

Yale University Library  
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

# Guide to the Alvin Feinman Papers

YCAL MSS 1524



by Annalise Hennessey

October 2022

P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
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<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** YCAL MSS 1524

**CREATOR:** Feinman, Alvin, 1929-2008 , author

**TITLE:** Alvin Feinman papers

**DATES:** circa 1950-2014

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 8.93 linear feet (10 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The collection contains correspondence, writings, photographs, personal papers, electronic files, and other papers by or relating to Alvin Feinman. Among the correspondents are Feinman's wife, Deborah Dorfman, Harold Bloom, James Geary, Reginald Shepherd, and Danny Myerson. Writings consist of notes and drafts of Feinman's poetry, articles, essays, and other works. Included are materials pertaining to *Preambles and Other Poems* and the posthumous publication of *Corrupted Into Song*. The collection also contains correspondence, notes, and other papers of Deborah Dorfman.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.feinman>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.feinman>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Glenn Horowitz, 2018.

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## Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Box 10 (computer media): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Alvin Feinman Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Alvin Feinman Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Separated Materials

Printed material received with the collection was removed for separate cataloging and can be accessed by searching the library's online catalog.

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## Alvin Feinman (1929-2008)

Alvin Feinman was born on November 21, 1929, in New York City. He attended Brooklyn College and the University of Chicago and completed graduate coursework at Yale University before briefly teaching in Yale's Department of Philosophy. Feinman then taught literature at Bennington College, Vermont, from 1969 to 1994. In addition to teaching, Feinman was a poet whose works include *Preambles and Other Poems* (1964). After Feinman's death in 2008, literary critic Harold Bloom published *Corrupted into Song: The Compete Poems of Alvin Feinman*. It contains fifty-seven previously published pieces and thirty-nine unpublished works found within Feinman's collection of manuscripts.

## Scope and Contents

The collection contains correspondence, writings, photographs, personal papers, electronic files, and other papers by or relating to Alvin Feinman. Among the correspondents are Feinman's wife, Deborah Dorfman, Harold Bloom, James Geary, Reginald Shepherd, and Danny Myerson. Writings consist of notes and drafts of Feinman's poetry, articles, essays, and other works. Included are materials pertaining to *Preambles and Other Poems* and the posthumous publication of *Corrupted Into Song*. The collection also contains correspondence, notes, and other papers of Deborah Dorfman.

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## Arrangement

Organized into four series: I. Correspondence, 1949-2004. II. Writings, 1951-2005, undated. III. Personal Papers, 1943-2002, undated. IV. Computer Media, 1993, undated.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, 1949–2004

1.42 linear feet (2 boxes)

This series consists of correspondence of Alvin Feinman with his friends and colleagues, including Harold Bloom, James Geary, Danny Myerson, and Reginald Shepherd, and correspondence with immediate and extended family, including Feinman's wife, Deborah Dorfman.

Associated material: Correspondence can also be found in Series III. Personal Papers.

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent or file title, with unidentified correspondence filed at the end of the sequence.

b. 1, f. 1-2	B [first initial only]	1956–1957
b. 1, f. 3	Bernstein, Jay	1974
b. 1, f. 4	Bloom, Harold	1955–1973
b. 1, f. 5	E. M. [Germany]	1955–1956
b. 1, f. 6	Feinman and Abrahams Family	1950–1988
b. 1, f. 7	Feinman, Alvin [printed emails]	2001–2008
b. 1, f. 8	Geary, James	1986–1997
b. 1, f. 9-11	General correspondence	1950–2005
b. 1, f. 12	Halpern, Bob	1946–1965
b. 1, f. 13	Healey, Sophie	1978–1979
b. 1, f. 14	Heller, Didi	2000–2004
b. 1, f. 15	Hollander, John	1970
b. 1, f. 16	Kruger, Melissa	1994–2001
b. 1, f. 17	Lehrer, Michael	1970
b. 1, f. 18	Malamud, Bernard	1970–1973
b. 1, f. 19	Maurey, Laurel [recommendation letters from Feinman]	1994–1996
b. 1, f. 20	McLaughlin, Joseph	1995–2001
b. 1, f. 21	Michaels, Jerry	1950–1961
b. 1, f. 22-26	Myerson, Danny	1996–2008
b. 1, f. 27	Omins, Marga	1949–1952
b. 1, f. 28	Rivera, Damon	1996–2003
b. 1, f. 29	Rorty, Amelie	1971–1996

