

Poetry's Molten Core: Contemporary Micropublishing
by Jesse Nathan

When I was a senior in college, a few friends and I started a little magazine. Each issue featured poetry, drawing, photography, and prose. Issues were the size of a piece of typing paper folded in half. We would invite everyone at our small, rural Kansas college over for barbeque, and give the magazine away. Copies disappeared quickly. The gatherings became community events. We only did five issues, but in the experience I saw the power of small-scale arts publishing. I was inspired.

After college, I took a job at the San Francisco publishing house McSweeney's, eventually co-founding and editing the McSweeney's Poetry Series (MPS). It's a tiny operation, and we sometimes only do one title a year, usually in an initial run of 2000 or less. To date, we've brought out twelve single-author poetry collections, including a National Book Award finalist. Meanwhile, I began a Ph.D. in literature at Stanford, specializing in late nineteenth-century British poetry and early twentieth-century American poetry, and connections between the two. Sometimes research takes me to archives like the Harry Ransom Center in Austin to look at poetry volumes published long ago in small batches. Sometimes I work in Stanford's excellent special collections. When setting up MPS, for instance, we spent time there poring over creations of Hogarth Press, run by Virginia and Leonard Woolf.

Working in publishing, along with my natural affinities for paper and research, soon had me collecting before I was conscious of it. I visited odd bookstores, trawled zine fairs, shopped at Printed Matter in New York City and E.M. Wolfman in Oakland. Books I tended toward were done in low print runs, often far less than 2000, and were, in various ways, underground printings, often appearing unheralded and selling out rapidly. Discovered by chance, or from a friend in the know. It is this gathering of materials—micro-published contemporary American poetry—that I submit to the Wreden Prize, bearing in mind, of course, that it is but one poet's small and somewhat haphazard sampling of a vast field.

Covering material published in roughly the last three decades, this assortment includes works by poets based in the United States, or publishing with a press here. My little array of artifacts highlights many unique aspects of publishing at this scale. While some of these items are small-press books, many more are chapbooks, or tape-bound behemoths, or pieces of paper folded a few times, or unclassifiable objects like the Ted Powers canister (Figure 1). Micro-publishing, in my estimation, may refer to the production of objects that are literally small or physically slight, such as Emily Carr's *Stay This Moment*, made from found cloth and, at 4.5" x 5.75", around the size of the City Lights Pocket Poets books (Figure 2). Or, it may refer to a book produced in exceptionally limited numbers, quickly unavailable, such as Claire Donato's *Someone Else's Body*, edition of 50. Handbound, manually typeset books published by Candida Pagan suggest the exceptional craft involved in micro-publishing. Some of these objects are more fragile than other books, painstakingly put together, prone to damage, easily lost amid bigger volumes. A scrappy fragility defines Hajara Quinn's *Unnaysayer*, for instance, which is printed on a single sheet of broadsheet newspaper, folded several times, subject to newspaper's yellowing and decay (Figure 3).



Figure 1.



Figure 2.

