

# Bridgewater State University

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**Seamus Heaney Collection**  
**1969 - 2016**  
(MSS-006)

*Finding Aid Compiled by  
Orson Kingsley*

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Maxwell Library  
Bridgewater State University  
10 Shaw Road / Bridgewater MA 02325 / 508-531-1389

**Volume:** 2.5 linear feet (7 document boxes, 2 oversized items)

**Acquisition:** Nearly all items in this manuscript group were donated to Bridgewater State University by Maureen Connelly from 2012-2016.

**Access:** Access to this record group is unrestricted.

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## **Seamus Heaney Collection**

### **Biographical Sketch**

Seamus Heaney was a renowned poet out of Ireland and in 1995 won the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was born in 1939 in Northern Ireland. Many of his childhood experiences growing up on a farm in County Derry would resonate in his poetry throughout his life.

Heaney's first major work of poetry was *Death of a Naturalist*, published in 1966. The first poem in this publication, *Digging*, would be among Heaney's most famous, and helped him establish his reputation as a poetic voice of Ireland. Heaney would continue to achieve acclaim through numerous publications of poetry collections. In the mid-1970s Heaney began to give poetry readings in the United States and in 1981 became a visiting professor at Harvard University. He would maintain professionally connected to Harvard in some capacity until 2006. He would also win awards during his career too numerous to mention, with the culminating award being the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1995. Heaney was commonly referred to as the best Irish poet since W.B. Yeats.

In 1965 Seamus Heaney married Marie Devlin. They had three children. Heaney would continue to be active in poetry readings until ill health slowed him down, beginning in 2006. On August 30, 2013 he passed away at age 74. He is buried in Bellaghy, Ireland.

### **Scope & Content Note**

This collection represents material created through the friendship of the donor, Maureen Connelly, and Seamus and Marie Heaney. Correspondence, photographs (all taken by Ms. Connelly unless noted otherwise), and signed books and rare pamphlets published by Heaney make up the bulk of the collection. Two folders near the end of box 1 contain contents that already were in the Maxwell Library's possession.

Ms. Connelly first became familiar with Seamus Heaney while an English professor at Boston State College. He became a frequent speaker at her Irish Literature classes in the mid-1970s. A number of the photographs in the collection were taken in Dublin as Ms. Connelly made multiple trips to Ireland to visit the Heaney's.

After the closure of Boston State College in 1982 (the same year Heaney had his first speaking event at Bridgewater State), Ms. Connelly received a job at Bridgewater State College as an English professor. She continued to get Heaney to make an occasional visit to speak at her Irish Literature classes. In March 1990 Heaney gave a poetry reading at Bridgewater State in the Maxwell Library for a Patrick MacGill Centennial Celebration. This event was recorded and can be found in the collection.

Related collections include material from other twentieth century Irish Literature figures of note (donated by Ms. Connelly), including Thomas Flanagan, Brian Friel, Edna O'Brien, Mary Lavin, and Brian Moore.

## **Seamus Heaney Collection Box and Folder List**

### **Box 1 Folder**

1. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, May 29, 1978
2. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, February 2, 1979
3. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, March 12, 1979
4. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, September 4, 1979
5. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, December 17, 1979
6. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, March 25, 1982
7. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, April 25, 1982
8. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, April 10, 1984
9. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, January 10, 1987
10. Seamus Heaney to BSU Vice-President Robert Dillman, January 11, 1987
11. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, telegram, October 10, 1995
12. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, fax, February 27, 1998
13. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, October 12, 2000
14. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, January 1, 2003
15. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, May 2003
16. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, and a Nobel Prize in Literature brochure signed by Heaney, November 12, 2004
17. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, January 15, 2007
18. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, August 22, 2007
19. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, undated
20. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, undated
21. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, undated
22. Seamus Heaney to Maureen Connelly, undated

23. Poem "Carlo," written by Heaney and signed, in memoriam of Connelly's deceased dog, undated
24. Envelope without letter, sent by Heaney, 1982
25. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, April 1979
26. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, April 1, 1981
27. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, May 26, 1982
28. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, November 25, 2003
29. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, March 21, 2006
30. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, January 29, 2007
31. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, March 14, 2007
32. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, December 30, 2007
33. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, March 29, 2008
34. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, November 23, 2010
35. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, includes a photo and limerick written by Connelly, January 3, 2013
36. Envelope without letter, sent by Marie Heaney, undated
37. Letter, photo, and separate postcard from Catherine Ann Heaney (daughter) to Maureen Connelly, c. 1979, 1984
38. Photocopied correspondence between Robert Breen (Boston firefighter) and Seamus Heaney, including copy of Heaney's poem "Helmet," which was inspired by Mr. Breen, December 2003
39. Copies of correspondence between Robert Breen and Seamus Heaney, 2003
40. Copies and news clippings of published non-poetry by Heaney, 1983-1995
41. Reviews of Seamus Heaney publications, c. 1975 – c. 2010
42. Review of a Marie Heaney publication, 2000
43. Programs and announcements pertaining to events attended by Heaney, including the Eire Society of Boston, 1982-1999
44. Postcard of Heaney portrait, 1987
45. Random periodicals that include material on Heaney, 1980, 1996-2006
46. Irish Times articles on Heaney's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, 2009
47. Reports on Heaney's death and funeral, 2013
48. Material on Heaney after his death, 2013
49. Seamus Heaney to Bridgewater State Library Director Owen McGowan, October 29, 1989
50. Ephemera and other material documenting Heaney's poetry readings at Bridgewater State, 1982, 1990
51. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, March 27, 2014
52. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly, May 20, 2016
53. Marie Heaney to Maureen Connelly (notes Heaney celebration event at BSU in 2014), July 24, 2016

