

## **University of Victoria Special Collections**

**Sward, Robert, 1933-**

**SC116**

### **Title**

Robert Sward fonds

### **Dates**

1937-1979

### **Extent**

70 cm of textual records  
ca. 220 photographs  
ca. 260 slides

### **Biographical Sketch**

Robert Sward was born in Chicago. He obtained a B.A. from the University of Illinois and an M.A. from the University of Iowa. He was appointed Visiting Poet in the University of Victoria Department of Creative Writing in 1969, and also taught in the University of Victoria Department of English. Sward's publications include "Poems: New and Selected, 1957-1976", and the novel "Jurassic Shales" (1975). In 1970 he founded the Soft Press publishing company in Victoria. In the early 1970s Sward and Robin Skelton began collaborating on a book of poems "Callsigns and Hannah", but due to disagreements the collaboration was abandoned and Skelton completed the book on his own, publishing it as "Callsigns".

### **Scope and Content**

The fonds consists of rough drafts and notes for Sward's poetry and prose fiction; publicity material for poetry readings given by Sward; correspondence relating to monetary appraisal of Sward's papers, correspondence between Sward and Wayne Carver, and correspondence regarding grants; Sward's daily journals, lecture notes and notebooks; publications, including magazines, brochures, chapbooks and booklets; Sward family photographs and photographs of Sward with friends and fellow writers, and slides of art works by Judith Sward; art work for publications by Soft Press; film, "The July Movie", by Frederick Edell; and, correspondence, essay and notebook of Irina Schestakowich.

### **Finding Aids**

Inventory available with series and file level control.

### **Title Source**

Title based on the contents of the fonds.

# **INVENTORY OF THE RECORDS OF**

## **ROBERT SWARD**

**Prepared by: Anne Maclean  
University of Victoria Archives  
January 1991**

**Revised by: Terry Tuey  
Special Collections  
March 2000**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The records of Robert Sward were acquired by the University Archives in 1982, 1984 and 1994. Most of the material documents facets of his career as a poet and prose writer from the 1950's to the 1970's; his teaching career is mainly documented by holograph lecture notes and course outlines. Among Sward's records are files of the Soft Press, which Sward founded in Victoria, drafts of his poems and prose works, and many photographs and slides of Sward, his family and close friends. These records will be of particular interest to researchers studying not only Sward's own career but also the creative process in general and the development of small publishing companies in British Columbia.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Sward was born in Chicago, Illinois, on 23 June 1933. He obtained an honours B.A. in English and American literature from the University of Illinois (Urbana) in 1956 and an M.A. in English and American literature from the University of Iowa (Iowa City) in 1958. His teaching experience prior to coming to U. Vic. included teaching English at Connecticut College, New London, Connecticut, from 1958-1959, and at Mitchell College, New London, in 1962, teaching in the writing program at Cornell University (Ithaca, New York), 1962-1964, serving as writer-in-residence at the Aspen Writers' Workshop, Summer 1967, and as poet-in-residence at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop, 1967. In July 1969 Sward was appointed Visiting Lecturer and Poet-in-Residence at the University of Victoria Dept. of Creative Writing, and was later appointed assistant professor.

Sward's areas of academic interest have included creative writing, particularly poetry; 20th century British and American literature; and American poetry from Walt Whitman to the present. As a writer, his areas of interest include contemporary American poetry, Eastern philosophy and lyric poetry. His first collection of poems, *Advertisements*, was published by Odyssey Chapbook Publications in Chicago in 1958. Subsequent publications included *Uncle Dog and Other Poems* (Putnam, 1962), *Kissing the Dancer and Other Poems* (Cornell University Press, 1964), *The Thousand-Year-Old Fiancee and Other Poems* (Cornell University Press, 1965), and *Horgbortom Stringbottom / I am Yours / You Are History* (Swallow Press, Chicago, 1970). His novel, *The Jurassic Shales* was published by Coach House Press, Toronto, in 1975, and his *Poems: New and Selected, 1957-1976* appeared in 1976. Sward has also published poems in numerous journals and anthologies, including *The New Yorker*, *The Malahat Review*, and *PRISM International*.