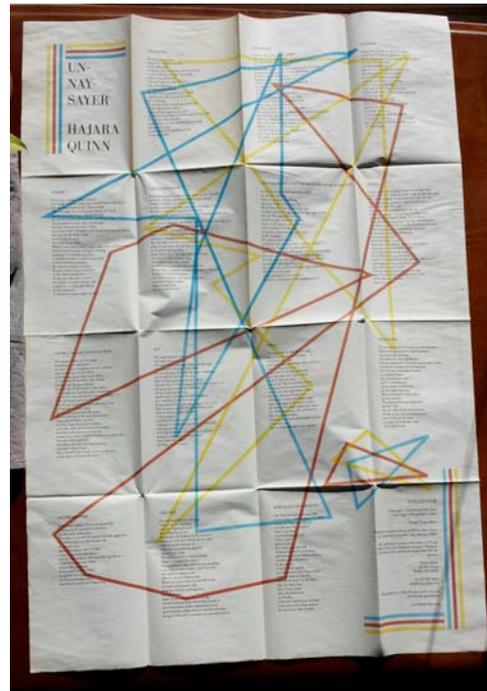
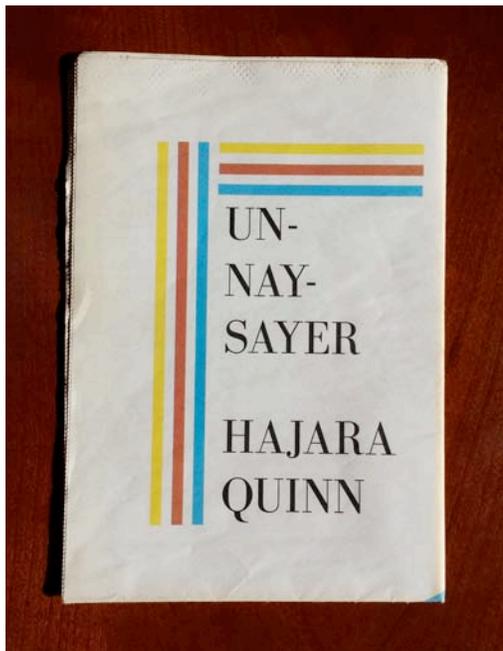


Figure 3.

My collection encompasses that which has been (almost) lost to time or fate, including recently discovered poetry by sci-fi writer James Tiptree, Jr. (a.k.a. Alice Sheldon), and Ronald Johnson's forgotten twentieth-century masterpiece, *ARK*, recovered recently by Flood Editions and reprinted in lush hardcover. It also encompasses texts that may be obscured or passed over by nature of their self-publication: Bill Knott's voluminous *Collected Poems*, a ream of copy paper bound with tape, which I chanced upon in a Seattle bookstore, deposited *gratis*—by the author? by his friends?—around town that week. The poet, known to do things his own way, died a few days later.

Other DIY works include crudely-assembled booklets published by Dikembe, and samples from chapbook-makers nationwide—Greying Ghost Press, Finishing Line Press, Spect!. Many of these celebrate the mark of the maker, created in apartments, sometimes by people learning bookmaking as they go. A stitch might be off here, a measurement incorrect there: you can feel the humanity, you know a human being constructed the object you’re holding. From the fine press sector, I include Pagan’s books, and the Graham Mackintosh-designed *Yellow Lola* by Ed Dorn. I include full-length books from small presses, including Kenneth Koch’s “poetry comics” from Soft Skull, a genre-bending achievement. I include oddball book-objects done in necessarily small runs, such as the oversize pamphlet of poems by Matthew Zapruder, bound with bolts (Figure 4), or Powers’s “book” of cards, offered in a small cardboard canister, each card with poetry, meant to be shuffled around and read in various orders.



Figure 4.

To the reading public, these creations are often invisible—they may as well not exist. Many aren’t carried in bookstores or libraries because of challenges they present in their shapes, materials, or distribution. They’re difficult to keep track of, difficult to classify, difficult to shelve (they often lack spines), and are sometimes easily damaged by handling. Some carry ISBNs, but many do not. Many come in extremely limited editions. The Zapruder booklet, for instance, resides in few publicly-accessible libraries. But it’s got great early poems, published when few had heard of a poet now well known. The fact that so much of this work is invisible to a wider public may be part of why cultural commentators occasionally find it necessary to declare poetry “dead” in the United States. Joseph Epstein claimed it so on March 31, 2013 in *The Wall Street Journal*, and later that summer Mark Edmundson attacked contemporary poetry’s vitality in *Harper’s*.