b. 1, f. 30	Rorty, Richard	1978–1995
b. 2, f. 31	Schaap, Rose	1994–2007
b. 2, f. 32	Shepherd, Reginald	1988–2003
b. 2, f. 33	Shepherd, Reginald regarding Feinman's writings	2001–2002
b. 2, f. 34	Spanel, A. N. (Abram Nathaniel)	1976–1977
b. 2, f. 35	Smyth, John	1998–2008
b. 2, f. 36	Werman, Robert	1951–2000
b. 2, f. 37	Wheeler, Susan	1985–1995
b. 2, f. 38	Wright, Jay [includes draft of letter from Feinman]	1970–1976
b. 2, f. 39	Unidentified	1978

**Series II: Writings, 1951-2014, undated***5.17 linear feet (5 boxes)*

This series primarily consists of drafts, notes, reviews, and other materials related to poetry, articles, essays, and various projects by Alvin Feinman. The series also contains works by other writers including Harold Bloom, David Bromwich, and Michael Gottlieb.

Organized into four subseries: Collected Poems, Individual Poems, Shorter Works, and Loose Notes and Notebooks.

## Collected Poems

This subseries includes drafts of published and unpublished works created by Feinman, including *Preambles and Other Poems* and *Corrupted into Song*. Some files contain correspondence.

Arranged alphabetically by title or file title.

b. 3, f. 40	11/63 <i>Out</i>	undated
<i>Corrupted Into Song</i>		
b. 3, f. 41	Cards and poems for James - <i>Corrupted Into Song</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 42-44	DD editing notes and transcriptions for <i>Corrupted Into Song</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 45	Poems with notes (for <i>Corrupted</i> )	undated
b. 3, f. 46	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> with annotations	undated
b. 3, f. 47	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> with corrections	undated
b. 3, f. 48	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 49	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> from <i>Hold (Poss)</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 50	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> from <i>Leave Alone</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 51	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> from <i>Preambles</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 52	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> [from envelope in Feinman's drafts]	undated
b. 3, f. 53	Poems published in <i>Corrupted</i> from "Wine" folder	undated
b. 3, f. 54	Prose - not for inclusion but useful to James Geary - <i>Corrupted Into Song</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 55	Partial TS <i>Corrupted Into Song</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 56	<i>Days, etc.</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 57	Drafts - <i>Apostrophes to the Mortal Blow</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 58	Draft of <i>Cancellations</i>	undated
b. 3, f. 59	Early poems - from "Box 9"	undated
b. 3, f. 60	From "Box 9" - poems, drafts, annotations	undated
b. 3, f. 61	<i>Hold (Poss)</i>	undated



