

Authors Publish

Poem to **BOOK**

The Poet's Path to a
Traditional Publisher

2nd Edition

Emily Harstone

Poem to Book

The Poet's Path to a
Traditional Publisher

Second Edition

Emily Harstone

Authors Publish

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Introduction

I often receive emails from authors who are looking to publish a book of poems. When I ask them where their poems have previously been published, they are confused.

Most have never published individual poems. Why would they do that, they ask, when they have a whole book?

Poetry publishing is a very tricky market. There is not much money in it for most poets or publishers. This is changing with the rise of Instagram poets, as well as spoken word poets, but for the majority of poets, poetry publishing remains more or less the same: competitive and influenced by fees and academia.

Often, when a book of poems is published, between ten and forty percent of the poems it contains have been previously published elsewhere. Sometimes this is just in a variety of literary journals, but often it is also in a chapbook (more on that later).

Most poets don't leap into publishing a book. Instead, they take small steps: first by publishing individual poems, then often a chapbook, and finally a book. The average time it takes to publish a book of poetry is ten years.

This might seem like a long, difficult process, but it doesn't have to be. All of the steps, from publishing poems to publishing chapbooks, can be enjoyable and rewarding in and of themselves.

Most novelists never get reader feedback, outside of friends, until they publish their novel as a whole, or the advanced reader copy is released. For poets who are actively publishing in literary journals, that is not the case.

Often, when a poem of mine gets published in a literary journal, I get feedback from the editor of the literary journal, from readers of the literary journal who are complete strangers to me, and also from my friends and family.

Sometimes these individual poems are nominated for awards. I have been nominated for eight awards, of various levels of prestige, and I have won one. Publishing individual poems in journals has helped me secure jobs and has made me eligible for fellowships. They have led to numerous public readings.

Chapbooks, short paperback books that are usually no more than thirty pages in length and have a limited press run, are usually the next step in the publishing journey for poets. Some poets self-publish chapbooks, but there are also a number of reputable, established chapbook presses.

Self-publishing an entire book of poems is generally considered to be bad form, but self-publishing a chapbook does not have the same negative connotations associated with it.

That said, I'm not ruling out self-publishing a book, particularly if you are a spoken-word poet. I know a number of people who've done well with that. (One just has to avoid using a vanity press.)

In any case, self-publishing a chapbook is usually very different. They are often handmade and handbound. Chapbooks tend to be very do-it-yourself, in terms of aesthetics, even with a publisher involved.

Publishing chapbooks can be rewarding. My chapbooks have helped build my readership and my reputation. I have even made some money from them. Every single chapbook I've published has been taught in a university class.

Usually, only after you have published poems in literary journals, anthologies, and chapbook(s), does one end up with a book contract.

Publishing a book of poetry is different than other forms of publication. I'm going to go into more details in the Book Publishing section of this book, but for now I will focus on the primary difference—reading fees and first book contests.

Most poets have to pay fees to poetry presses, sometimes as part of a first book contest. Other times, they just pay a general reading fee in order for their work to be considered. These fees are generally between \$20 and \$35.

The fees are only for reading unsolicited work where the presses are traditional and respected. This is very uncommon outside of poetry publishing but par for the course with it.

Agents don't represent poets, unless they are also novelists, so the only route forward for most poets is to pay the fees. However, I have put together a list of 90 poetry manuscript publishers that accept fee-free submissions, so there are options out there.

If you haven't spent a lot of time in the poetry community, publishing poetry can seem completely confusing and counterintuitive. I'm hoping to make it much easier to understand.

Publishing Poems

When you flip open a traditionally published book of poetry by an author published in the last thirty years, you will find a list of previously published poems.

This list is either in the first few pages or in the last few pages. Occasionally, it's buried in the acknowledgments. It is generally not part of a collected works.

This list is very helpful. Particularly if it is a contemporary book of poetry and the poet's first or second book. This tells you which journals can help establish your reputation as a serious poet. It gives you a list of publishers you should submit to as much as possible.

I have a list of journal names that I've curated from other poets' first and second books. I refer to this list often, and it's been of great help in establishing my own career. I put a star next to journals that have published poems that are particularly like mine. This, too, has helped.

These poets have all started off submitting their work to literary journals. They probably didn't start off getting published by the journals listed in their books, but it's a place to start.

Submitting to literary journals is the first step almost every established traditional poet has made. I say the word “traditional” to make it clear that this doesn’t include slam or spoken-word poets, where performing/reading their poems in public venues is usually the first step.

In this section of the book, I’m going to focus on sharing what I know about submitting and getting published in literary journals. I’ve written a [whole book on this](#) and [teach a course on this](#), and this book will not be as thorough as those resources, just because it would end up being far too long, but it should be more than enough information to get you started.

I’m also going to cover a little bit of how to get your work published in anthologies because that can really help your career in the long run. Anthologies differ from literary journals in that they aren’t magazines, online or off, but books, and they are usually organized around a theme.

How to Start Submitting to Literary Journals

Literary journals are wonderful magazines that focus on publishing creative writing. Some are digital. Others are print. Some only publish literary work. Others focus on genre.

Getting published in them is one of the only ways to find a traditional publisher for your book of poetry.

The great thing is that submitting your work to them is easy. Getting your work accepted by them is often a different story, but for now we are going to focus on the actual act of submitting.

Submitting poetry to a journal is different than submitting other kinds of writing. When you submit short stories or nonfiction to a journal, it can be fairly straightforward: You just choose one well-edited story that you wrote and submit it. With poetry, things are a little tougher because you have to choose three to five poems to submit. There are several things you have to do before you submit them.

Selecting poems for packets

The first step is to choose three to five poems that go together. Some journals accept six and some only accept three. I usually gather the poems in groups of three to five, because the acceptance of six is rare and it's easy to shave a packet of five poems down to three for one journal.

I call each grouping of three to five poems a “submission packet.” I usually have between five to seven submission packets ready to submit, and each packet contains three to five different poems. I submit each of these packets to more than one place at a time, but usually to no more than eight places at one time. That way if the poems get accepted, I can easily withdraw them from consideration at the other publications.

Before putting the poems in packets, I place all the poems I’ve written recently that I’d consider publishing in a single Word document. I name this document something along the lines of “potential places to submit to in 2020.”

The components of a good packet

When choosing which poems to place in which submission packet, I consider the tone. For example, say I have a number of dark, comic poems; I may group these together in a submission packet.

However, there should be variation in each submission packet. Don't make the mistake of grouping poems that all have the same tone, theme, and subject matter. The editor who reads these poems only gets one impression of your work, and if it doesn't match what they are looking for, too bad for you.

Having variation in your packet significantly increases the likelihood of the editor connecting with one of your poems. Still, think about order and sense of narration as well—one poem should not contradict or clash with the next. After you have chosen a group of poems, go over them one last

time, reviewing for any obvious mistakes or changes in spacing during the rearranging process.

Some poets often have an urge to overexplain the context of their poems in the cover letter when they submit their work to a journal. Restrain yourself from doing that. Most editors won't publish work unless the context is made clear within the poems themselves.

Choosing where to submit packets

I do try to create one to two packets of my best poems and submit these packets to just top-tier journals, ones with really low acceptance rates. If I submitted these packets to top-tier journals and ones with higher acceptance rates at the same time, the odds go up for the poems in the packet being accepted by a lesser journal before the more prestigious ones had time to consider them. Prestigious journals tend to have a slower response time because they generally have a team of editors, instead of just one person, who have to read everything.