Part of what’s at stake in my collection is that it counters Epstein and Edmundson. Poetry is alive and well—but that vitality flows in an underground river, largely unseen. My collection reveals the churning molten core of the art—whether in a box set featuring chapbooks by eight “new-generation” African-born poets, or in experiments by the established and famous, like Richard Howard. The quality of writing I’ve gathered is of the highest order: some of these authors have won Pulitzers, National Book Awards, and other honors. The collection demarcates a territory it seems most poets worth their salt pass through. As a young poet myself, I’m nourished by that realization. This space, where books of poetry circulate like rumors, has an

aura of auguring excitement about it. A frontier where renditions of poems exist like “takes” by a band. So much seems possible.

Mine is also a collection that eschews mass production, embracing direct personal exchanges on a scale almost unimaginable in today’s internet-steeped market. I received my copy of Koch’s poem-comics directly from his widow, when I queried her about an art book I was curating at McSweeney’s. I learned of Tiptree’s poems from a friend and science fiction scholar at Stanford. Two years ago I participated in a reading with Quinn, and that evening she traded me *Unnaysayer* for a chapbook.

This scale of publishing may in fact always have represented the leading edge of poetry, a zone where profound experimentation and achievement happen. Often, before becoming known to a wider audience, a poet’s work was making ripples underground. Hundreds of years ago, before printing was commonplace or easy, poets “published” their verse among friends by circulating manuscripts—sheaves of paper. This is how Shakespeare’s sonnets were experienced in his time, only a coterie of folks got a look at them. In the nineteenth century, some who are now household names, Emily Dickinson and Gerard Manley Hopkins, for example, in their lifetimes disseminated poems only to one or two trusted friends. Micro-publishing has long provided poetry with an incubator and staging ground, and it’s a noteworthy paradox that from such small-scale beginnings arise much of what lasts longest, such as works by Shakespeare, Dickinson, and Hopkins now ensconced in our cultural landscape. This collection, I hope, illuminates what might otherwise be lost: a vibrant but largely invisible living tradition of contemporary poetry publishing in the United States.

A final note: It may not be surprising that the friend from college most instrumental in starting our little magazine, now an MFA candidate in the bookmaking program at the University of Iowa, has received a grant from the Caxton Club to publish a poem in a tin can. The words will be printed, along with fifty woodcuts, on a scroll rolled up and sealed inside. He wrote the text. He made the woodcuts. He designed the label. If you want to read what’s inside, he says, you’ll have to use a can opener. He’s procured a canning machine, and he’ll do an edition of one hundred. I’ve already asked him to hold one for me.

Selected Bibliography

Alexander, Elizabeth. *Praise Song for the Day*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2009. Paperback. 4.5" x 6.5". 8 pages.

Commemorative pamphlet showcasing in stand-alone fashion the poem Alexander read at President Barack Obama's inauguration on January 20, 2009. This limited edition piece stands paradoxically at the intersection of micropublishing and national grandeur.

Armantrout, Rae. *Precedence*. Providence: Burning Deck, 1985. Paperback. 6" x 9". 44 pages. Edition of 1000.

Early volume by a poet who was at that time relatively unknown, but on her way to fame. Book designed by legendary poet-publishers, Rosmarie and Keith Waldrop.

Auster, Paul, trans. *A Little Anthology of Surrealist Poems*. Minneapolis: Rain Taxi, 2002. Paperback. 5.375" x 8.375". 35 pages. Edition of 300.

Acclaimed novelist Paul Auster first translated a series of French surrealist poetry—including Breton, Char, Artaud, Desnos, Aragon, Arp—in 1972, and published the volume with Siamese Banana Press (New York). That petit volume is highly sought-after by collectors. This Rain Taxi re-issue is #8 in their "Brainstorm Series," and includes a new preface by Auster.

Andersson, Roger, and Albert Mobilio. *Letters from Mayhem*. New York: Cabinet Books, 2004. Hardcover. 10" x 10".

An abecedarian art and poetry collaboration on big, square, extra-thick stock. The pages are not numbered. The front cover shows a giant A, and the back cover has a giant Z: does that make the front cover page 1? The thick leaves give this object the feel of a kids book. The glossy boards could survive spilled milk, or the jaws of a toddler.

