Abstract: American poet David Posner sent these four poems to poet and critic John Ciardi, together with a handwritten letter added to the bottom of a previous letter from Ciardi.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 099, F884
Title: David Posner poems and correspondence with John Ciardi
Inclusive Dates: 1950-1958
Extent: 5 items (5 p.)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 099, F884, David Posner poems and correspondence with John Ciardi, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 61, F884: Shelved in SPEC MSS 099 manuscript boxes

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/

Source: Originally laid in a copy of David Posner's *The May-Game* (Spec PS3531.O7642 M3x 1946).

Processing: Processed and encoded by Anita Wellner, October 2011.

Access Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

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Biographical Notes

David Posner

American poet David Louis Posner was born August 6, 1921, in New York, to Nell and Louis S. Posner.

In 1945, Posner received his B.A. from Kenyon College where he majored in French and in 1947 he received his M.A. in English Literature from Harvard. After studying at the Sorbonne, he worked for two years with Radio Diffusion Française interviewing famous personalities. During this time, he traveled extensively in Europe and pursued an interest in archeology.

In 1953, Posner returned to formal academic pursuits and studied modern languages at Wadham College, Oxford. Posner also began writing poetry, in fact his poem, "The Deserted Altar," won the Newdigate Prize for English Verse in 1956.

From 1957-1969, Posner was an English instructor and Assistant Curator of Poetry at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He became an assistant professor of English at the University of California and remained there until 1973.


John Ciardi

American poet and critic John Ciardi, born June 24, 1916, in Boston, Massachusetts, was the poetry editor for the Saturday Review from 1956 to 1972.

Early in his career, John Ciardi taught English at a number of universities, including the University of Kansas City, Missouri (1940-1942, 1946), Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1946-1953), and Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey (1953-1961).

Ciardi was a lecturer in poetry at the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference from 1947 to 1973 and the director of the conference from 1955 to 1972.


Through numerous public readings and lectures, his poetry written for juveniles, and his appearances on educational television, Ciardi was a strong proponent of sharing poetry with mass audiences. In his preface to Dialogue with an Audience, Ciardi expressed the hope that some readers "can be brought to a more than merely general interest in poetry."

John Ciardi died on March 31, 1986.
Sources:


Scope and Content Note

American poet David Posner sent these four poems to poet and critic John Ciardi, together with a handwritten letter added to the bottom of a previous letter from Ciardi.

John Ciardi originally wrote to David Posner on May 7, 1958, to return three of these four poems and to explain that although Posner has "a good thing going in them," they were not for the Saturday Review. David Posner's letter, written in response, sent the original three poems plus a fourth back to Ciardi and asked Ciardi to critique the poems. Posner complimented Ciardi on his critical eye with poetry and asked Ciardi to "give me a few notes as to where or how they fall short ... It will help me to make the book better."

The four poems which Posner sent to Ciardi are all numbered poems which were part of a sequence titled "The Voices of Ulysses." Three of the poems are additionally numbered "1," "2," and "3" in pencil in the top left-hand corner. Poem No. 39 does not have an additional penciled number and is perhaps the poem to which Posner referred in his postscript: "there's one I've added!"
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names

Posner, David Louis--Correspondence.

Ciardi, John, 1916- --Correspondence.

Topical Terms

Poets, American--20th century--Correspondence.

Periodical editors--United States--20th century--Correspondence.

Form/Genre Terms

Correspondence.

Poems.

Personal Contributors

Ciardi, John, 1916-, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository

This item forms part of MSS 099 Miscellaneous Literary and Historical Manuscripts.

MSS 614, David Louis Posner papers

MSS 099 F833, Muriel Rukeyser letters to David Posner
**Detailed Description of the Collection**

John Ciardi autograph letter signed to David Posner, 1958 May 7 [Box 61 F884]

1 item (1 p.)

At the bottom of the page of Ciardi’s letter, is a handwritten letter written by Posner to Ciardi in response to his letter, which is initialed and returned to Ciardi with the enclosed poems.

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Typescript of poem No. 39 from The Voices of Ulysses, 1950-1958 [Box 61 F884]

1 item (1 p.)

The first line of this poem reads: "The instruments of war stand on the walls."

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Typescript of poem No. 41 from The Voices of Ulysses, 1950-1958 [Box 61 F884]

1 item (1 p.)

The first line of this poem reads: "Shut in a child's hand." The typescript is numbered "1" in pencil.

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Typescript of poem No. [26] from The Voices of Ulysses, 1950-1958 [Box 61 F884]

1 item (1 p.)

The first line of this poem reads: "The Japanese handle certain flowers with tweezers." The typescript is numbered "2" in pencil.

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Typescript of poem No. [29] from The Voices of Ulysses, 1950-1958 [Box 61 F884]

1 item (1 p.)

The first line of this poem reads: "A covey of demoiselles flying east." The typescript is numbered "3" in pencil.