditional sense,” Charles Henri Ford’s work, “reflects a more broad homosexual American and expatriate American experience.” Born in Brookhaven, Mississippi in 1913, Ford exhibited poetic creativity from a very young age. At sixteen, he published and edited *Blues: A Magazine of New Rhythms* from Columbus, Mississippi. Although only in print for two years, famous poets such as Ezra Pound contributed works. Ford’s poetry continued to flourish during his early years in Paris and New York. On display is a first edition of his first full-length book of poems, *The Garden of Disorder* (1938), with an introduction by William Carlos Williams. One of the surrealist artists honored in the displayed *Poems for Painters* (1945) was Pavel Tchelitchev.



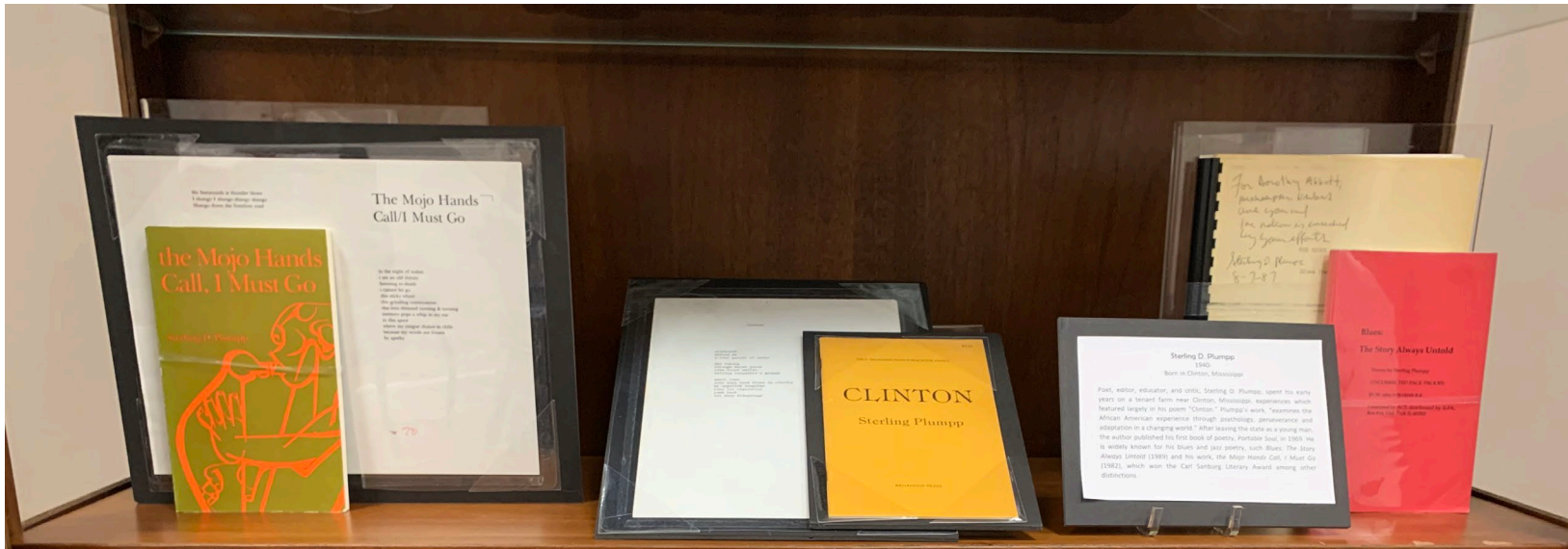
Beth Ann Fennelly

1971-
University of Mississippi
Professor of English

Featured items, left to right:

- *Open House* (2001)
- *A Different Kind of Hunger* (1997)
- *Unmentionables* (2008)
- Draft of “Mary Speaks to the Early Visitor at the Laying Out” (1996)

Although raised in Illinois, Beth Ann Fennelly made her home in Mississippi and served as the state’s fifth Poet Laureate from 2016 through 2021. Her 1997 chapbook, *A Different Kind of Hunger*, received the *Texas Review* Breakthrough Prize, and her 2001 collection of poetry, *Open House*, was awarded the Kenyon Review Prize. Published in her work *Unmentionables* (2008), the poem “The Kudzu Chronicles” was noted by one scholar as “grounded in her experience of living in Mississippi. . . how a Midwestern transplant can take root as a southern writer, just as the kudzu vine flourishes.”