Blackburn, Olivia. *Communism is up there and we are down here but it is happening now*. Oakland, CA: Timeless, Infinite Light, 2014. Paperback. 5.25" x 7.75". 54 pages. Second edition.

Small book from a rising East Bay press. Poetry drawn from the language of "listserv battle threads, Q&As, things people say at parties."

Borzutzky, Daniel. *The Performance of Becoming Human*. Brooklyn: Brooklyn Arts Press, 2016. Paperback. 6" x 8". 89 pages.

This book, from a small NYC press that is a bit like a City Lights Books of our day, consists of poems dramatizing the horrors faced by immigrants, and it won the 2016 National Book Award. It's included here in part because, in his award acceptance speech, the author noted that the book had been published out of an apartment, a comment highlighting where—that is, in what kinds of publishing situations—the fecundity of contemporary poetry can often be found. Brooklyn Arts Press, like other small operations, functions out of the publisher's living quarters.

Burt, Stephen. *All-Season Stephanie*. Minneapolis: Rain Taxi, Ohm Editions, 2015. Paperback. 7" x 8.5". 43 pages.

A chapbook of poems by one of the art form's great contemporary critics, Stephen Burt. Burt has been profiled in the *New York Times*, and is known to cross-dress. In this mini-collection, he dons his "Stephanie" persona. Burt says these poems, with illustrations by Eowyn Evans, give voice to "a girl who is both me and not me: they come from a life, or lives, that I could have lived, had I been born and raised and grown up as a girl."

Carr, Emily. *Stay This Moment: The Autopsy Lyrics, Acts 1 & 2*. Houston, TX: little red leaves textile series, 2013. Found cloth/paperback. 4.5" x 5.75". 32 pages. Signed.

Poems from an Oregon-based poet, published in "textile": each pocket-size chapbook in this series includes extensive hand-sewn funky cloth covers, endpapers, and bindings.

Chelotti, Dan. *Two Poems by Dan Chelotti*. Boston: Greying Ghost Press, 2013. Pamphlet. 4.25" x 5.5".

Number 50 in a series of poetry "pamphlets" published by this chapbook publisher. The pamphlet consists of one sheet of paper folded into quarters, featuring a title page, two poems, and a colophon.

Dawes, Kwame, and Chris Abani, eds. *8 New-Generation African Poets: A Chapbook Box Set*. Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2015. Paperbacks in box. 6" x 8.25". Varying from 13 to 46 pages.

Eight chapbooks in a lush, sleekly-designed box set. Books by up-and-coming young writers Liyou Libsekal, Vuyelwa Maluleke, Amy M. Lukau, Inua Ellams, Viola Allo, Peter Akinlabi, Blessing Musariri, and Janet Kofi-Tsekpo. Poems are in English, but the poets' roots are in Angola, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere.

Di Piero, W. S. *The First Hour*. Omaha, NE: University of Nebraska, Abattoir Editions, 1982. Hardcover. 6.5" x 9.75". 55 pages. Edition of 200.

Donato, Claire. *Someone Else's Body*. Fayetteville, AK: Cannibal Books, 2009. Paperback. 5.75" x 6". 26 pages. #11/50. Signed.

Dorn, Edward. *Yellow Lola: Formerly Titled Japanese Neon (Hello La Jolla, Book II)*. Santa Barbara: Cadmus Editions, 1981. Hardcover. 4.5" x 6.25". 128 pages. Edition of 187. First edition.

This particular copy is dedicated by the author to the book's designer, the renowned Graham Mackintosh. A short message appears. The date of the inscription is 22 December 1980. "Designer's copy" appears on the colophon, in calligraphy. The pages are bright yellow and the page numbers are big and red. The type is Trump Mediaeval. Some of the 187 copies were paperback. I have one of these as well, and the stock used for these is a much cooler, paler yellow. But the page numbers remain big and red.