## Collected Poems (continued)

b. 3, f. 62	NYC poems and notes	undated
b. 3, f. 63	Post - Days	undated
<i>Preambles and Other Poems</i>		
b. 3, f. 64	<i>Preambles</i> drafts	undated
b. 3, f. 65	<i>Preambles</i> , drafts, carbons	undated
b. 3, f. 66	<i>Preambles</i> - carbons, drafts, rejects	undated
b. 3, f. 67-69	<i>Preambles</i> drafts and rejects	undated
b. 3, f. 70	<i>Preambles</i> worksheets with dark copies	undated
b. 3, f. 71	<i>Preambles</i> , galleys, letter from John Weiner	undated
b. 3, f. 72	<i>Preambles</i> long galleys	undated
b. 4, f. 73-76	MS for <i>Preambles</i> /poems	undated
b. 4, f. 77	Rejected <i>Preambles</i> poems	undated
b. 4, f. 78	<i>Preambles</i> typed MS	undated
b. 4, f. 79	Typed MS of <i>Preambles</i> with rejected poems	undated
Individual Poems		
This subseries features drafts, notes, and materials related to individual poems by Feinman.		
Arranged alphabetically by title or file title.		
b. 4, f. 80	AF most recent poems	undated
b. 4, f. 81	Current transcriptions for first batch poems	undated
b. 4, f. 82-84	DD photocopies of unpublished poems	undated
b. 4, f. 85	Drafts	undated
b. 4, f. 86	Drafts - <i>Briefs- Decomposition</i>	undated
b. 4, f. 87-88	Drafts for work added to "Poems"	undated
b. 4, f. 89-91	Drafts of poems	undated
b. 4, f. 92	Draft titled <i>Autumn '59</i>	undated
b. 4, f. 93	Misc. lines	undated
b. 4, f. 94	Most recent poems - not yet dealt with	undated
b. 4, f. 95-98	MSS 100-162	undated
b. 4, f. 100	Poem drafts - Normandy tablet	undated
b. 4, f. 101	Poems, several marked "removed"	undated

## Individual Poems (continued)

b. 5, f. 102-103	Poetry center card/letter poem drafts	1951
b. 5, f. 104	University of California Santa Barbara letter paper	undated
b. 5, f. 105	Unpublished poems	undated
b. 5, f. 106	Worksheets for poems	undated
b. 5, f. 107	Yale and Brooklyn College letter paper	undated
b. 5, f. 108	<i>Your Words</i> poem drafts	undated
b. 4, f. 99	Omitted from <i>Preambles</i>	undated

## Shorter Works

This subseries includes book and poetry reviews, essays, and other shorter works by Feinman and other writers.

Arranged under two subheadings: Works by Alvin Feinman and Writings of Others. Within each subheading, materials are arranged alphabetically by title or file title.

## Works by Alvin Feinman

b. 5, f. 109	AF Hofmannsthal translation	undated
b. 5, f. 110	AF Kierkegaard essay	undated
b. 5, f. 111	AF on his own poetry	undated
b. 5, f. 112	AF's remembrance of Tristman and more	undated
b. 5, f. 113	AF translations of Rilke	undated
b. 5, f. 114	Draft of Rorty essay	undated
b. 5, f. 115	List of AF publications	undated
b. 5, f. 116	Notes - prose piece	undated
b. 5, f. 117	Prose - <i>The Earring</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 118	Reviews of <i>Preambles</i>	1964
b. 5, f. 119	Reviews of <i>Preambles</i> /photocopies	1965
b. 5, f. 120-121	Rorty articles - some with AF marginalia	1984-1994
b. 5, f. 122	<i>To Write a Novel?</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 123	Various story drafts	undated
b. 5, f. 124	<i>Will Not Write a Novel</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 125	<i>Woman on Train</i> story	undated

## Writings of Others

b. 5, f. 126	About Sidney Meyers memorial publication	undated
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## Shorter Works &gt; Writings of Others (continued)

b. 5, f. 127	Bloom's Belitt lecture essay <i>Tally</i>	1996
b. 5, f. 128	Bloom's <i>Covering Cherub</i> essay	undated
b. 5, f. 129	David Bromwich's <i>A Choice Inheritance</i>	2000
b. 5, f. 130	Dora Story - <i>Refrigerator Page</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 131	<i>Floating Bear</i>	1967-1968
b. 5, f. 132	Gundrun Brug	1967-1968
b. 5, f. 133	Helen Elam - <i>Studies In Romanticism</i>	1970
b. 5, f. 134	Laparete and Uhlenbeck	1984
b. 5, f. 135	<i>Metaphysical Pragmatism</i>	1961
b. 5, f. 136	Michael Gottlieb <i>The Night Book</i>	1998
b. 5, f. 137	Notes on Sartre's <i>What Is Literature?</i>	undated
b. 5, f. 138	Offprint from National Gallery from John Cauman	1997
b. 5, f. 139	"On Thomas Mann"	undated
b. 5, f. 140	Related to "Bennington Purge" - James Lasdun and Helen Elam	1994-2000
b. 5, f. 141-142	Student theses	1976-1977
b. 5, f. 143	Work of various students	undated
b. 6, f. 144-145	Various publications	1996-2005

## Loose Notes and Notebooks

This subseries contains folders of autograph manuscript notes by Alvin Feinman and Deborah Dorfman on varied topics, as well, as journals, notebooks, and planners.

