

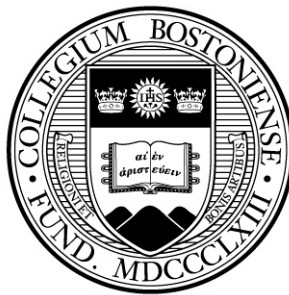
# Boston College Collection of Edith Sitwell

1935-1964

MS.1986.079

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Archives and Manuscripts Department

John J. Burns Library  
Boston College  
140 Commonwealth Avenue  
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## Summary Information

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<b>Creator:</b>	Sitwell, Edith, 1887-1964
<b>Title:</b>	Boston College collection of Edith Sitwell
<b>Collection Identifier:</b>	MS.1986.079
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1935-1964
<b>Physical Description</b>	0.5 Linear Feet (1 box)
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English and Italian
<b>Abstract:</b>	This collection of papers concerns twentieth-century British poet and author Edith Sitwell. It is comprised of correspondence, manuscript drafts of poems and other writings, and an obituary.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of item, Box number, Folder number, Boston College collection of Edith Sitwell, MS.1986.079, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

Processed by Erin Edwards, 2004; updated by Amy Braitsch, April 2007; and Ray Hartley in 2018. This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace.

### Restrictions on access

Collection is open for research.

### Provenance

Purchase (1983); and gift of Victoria Glendinning (prior to 1986) and Francis Sweeney, S.J. (1993).

### Restrictions on use

These materials are made available for use in research, teaching and private study, pursuant to U.S. Copyright Law. The user must assume full responsibility for any use of the materials, including but not limited to, infringement of copyright and publication rights of reproduced materials. Any materials used for academic research or otherwise should be fully credited with the source. The original authors may retain copyright to the materials.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

Graham Greene papers, MS.1995.003, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

Philip Caraman, S.J. papers, MS.1998.030, John J. Burns Library, Boston College.

### Separated Materials

Published works associated with this collection have been transferred within the Burns Library and can be found in the Boston College Library catalog.

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## Biographical note

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Edith Louisa Sitwell was born in Scarborough, Yorkshire, England on September 7, 1887. She was the eldest child and only daughter of Sir George Reresby Sitwell, Fourth Baronet, and his wife Lady Ida Emily Augusta Denison Sitwell. Sitwell and her two brothers, Osbert and Sacheverell, became known for their avant-garde literary work.

Sitwell was a poet, critic, and biographer. She published one of her earliest poems, "Drowned Suns," in *The Daily Mirror* in 1913 and her first volume of poetry, *The Mother and Other Poems* in 1915. Some of her other lyrical works include *Clown's Houses*, *The Wooden Pegasus*, *Façade*, and *Bucolic Comedies*.

Sitwell gained wide recognition in 1923 following her controversial reading of *Façade*, which was the result of her collaboration with composer William Walton. Some of her best known works are *Bucolic Comedies*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, and *Troy Park*. Sitwell also wrote a biography of Alexander Pope in 1930 and began to receive acclaim for her work. She received the Royal Society of Literature medal in 1933, along with honorary degrees from Leeds University, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Oxford, and Sheffield University. In 1954 she was made Dame of the British Empire.

Sitwell converted to Catholicism in 1955 and continued to publish, including a biography about Queen Elizabeth of England and Queen Mary of Scotland called *The Queen and the Hive*.

Dame Edith Louisa Sitwell died on December 9, 1964 at the age of 77.

### Source:

Cevasco, G. A.. "Sitwell, Dame Edith Louisa (1887–1964)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, edited by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. Oxford: OUP, 2004. Online ed., edited by Lawrence Goldman, May 2006. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36113> (accessed April 9, 2007).

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## Scope and Contents

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The collection includes Edith Sitwell's manuscript versions of poems such as "The Outcasts", "At the Cross-Roads", and "The Queen of Scotland's Reply to a Reproof from John Knox", as well as drafts for many of the poems that would become *Street Songs*. Additionally there are notes, prose, and other writings.

The correspondence contains letters by Sitwell to friends, literary peers, and publishers. Of note are letters between Sitwell, D. O'Connell, SJ, and lawyer Ferdinando Bosi concerning Guido Masti, a caretaker of the Castle of Montegufoni, which Osbert Sitwell owned during World War II. The Sitwells credited Masti with the safe return of art masterpieces to museums which had been hidden at Montegufoni during the war, and they hoped to gain state recognition for Masti's efforts.

Also included is Sitwell's obituary as it appeared in *The Observer Weekend Review* (1964) written by Stephen Spender.

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## **Arrangement**

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Arranged in three series. I. Writings; II. Correspondence; and III. Obituary

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# Collection Inventory

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## Series I: Writings, 1935-1964, undated

### Subseries A: Poetry, 1935-1958, undated

#### Arrangement

Alphabetical.

#### Scope and Contents

All poems are signed manuscripts.

"Lo, this is she that was the world's desire", undated	box 1	folder 1
"The Outcasts" and "At the Cross-Roads" (on a single page), 1958 October 2	box 1	folder 2
"The Queen of Scotland's Reply to a Reproof from John Knox", undated	box 1	folder 3
"Ragged Serenade" (published as "Tattered Serenade"), before 1942	box 1	folder 4
"Song" ("We are the rootless flowers in the air..."), before 1942	box 1	folder 5
"Street Song", before 1942	box 1	folder 6
"The Weeping Nymph", before 1942	box 1	folder 7
"The Youth with the Red-gold Hair", before 1942	box 1	folder 8

### Subseries B: Prose, 1960-1964, undated

#### Arrangement

Alphabetical.

Sitwell's blurb for <i>The Other Face: Catholic Life Under Elizabeth I</i> , by Philip Caraman, SJ, probably 1960	box 1	folder 9
Notebook with insertion for <i>Taken Care Of: An Autobiography</i> , probably 1964	box 1	folder 10

#### Processing Information

This notebook was previously described as "New Poems",  
as this is written in Sitwell's hand in the inner cover.  
However, the early pages of the notebook have been torn  
out and no poems remain.

"Notes", probably footnotes for an unidentified work, undated	box 1	folder 11
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## **Series II: Correspondence, 1937-1963**

### **Arrangement**

Alphabetical.

Capote, Truman, 1949 August 31	box 1	folder 12
Editor, <i>The Spectator</i> , 1937 July 21	box 1	folder 13
Millman, Rose, 1951-1962	box 1	folder 14-15
O'Connell, D., SJ (includes correspondence with Ferdinando Bosi), 1955-1961	box 1	folder 16
Unidentified correspondent ("My dearest"), 1963 January 8	box 1	folder 17
<b>Series III: Obituary, <i>The Observer Weekend Review</i>, 1964 December 13</b>	box 1	folder 18