Once you have your submission packets ready, your poems should be ready to submit to any journal. Don't edit or reorder the packets for every journal, just make sure that the way your poems are formatted fits the journals' guidelines.

General considerations

Some journals require your name and contact information to be on every page. Other journals prohibit this and will discard any packet that includes

the author's name or personal information. Make sure your packet is formatted correctly for the specific journal.

Once you have a couple of submission packets, it is easy to submit your work. Often, it will take me no longer than ten minutes to submit my poems to a journal I am interested in.

After I submit a piece of work, I immediately update my submission tracker so it is up to date. A submission tracker is a simple Word document that is divided into three sections: pending submissions, accepted, and rejected. I include the names of the poems, the name of the journal, and the date submitted.

At first, this might seem unnecessary but it is very important if you submit often.

Nowadays, almost all submissions are made online, either via email or online submission manager, the most popular of which is Submittable.

It is important to write a fifty-word third-person bio and a generic very short cover letter, to submit to all journals.

Journals often open and close to submissions on a rolling basis. Because of that, it's often easier to submit to journals during the school year.

A large number of journals are linked to academic institutions, but there are many other ways journals can be run. Some are funded by subscribers, others by donations, some entirely self-funded by the editor. Some literary

journals are just one-person operations. Others involve a half-dozen employees.

Some journals charge reading fees. These fees tend to be \$3. This is considered perfectly normal at this point. I'm not a big fan of this practice for a number of reasons, and I would caution that even at the cost of \$3 per submission, these fees do add up.

Authors Publish never reviews fee-charging markets, and it is very possible to submit to journals without ever paying fees.

Common Mistakes Poets New to Submitting Make

I made these mistakes for the first decade I wrote poetry. I did not understand why they were mistakes. I didn't understand why they frustrated editors and fellow writers. Now I do.

When you are used to reading poetry closely, every word counts, every line break counts, every capitalization counts, so any mistakes within the poem distracts and throws the reader out of the poem.

Whenever I guest-edit a journal, I try not to just dismiss poems containing these errors, but it can be hard not to. After all, these mistakes make it clear that the poet is not necessarily paying attention to detail. As a submitting poet, you want to make it clear that details matter to you.

Capitalization at the beginning of every line

If you read poems by Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson, or other works by historic poets, the first letter of the first word on every line of the poem is capitalized. It was the way poems were written, historically. However, in the world of contemporary poetry, it is rarely done. Unfortunately, in the modern world of poetry, capitalizing the first letter on the first word of every line usually means that your Word processor automatically capitalized those words for you.

When a poet or an editor gets used to reading poetry closely, everything in the poem is examined and taken into consideration. All of those automatically capitalized words are distracting, they don't serve a purpose in the poem, they are not something the poet intended to do, they are just there. Usually, their biggest function is to tell the poetry editor or reader that you are new to this and did not notice.

The good news is that you can turn this function off easily. When you are in Word, go to Tools and then to AutoCorrect Options. On the AutoCorrect tab, deselect the Capitalize First Letter of Sentences check box and click OK.

Out of the three mistakes, this is the most distracting and the biggest tip-off to established poets and editors that you are new to submitting.

Punctuation at the end of every line

Line breaks are difficult. Figuring out where to make line breaks can take me hours. It is not easy. But a lot of people just make the line breaks after punctuation, like this:

I love roses,
tulips,
and you.

It is easy to spot in this example, but this problem is often hidden by longer lines. Many poets just don't realize what they are doing. This is important to stress: Sometimes the right place for a line break is after

punctuation, just as long as you are not doing it on the end of every line. [This article](#) is a good starting place in terms of thinking about line breaks.

Sporadic punctuation

You can write a poem without any punctuation. That is not as accepted as writing poems with punctuation, but it is more accepted than writing a poem with sporadic punctuation. What do I mean by sporadic punctuation? I mean this:

All of the moons, beamed down on us
a cascade of light in the darkness

There is one comma but no periods in this example. Sporadic punctuation can be done many ways. Sometimes there is one period in a poem of twenty-five lines. Sometimes the poet uses line breaks instead of commas, which only works if you are avoiding punctuation entirely.

Even if you've made these mistakes in the past, as I have, they are all relatively easy to change. Editors are often quick to make judgments, casting aside poems because of the smallest errors. By avoiding these mistakes, you are giving your poetry the chance it deserves.

How to Find Literary Journals

I find literary journals in various ways. I keep tabs on the journals my friends publish their work. I create a list of journals that poets I admire publish in. I also end up using listing services.

In order to be a successful poet, you have to submit a lot of work. Most emerging poets I know always have forty submissions out at places at any given time. That's why poets and writers end up requiring listing services.

The four biggest listing services all have pros and cons, but all are worth using. Below, I review all four. It is worth pointing out that [Entropy also has a good list](#).

Duotrope

Duotrope is the only listing service that charges (\$5/month, or \$50/year). However, if you are serious about submitting to literary journals, it is the best bet.

I have a Duotrope subscription, and I pay for everyone else that works for AP to have one as well.

Duotrope lists almost all journals that are currently active. They list journals that involve a fee as well as free journals, but they always try to make it clear if a journal charges a fee.

Some journals try to make that harder for Duotrope to keep track of, by charging sometimes and not others, or charging for some ways to submit and not others.

To find journals on Duotrope, you can sign up for their weekly market update, which is an email that informs you of what journals have opened and which ones have closed. You can also use their search engine and their statistics page for more detailed information.

There are many ways to find new markets on Duotrope.

In my opinion, their statistics page is the most helpful place to start. Here, they list the journals that have the highest and lowest acceptance rates. They also list the journals that are slowest to respond and those that are the quickest. These are all helpful statistics to know.

I also like using their advanced search features, which allow you to eliminate all journals with high acceptance rates efficiently. It can also be used to find a journal with a particular aesthetic. For a while, I was having much better luck submitting to UK-based journals and so I used the search feature to show me only those.

If a journal takes more than a year on average to respond, I won't submit to them. If a journal accepts over twenty percent of what is submitted to them, I will not send them my work. It is hard to determine these two things if you don't have a Duotrope subscription.

Duotrope has a wealth of information. You can monitor the journals you submit to there, and use their handy submission tracker to keep track of where you have submitted your work.

It also provides interviews with the publishers, informs you on how much they pay, and provides various other kinds of information.

I do think the information Duotrope provides is skewed because of the subscription fees. In the past everyone used it, and now it is primarily used by established poets in the US.

Because all the information Duotrope provides is based on user submitted reports, the shift in users because of the paywall has affected (although it is hard to tell how much) the overall quality of the site.

Also the information they provide is much more relevant for fiction and poetry. They list many creative nonfiction markets, but because of how few users submit to these, versus the others, the stats are unreliable and very limited.

[The \(Submission\) Grinder](#)

The (Submission) Grinder is a submission tracker that is the free alternative to Duotrope. It is run by Diabolical Plots, which is a genre zine that has been around since 2008, although The (Submission) Grinder has only been around for a few years.

They publish statistics about acceptance rates and response times just like Duotrope does, except they are a free service. However, the feedback is

not at the same level, as fewer people use their service at this point. Hopefully that will change over time.

Most markets listed with them have one or two reports, not dozens or hundreds. Only major journals have more than a dozen submission reports at this point. However, that is about ten more reports than they had at this time last year, so they do seem to be getting more contributors, and the quality of information appears to be improving.