Sterling D. Plumpp

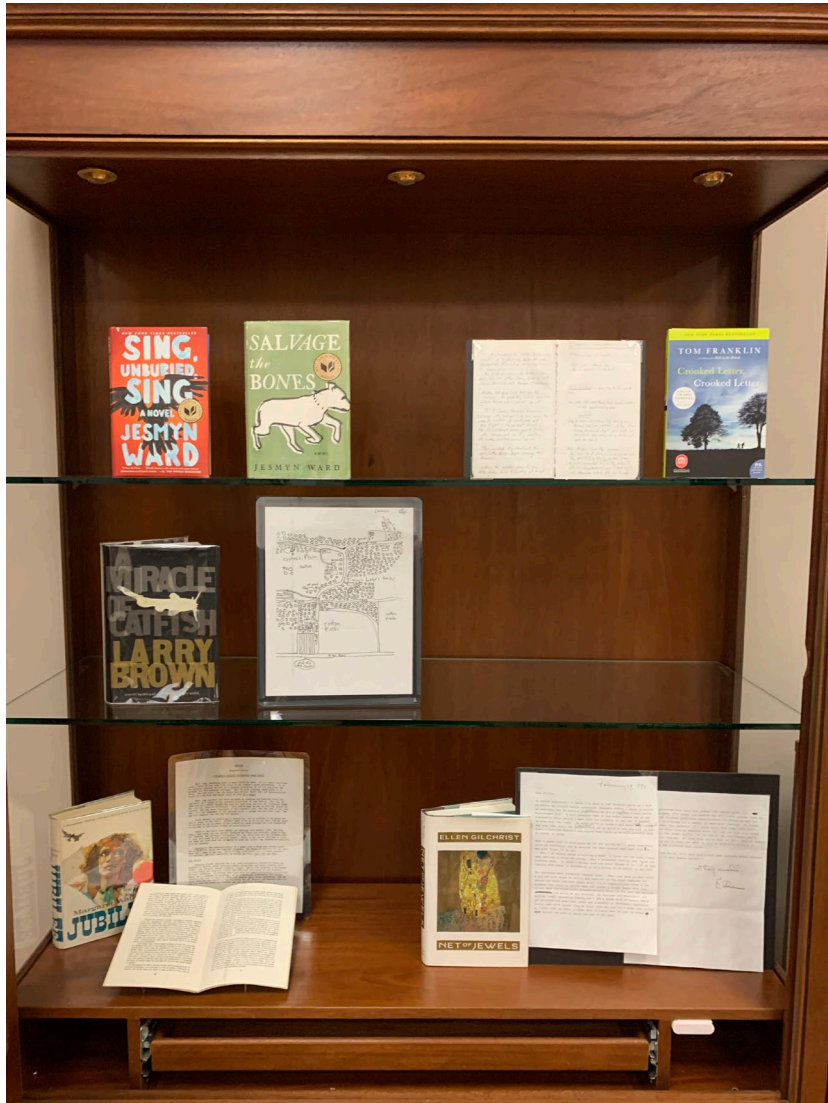
1940-

Born in Clinton, Mississippi

Featured items, left to right:

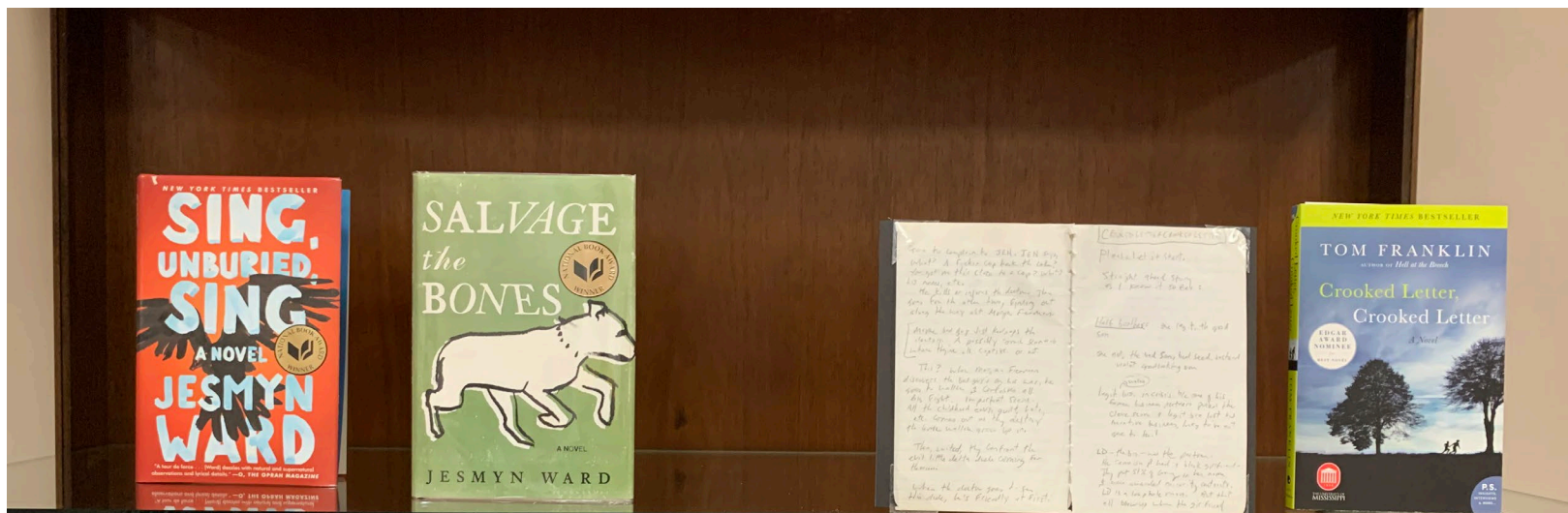
- Galley copy and published volume, *the Mojo Hands Call, I Must Go* (1982)
- Draft version and published copy, *Clinton* (1976)
- Bound galley copy (inscribed to Dorothy Abbott) and uncorrected page proofs, *Blues: The Story Always Untold* (1989)

Poet, editor, educator, and critic Sterling D. Plumpp spent his early years on a tenant farm near Clinton, Mississippi, experiences which featured largely in his poem “Clinton.” Plumpp’s work, “examines African American experience through psychology, perseverance and adaptation in a changing world.” After leaving the state as a young man, the author published his first book of poetry, *Portable Soul*, in 1969. He is widely known for his blues and jazz poetry, such as *Blues: The Story Always Untold* (1989) and his work, *the Mojo Hands Call, I Must Go* (1982), which won the Carl Sanburg Literary Award among other distinctions.