Sward won the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference Poetry Fellowship in 1958, a Fulbright Fellowship for study in England (1960-1961), a Guggenheim Fellowship in poetry (1964-1965), and the D.H. Lawrence Fellowship, awarded by the University of New Mexico for residence and writing at the Lawrence Ranch in Taos, New Mexico (1966). Sward has also been a member of the League of Canadian Poets.

At the University of Victoria, Sward has served on the Creative Writing Committee and the Committee on Visiting Poets, the latter being chaired by Robin Skelton. As fellow teachers and poets, Sward and Skelton began collaborating on a collection of poems, "Callsigns and Hannah", but due to personal disagreements the collaboration was abandoned and Skelton eventually completed the work on his own; it was published as *Callsigns* in 1976.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Other collaborations included the novella, *Soft*, which Sward wrote with Judith Sward. He and Judith were also interested in art history, an interest he shared with Irina Schestakowich. Since living in Victoria Sward has spent some time on Lasqueti Island, off eastern Vancouver Island, with Irina and with other friends.

In 1970 Sward founded Soft Press, a Victoria company which published fine limited editions of poetry. As its editor, Sward helped publish 16 poetry collections between 1970 and 1976, including the anthology *West Coast Visions*, and *How Love Gets Around*, by Michael Wolfe.

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

- I POETRY, 1970 - ca. 1976**  
**Accession 82-3, Box 1; Box 2, Files 1-11**  
**25 cm.**  
**Arranged chronologically.**  
Rough drafts of poems for collections of poetry, including "Selected Poems 1959-1971" (published as *Poems: New And Selected, 1957-1976*); early drafts of "Callsigns and Hannah", written with Robin Skelton and later completed by Skelton alone; holographs and typescripts of uncollected poems, including limericks.
- II PROSE FICTION, 1970-1971, n.d.**  
**Accession 82-3, Box 2, Files 12-20**  
**18 cm.**  
**Arranged chronologically.**  
Drafts of *The Jurassic Shales*, novel; *4 by Robert and Judith Sward*, novel; *Soft*, novella by Robert and Judith Sward; "Journey to Ganeshpuri", novel; and "Events Surrounding the Supposed Progress of Four Homosexual Karate Experts Through the Streets of Chicago Towards the Palace of Hugh Hefner, A Play for Voices". Written by Sward and Lawrence Russell. Includes holograph manuscripts, typescripts and carbons with holograph revisions.
- III PUBLICITY AND REVIEWS, 1958-1972, n.d.**  
**Accession 82-3, Box 2, Files 21-26**  
**5 cm.**  
**Arranged chronologically.**  
Publicity material for poetry readings given by Sward; reviews of Sward's poetry collections, *Honey Bear* and *Horgborton*, *Stringbottom*, *I Am Yours / You Are History*; interview with Sward in *The Martlet*; lists of Sward's publications.
- IV CORRESPONDENCE, 1964-1975**  
**Accession 82-3, Box 2, File 27; Box 3, Files 1-6**  
**10 cm.**  
**Arranged by subject.**  
Correspondence relating to monetary appraisal of Sward's papers by American appraisers; correspondence between Sward and Wayne Carver; correspondence and applications relating to grants, including the Guggenheim Fellowship.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

- V NOTES AND NOTEBOOKS, 1951, 1973, n.d.**  
Accession 82-3, Box 3, Files 7-9  
Accession 84-5, Box 1 File 1  
12 cm.  
Arranged chronologically within each accession.  
Daily journal, 1973; lecture notes, n.d.; copy of *Current Thinking and Writing*, Second Series (New York, 1951), used by Sward while at San Diego Junior College, 1953, with extensive holograph notes by Sward in the margins and on the front and back fly-leaves.
- VI PUBLICATIONS, 1966-1979**  
Accession 82-3, Box 3, File 10  
7 cm.  
Arranged chronologically.  
Magazines; brochures; chapbooks; maps; booklet, "Thus Spake Prophet Muhammad".
- VII GRAPHIC MATERIALS, 1937-1975**  
Accession 82-3, Box 4, Files 1-6; Box 6  
12 cm.  
Arranged chronologically.  
Sward family photographs; collage; photographs of Sward at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, at readings, and with Irina Schestakowich and friends at Lasqueti Island, B.C.; colour slides of art works by Judith Sward; slides and negatives of Sward family members.
- VIII SOFT PRESS, 1970-1979, n.d.**  
Accession 82-3, Box 4, Files 7-12; Box 5, Files 1-4  
20 cm.  
Arranged by subject.  
Art work for publications by Soft Press, Victoria B.C., including photographs by Tom Gore and Leonard Trabka; master set list; correspondence; reviews.
- IX FILMS, 1970-1971**  
Accession 82-3, Box 7  
12 cm x 2 cm.; Permaflex Dual 8 reel film.