To see response times and acceptance rates on The (Submission) Grinder, you do not even have to sign up for the service; you can just browse the website. In order to contribute to the website and help improve it, you have to sign up.

[Poets & Writers](#)

Poets & Writers is a magazine that also has a website filled with resources. All of their resources are free and easy to use. In my experience, the most helpful resource they provide is their literary magazine listing service.

They do not list as many journals as Duotrope, and most of the journals they list are based outside the US. However, they still list over two thousand journals.

You can look through the listings alphabetically by title, or apply search filters. When they list a journal, they specify what kind of creative writing they accept, if they accept simultaneous submissions, and whether they accept electronic submissions. They also tell you if the journal pays, even

if it is only a contributor copy. They also list the dates the journal is open to submissions, as well as if it is an electronic or print journal. However, they do not list the journal charges or reading fees, which are important.

This is a lot of helpful information, but nothing is given about response times or acceptance statistics. You still have to visit the literary journals' individual websites to find out the details of their submission guidelines. Poets & Writers also does not update their website as frequently as Duotrope, so much of their information is out of date.

[Submittable Discover](#)

Submittable, the submission manager widely used by many literary journals, launched a page three years ago where they list markets.

The page has a very easy-to-use filter system, so you don't even have to be tempted by the names of any journals that charge fees. You just select the large “no submission fees” button on the top of the right side, under the search bar.

They call this service “Discover.” The main limitation of this new service is they just list sites that use Submittable, but that is a lot of places now. They also don't have any additional information regarding response times or acceptance rates, which would have been nice, because they clearly have the capacity to track such things.

The other issue is that people use Submittable for all sorts of things, from literary conference panels to film festivals, so you are not just seeing calls

for written submission, although the title usually makes it clear what they are looking for.

As well as by fee, you can also search by deadline, or lack of deadline. You must open a free Submittable account to access all this information, but you will need to have one anyway to submit to any of the journals listed on the site. If you have submitted to more than two journals in the last half decade, you will probably already have an account. Even *The New Yorker* uses Submittable.

It is also very important to note that one of the best ways to discover which literary journals are the most established, in terms of print, is to go to a magazine store or a Barnes & Nobles or another large bookstore and see which literary journals they carry.

Where to Start Submitting

There are not any hard or fast rules on where you should submit when you are starting out. Although certain journals make it clear in their guidelines that they prefer submissions from unpublished writers, this is a rare request.

Most journals are happy to publish a writer for the first time, but they are not overtly trying to do so.

Every writer has different goals and ambitions. Some just want to publish their work. They want to get it out into the world and they don't care how prestigious the journal is, or how many authors it accepts.

Other authors are only interested in publishers that publish genre work. Some new writers just want personal feedback and others want a quick response time.

It is very important that you figure out what your goal is before you start submitting! What are you looking for when you publish?

Are you just interested in building up a long backlist of journals, or is it more important that you place your work in a journal that's very prestigious?

I do think that it's good to start with a few journals with fast response times, just to get the ball rolling.

It can be hard to get work accepted with no track record at all, so I included a list of publications that read all submissions blind (without any names or identifying information attached).

I also have included a number of new literary journals that show promise. New journals are much more likely to take a chance on new writers, and they tend to be more supportive of the writers they publish.

I really think you can submit your work to any journal that you want. But I do think that it is good to know what you are getting into. Below, I have listed some good places to get started if you are looking for journals that accept most of what they receive, journals with good reputations, and journals that respond quickly to submissions.

Journals that accept about half of what they receive

Some journals accept over half of what they receive. Acceptance rates change all the time, so realize that over time these journals may become harder to get into. At the time I updated this list, they all had an over 40 percent acceptance rate.

These are not the only publishers that are easy to get into, but they are a good place to start if your sole goal is to get published in a literary journal.

Make sure you read the guidelines before submitting to know if your work fits. Just because they are approachable, doesn't mean that they will accept angry poetry when they only publish nature poetry!

All of the information used to ascertain if the market is approachable or not was found through research done at the websites [Duotrope](#) and [The \(Submission\) Grinder](#).

Anti-Heroin Chic

Anti-Heroin Chic publishes poetry, fiction and nonfiction. They no longer permit simultaneous submissions.

Ekphrastic Review

An Ekphrastic work is writing or art about another work of art. The Ekphrastic Review publishes fiction, creative nonfiction, and poetry. They accept a little under half of what they receive.

[Ariel Chart](#)

They publish poetry and short fiction.

[Adelaide Literary Magazine](#)

They publish over half of what they receive. They are a print and electronic journal that publishes short stories, reviews, poetry, creative nonfiction, translation, and interviews.

[Otoliths](#)

An online journal of visual poetry, poetry, short fiction, essays, and art, they accept over half of what is submitted to them.

[Children, Churches, and Daddies](#)

They bill themselves as "*The* UN-religious, **NON**-family oriented literary and art magazine". They publish poetry, prose, and art work online.

[Academy of the Heart and Mind](#)

Their mission is to help emerging writers. They accept over 60% of what is submitted. They publish poetry, art, prose, and creative nonfiction online.

[Writing in a Women's Voice](#)

An online poetry journal that publishes over 50% of what is submitted to them. They do not respond if they are not interested.

Down in the Dirt

Down in the Dirt publishes fiction and poetry. They have an acceptance rate of 70%.

The Cabinet of Heed

This online literary journal has an over 70% acceptance rate, and publishes fiction, poetry, and visual art.

101 Words

The title spells out exactly what they are looking for, flash fiction that are exactly a 101 words. They accept almost 90% of what they receive, but only select work makes it into their anthology. Authors whose work is selected for the anthology are paid 10 dollars.

The Poet

They accept almost 100% of what is submitted to them.

Grand Little Things

A journal of mostly formal poetry. They accept over 50% of what they receive.

As Above, So Below

A UK based journal of formal poetry.

The most established and respected journals

These journals are very hard to get into. They are considered to be among the best and most prestigious journals out there.

However, there is no reason not to start out trying to submit to these journals (as long as you are not submitting your work only there). Set aside a packet or two to submit to the most prestigious journals, and then send your other poems to less competitive journals. You don't have to necessarily send your work to the most approachable ones. Most literary journals fall somewhere in the middle of these two extremes.

Most of the journals on this list accept less than 1 percent of what is submitted to them, so don't take rejection from them personally.

The Atlantic

The Atlantic is open to submissions of poetry, nonfiction, and fiction. They pay well.

The New Yorker

The most famous (and most profitable) magazine with a literary bent, The New Yorker is very competitive to get into. However, they accept

unsolicited submissions of fiction, poetry, and cartoons. They pay very well.

Poetry

This is the most famous poetry magazine there is. It is published by The Poetry Foundation. The first time you have a poem printed by them, an asterisk appears next to your name to note your appearance as a debut poet with them.

The Sun

The Sun is a fabulous ad-free magazine that has been around for over 40 years and has published so many famous writers, I have a hard time choosing even five. They publish fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir, and poetry. They only accept submissions through the mail. They even pay well.

Rattle

This prestigious print magazine also has a great weekly online feature called Poets Respond, which features poems that are responses to news articles published that week.

One Story

They publish one story per issue. They pay well and they have published many established, reputable, bestselling, and award-winning authors.

[The Paris Review](#)

This venerable print publication accepts only postal submissions. They publish poetry and fiction, as well as interviews, which they are rather famous for. They were founded in 1953 and have published many well-known writers since then. Some famous authors including Adrienne Rich, Philip Roth, V. S. Naipaul and Rick Moody were first published by The Paris Review.