Arranged under two subheadings: Loose Notes and Notebooks. Within each subheading, materials are arranged alphabetically by file title.

## Loose Notes

b. 7, f. 146	DD notes/reviews	undated
b. 7, f. 147	Hardcover "record" book with notes	undated
b. 7, f. 148	Norddeutsche Lloyd Bremen	undated
b. 7, f. 149	Notes and poems	undated
b. 7, f. 150	"Notes on Kierkegaard Shakespeare"	undated
b. 7, f. 151	Notes on Sartre Kierkegaard	1961
b. 7, f. 152	Prose notes	undated
b. 7, f. 153-154	Various notes	undated

## Loose Notes and Notebooks &gt; Loose Notes (continued)

b. 7, f. 155-156	Various notes found in books	undated
b. 7, f. 157	Various teaching notes	undated
b. 7, f. 158	Various teaching notes - ephemera	undated
b. 7, f. 159	Various teaching notes - poetry as symmetry	undated
Notebooks		
b. 7, f. 160	DD composition book	2009-2014
b. 7, f. 161	DD daybook	undated
b. 7, f. 162	DD hardcover notebook	2014
b. 7, f. 163	"Germany"	undated
b. 7, f. 164	Hardcover notebook	1952
b. 7, f. 165	Spiral and hardcover notebook	1951
b. 7, f. 166-167	Steno paper/notebook	1960-1998
b. 7, f. 168	Woodstock, NY notebook/drafts	1962

**Series III: Personal Papers, 1943-2002, undated***1.92 linear feet (2 boxes)*

This series includes materials related to Alvin Feinman's early life and education, financial and legal records, photographs, and artwork, as well as papers of Feinman's wife, Deborah Dorfman, which contain a small amount of correspondence, notebooks, photographs of Feinman, and other materials.

Arranged alphabetically by file title.

b. 8, f. 169	Advice to academic counselors	undated
b. 8, f. 170	AF and DD salary documents	1984-1994
b. 8, f. 171	AF birth certificate, passport, etc.	1953-1955
b. 8, f. 172	"Computer Issues"	undated
b. 8, f. 173	DD and JG communication re <i>Corrupted</i>	undated
b. 8, f. 174	DD correspondence from McKee with ref. to JG	undated
b. 8, f. 175	DD general correspondence	1949-1974
b. 8, f. 176	Heidelberg driving documents	1954
b. 8, f. 177	Job Inquiries (Yale)	1954-1957
b. 8, f. 178	NYC rent/lease docs	1953-1967
b. 8, f. 179	Oxford University Press	1972-1986
b. 8, f. 180-182	Photographs	undated
b. 8, f. 183	<i>Preambles</i> /Oxford University Press	1963-1973
b. 8, f. 184	Princeton University Press contract docs	1988-2002
b. 8, f. 185	Social Security information	1984-2000
b. 9, f. 186	Personal documents	1943-1966
b. 9, f. 187	Stuyvesant High School	1945-1946

**Series IV: Computer Media, 1993, undated**

*0.42 linear feet (1 box)*

b.10

Computer media

Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. consult Access Services for further information.

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

American literature -- 20th Century  
American poetry -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century  
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives  
College teachers -- United States  
Poets, American -- 20th Century  
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives

### **Occupations**

Authors -- United States -- 20th Century  
Poets -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Genres / Formats**

Born digital  
Pencil drawings  
Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century

### **Names**

Bloom, Harold, 1930-  
Dorfman, Deborah  
Spanel, A. N. (Abram Nathaniel), 1901-1985