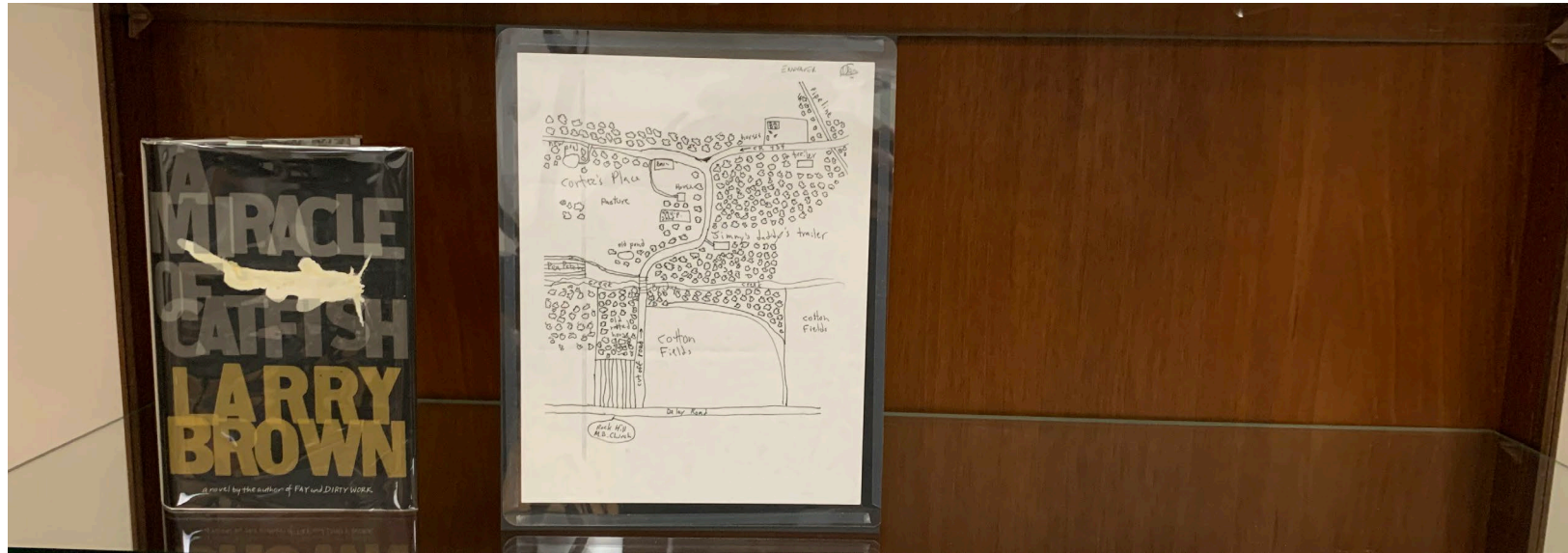
2. Mississippi Novelists

- Jesmyn Ward
- Tom Franklin
- Larry Brown
- Margaret Walker
- Ellen Gilchrist



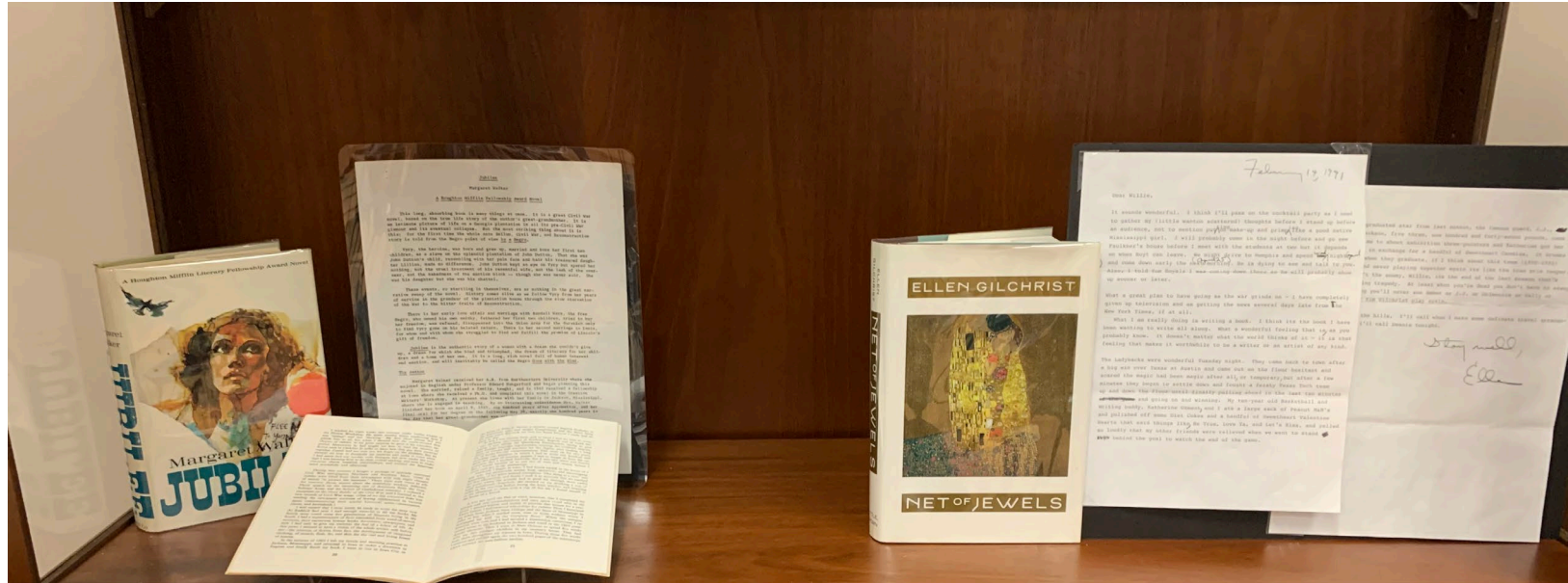
Featured items, left to right:

- *Sing, Unburied, Sing: a novel* / Jesmyn Ward. Scribner (2017)
- *Salvage the Bones: a novel* / Jesmyn Ward. Bloomsbury (2011).
- Notebook kept by Tom Franklin while writing *Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter*
- *Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter* / Tom Franklin. Harper Perennial, UM Common Read Edition (2012).