Downing, Brandon. *At Me*. Portland, OR & Denver, CO: Octopus Books, 2011. Paperback. 6" x 9". 30 pages. Edition of 300.

Contemporary Dada-influenced poetry with an exquisite collage encompassing the front and back cover, and created by the poet.

Farris, Katie. *boysgirls*. Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan: Marick Press, 2011. Paperback. 6" x 9". 77 pages.

Debut collection of prose poems (“a hybrid form text”) by Farris, published by a press devoted to finding and publishing the work of talented women poets.

Gamal, Arif. *Morning in Serra Mattu: A Nubian Ode*. Berkeley: Arkady Book Company, 2005. Paperback. 6.5" x 9.25". 257 pages.

An epic poem, printed in a limited edition by the author. The book is “by Arif Gamal (as told to E.G. Dubovsky who recorded it in meter).” The minimalist cover is reminiscent of common cover design of French paperbacks; the author lived for a time in Paris. The book was re-published as #7 in the McSweeney’s Poetry Series (San Francisco) in 2014.

Howard, Richard, and John Button. *If I Dream I Have You, I Have You*. New York: Tibor de Nagy Editions, 1997. Paperback. 6" x 9". 43 pages. Edition of 500.

Pulitzer-winning poet Richard Howard is here teamed with John Button (1929-1982), whose nudes illustrate in oblique ways the intimate, sexy love verses by Howard. The title comes from a line by Edmund Spenser. Published by the distinguished New York art gallery Tibor de Nagy, known for fostering collaborations between poets and visual artists such as Frank O’Hara, Fairfield Porter, John Ashbery, and others. This little volume (it is a paperback, not particularly expensive) demonstrates the ways even established writers like Richard Howard are active in the realms of poetry micro-publishing. Copy signed by Howard.

Janzen, Jean. *Words for the Silence*. Fresno, California: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, 1984. Paperback. 6" x 9". 42 pages.

This is the first major work by the first contemporary American Mennonite poet to gain a national and non-Mennonite audience. At the time she began publishing, Janzen was in her fifties, married to a doctor, mother of four. She is considered the inspiration and matriarch of a now-burgeoning contemporary Mennonite poetry scene in the United States. This book is on purple-gray paper, a heavier stock. It includes cover art—with art scattered throughout—by minimalist Rod Harder.

Johnson, Michael. *Ecphrases*. Topeka, Kansas: The Woodley Memorial Press, 1989. Paperback. 5.5" x 8.5". 80 pages.

Johnson, Ronald. *ARK*. Chicago: Flood Editions, 2013. Hardcover. 6.25" x 9". 318 pages.

Jones, Saeed. *When the Only Light Is Fire*. Alexander, AK: Sibling Rivalry Press, 2011. Paperback. 6" x 9". 40 pages.

After this chapbook, Jones would go on to write a National Book Critics Circle finalist debut collection published in 2014, and become culture editor at BuzzFeed.

Karnes, Jordan. *More Silver Than Gold*. Georgetown, KY: Finishing Line Press, 2016. Paperback. 5.5" x 8.5". 36 pages.

Poems about Paris, with ephemeral imagery created for the poems by Heather Watson.

Koch, Kenneth. *The Art of the Possible*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2004. Hardcover. 7.25" x 9.25". 125 pages.

With an introduction by *Best American Poetry* editor David Lehman, this book is a collection of "poetry comics" written, illustrated, and lettered by the award-winning poet Kenneth Koch. Marketing copy describes it this way: "Carrying the wit and tenderness of his poems into a genre which, if he did not invent, he certainly made new, *The Art of the Possible* includes puzzle pages, guides to different kinds of guys, gals, onions, and Easter, not to mention observations on eating snails in Wales or looking for a locker in Cuernavaca." Hardback, bright orange jacket, orange cover with foil-stamped lettering by Koch. Comes with a CD of Koch reading. This book, like *Letters from Mayhem*, reveals the zone demarcated by my collection to be a place of freedom and experimentation, where poets mix poetry into new configurations and genres.

