



The New York Public Library  
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,  
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

**Amiri Baraka collection of unpublished poetry**

1959-1965

Sc MG 280

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

## Summary

**Creator:** Baraka, Amiri, 1934-2014

**Title:** Amiri Baraka collection of unpublished poetry

**Date:** 1959-1965

**Size:** 0.42 linear feet (2 boxes)

**Source:** Purchased from Phoenix Book Shop, 1988.

**Revision History:** Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

**Abstract:** Amiri Baraka's collection of unpublished poetry consists of over two hundred poems, which, according to Baraka, were written between 1959 and 1965. With the exception of three poems, all are unpublished. Most items bear holograph corrections, changes, and deletions, and most are short poems of one page in length. Included in the collection is a four-page bibliography compiled by the author containing entries not noted in other publications. Additionally, there is a six-page manuscript entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin: An Alternate Ending".

**Preferred citation:** [Item], Amiri Baraka collection of unpublished poetry, Sc MG 280, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Accessioned by Mary Yearwood, February 1988.

## Creator History

Imamu Amiri Baraka was a writer whose variety of forms included drama, poetry, music criticism, fiction, autobiography, and the essay. As a major and controversial author, his ideas and art, especially, as the primary architect of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, have had a profound influence on the direction of subsequent African American literature.

Baraka was born Everett LeRoi Jones in Newark, New Jersey, to working class parents; he attended

Rutgers, Howard, and Columbia Universities and the New School for Social Research. He taught at several universities and founded the Black Arts Repertory Theater School in Harlem in 1964. His literary career began in 1958 when he founded *Yugen* magazine and Totem Press. Although Baraka started publishing in the early 1960s, he did not achieve fame until the 1964 publication of his play *Dutchman*, later made into a movie. Other important plays he wrote include *The Slave* (1964) and *Toilet* (1964). A prolific writer, Baraka published two books of poetry, *Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note* (1961) and *The Dead Lecturer* (1964). The mid-1960s saw the publication of *The System of Dante's Hell*, a novel, and *Tales*, a collection of short stories. Baraka also wrote a major social-aesthetic study of African American music, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (1963).

Baraka's career went through a series of dramatic stages; first were his Beatnik years in the late 1950s through the early 1960s, when this apolitical avant garde writer refused to take action in the world. Then he became a Black cultural nationalist, renouncing the white world in the mid-1960s through mid-1970s, and then to a Marxist-Leninist rejecting monopoly capitalism in the mid-1970s. In 1974, dramatically reversing himself, Baraka rejected Black nationalism as racist and became a Third World Socialist.

## Scope and Content Note

Amiri Baraka's collection of unpublished poetry consists of over two hundred poems, which, according to Baraka, were written between 1959 and 1965. With the exception of three poems, all are unpublished. Most items bear holograph corrections, changes, and deletions, and most are short poems of one page in length. Included in the collection is a four-page bibliography compiled by the author containing entries not noted in other publications. Additionally, there is a six-page manuscript entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin: An Alternate Ending".

## Key Terms

### Subjects

African American poets  
African Americans -- Poetry  
Authors, Black  
Black arts movement

### Names

Baraka, Amiri, 1934-2014

## Container List

### b. 1 f. 1 Poems 1-40

Includes: 1. "Eugenes"; 2. "Bar"; 3. Untitled; 4. "Hunger"; 5. "Grey Heart"; 6. "In the Money Jungle"; 7. "Inside"; 8. "New York Haiku"; 9. "A Poem Welcoming Jonas Mekas to America"; 10. "Medicine Lady"; 11. "Not at All"; 12. "Niagara Frontier"; 13. "The Christian Jungle"; 14. "Wizardry"; 15. "A Spanish Woman"; 16. "Sonny Liston Confesses His Ties With the Mafia"; 17. "A Poem for Draft Dodgers"; 18. "Skulls Talk on Their Poles"; 19. "Grace"; 20. "A Poem by Leroi Jones" (Untitled); 21. Untitled; 22. "Sonnet Barrier"; 23. Untitled; 24. "Nihilistic Bullshit"; 25. "Ribbon"; 26. "Elaine's Dance"; 27. "Anthem"; 28. "Speechless"; 29. "Progress Report"; 30. "All Praise Knowledge"; 31. "After the Chinese"; 32. "History of Energy"; 33. "Vox Pop"; 34. "Explorer AD (?) 1965"; 35. Untitled; 36. "For All of Us Primitive Men"; 37. "Robinson Crusoe"; 38. Untitled; 39. "Prose"; 40. "Poem for Bald Heads"

