On Campus

Library Acquires Archive of Flash-Fiction Master

Summer 2019



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The Rare Book and Manuscript Library has acquired the personal papers of American author Lydia Davis ’70BC.

A pioneer of “flash fiction” — extremely brief stories that often blur the line between prose and poetry — Davis has pushed the form to its minimalist extreme, writing elliptical vignettes that often consist of just a sentence or two. Here’s one from 2007

called “Collaboration with Fly”: “I put that word on the page, but he added the apostrophe.”

Davis, who taught for many years at the State University of New York at Albany, has published six collections of fiction and is a recipient of the Man Booker International Prize. She is also celebrated for her translations of French literary classics, including Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* and Marcel Proust’s *Swann’s Way.*

The archive features corrected drafts of her fiction, personal correspondence dating back to her adolescence, and notes relating to her translation projects and her thirty-five years of teaching.

Davis is a “truly significant” American writer, and “literary historians will be reckoning with her influence for decades to come,” says Columbia English professor Nicholas Dames.



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