Knott, Bill. *Collected Poetry 1960-2014*. San Bernardino, CA: Published by author, 2/20/14. Paperback. 8.5" x 11". 500 pages.

I came across this behemoth in a bookstore in Seattle on March 1, 2014. At the checkout counter, being given out for free. I believe the author may have dropped it off himself. Many of us were in town for a creative writing conference, so Knott or someone had apparently been distributing the book at bookstores and gathering places around town. Knott, like a latter-day Rimbaud, had developed a reputation for being an exceptionally difficult person, for spitting on convention. In various ways, he alienated many critics and fellow poets. In 2014, he was looking without success for a publisher for his collected works. The first poem in the book is "Goodbye" and the last is "My Epitaph." An afterword says: "Wealthy poets like Louise Glück and C.K. Williams and Russell Edson can hire professional proofreaders and copy editors to help prepare their books, and poet professors like Linda Bierds and Dave Smith and others have student assistants to aid with the readying of their mss. But I have no such resources, I have to do it all on my own. So please forgive me if you see any errata I couldn't catch, or duplicated texts or spacing glitches, etc." Bill Knott died eleven days later on March 12, 2014.

Lin, Tao. *you are a little bit happier than i am*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Action Books, 2006. Paperback. 6" x 8". 87 pages. First edition.

Lin is now better known as a novelist, but he began with this collection of poetry from a small press. Lin's book was winner of the 2005 December Prize.

Lindsay, Nick. *Magnificent Storm: Collected Poems of Nick Lindsay, 1960-2000*. Goshen, Indiana: Pinchpenny Press, 2000. Paperback. 6.75" x 8.25". 200 pages.

Nick Lindsay is the son of American poet Vachel Lindsay, who was once very famous. This book of Nick's works, a fine paperback issued in a nice, heavy stock, was produced by Goshen College's well-respected student-run press. He was a professor at Goshen for several decades.

Matranga, Quintessa. *Bad Badtz-Maru*. Oakland, CA: Publication Studio Oakland, 2015. Paperback. 5.125" x 6.25". 108 pages.

Many of the poems are only one line long, leaving most of the page blank. One page, for instance, says only: "This book is on fire." Published by "publication studio" in Oakland.

Muldoon, Paul. *When the Pie Was Opened*. Lewes, England: Sylph Editions, 2008. Paperback. 6" x 9.5". 41 pages.

A sequence of thematically linked poems by *The New Yorker* poetry editor and award-winning Irish-American poet Muldoon. The book is #8 in "The Cahiers Series," a line of high-end chapbooks, complete with French flaps and bellybands, that is published by Sylph Editions in conjunction with the Center for Writers & Translators at the Arts Arena of the American University of Paris.

Nadelberg, Amanda. *Delphiniums*. Oakland, CA: Spect!, 2013. 5.5" x 8.5". Paperback. 19 pages. #76/100.

Pamirs Poetry Journey. Beijing: Zhongkun Poetry Development Foundation, 2008. Paperback. 5.875" x 9.875". 143 pages.

The Zhongkun Foundation began investing in "the development of contemporary Chinese poetry" around 2005. This slender anthology, just over 100 pages, was published on the occasion of the 2008 Pamirs Poetry Journey. The foundation brought an all-star cadre of U.S. poets (Robert Hass, Brenda Hillman, Ron Padgett, Anne Waldman, Juan Carlos Mestre) to journey in China, and printed poems by them in this collection, alongside contemporary Chinese poets like Xi Chuan and Lan Lan. This booklet, likely printed a small edition (I could not determine the exact number), represents an extraordinary bicultural, bilingual sampling of vibrant contemporary poetry happening in two world languages. All poems herein—and all other text, like author bios—are offered in both English and Chinese.

Pavlić, Ed. *But Here Are Small Clear Refractions*. Annandale on Hudson, NY: Chinua Achebe Center for African Writers and Artists, Bard College, 2009. Paperback. 5" x 9". 72 pages. Signed first edition.