[The Threepenny Review](#)

According to Tony Kushner, "Everybody should rush right out and subscribe to The Threepenny Review". This quarterly arts magazine publishes poetry, fiction, memoir and criticism. They have very fast response times. They pay.

[The Rupture](#)

This online-only literary journal publishes fiction, excerpts, poetry, and nonfiction. They are highly respected and have published many contemporary authors that have become part of the establishment.

[AGNI](#)

This is a great print journal that publishes fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Known for publishing "important new writers early in their careers" (PEN), six of their contributors have gone on to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

[The Missouri Review](#)

This established print journal publishes some of the best nonfiction around; they also publish poetry and fiction. They do charge for electronic submissions, but postal submissions are free.

[ZYZZYVA](#)

ZYZZYVA has some of the best distribution I have ever seen. If a bookstore sells only three different literary journals, ZYZZYVA is one of those. They have published many famous poets and writers, including Haruki Murakami and Sherman Alexie.

[Beloit Poetry Journal](#)

A very respected Poetry journal.

[A Public Space](#)

This respected literary journal publishes terrific writing in a range of genres.

Journals with fast response times

It is good to start out by submitting your work to journals that have fast response times. It is rewarding to hear back from journals within a month, rather than a year, when you have forgotten all about your submission.

Submitting to journals with fast response times helps keep you motivated.

All of these journals respond to submissions within a month.

The Penn Review

The Penn Review publishes original poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and visual artwork, and responds to most submissions within a week. They are also very respected.

Radar Poetry

Radar Poetry is a wonderful electronic poetry journal that responds within three weeks to submissions.

Red Eft Review

This electronic literary journal focuses on publishing accessible poems. Their turnaround time is a couple of days.

The Dark

An electronic magazine that publishes fantasy and horror short stories. They respond within four days.

The Jellyfish Review

They publish flash fiction online and respond within a week. They are based out of Indonesia.

Eunoia Review

The Eunoia Review describes themselves as a publisher of “beautiful thinking”. They respond in three days or less.

Ghost Parachute

This flash fiction publisher responds to all submissions within two week.

Front Porch Review

A long running e-magazine that publishes fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction. They respond within a week.

The New Verse News

The New Verse News presents politically progressive poetry on current events and topical issues. Because of the nature of what they publish, respond within two weeks.

Dream of Shadows

A London-based website for horror and fantasy short stories. They generally respond within three days. They publish new stories monthly.

Thrush

Thrush is a highly respected poetry journal that responds to most submissions within 10 days.

Journals that read submissions blind

A blind submission is one that is submitted to the literary journal in a way that the readers and editors can read all the submissions without knowing the name or anything else about the author who submitted to the journal.

The idea is that it takes away any bias someone might have against or for a particular ethnic heritage, or any other number of things. It hopefully means that your creative work is selected based on its own merits.

Blind submissions are particularly helpful for new authors who don't have previous publications. I had been writing for over a decade by the time I started submitting, but my bio was so thin and unsubstantial that I struggled to find anywhere to place my poems until I started submitting to journals that read blind. The first two publishers who accepted my work read blind.

If a journal does not read blind the advantage can sometimes go to authors who have published a lot more work, even if the work they submit to that literary journal is not very good.

The literary journal I was an editor for read submissions blind, and I ended up rejecting a very famous author.

[Spry](#)

An online literary journal that publishes poetry and prose.

[Burningword Literary Journal](#)

Burningword Literary Journal accepts poetry, flash fiction, and flash nonfiction submissions for publication. They have electronic and print versions. They refer to their reading process as double-blind.

[POUi](#)

They have only one agenda - *to be a vehicle for new and exciting writing*. They publish a particularly international group of writers.

[The Matador Review](#)

"Our purpose: to promote "alternative work" from both art and literature, and to encourage the new-wave of respect for online publications. In a world of print, we celebrate the digital decision." This new literary journal seems to be doing a great job publishing challenging and exciting work. [You can read their first issue here](#). They publish fiction, nonfiction, flash fiction, visual art, and poetry.

[Into The Void](#)

Into The Void is a UK based literary journal that publishes experimental literary work of poetry and prose. They publish print and online issues every couple of months.

[Toyon](#)

Toyon is a multilingual journal of literature and art that is edited and produced by Humboldt State University. They publish work in English and Spanish. They also accept reprints.

[Sweet Tree Review](#)

A wonderful online literary journal that publishes poetry and prose.

[Border Crossing](#)

They are particularly interested in publishing writing that crosses boundaries in genre or geography, and voices that aren't often heard in mainstream publications.

[Stonecoast Review](#)

They publish creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry, dramatic works, and visual arts

[Lunch Ticket](#)

This established literary journal publishes prose and poetry and returns all work that has identifying information attached to it.

[Levitate](#)

They are a literary and art magazine published by the Chicago High School for the Arts. They are open to submissions twice a year.

Exciting New Literary Journals

In my experience, there are many reasons to seek publication in journals that have been around for less than a year. When a literary journal is new, the editors tend to be a lot more passionate. I have gotten handwritten thank you cards from editors of new publications, something that has never happened when my work was published by a more established journal.

Editors of new journals tend to be more generous with their time, energy, and enthusiasm. Plus, they are genuinely grateful that you trusted their new and untested journal with your work. Several of the journals that published my work in their first issue have gone on to permanently feature my poems on their website as their ‘sample poem’, so that other submitters get a feel for the kind of work they like to read.

New journals have recorded podcasts about my work. My work ended up getting promoted a lot more than if it had been accepted by an older, more established journal.

With a new journal, the odds that work will be nominated for a literary prize increase as well. I have been publishing in new journals for eight years and some of the journals that published my work when I was a new writer are now established and several now have a less than 1% acceptance rate. However, when I originally submitted, they were far less competitive.

During that eight-year period, a number of those new journals went under, which is one of the major pitfalls to submitting to new journals. The other major pitfall is that you don't know what you are getting into, particularly if your work is published in the first issue. You can't look at past issues, online and in print, because they have none. In a way it is stepping into the unknown. In my experience though, the risk is always worth it because the reward can be much greater

[Bowery Gothic](#)

Inspired by a reading series in the Bowery, New York, this great online journal publishes fiction and poetry. This is what they say they are looking for, "We look for stories—both real and imagined—that exist in that liminal space: between the seen and unseen; between entertainment and fear. We are excited by work that stands at the threshold and looks into the unknown. We are excited by the sublimity of terror."

[Club Plum](#)

Club Plum is a literary journal that wants to feel like a house party. They publish prose poetry, flash fiction, and art.

[Red Tree Review](#)

They are a poetry only literary journal.

[Yolk.](#)

This Canadian literary journal has online and print issues and is based in Montreal and they publish established and emerging artists. They are open to online and print submissions at different times.

The West Review

A new online literary journal based on the west coast of the United States. They are currently seeking submissions for their debut issue. They publish poetry, prose, and art. They are paying all contributing writers an unspecified amount.

Life in the Time

This online literary journal focuses on publishing poetry and stories from the COVID-19/pandemic era. As someone who finds it hard to write about anything else right now, and has noticed that most literary journals are reluctant to publish COVID era work, I think this project is off to a great start.

Bee House Journal

They published their first electronic issue this summer, and it is visually beautiful and contains a number of wonderful poems. They publish once per season and only focus on visual art and poetry.