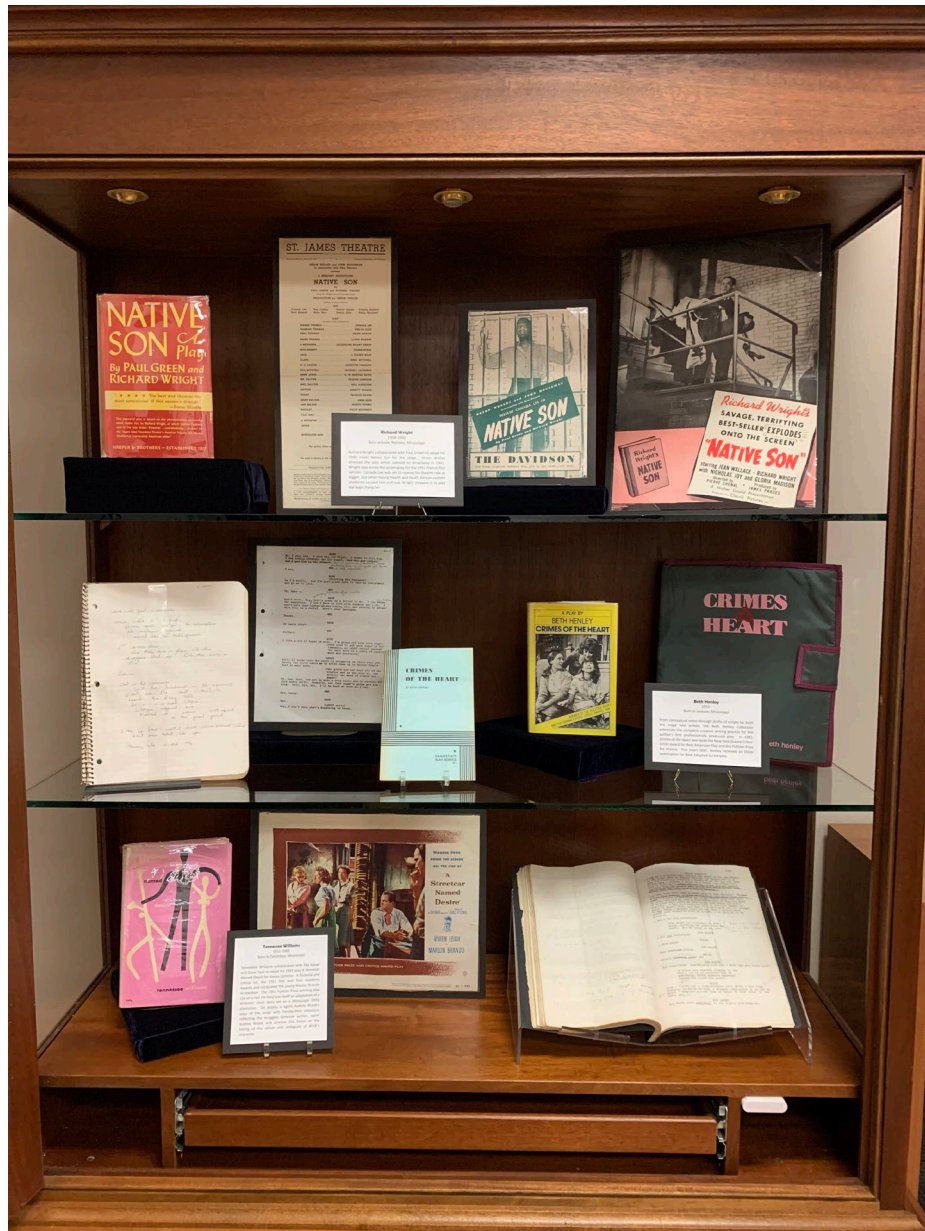
Featured items, left to right:

- *A Miracle of Catfish* / Larry Brown. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill (2007).
- Hand-drawn map including “Cortez’s Place,” “Jimmy’s daddy’s trailer,” and “cotton fields”



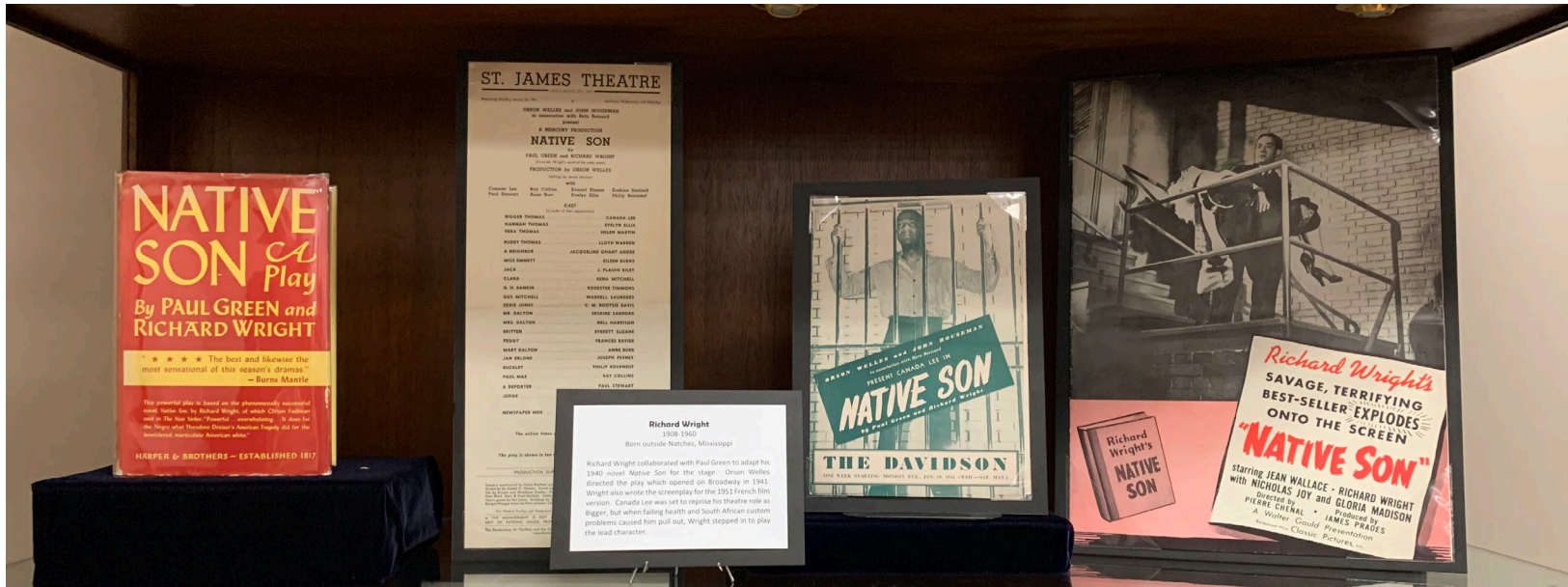
Featured items, left to right:

- *Jubilee* / Margaret Walker. Houghton Mifflin (1966).
- Promotional materials for *Jubilee*
- *Net of Jewels* / Ellen Gilchrist. Little Brown and Co. (1992).
- Letter from Ellen Gilchrist to Willie Morris. 19 February 1991.



3. Mississippi Playwrights

- Richard Wright
- Beth Henley
- Tennessee Williams



Richard Wright

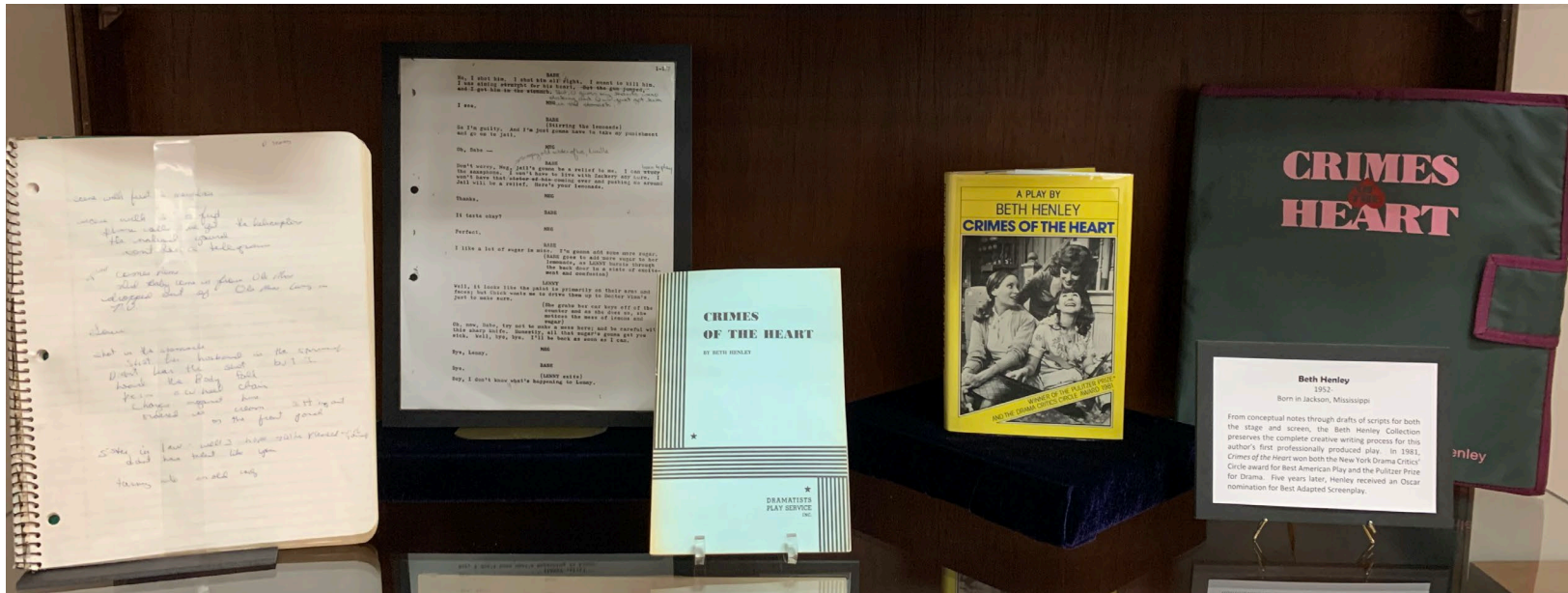
1908-1960

Born outside Natchez, Mississippi

Featured items, left to right:

- *Native Son, a play* / Paul Green and Richard Wright (1941)
- Broadside from original production of *Native Son* at Broadway's St. James Theatre (1941)
- Program from the production of *Native Son* at The Davidson Theatre (1942)
- Lobby card for film adaptation of *Native Son* (1951)

Richard Wright collaborated with Paul Green to adapt his 1940 novel *Native Son* for the stage. Orson Welles directed the play which opened on Broadway in 1941. Wright also wrote the screenplay for the 1951 French film version. Canada Lee was set to reprise his theatre role as Bigger, but when failing health and South African custom problems caused him pull out, Wright stepped in to play the lead character.