**Box 2 (Photographs, all of which taken by Maureen Connelly unless noted otherwise)  
Folder**

1. Seamus Heaney and Maureen Connelly, undated
2. Marie Heaney and Maureen Connelly, c. 1984
3. Seamus Heaney at Bridgewater State University event, undated
4. Seamus Heaney and Bridgewater State University Professor Charles Fanning at Bridgewater

- State University, undated
5. Seamus Heaney with Bridgewater State University students and others at an event at Boston College, 1995
  6. Heaney and Bridgewater State University Professor Tom Curley at event at Boston College, 1995
  7. Heaney and Robert Breen (the man who inspired Heaney's poem "Helmet") at event at Boston College, 1995
  8. Heaney at Boston State College classroom of Professor Maureen Connelly, c. 1970s
  9. Heaney and Lloyd Schwartz at Professor Maureen Connelly's Boston State College class, c. 1975
  10. Heaney and Brian Moore at unknown event, 1979
  11. Heaney at a party celebrating Thomas Moore's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in Cambridge, MA, 1979
  12. Heaney in Dublin, 1980
  13. Heaney and Joe Gannon, 1981
  14. Heaney and John Duff, and other photos at same event, 1982
  15. Field Day Theatre Company party, includes images of Brian Friel, Maureen Connelly, and John Hume, undated
  16. Heaney with Tom Paulin at Field Day, undated
  17. Heaney at Boston College event, c. 1990
  18. Heaney and a member of the music group the Chieftains at Eire Society of Boston ceremony, 1991
  19. Heaney at unknown events, undated
  20. Images of Heaney not taken by Maureen Connelly, undated

### **Box 3 (books, all signed)**

By Seamus Heaney

- Door Into The Dark*, signed, 1969
- A Family Album*, inscribed, Byron Press, copy 3 of 50, 1979
- Changes*, inscribed, private printing by Peter Fallon, 1980
- The Writers: A Sense of Ireland*, inscribed by Heaney, 1980
- Holly*, inscribed, private printing by Peter Fallon, 1981
- New Selected Poems, 1966-1987*, inscribed, 1990
- Anything Can Happen*, inscribed, 2004

By Marie Heaney

- Over Nine Waves*, inscribed, 1994

By Multiple Authors

- Ireland's Field Day: Field Day Theatre Company*, inscribed and signed by Seamus Heaney, and also signed by Seamus Deane, Tom Paulin, and Brian Friel, 1986

### **Box 4 (books)**

By Marie Heaney

- Heart Mysteries: 50 Poems from Ireland to Touch the Soul*, inscribed, 2003

By Seamus Heaney

- Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968-1978*, 1980
- Ploughshares*, Vol. 5 No. 3, contains a poem by Heaney and an interview, 1979
- Ploughshares*, Vol. 6 No. 1, edited by Seamus Heaney, 1980

- Station Island*, 1985
- The Paris Review*, contains interview with Heaney, 1997
- District and Circle*, 2006

### **Box 5 (books)**

By Seamus Heaney

- Field Work*, 1979
- The Redress of Poetry: Oxford Lectures*, 1995
- Finders Keepers: Selected Prose, 1971-2001* (1<sup>st</sup> American edition), 2002

By Dennis O'Driscoll

- Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney*, 2008

### **Box 6 (audio/visual)**

#### **Video**

- Two DVDs and two VHS tapes of a recording of Seamus Heaney during a speaking event at Bridgewater State College Irish Week on March 7, 1990
- VHS recording of Seamus Heaney and Seamus Deane involving Field Day, undated
- VHS recording of a Bravo channel profile of Seamus Heaney, 1992

#### **Audio Recordings by Maureen Connelly**

- Personal recording of a Heaney poetry reading (original cassette tape and digitized version) at Boston University, April 30, 1976
- Personal recording of a Heaney poetry reading (original cassette tape and digitized version) at JFK Library, March 18, 1982
- Personal recording of a Heaney poetry reading (original cassette tape and digitized version) at an unknown location, c. 1980

#### **Published Audio Recordings**

- Beowulf*, translated and read by Seamus Heaney, 2000
- The Spirit Level*, read by Seamus Heaney, 1996
- A Faber Poetry Cassette*, Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin, 1983

LP (in separate location)

- The Northern Muse*, recordings by Seamus Heaney and John Montague, 1968

### **Box 7 (books)**

By Seamus Heaney

- Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966-1996*, 1998
- Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, 2000
- Finders Keepers: Selected Prose, 1971-2001* (1<sup>st</sup> UK edition), 2002
- Human Chain*, 2010
- Aeneid Book VI*, 2016

By Multiple Authors

- The Yellow Nib: The Literary Journal of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry*, vol. 4, 2008

### **Oversized Material**

- Jack Coughlin engraving of Seamus Heaney, No. 10 of 100, 1982
- Ephemera-oversized print of a Heaney poem signed twice by Heaney. Contains the poem *I Am Raftery*, edition of 300, The Deerfield Press, 1996