Moment Poetry

Each of the poems is printed in a limited run of 100 numbered prints and signed by the author. The print is inserted in a cover sleeve (the size of a 7-inch vinyl) and it features a short quote from the poem in the author's handwriting and an original artwork to accompany it. It's easy to get a feel for what they publish by looking at the two previous projects. [Their submission guidelines](#) are short and at the bottom of the page here.

Skeleton Beetle

A new online literary journal based out of Oregon. They publish a wide range of intriguing writing.

Publishing in Anthologies

Anthologies are a great way to get your foot in the door. They are more likely than literary journals to be sold at bookstores. Some are taught in classrooms. They look great on a resume, and they can help establish a working relationship with a particular press.

Most anthologies are themed. Sometimes the theme is more about the contributor than the work itself (such as the *Best New Poets* anthology series), other times the theme is the subject that ties all the poems together, such as politics, violence, or Star Trek.

You are much more likely to get paid if your work is in an anthology. They also don't have the same limited shelf life of a literary journal. They are much less likely to go out of print.

They are also much more likely to submit to reprints.

Anthologies also tend to be less competitive than top-end literary journals. This is partly because the theme is so important. If your writing matches the theme, your work has a good chance of being chosen.

This is partially because it is much harder to find out about anthologies, and they tend to have limited submission windows.

The other downside is that often editors will put together an anthology without a publisher in mind, so your work can be accepted and then it could take years for that editor to find a publisher.

Authors Publish shares links to anthologies seeking submissions via our themed calls for submissions, which is always published on the first Monday of every month.

You can also find anthologies in [New Pages Calls for Submissions](#).

Literarium also has a good list you can see [here](#).

Publishing Chapbooks

Chapbooks are very small books, usually no more than thirty pages in length, fifty at the most. They frequently have no spine and are often bound with staples. They have been around for a long time, at least since the 16th century, when they were associated with fiction, but now they almost always function as a vehicle for poetry.

Chapbooks are often seen as a stepping-stone between journals and books. Often, whole chapbooks are republished as part of larger books.

Successfully launching and promoting a chapbook can very much help you publish a full-length poetry manuscript.

By promoting that poetry chapbook, you can learn valuable skills that you can put towards prompting a full-length book when you find a publisher for that.

Chapbook Basics

There are a number of presses and literary journals that publish chapbooks either through open submissions or through social contacts. Also, a lot of poets self-publish chapbooks. Self-publishing your chapbook is not considered to be the same as self-publishing a book. It does not have a lot of the same stigmas surrounding it.

In the poetry world, a writer is often looked down upon if they have self-published a manuscript of their poems for sale. It is seen as an act of vanity, yet self-publishing a chapbook is seen as a positive thing, a way to share your poems with others.

One of the reasons this distinction is made between books and chapbooks is that all the material that you put in a chapbook can be republished later as part of a larger collection as long as you publish no more than 500 copies of the chapbook. Another reason is that a chapbook is simple and cheap to make. You can almost give them away for free, and most chapbooks are sold for between \$5 and \$10.

Poets that start writing outside of an established community, like I did, do not always see the need for chapbooks. When I was in my second year of graduate studies, my fourth or fifth year as a serious writer of poems, I finally started to understand the function and purpose of chapbooks.

I realized that a lot of the writers I enjoyed I had initially discovered through their chapbooks. Many of these were purchased on a whim, before I later committed to buying a whole book (or two).

A famous poet later explained it to me as this: A chapbook is your calling card; it is a way for someone to get a much better feel for the poetry that you write, and it is also a stepping-stone, a way to get that much closer to publishing a full manuscript.

Because most poets' first books take over a decade to get published, if you are working within the traditional system of contests and open reading periods, it is good to publish a chapbook or three, while refining that manuscript and submitting it. A chapbook is a great way to get your name out there.

I have published three chapbooks, all through chapbook publishers. The first two times my work was solicited, the third chapbook was an unsolicited submission.

My first chapbook opened so many doors for me. I ended up selling a fair number of copies and doing several important interviews because of them. A copy of my chapbook is at Poet's House in NYC and another is at a local library. Those are small steps, of course, but they are steps forward that have led to other greater opportunities.

My advice to most poets who are interested in publishing a chapbook is to gather up a small number of poems, between ten and twenty-five, that are thematically linked and put them together as a chapbook manuscript. Then

find a few chapbook publishers with open reading periods that do not charge, and submit the manuscript. If no one accepts your manuscript, you can easily self-publish it, then you will have something to give to your friends and sell at readings.

Chapbook Publishers

Keep in mind that most chapbook publishers are small not-for-profit one-person companies. They are not huge organizations and a lot of them are regional publishers, special interest publishers, or are only open for a short reading period.

Not all of the publishers listed here are currently open to submissions, so mark your calendars if that is the case.

Most chapbook publishers charge reading fees. I have not listed chapbook publishers that charge fees.

The fees they charge tend to be between \$10 and \$30. However, I think it is perfectly fine to pay those fees as long as you get something in exchange, for example a copy of the winning chapbook, a chapbook they have previously published, or an anthology.

Many chapbook and first book contests that charge a fee are listed [here](#). It's a helpful resource if money is not an option.

There are a lot of chapbook presses out there, but many are local and only open to local authors. If you are active in your local poetry community, it is easy to find these chapbook publishers.

It is also good to note that unless explicitly stated, all submissions can be made electronically.

[Damaged Goods Press](#)

They publish poetry by queer and trans-identified people. They accept chapbooks and full-length manuscripts on a rolling basis. They offer author copies plus royalties.

[Glass Poetry Press](#)

This press publishes four to six poetry chapbooks a year plus a free literary journal. They are open to submissions in March. Payment to the author is ten copies plus fifteen percent of royalties on sales. The print run is between a hundred and two hundred copies.

[Porkbelly Press](#)

Letterpress, lithograph, and screen print all used by this micro-press for their covers. Interior pages are printed regularly. Poetry, prose, and graphic narrative manuscripts are accepted. They publish four to ten titles per year. They are generally open to chapbook submissions in January, and in July they accept micro-chapbook (eight to ten pages) submissions. They have a print run of two hundred and they give authors ten copies and a discount on additional ones.

[Ugly Duckling Presse](#)

Ugly Duckling is one of the most prestigious chapbook publishers. They publish beautiful books, but they tend to lean towards pretentious work. If you sign up for their mailing list, they will email you an alert when they re-open to submissions. They have rolling submission periods.

[Nightingale & Sparrow Press](#)

This small press publishes chapbooks, micro chapbooks and full length works. They have reading periods for each length of work. You can see the books and chapbooks they've previously published [here](#).

[Bad Betty](#)

A press that publishes books and chapbooks by Black, Brown, and Asian writers. Because they are a British press they refer to chapbooks as pamphlets.

[Gray Book Press](#)

A small publisher of chapbooks with an open reading period, usually in the fall. They may have an additional one earlier this year according to a blog post.

[Yavanika Press](#)

Based out of India and publishing a range of authors and forms, including short prose and Japanese short form, this press, run by the tri-annual literary journal [Sonic Boom](#), publishes chapbooks and mini chapbooks. They have two reading periods a year.

Promoting Your Chapbook

One of the reasons publishers really like your work to be previously published in a chapbook form is because it teaches you how to promote your work.

At Authors Publish, we have published [an eBook on the subject of book promotion](#), and even that eBook only scratches the surface of how to promote a book.

There are a lot of things one needs to learn about self-promotion when one is a poet, because even if you end up with a traditional publisher a lot of the promotional work will be up to you.