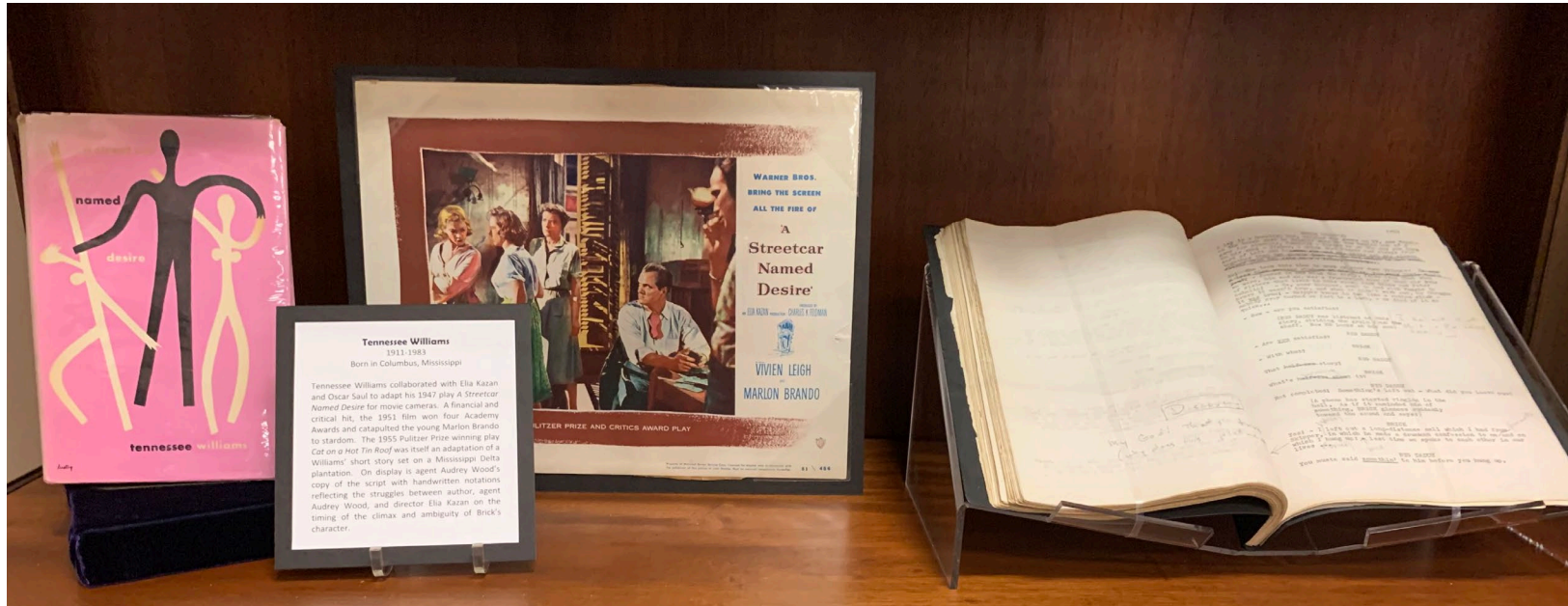
Beth Henley

1952-
Born in Jackson, Mississippi

Featured items, left to right:

- Spiral notebook with conceptual notes for *Crimes of the Heart*
- Photocopied page of dialogue from *Crimes of the Heart*
- *Crimes of the Heart* / Beth Henley. Dramatists Play Service (1982)
- *Crimes of the Heart* / Beth Henley. Viking/Penguin Books (1982)
- Beth Henley's Film Production Folder for *Crimes of the Heart* (1986).

From conceptual notes through drafts of scripts for both the stage and screen, the Beth Henley Collection preserves the complete creative writing process for this author's first professionally produced play. In 1981, *Crimes of the Heart* won both the New York Drama Critics' Circle award for Best American Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Five years later, Henley received an Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay.



Tennessee Williams

1911-1983

Born in Columbus, Mississippi

Featured items, left to right:

- *A Streetcar Named Desire* / Tennessee Williams. New Directions (1947)
- Lobby card from film adaptation of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)
- Annotated film script of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), with notes by agent Audrey Wood