"The July Movie", by Frederick Edell, June-July 1970, completed 3 October 1971.  
Inscribed "To Robert and Judith Sward, with love", on film leader.

## **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

- X      RECORDS OF IRINA SCHESTAKOWICH, 1976, n.d.**  
**Accession 82-3, Box 8, Files 1-3**  
**5 cm.**  
**Arranged chronologically.**  
Correspondence; art history essay; notebook.



**Accession 1982-003**

**Box 1**

- 1.1 "Callsigns and Hannah". Notebook, 1971.
- 1.2 "Callsigns and Hannah". Holographs and tss., 1971.
- 1.3 "Callsigns". Photocopy of final draft, tss., 71-9-14.
- 1.4 "Innocence - 1950". Photocopied tss., 71-10-19.
- 1.5 "Suicide". Early, long version. Photocopied tss., Oct. 1971.
- 1.6 "The Champion of Living"; "Impossible Hurricane Loss-of-Name Poem".  
Tss., hol., n.d.
- 1.7 Ephemera - "Valentine Limericks"; "*Outside: Amsterdam, the Seven Judges*", by Michael Zwerin, *The Village Voice*, 17 Dec. 1970, photocopy.
- 1.8 "Selected Poems, 1959-1971". Photocopied tss., ca. 1976. 1 of 2.
- 1.9 "Selected Poems, 1959-1971". Photocopied tss., ca. 1976. 2 of 2.

**Box 2**

- 2.1 "Half a Life's History: Poems New and Selected, 1959-1972". Ts. with  
hol. rev.
- 2.2 "Be a Plant and Other Poems". Photocopied tss.
- 2.3 "Spaceflight to Ice-Hell". Ts. with hol. rev.
- 2.4 Poems. 1 of 4. Holographs, tss.
- 2.5 Poems. 2 of 4. Photocopied tss. with hol. rev.
- 2.6 Poems. 3 of 4. Tss. and photocopies.
- 2.7 Poems. 4 of 4. Tss. and photocopies; annual report of Sward's work in  
the U. Vic. Dept. of English, 1971-1972.
- 2.8 Photocopies of poems featured in *New American and Canadian Poetry*.
- 2.9 "The Seven of Pentacles". Ts., 6 leaves, with original drawings on each  
leaf.
- 2.10 *The Jurassic Shales*. Tss., n.d.
- 2.11 *The Jurassic Shales*. Tss., 1970-1971.
- 2.12 "4 by Robert Sward and Judith Sward". Novel, n.d. Photocopied ts., 138  
leaves; carbons, 3 leaves.
- 2.13 Novel in progress, untitled, n.d. Photocopied ts., 28 leaves.
- 2.14 "Soft: A Novella". Ts. with hol. rev., ca 125 leaves.
- 2.15 "Soft: A Novella". Carbon ts., 124 leaves.
- 2.16 "Journey to Ganeshpuri". Novel. Ms. with holograph and typed leaves,  
ca. 50 leaves total.
- 2.17 "Journey to Ganeshpuri". Photocopied ts., 88 leaves.
- 2.18 "Events Surrounding the Supposed Progress of Four Homosexual Karate  
Experts Through the Streets of Chicago Towards the Palace of Hugh Hefner, A  
Play for Voices". Written by Sward and Lawrence Russell. Ts., 1 leaf; carbon  
with hol. rev., 42 leaves.