There's not a lot of money in poetry publishing, so marketing is very much a do-it-yourself endeavor, for the most part. Although having a big poetry publisher will help open doors in terms of promotion, their name on your book acts a little bit like a stamp of approval and they can get major publications to review your work.

I'm going to focus on the bare bones of promotion, the basic tenets that can help you launch a chapbook.

Readings

Reading poetry in public is a time-honored tradition. Often, readings are held in bars, coffee shops, and bookstores. Some reading opportunities are linked to literary journal launches (one of the benefits of submitting to local literary journals is they'll often ask you to read), others to ongoing reading series, some to open mics, others to specifically launch books.

It's common to throw a chapbook launch party, often by renting out a venue or scheduling one at a venue like a bookstore.

Even if you do a proper chapbook launch, it's important to do group readings as well. People coming to hear others reading might end up falling in love with your work. Open mics can be helpful that way too.

The more readings you do, the more opportunities you tend to get to do more of them.

Even before Covid-19 more readings were shifting online and now the bulk of them happen here. Unless you have a large personal network of committed fans it's usually a good idea to look for a Bookstore, library, or reading series to be a part of your launch.

Reviews

Though reviews can really help sell copies of your books, they can also be hard to get. Usually your chapbook publisher will give you author copies, and you can give them out as review copies.

There are big publications out there like *Verse Daily*, where you can send copies of your chapbook in the hopes that they'll promote in some way.

In my experience though, it's hard for those opportunities to actually pan out.

I've received a large number of chapbook reviews by approaching the journals that have previously published my work.

This is really where you should focus not just in terms of reviews. Some journals don't publish reviews but still promote your chapbook via social media and their website. It looks good for them if you have a book out.

Never send the full print chapbook without talking to them first. Some publications want digital copies only, so do keep that in mind.

Getting a local bookstore to carry your chapbook

Often, local indie bookstores will carry your chapbook on consignment. It's worth asking your local bookseller about this option, although be polite if they don't. It doesn't always work for some bookstores.

Reach out to the Journals who published your work

I mentioned this before in terms of reviews, but some are happy to promote your work in other ways. This could be through an announcement

on their social media, or through promoting your launch, or any number of things.

Publishing Books

Turning a poetry manuscript into a book usually takes about a decade, particularly in terms of first books.

I would say that it's harder to publish a book of poetry than any kind of prose. But it is very possible. People do it every year.

I have friends who managed to publish their book after submitting it for a year; I have other friends who've been trying for far longer.

Books of poetry are usually between fifty and seventy-five pages. They're much shorter than most books of prose.

It's important to be familiar with what publishers are publishing now. If you are considering submitting to a press, it's often very much worth your money to order a copy of a book they've recently published.

If money's very tight, you can usually look up recent poems by the poets they've published online and that can be helpful as well.

When you submit a poetry manuscript, you must have a more detailed query letter. Your bio should not be third person but instead be integrated into the letter itself. You should also make the theme(s) of your book clear

in the query letter. If a famous poet has workshopped or offered feedback on your poems in a positive way, make sure to mention that.

How Publishing Poetry Manuscripts Is Different

Novelists and nonfiction writers face a lot of hurdles on their road to publication, but they are very different than the ones faced by poets.

The major hurdle that poets face is reading and contest fees.

I always tell writers looking to publish fiction or nonfiction that they should never pay a traditional publisher. I tell them a traditional publisher of any standing will not charge their writers. This is true for fiction and for nonfiction. It is true for most genres.

Unfortunately, it is not true for poetry books.

I am not saying that there are not good, reliable, traditional poetry publishers, just that there are very few that don't charge a reading fee or a contest entry fee for authors without a significant track record (i.e., a book or two).

That does not mean that the publisher should charge you anything beyond the reading fee. A legitimate publisher will not. But the reading fee has become standard for poetry manuscript contests and even for open reading periods. Reading fees usually range in price from \$25 to \$50.

I have a lot of problems with reading fees and, as you can see from our [guiding principles](#), we would not review a publisher that charges them.

However, as an individual who has an academic career, I must submit to these publishers.

If you are serious about publishing your book of poetry, the truth is that you will most likely end up paying a fee. Most publishers are open to first books and unsolicited manuscripts only through open reading periods (with a fee attached) and contests.

Most of the best publishers only select one book of poetry to be published a year by a poet without a previous book. These books are always selected via reading periods or, more commonly, contests. Winning one of these big contests is a great thing, but it isn't easy.

I would say that a little over half the publishers I would consider for my book charge a reading fee, and because I am serious about getting it published, I have ended up paying that fee.

There are other options out there and there are a number of good presses that don't charge poets. New presses and very small presses often do not.

90 Manuscript Publishers that Do Not Charge Reading Fees

Most traditional poetry manuscript publishers charge their readers a fee to submit. You can read about why that is the case [here](#). This article focuses on a number of poetry manuscript publishers who do not charge submission fees to writers, which is good news for poets.

This is the longest and most accurate list of poetry manuscript publishers who do not charge fees for online or postal submissions. A number of the publishers on this list have at least one free reading period a year, where they will consider all the manuscripts submitted to them. Some of the publishers are open all the time. Some have a limited window that is only a month or two long.

Not all of the publishers are currently open to submissions. Some have newsletters that notify potential submitters when they re-open. If that is the case I note that. On most of our lists it isn't unusual for one or two publishers to be closed, but the numbers are much higher here, firstly because COVID-19 has particularly impacted the very small press industry that has long relied on conferences and book fairs, and secondly because poetry publishers generally have shorter submission windows.

A few of them have geographic or other limitations, but the majority are open to authors of any nationality and background.

The list is in no particular order. If you know of another publisher who belongs on this list, or if you find an error or an update for this list, please email support@authorspublish.com.

Unlike other lists and reviews on Authors Publish, I do not do full background checks or complete reviews on all the publishers. That is partially because the task would be overwhelming in terms of time and also because most poetry presses are small and it is hard to find out that much about them. I did eliminate any press that had glaring red flags, but please research any of the presses on the list you are considering submitting to.

1. **8th House Publishing**

8th House Publishing is a newer publisher based out of Montreal and New York. They publish poetry, novels with a literary bent, and nonfiction. You can get a better idea of the poetry they have previously published [here](#).

2. **Measure Press**

Measure Press is a small press that publishes poetry, criticism, and poetry instruction as well as a semi-annual literary journal that focuses exclusively on publishing formal poetry. You can read our full review of them [here](#).

3. **Arte Público Press**

Arte Público Press, affiliated with the University of Houston, specializes in publishing contemporary novels, short stories, poetry, and drama based on U.S. Hispanic (Cuban American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and others) cultural issues and themes. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

4. **House of Anansi Press**

This is an established Canadian press that also publishes nonfiction and literary fiction. They are only open to submissions from Canadian citizens, and residents. You can learn more [here](#).

5. **BlazeVOX**

They publish poetry and experimental literature. Learn more at their website [here](#).

6. **Platypus Press**

This is a UK-based publisher of poetry and prose. At the time of publishing this list, they are temporarily closed to submissions You can read our full review of them [here](#).

7. **Carcenet**

A UK-based publisher of poetry. At the time of posting the list they

are closed to submissions, but they may reopen in the summer. To learn more about their submission guidelines, visit their website [here](#).

8. **Deerbrook Editions**

An independent literary press publishing noteworthy or emerging authors in well-designed trade editions. They are usually open to submissions from August to September. You can read their submission guidelines [here](#).