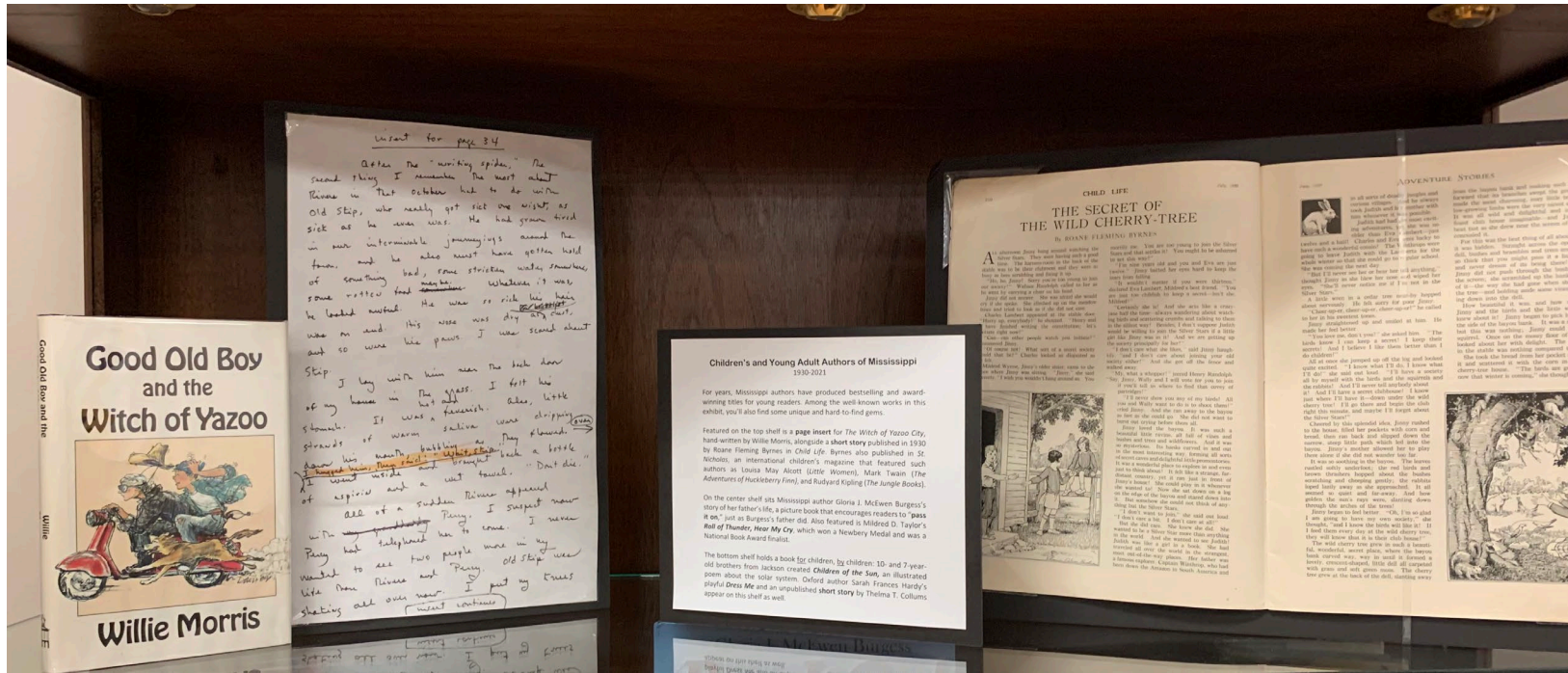
Tennessee Williams collaborated with Elia Kazan and Oscar Saul to adapt his 1947 play *A Streetcar Named Desire* for movie cameras. A financial and critical hit, the 1951 film won four Academy Awards and catapulted the young Marlon Brando to stardom. The 1955 Pulitzer Prize winning play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was itself an adaptation of a Williams' short story set on a Mississippi Delta plantation. On display is agent Audrey Wood's copy of the script with handwritten notations reflecting the struggles between author, agent Audrey Wood, and director Elia Kazan on the timing of the climax and ambiguity of Brick's character.



4. Children's and Young Adult Authors of Mississippi, 1930-2021

- Willie Morris
- Roane Fleming Byrnes
- Mildred D. Taylor
- Kiese Laymon
- Gloria J. McEwen Burgess
- Angie Thomas
- Michael W. Waters and Nicole Tadgell
- Kabir Blake Gupta
- Jean-Henri Fabre
- Sarah Frances Hardy
- Thelma T. Cullums

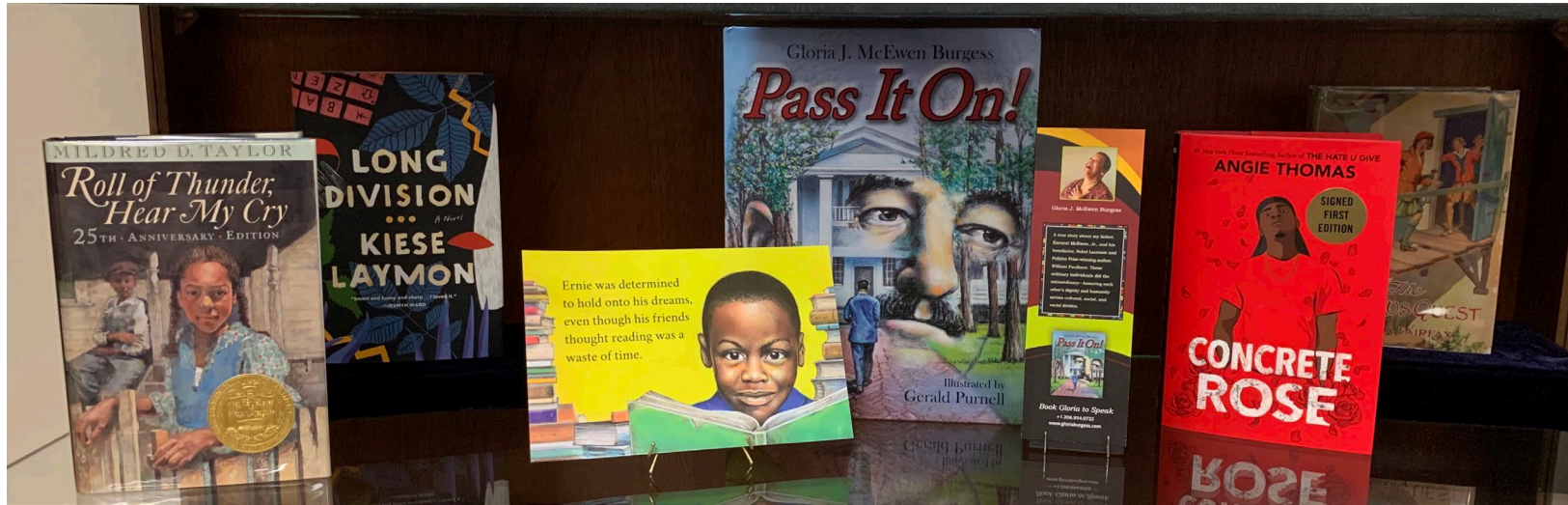
For years, Mississippi authors have produced bestselling and award-winning titles for young readers. Among the well-known works in this exhibit, you'll also find some unique and hard-to-find gems.



Featured items, left to right:

- *Good Old Boy and the Witch of Yazoo* / Willie Morris. Yoknapatawpha Press (1989)
- Page insert for “The Witch of Yazoo,” hand-written by Morris
- “The Secret of the Wild Cherry Tree” / Roane Fleming Byrnes. *Child Life* Vol. 9, no. 7 (1930).