**Accession 1982-003**

**Box 2**

- 2.19                    Publicity broadside, n.d.
- 2.20                    Poetry reading publicity, 1958-1969. Photograph of Sward,  
correspondence, clippings.
- 2.21                    "Cornell Publicity", 1963-1969. Re. publicity for readings at Cornell  
University, Ithaca, New York. Photographs, c.v.'s, announcements, brochure on  
the Guggenheim Foundation, photocopies of poems.
- 2.22                    Reviews of *Honey Bear* and *Horgborton, Stringbottom, I am Yours, You  
Are History*. Correspondence, clippings, 1978, n.d.
- 2.23                    Interview with Sward in *The Martlet*, 17 February 1972. Clipping.
- 2.24                    Bibliography. C.v.'s, annual reports, lists of publications, 1964-1972.
- 2.25                    Correspondence re. monetary appraisal of Sward's papers by American  
appraisers, 1967-1969.
- 2.26                    Correspondence - Wayne Carver to Sward, 1 tls., 1972.
- 2.27                    *Lists of Grants and Awards Available to American Writers*, published by  
P.E.N., 1969-1970.
- 2.28                    Grants. Correspondence, 1966.
- 2.29                    Grants. Applications, c.v.'s, 1964-1972.
- 2.30                    Grants. Correspondence, 1972-1975.
- 2.31                    Guggenheim Fellowship. Application, correspondence, 1972.
- 2.32                    Daily journal, 1973.
- 2.33                    Lecture notes, holographs re. Yates, Robert Lowell, Plato, etc. n.d.
- 2.34                    Lecture notes, handouts. Re. structure of poetry; romance languages. Tss.  
with hol. rev. n.d.
- 2.35                    Publications. Magazines, brochures, chapbooks, maps, booklet, "Thus  
Spake Prophet Muhammad". 1966-1979.

**Accession 1982-003**

**Box 3**

- 3.1 Sward family photographs, 1937-1973. Includes Gertrude Sward (mother), Betty Ann Sward (sister), childhood photos of Sward and photos of Sward at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference (1959).
- 3.2 Photograph of Sward, ca. 1969.
- 3.3 Photographs of Sward and Irina Schestakowich, 1974.
- 3.4 Photographs of Sward at readings and with friends and family. n.d.
- 3.5 Photographs of Sward with Irina and friends on Lasqueti Island; drawing; card. n.d., 1975.
- 3.6 Collage of photographs of Sward, n.d.
- 3.7 Photographs by Tom Gore. Two collages, one view of James Bay, Victoria. n.d.
- 3.8 Art work for *Vancouver Island Poems*. Two photographs by Leonard Trabka, Olympia, Washington, "Dance of Siva I" and "Dance of Siva II". n.d.
- 3.9 Six photographs by Leonard Trabka, with covering note to Sward. n.d.
- 3.10 Soft Press. Drawings for publications, n.d., 1973.
- 3.11 Soft Press. "Rare Master Set List" for publications, 1970.
- 3.12 Soft Press. Correspondence from the B.C. Publishers Group and the Literary Press Group, 1978-1979.
- 3.13 Soft Press. "West Coast Visions". Holograph notes, n.d.
- 3.14 Soft Press. Ed Varney manuscript. Notes, holograph draft, n.d.
- 3.15 Soft Press. *Review of How Love Gets Around*, by Michael Wolfe, Soft Press. Reviewed in *The Victorian*, 18 November 1974.
- 3.16 Soft Press. Drawings, n.d.
- 3.17 Ca.240 colour slides of art works, some by Judith Sward; slides of Hannah Sward and other family members. 1969.  
plus 1 16mm reel and 3 35mm negative strips.
- 3.18 "The July Movie", by Frederick Edell, June-July 1970, completed 3 October 1971. Permaflex Dual 8 reel film. Inscribed "To Robert and Judith Sward, with love", on film leader.
- 3.19 Correspondence. "Raymond" [?] to Irina Schestakowich, 1 als., 1976.
- 3.20 Irina Schestakowich. Essay for Art History 490, 1976. 13 p., with copies of photographs of art works.
- 3.21 Irina Schestakowich. "Multi-purpose book" [notebook], n.d.

***Accession 1984-005***

- 3.22                      Bachelor, Joseph M., Ralph L. Henry and Rachel Salisbury. *Current Thinking and Writing*, Second Series. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951). 316 p. With extensive holograph notes written by Sward in margins and on front and back fly-leaves.

***Accession 2000-047***

- 3.23                    b/w 8 x 10" photograph of Robert Sward (ca.1994); reviews, clippings, and brochures re Sward's poetry, mainly about *4 Incarnations* ; biographical information; Sward's Poetry and Fiction Workshop brochure; and a photocopy of a letter/poem from Michael Sward (son).

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