9. **Ekstasis Editions**

A Canadian publisher of poetry manuscripts. They have been around since 1982. To read their submission guidelines, go [here](#).

10. **Harbor Mountain Press**

A nonprofit poetry press based in Vermont, they prefer queries before submissions. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

11. **Lapwing Publications**

A small publisher of poetry based out of Belfast. You can learn more [here](#).

12. **solid objects**

solid objects is a publisher of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction

based out of New York. They are currently closed to submissions but should reopen this year. You can read our full review [here](#).

13. **Doubleback Books (Sundress Publications)**

Doubleback Books is an imprint of Sundress Publishing that reprints books from small independent presses that have closed. They host one open reading period a year generally with submissions made via email. Sundress Publishing as a whole is open to free manuscript submissions by BIPOC. You can learn more [here](#).

14. **Winter Goose Publishing**

They are open to a wide variety of genres, including poetry. They ask that you only submit 15 poems from the manuscript initially. They are currently closed to submissions but you can subscribe to their newsletter to learn when they reopen to submissions in 2021. To learn more, go [here](#).

15. **Coach House Books**

Coach House Books publishes innovative poetry, literary fiction, drama and select nonfiction primarily by Canadian authors. You can learn more [here](#).

16. **Northwestern University Press**

A university press open to unsolicited poetry manuscript submissions. Learn more [here](#).

17. **Cornerstone Press**

They accept fee-free submissions for their Portage Poetry series. Learn more [here](#).

18. **Salmon Poetry**

This Irish poetry press asks that you query first. They are currently closed to new submissions but plan to reopen later in 2021, even though they have publications lined up till 2024. Learn more about them [here](#).

19. **Nine Arches Press**

A small poetry publisher. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

20. **Unicorn Press**

A North Carolina-based poetry publisher. They have two reading periods a year and do not consider work outside of that. In 2021 those periods are 1 October to 31 December, and 1 April to 30 June. Learn more [here](#).

21. **Black Mountain Press**

A small publisher open to poetry and a number of other literary works. They charge a small fee for Submittable submissions, but sending through the post is free. Learn more [here](#).

22. **Canarium Books**

They are an independent press dedicated to publishing poetry by established and emerging authors from the US and abroad. At the time of writing this article the submission period is closed. They note it on their contact page when they reopen. Learn more [here](#).

23. **Faber & Faber**

This respected British publisher is open to unsolicited submissions of poetry only. Learn more [here](#).

24. **Kaya Press**

They only publish work by Asian and Pacific Islander diasporic writers in the US. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

25. **McSweeney's**

Started by the writer Dave Eggers, McSweeney's is a well known and established publisher. At the time of writing they are temporarily closed to submissions. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

26. Able Muse

A small publisher that publishes a wide variety of work. Learn more [here](#).

27. Damaged Goods Press

They publish poetry by queer and trans identified people. They accept chapbooks and full length manuscripts on a rolling basis. Learn more [here](#).

28. Acre Books

Acre Books is an imprint of [The Cincinnati Review](#). They focus on publishing literary fiction and poetry. They are interested in novels and short story collections. They are not accepting submissions of full manuscripts. They ask that authors query first. Read our review [here](#).

29. BatCat Press

A literary press that is planning to reopen to submissions later in 2021. Learn more [here](#).

30. Tinderbox Editions

This poetry press has at least one short fee-free period every year in summer and winter. They ask that only those that can't afford to pay

submit with the fee-free option, on the honor system. Learn more [here](#).

31. Persea Books

A respected literary publisher open to queries. Read our review [here](#).

32. Astrophil Press

A small press based out of the University of South Dakota. They have at least one open reading period a year, they do not accept unsolicited submissions outside of it. Learn more [here](#).

33. Coffee House Press

This respected independent publisher is open to poetry manuscript submissions at different time periods every year. They have a newsletter that notifies you when they open. Learn more [here](#).

34. Tarpaulin Sky

They are open to poetry manuscripts every year for a period of time. Visit their website [here](#).

35. Pavilion Poetry

Part of the University of Liverpool Press, they are committed to publishing the best in contemporary poetry. Learn more [here](#).

36. Milkweed Editions

This respected non-profit publisher only considers fee-free manuscript submissions for the Ballard Spahr Prize for Poetry, which is only available to poets based in the upper Midwest. The prize is open till 15 of February 2021. Learn more [here](#).

37. Mansfield Press

This small Canadian press is only open to submissions by Canadian authors. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

38. Arktoi Books This press only publishes work by lesbian authors. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

39. Wake Forest University Press

This small poetry press only publishes the work of Irish poets. To learn more, visit their website [here](#).

40. Prolific Press

Accepts full-length poetry, fiction, and nonfiction manuscripts. Learn more [here](#).

41. Phoenicia Publishing

They accept unsolicited manuscript submissions during reading

periods, but only after receiving and responding to a query letter from the poet. Learn more [here](#).

42. **Apogee Press**

They print beautiful books by a wide variety of new and established poets. They are currently not open to submissions. You can learn more [here](#).

43. **BookLand Press**

This Canadian press is only open to submissions from Canadians. They publish fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and Indigenous literature. Learn more [here](#).

44. **Holy Cow! Press**

This small press has been around for over forty years. They publish poetry and a variety of other genres. To learn more, go [here](#).

45. **Whisky Tit**

Whisky Tit is a small press that publishes a variety of quirky literary work. They have just started to publish poetry. They are open to submissions year round. To learn more, go [here](#).

46. **Grayson Books**

Grayson Books only publishes a few books a year, they find some

through contests (a fee is involved) and others through general submissions. To learn more, go [here](#).

47. City Lights

The famous publisher of many beat poets, City Lights is based out of San Francisco and they accept unsolicited poetry manuscript proposals. At the time of publishing this article they are on a COVID-19 initiated hiatus on submissions but plan to reopen. You can learn more [here](#).

48. Inside the Castle

This small press has at least one submission period a year. You can learn more [here](#).

49. Salò Press

An independent micro publisher focusing on poetry & fictions of an experimental / weird / surreal nature. To learn more, go [here](#).

50. ECW Press

They are only open to fiction and poetry books submitted by Canadians; there are no citizenship restrictions on writers submitting nonfiction. Learn more [here](#).

51. Disorder Press

This small press is looking for unapologetic writing. Learn more [here](#).

52. Vegetarian Alcoholic Press

They are seeking manuscripts longer than 25 pages. After six years of being open to unsolicited submissions they are taking a temporary break. Learn more [here](#).

53. University of Saint Katherine Press

They publish poetry, essays, and short fiction, as well as academic books in the humanities and social sciences, science, technology, medicine, and education. They are open to submissions in all of these categories. All of the books they publish reflect on Christianity in some way. Read our full review [here](#), and see their guidelines [here](#).

54. Wolsak and Wynn

They publish books by Canadian authors mainly, and discourage non-Canadian residents from submitting. Learn more [here](#).

55. Two Plum Press

Two Plum Press produces slim volumes of literary works both contemporary and classic. Titles include works of poetry, essays,

fiction, philosophy, visual art, travel, and food writing. You can learn more about them [here](#).

56. **Indigo Dreams**

They have one open reading period per year. This year's has just closed, but I've left it on this list because the next reading period will likely be at the very start of the year, and before this list is updated.

To learn more, go [here](#).

57. **Nightingale & Sparrow**

They publish full length and chapbook length work. They have different reading periods for different length work. The full length period this year is in May. You can visit their website [here](#).