Penna, Sandro. *Confused Dream*. New York and Madras, India: Hanuman Books, 1988. Paperback. 2.75" x 4". 82 pages.

Sandro Penna was an Italian poet of the twentieth century. *Confuso sogno* was published in 1980, three years after the poet's death. This English translation is smaller than a wallet, and is notable because it was created by Hanuman Books. Edited and managed by Raymond Foye and Francesco Clemente out of the Chelsea Hotel, Hanuman created very small handmade books for the better part of a decade, beginning in 1986. Printing and binding was done in Madras, India. The size of these books brings new meaning to the term "micro-publishing."

Peterson, Allan. *Omnivore*. Northampton, MA: Bayou Press, 2009. Paperback. 5" x 7". 20 pages. Signed.

This volume was published by a press that runs entirely on hydroelectric and wind power. A finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, Allan Peterson, who splits his time between Oregon and Florida, is in his eighth decade, but he works on the cutting edge, publishing with interesting small presses in the United States and abroad.

Powers, Ted. *Please Light Up*. Massachusetts: Slope Editions, 2015. Cylindrical, approx. 3.375" dia. x 5" tall. 42 cards, 2.875" x 4.125" each. #82/100.

This experimental book consists of dozens of unbound cards—the pages of the book—each with an untitled batch of lines printed on them, bound in a little auburn-colored string. The cards are packaged in a cardboard canister. Each can has an image stamped on the outside, a picture of a humanoid whose head is a star. Stamp by Emily Siegenthaler, made from a drawing by Rachel B. Glaser. The publisher describes the book as a “serial poem that is meant to be read a new way each time.” The goal is to foster non-sequential reading experiences, combinations of cards that reveal new narratives and revelations each time through the poem.

Quinn, Hajara. *Unnaysayer*. Hadley, MA: Flying Object, 2013. Folded broadsheet. Edition of 500.

This object is made of one giant broadsheet of newsprint that measures 22.5" x 33". It is folded such that Quinn's poems, along with title page and colophon, appear on 16 panels.

Ra, Sun. *This Planet Is Doomed*. New York, NY: Kicks Books, 2011. Paperback. 4.25" x 7.25". 124 pages.

The subtitle for this collection describes it as “the science fiction poetry of Sun Ra.” Includes a foreword by Amiri Baraka.

Robilliard, David. *Baby Lies Truthfully*. New York and Rome: Inanout Press, 1990. Hardcover. 5.75" x 8". 147 pages.

This collection marked the first of Robilliard's poems to chronicle his struggle with AIDS. He died in 1988 at age 36. It was printed by Fernando Begliomini in Rome.

Rohrer, Matthew. *A Ship Loaded with Sequins Has Gone Down*. Lincoln, NE and Portland, OR: Dikembe Press, 2013. Paperback. 5.375" x 8.5". 33 pages. Edition of 100.

Rohrer, an established poet, brought out this chapbook with Dikembe, a publishing venture whose name pays homage to basketball star Dikembe Mutombo. The press is a run by poet Jeff Alessandrelli, and produces chapbooks that embrace a DIY aesthetic, often making use of a tape binding and other intentionally scruffy elements.

Roggenbuck, Steve, Scott, E.E., and Younghans, Rachel, eds. *The Yolo Pages*. Boosthouse, 2014. Paperback. 5.5" x 8". 205 pages.

An anthology featuring dozens of young poets, mostly born in the late 1980s or 1990s. These writers use new modes—making poetry of twitter feeds, or “macros”—as well as more traditional approaches to the genre, such as using lines and stanzas.

Šalamun, Tomaž. *Poker*. Joshua Beckman, trans. Brooklyn: Ugly Duckling Presse, 2008. Paperback. 5" x 7.5". 75 pages. Second edition.

Šalamun, born in Croatia and a beloved figure of world poetry, is brought into English by Beckman in this chic paperback, with an introduction by Matthew Rohrer.