### b. 1 f. 2 Poems 41-95

Includes: 41. "In Place of a Sonnet"; 42. "In Harms Way"; 43. "Still Another Romantic Is Heard From"; 44. "Crazyology Crazeology Craziology"; 45. "Don't Ask"; 46. "Little Bit"; 47. "Do You Think Buck Rogers Was a Junkie?"; 48. "Cut That Shit Out!"; 49. Untitled; 50. Untitled; 51. "Grey Barkeley"; 52. "Arab Booggers"; 53. "Pretty Wards"; 54. "Airboy II"; 55. "At the Tone"; 56. "This Is Not Exactly the Way I'd Say It if I Had All My Shit Together"; 57. "Sunsports"; 58. "Sugarlips"; 59. "Dirty Red"; 60. Untitled; 61. "Alright Okydal"; 62. "Ghosts"; 63. "Buffalo Girls"; 64. "Young Eyes"; 65. "Notes on the Enemy"; 66. "Report 00003 Yellow Baron"; 67. "00004 Yellow Baron"; 68. "Death Song"; 69. "Billy's Bounce"; 70. "Brides of the Captured"; 71. "Corregidor"; 72. "This Is What That Cat Wanted to Say"; 73. "Hands"; 74. "A Western Lady"; 75. "Crazy Horse"; 76. "In One Battle"; 77. "All's Well"; 78. "Out of Sight"; 79. "Go Ahead"; 80. "Connection II"; 81. "Curtain Time"; 82. "Ratior"; 83. "Tenar"; 84. "Funnygo"; 85. "Radar"; 86. "Outside"; 87. "Courtly"; 88. "Everybody Believe In God Raise Your Hand"; 89. "Not a Lie"; 90. "Against Warriors with Cancer and Heart Trouble"; 91. "Major Bowles' Diary"; 92. "A Ceremony"; 93. "All's Well"; 94. "The Availability of Christian Passport"; 95. "Starlight"

### b. 1 f. 3 Poems 96-156

Includes: 96. "Dragon of Longing"; 97. "P.T."; 98. "Re/verse"; 99. "Irrelevance"; 100. "Robespierre"; 101. "Far Turhan Bez"; 102. "Commercials"; 103. "De Sade"; 104. "Rubber Lips"; 105. "Freddy"; 106. "Sam Spade"; 107. "Conrad Nagle"; 108. "Song Form"; 109. "Fast Eddie"; 110. "Moonlighting"; 111. "Recipe"; 112. "Force"; 113. "Flying Instructions"; 114. "Tonto Rhythm"; 115. "Disobedience"; 116. "Physics"; 117. "Chapter Six"; 118. "A Poem for the Mistaken Lover"; 119. "Immelman"; 120. "Entering Snow World Blind Dreams"; 121. "Straight Man"; 122. "A Lover"; 123. "Churches"; 124. "Do Not Reject What Silence Asks For"; 125. "Art-Function"; 126. "Cagney"; 127. "Devotion"; 128. "New Definitions"; 129. "An Actual Address to Congress"; 130. "Studentin"; 131. "Brothers"; 132. "Hands"; 133. "Western Front"; 134. "Bad Month"; 135. Untitled; 136. "Third Avenue, Early Winter"; 137. "Vanila Movies"; 138. "The Target Stars"; 139. "Funny Ass Question"; 140. "What to Do with Lyndon"; 141. "The Cruelty of Unintentional Disguise"; 142. "The Scholar"; 143. Untitled; 144. "Half Dark, Old Skills"; 145. "Rank"; 146. "Claustrophobia"; 147. Untitled; 148. "Right"; 149. "There Goes the Block!!"; 150. "TV"; 151. "Look, Up in the Sky"; 152. "The Rotting Spirit"; 153. "Lowdown"; 154. "Lullaby"; 155. "A Ceremony"; 156. "Radio Dreams"