58. **Biblioasis**

This literary press is based in Windsor, Ontario. They publish poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. You can learn more [here](#).

59. **Encircle Publications**

To learn more, read our review [here](#). At the time of publishing they are closed to submissions but plan to reopen later in 2021.

60. **Clash Books**

Clash Books started in 2015, they also publish Clash Magazine and

the literary journal Black Telephone Magazine. They publish fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Learn more [here](#).

61. **Invisible Publishing**

Invisible Publishing publishes literary fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Read more [here](#).

62. **Inanna Press**

This feminist press is based in Canada but publishes authors from around the world. Learn more [here](#).

63. **Peneract Press**

A UK-based publisher of formal, visual, and constrained poetry. Learn more [here](#).

64. **Grey Borders Books**

They publish books that confront and challenge current social norms. They publish poetry, fiction, and nonfiction. They are currently closed but plan to reopen later in 2021. Learn more [here](#).

65. **University of Pittsburgh Press**

The Pitt Poetry Series publishes one book a year, but you can only submit if you have previously published a full-length manuscript. Learn more [here](#).

66. High Plains Press

A respected regional press, they publish one poetry title a year in a series called “Poetry of the American West.” Learn more [here](#).

67. Tia Chucha Press

A cross-cultural press that is open to poetry submissions. Learn more [here](#).

68. Alaska Literary Series

Published by the University of Alaska Press, this series publishes only work by those with a connection to or writing about Alaska, or the circumpolar north. Learn more [here](#).

69. Broken Sleep Books

A UK-based company that publishes contemporary poetry of a more experimental slant. Learn more [here](#).

70. Deep Vellum

They are a non-profit publisher of poetry, nonfiction, and prose, open to submissions based on queries. Learn more [here](#).

71. Golden Antelope

They publish poetry, short stories, novellas, novels, plays, and works

of creative nonfiction. They reopen to submissions on May 1st. Learn more [here](#).

72. 404Ink

A Scottish publisher open to international submissions, with varying reading periods. Learn more [here](#).

73. New Rivers Press

This literary leaning press, located at Minnesota State University Moorhead, is open a few different times a year for general submissions. Learn more [here](#).

74. Panhandler Books

This Florida-based press will in all likelihood reopen to submissions on January 1st 2022, before I update this review. So I'm including a link to it for that reason, plus they have a very nice magazine. Learn more [here](#).

75. Green Writers Press

They are open to submissions from January till June 1st of poetry manuscripts, and they run the literary journal The Hopper. Learn more [here](#).

76. Game Over Books

A wonderful and innovative press that publishes excellent work and is periodically open to submissions. Learn more [here](#).

77. 11:11 Press

A small press founded in 2018, they are open to submissions till March 31st this year. Learn more [here](#).

78. April Gloaming

They publish southern writing but they have varying definitions of what that is. Learn more [here](#).

79. Bad Betty Press

They publish chapbooks and full length manuscripts by Black, Brown, and Asian writers. Learn more [here](#).

80. Shearsman Books

A UK-based publisher of poetry. Read their guidelines carefully. Learn more [here](#).

81. BD Studios

They publish manuscripts mostly by queer creators, but they say they are open to submissions by all. To learn more, go [here](#).

82. Luath Press

This UK-based press publishes a wide variety of genres, including poetry. Learn more [here](#).

83. Black Ocean

They consider submissions of manuscripts year-round. Learn more [here](#).

84. Brighten Press

This Texas-based press publishes fiction and poetry for adults and children. Learn more [here](#).

85. University Professors Press

To learn more about their poetry, healing, and growth series, go [here](#).

86. Vine Leaves Press

They publish poetry under their Vignettes imprint. To learn more, go [here](#).

87. Xi Draconis

This small press pays in eight author copies and a hundred dollars. Learn more [here](#).

88. Riot in Your Throat

Founded in 2020, this brand new press is open to submissions at

various periods throughout the year. They focus on publishing feminist work. Learn more [here](#).

89. **Pski's Porch Publishing**

They have open reading periods in January and July. Learn more [here](#).

90. **Propertius Press**

A non-for-profit press that accepts submissions through Submittable. Learn more [here](#).

Also, while not free, [Gold Wake Press](#) has a good deal during their two submission periods; buy a book of theirs through Submittable, and you can submit your manuscript. [Sunbury Press](#) accepts submissions for \$2.95 to cover their Submittable fees.

Conclusion

Publishing a book of poetry probably seems a lot less straightforward than you'd assumed it was before picking up this book.

Right now that might be overwhelming but over time the information this book contains will just become part of how you understand the publishing world, and it will help you take real concrete steps towards being published.

One day this information will just be part of your body of knowledge.

I'm wishing everyone who has read this book and follows the advice it contains the best of luck. If you have additional questions, don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing me at support@authorpublish.com.

Glossary of Terms

Helpful words to know in the context of writing and submitting.
Organized alphabetically.

Anthology

A published collection of poems or other pieces of writing, usually on a theme.

Chapbook

A ten to twenty-page collection of poetry or, less commonly, fiction or creative nonfiction, by one author.

Editor

The person or people who run the literary journal and consider your work for publication.

First Publication Rights

Most publications will not publish work that has previously appeared in a different literary journal, print or online. Because of this, most publishers require First Rights. These can also be called First North American Serial

Rights or First Serial Rights. No matter what they are called, it usually means that you are giving that publication exclusive rights to publish your poem first. After they publish the work, the rights revert to you, sometimes right away, sometimes after six months.

Any time specified over six months is not standard and that should be taken into consideration because if a literary journal retains the rights for a longer period, you may not be able to include that poem or short story as part of a longer book.

Genre

A category of artistic composition, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter. Genre can refer to poetry, prose, or nonfiction in terms of form. Or it can be a subject matter classification referring to science fiction, mysteries, or various other established types of stories. If a journal says they are not interested in genre work, they are using it as a subject matter classification.

Literary Journal

A magazine that publishes primarily poetry, fiction, and/or creative nonfiction.

Reader

Large journals and contests generally have volunteer readers. These individuals read a large chunk of the work submitted and decide what part of that work they are going to pass on to the editors.

Manuscript

An unpublished book-length work of fiction, nonfiction, or poetry.

Multiple Submissions

Multiple submissions is when you submit work that belongs to different genres (for example, a piece of flash fiction and packet of poetry) to the same journal at the same time. Some journals allow multiple submissions. Some do not.

Simultaneous Submissions

When you submit the same piece or pieces of writing to multiple journals at the same time. Most literary journals now allow and some even encourage simultaneous submissions.

Solicited Submissions

Submissions from authors that a publisher directly requests. Most journals publish a mix of solicited and unsolicited submissions. Editors can solicit the work of friends or of famous or emerging writers. Most of the time when your work is solicited, it is published.

Submission Manager

An online program that handles submissions electronically. The most common one is Submittable.

Unsolicited Submissions

The bulk of submissions to most journals are unsolicited. They are the submissions sent through submission managers, posts, or emails to literary journals.

About the Author

Emily Harstone is the author of many popular books, including *The Authors Publish Guide to Manuscript Submissions*, [*The 2019 Guide to Manuscript Publishers*](#), and [*The Authors Publish Guide to Children's and Young Adult Publishing*](#).

Through these books, she has helped many writers connect with quality publishers for their books.

She occasionally teaches [a course on manuscript publishing](#).

You can follow her on Facebook [here](#).