

# **Stephen Berg letters to Seth Fagen**

**Ms. Coll. 1211**

**Finding aid prepared by Sarah Yerger.**

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Last updated on April 14, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 May 16

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
<b>Creator</b>	Berg, Stephen, 1934-2014
<b>Title</b>	Stephen Berg letters to Seth Fagen
<b>Call number</b>	Ms. Coll. 1211
<b>Date [bulk]</b>	1989-1992
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1983-2002
<b>Extent</b>	0.4 linear foot (1 box)
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Stephen Berg was a Philadelphia born poet, professor, and editor of the <i>American Poetry Review</i> . The vast majority of this collection includes letters from Stephen Berg to Seth Fagen written between 1983 and 2002. Letters addressed to Seth Fagen by other authors occupy a small segment of the collection, as well as miscellaneous enclosures, 1990-1993, and two works of poetry by Stephen Berg.

**Cite as:**

Stephen Berg letters to Seth Fagen, 1983-2002 (bulk: 1989-1992), Ms. Coll. 1211, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

## Biography/History

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Stephen Berg was a Philadelphia born poet, professor, and editor who made that city his home for the majority of his career. Born on August 2, 1934, he briefly attended the University of Pennsylvania in addition to other colleges before graduating from the University of Iowa in 1959.

He went on to co-found the *American Poetry Review* in 1972, based in Philadelphia, and continued on as editor until his death. He also taught at several area institutions including Temple University, Princeton University, Haverford College, and the University of the Arts.

A prolific writer and publisher, he was awarded several prizes throughout his lifetime including a Guggenheim Fellowship, Rockefeller Fellowship, Pew Fellowship, PEN Translation Fellowship, and the Frank O'Hara Prize.

Berg was married to Millie Lane and had three daughters: Margot, Clair, and Emily. He died on June 12, 2014, after struggling with declining health due to a cancer diagnosis.

Seth Fagen was born on July 2, 1958, and lived in Somerville, Massachusetts, until 1990, when he moved to New York City. Until his move in 1990, he was employed in the Classics Department of Harvard University. He married Maria M. Lowrie on June 12, 1988. Following his move to New York, he worked as an antiquarian bookseller at the firm Martayan Lan. He is now works for PRPH Rare Books.

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## Scope and Contents

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The vast majority of this collection includes letters from Stephen Berg to Seth Fagen written between 1983 and 2002. Letters addressed to Seth Fagen by other authors occupy a small segment of the collection, as well as miscellaneous enclosures, dating from 1990 to 1993, and two works of poetry by Stephen Berg.

The content of the letters written by Stephen Berg to Seth Fagen includes mostly personal anecdotes, professional advice, relationship complaints, and gossip about current events. The letters are written in a frank, poetic style which indicates a level of close personal friendship and trust between recipients.

Letters are often addressed using a nickname or short phrase which is repeated over the entire span of correspondence. The letters date from 1983 to 2002, but the bulk of the content lies between 1989 and 1992. The majority of the letterhead is from the *American Poetry Review*, which was founded by Stephen Berg. Personal letterhead also represents a large portion of the collection, with a lesser portion written on postcards.

Letters written to Seth Fagen from other authors include Harold Brodkey of *The New Yorker*, David Godine of David R. Godine Publishing, Dan Duffy, and John Plotz of *Tikkun*. These letters are mostly of a professional nature and generally seem to be responses to previous enquiries.

Enclosures included in the collection include two works of poetry by Stephen Berg: "Sleeping woman" and "S. Berg's homage to the afterlife." Two photographs are also included, along with other papers relating to the *American Poetry Review*.

## **Administrative Information**

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University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2016 May 16

Finding aid prepared by Sarah Yerger.

### **Access Restrictions**

This collection is open for research use.

### **Use Restrictions**

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### **Source of Acquisition**

Gift of Seth Fagen, 2015.

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## **Related Materials**

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### **Related Archival Materials note**

At the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts: American Poetry Review records, 1971-1998, Ms. Coll. 349

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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**CORPORATE NAME(S)**

- American Poetry Review.

**FORM/GENRE(S)**

- Correspondence

**GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)**

- Philadelphia (Pa.)

**PERSONAL NAME(S)**

- Fagen, Seth

**SUBJECT(S)**

- American poetry--20th century
- American poetry--20th century--Periodicals
- Poetry
- Poetry, modern--20th century
- Poets
- Poets, American--20th century

## Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Letters, 1983, 1985-1988.	1	1
Letters, 1989.	1	2
Letters, 1990.	1	3
Letters, 1991.	1	4
Letters, 1992.	1	5
Letters, 1993.	1	6
Letters, 1994.	1	7

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Letters, 1995.	1	8
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Letters, 2002.	1	9
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Letters, undated.	1	10
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Letters by others, 1988-1992.	1	11
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Works of Stephen Berg, possibly enclosures ("Sleeping woman" and "S. Berg's homage to the afterlife"), 1991, undated.	1	12
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Miscellaneous enclosures, 1990-1993, undated.	1	13
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