Saroyan, Aram. *Coffee Coffee*. New York, NY: Primary Information, 2007. Paperback. 5" x 7". 86 pages.

Coffee Coffee was originally published as a mimeographed edition by Vito Acconci and Bernadette Mayer on their 0 to 9 Press in 1967. Primary Information created its facsimile edition, with dimensions and binding varying from the original.

Sturgeon, Stephen. *The Ship*. Iowa City, IA: Digraph, 2014. Paperback. 4.5" x 7". 36 pages. #71/80, signed.

The Ship is designed, typeset by hand, and hand-bound by the up-and-coming young poetry book designer, letterpress publisher, and founder of Digraph, Candida Pagan. Includes a print by her affixed to the cover.

Syms, Martine. *A Thread or Line that Holds Things Together: 99 Subtle Maneuvers*. Oakland, CA: Publication Studio Oakland, 2015. Paperback. 4" x 8.5". 23 pages.

Whether or not Syms would call this work poetry—she calls herself a “conceptual entrepreneur”—the writing herein is lyrical, intimate, surprising, blunt, beautiful, terse, and full of new wisdom. Many of the lines feel like a mix of idiom and haiku.

Taylor, Justin. *More Perfect Depictions of Noise*. Brooklyn: X-ing Books, 2008. Paperback. 5" x 8.25". 41 pages. Signed.

No text anywhere on this book’s case, but instead there’s a relief print made with an array of staples and multi-colored ink. The book’s title, publisher, and ISBN are printed on a paper tag that’s attached by a few inches of gold-colored string strung through a small hole in the book’s spine.

Tiptree, James, Jr. *Neat Sheets: The Poetry of James Tiptree, Jr.* San Francisco: A Tachyon Publication, 1996. Paperback. 5.5" x 8.5". 26 pages.

“James Tiptree, Jr.” was the pseudonym Alice Sheldon took to write science fiction stories in the middle of the twentieth century, a time when few women wrote in the genre. The poetry in this brief collection was discovered after her death. It is her only published gathering of poems. Almost all were found in one folder, likely written in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Twemlow, Nick. *Palm Trees*. Chicago: Green Lantern Press, 2012. Paperback. 6" x 9". 77 pages. Edition of 500.

Ward, C.S. *Make This Happen or Pass Away*. Iowa City, IA: Digraph, 2012. Paperback. 4.25" x 7". 11 pages. #28/35.

Another letterpress gem from publisher-designer Candida Pagan. Poems by Ward, who is a Stanford alum and filmmaker, intermingle with polymer plate and lino-cut illustrations.

Wiebe, Dallas. *The Kansas Poems*. Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Poetry Review Press, 1987. Paperback. 5.5" x 8.5". 64 pages. Signed.

Terse lines from curmudgeon-poet Wiebe. Each page includes a short poem at the top, and a short poem at the bottom. The poem at the bottom is always entitled “Tornado.”

Wiebe's most well-known work is a novel called *Skyblue the Badass*. Over the years, he produced pamphlets of enigmatic, brusque idioms and epiphanies, such as his series *The Sayings of Abraham Nofziger*, which he mailed to a handful of friends and admirers.

Yalen, Lesley. *The Hearts of Vikings*. Boston: Natural History Press, 2015. Paperback. 5" x 7". 56 pages.

Debut collection from a great new small press publishing contemporary poetry. This is one of the first books Natural History Press has brought out.

Zapruder, Matthew. *For You in Full Bloom*. Seattle: Pilot Books, 2009. Paperback. 11" x 10.125". 20 pages.

This sequence of poems, printed on varying bright-colored glossy pages, includes artwork by Chris Uphues. There's no image on the cover, which is made of glittery vinyl-like material called "blue metallic card stock." The title is embossed into a thin strip of metal, and the strip of metal is pasted onto the cover. The title poem is a foldout page. The book's binding consists of four bolts.