### b. 2 f. 4 Poems 157-188

Includes: 157. "King Fish"; 158. "Friday"; 159. "Radio Magic"; 160. "Travel Agent"; 161. "Strutters"; 162. "Dead Ladies"; 163. "Airboy"; 164. "Can Someone Sing This?"; 165. "History"; 166. "Color Struck"; 167. "Courtesy"; 168. "Raw Meat"; 169. "New Move"; 170. "Japanese Bedbugs"; 171. "Cop's Dream"; 172. "The Young Master II"; 173. Untitled; 174. "Cape, Cloak and Window"; 175. "Letter to Robert Duncan"; 176. "The Inside of a Cloak"; 177. "The Black Arts"; 178. "Courtly"; 179. Untitled; 180. Untitled; 181. "Animal Farm"; 182. "Lately"; 183. "Square Business"; 184. "Tone Poem"; 185. "The Scholar"; 186. "David Copperhead"; 187. "The Bronze Buckaroo"; 188. "Scroll"

b. 2 f. 5 Poems 189-236

Includes: 189. "New Music Seminar"; 190. "Paradiso: Purgatorio"; 191. "The Dictator"; 192. "A Groove Yard"; 193. "New Year"; 194. "A Toast"; 195. "The Plank"; 196. "Eastern Romance"; 197. "December 22, 1962"; 198. "S.O.T.F.L."; 199. "Edge"; 200. "Nana"; 201. "The Soldiers' Thing"; 202. "Rimbaud on Vacation"; 203. "There's Good News Tonight"; 204. "An Interview with Napoleon"; 205. "Snake Oil for American Virgin No. 105574"; 206. "The Explorer's Warning"; 207. "The Puritan"; 208. "Between Solos I Think About My Ham"; 209. "Love Stores"; 210. "Evidence"; 211. "Lament after John Skelton's *Uppon A Deedmans Hed*"; 212. "Post-Christian Sonata"; 213. "A Camera's Black Tears"; 214. "Combining"; 215. "The Patsy"; 216. "Get Off My Suedes"; 217. "Vector"; 218. "Dogma"; 219. "A Christian Tragedy"; 220. "Time Mask"; 221. "Predicates/Categories (After M.H.)"; 222. "Theory"; 223. "The Tony"; 224. "The Success"; 225. "Morning Purpose"; 226. Untitled; 227. "Blessing on the Saints of New York"; 228. Untitled; 229. "Bowery Haiku"; 230. "The Shiek's Soliloquy"; 231. "The Way I Walk"; 232. Untitled; 233. "Reposit"; 234. "Letter to E. Franklin Frazier"; 235. "Rope Trick"; 236. "Too Intellectual"

b. 2 f. 6 Poems 237-279

Includes: 237. "Wailing Ashes"; 238. "Comes for Body and Soul"; 239. "The Poisoned Cod"; 240. "Satisfaction"; 241. "The Afro-Christian Seeks a Cooler Rite"; 242. "The Sophomore/Aye, Aye, from Exotic Parts"; 243. "Voyager, Late of the USS Reptile, Returned"; 244. "The Method"; 245. "The Destruction of America"; 246. "Holds"; 247. "Dialectic"; 248. "Will Not Descend"; 249. "Hegel"; 250. "Charlie Parker: The Human Condition"; 251. "Treatise on Propaganda for the 'Working Classes'"; 252. "Essays in Sociology"; 253. "Cleo"; 254. "Sportin' Life's Putdown"; 255. Untitled; 256. "You Can't Please Cowboys"; 257. "The Exiles"; 258. "The Plainclothesman"; 259. "The Tribe That Invented the Vibes"; 260. "Dubois"; 261. "Craft-23, Minus (Treasures) Bravery"; 262. "Chasing the Bag"; 263. "Barbarianism"; 264. "Green Lady, Grey Background, the City"; 265. "History"; 266. "Lownight"; 267. "A State"; 268. "Niggertoes"; 269. "Exhaugral Address"; 270. "Pound"; 271. "Science"; 272. "Under Stand"; 273. "Venus Demilo Must Be a Song"; 274. "Nature Poem"; 275. "I Can't Hear You"; 276. "Ice"; 277. "End the Poem"; 278. "The Cynical Wizard"; 279. "The Christian Jungle"

b. 2 f. 7 *"Uncle Tom's Cabin: An Alternate Ending"*