

Joseph Brodsky Correspondence
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2011

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm99084477>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms011073>

Prepared by Michael McElderry

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2011

Collection Summary

Title: Joseph Brodsky Correspondence

Span Dates: 1965-1972

ID No.: MSS84477

Creator: Brodsky, Joseph, 1940-1996

Extent: 20 items

Extent: 1 container

Extent: .2 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English, Polish, and Russian

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

LC Catalog record: <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm99084477>

Summary: Poet. Letters from Brodsky to Kira Fedorovna Samosiuk including Brodsky's poetry and drawings.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

People

Brodsky, Joseph, 1940-1996.

Samosiuk, Kira Fedorovna--Correspondence.

Subjects

Russian poetry--20th century.

Places

Soviet Union--History--1953-1985.

Titles

Joseph Brodsky papers

Occupations

Poets.

Provenance

The correspondence of Joseph Brodsky, poet, was purchased by the Library of Congress in 1999.

Other Repositories

The main body of the Joseph Brodsky Papers can be found in the Beinecke Library of Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Joseph Brodsky is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The correspondence of Joseph Brodsky is open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, Joseph Brodsky correspondence, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Joseph Brodsky was born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Soviet Union, on May 24, 1940. He left school in 1955, held a variety of jobs, and began a program of self-education during which he taught himself Polish and English. By the late 1950s, Brodsky had started writing poetry and producing literary translations that were published in samizdat editions and in 1960 met the Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, who became Brodsky's mentor and advocate. In 1964, Brodsky was charged and convicted as a "social parasite" in a Soviet court and sentenced to five years in a labor camp in Siberia. Following protests by Akhmatova, Jean Paul-Sartre, and others, Brodsky's sentence was reduced, and in 1972, he was forced into exile from the USSR.

After his exile, Brodsky emigrated to the United States and in 1977 became an American citizen. In addition to teaching positions at Columbia University, New York, N.Y., and Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, Mass., where he taught for fifteen years, Brodsky also served as a visiting professor at several other colleges and universities. In 1986 his collection of essays *Less Than One* was awarded the National Book Critics Award for Criticism, and in 1987, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1990, Brodsky married Maria Sozzani and was appointed Poet Laureate of the United States, 1991-1992. Brodsky died on January 28, 1996, New York, N.Y.

Celebrated as one of the great Russian poets of his generation, Brodsky authored nine volumes of poetry, and several collections of essays, including *Elegy for John Donne and Other Poems* (1967), *Selected Poems* (1973), *A Part of Speech* (1980), *To Urania* (1988), *Watermark* (1992), and *On Grief and Reason* (1995), as well as the play *Marbles* (1989).

Scope and Content Note

The correspondence of Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996) spans the years 1965-1972 and consists of twenty holograph, signed letters, cards, and telegrams, some containing unpublished verses and drawings, from the former poet laureate. This early correspondence is addressed to Kira Fedorovna Samosiuk, an intimate friend of the poet, and while written largely in Russian, also contains an early attempt at verse in English and an unpublished poem in Polish. The letters reflect on a close and important relationship from the poet's early years as well as document broader aspects of Soviet life.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged chronologically.

Container List

Container	Contents
BOX 1	Correspondence, 1965-1972 (2 folders)