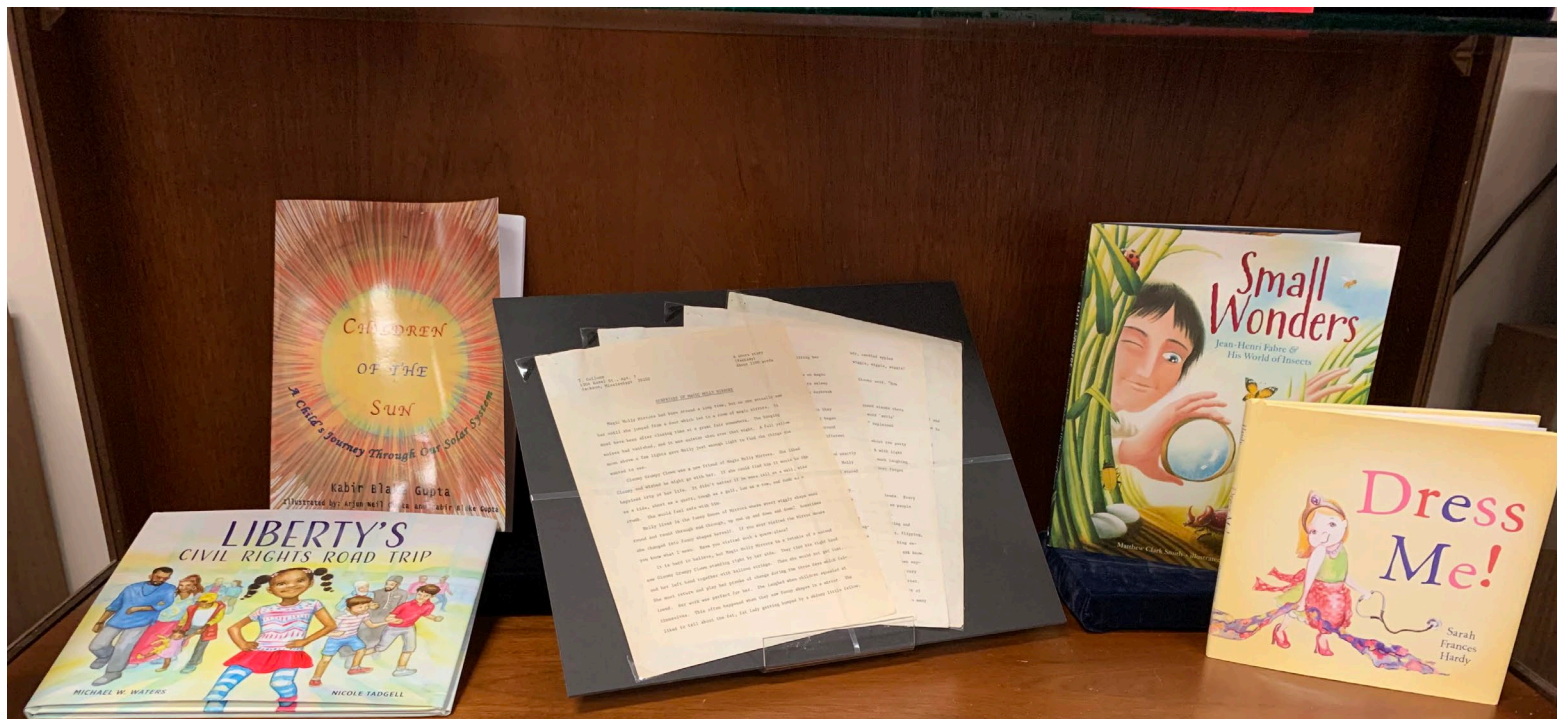
Featured on the top shelf is a **page insert** for *The Witch of Yazoo City*, hand-written by Willie Morris, alongside a **short story** published in 1930 by Roane Fleming Byrnes in *Child Life*. Byrnes also published in *St. Nicholas*, an international children’s magazine that featured such authors as Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*), Mark Twain (*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*), and Rudyard Kipling (*The Jungle Books*).



Featured items, left to right:

- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* / Mildred D. Taylor. Phyllis Fogelman (2001).
- *Long Division* / Kiese Laymon. Scribner (2021).
- Two copies of *Pass it On* / Gloria J. McEwen Burgess. Two Sylvias Press (2018). One copy is open, the other closed.
- *Concrete Rose* / Angie Thomas. Balzer + Bray (2021).
- *The Curious Quest* / Virginia Fairfax. A. L. Burt Co. (1934)

On the center shelf sits Mississippi author Gloria J. McEwen Burgess’s story of her father’s life, a picture book that encourages readers to “**pass it on**,” just as Burgess’s father did. Also featured is Mildred D. Taylor’s ***Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry***, which won a Newbery Medal and was a National Book Award finalist.



Featured items, left to right:

- *Liberty's Civil Rights Road Trip* / Michael W. Walters, Nicole Tadgell. Flyaway Books (2021).
- *Children of the Sun: A Child's Journey Through Our Solar System* / Kabir Blake Gupta, Arjun Neil Gupta. Lulu.com (2018)
- Unpublished short story by Thelma T. Collums
- *Small Wonders: Jean-Henri Fabre and his world of insects* / Matthew Clark Smith, Giuliano Ferri. Two Lions (2015).
- *Dress Me* / Sarah Frances Hardy. Sky Pony Press (2015).

The bottom shelf holds a book for children, by children: 10- and 7-year-old brothers from Jackson created ***Children of the Sun***, an illustrated poem about the solar system. Oxford author Sarah Frances Hardy's playful ***Dress Me*** and an unpublished **short story** by Thelma T. Collums appear on this shelf as well.