



Emily Harstone

# Poem to **BOOK**

The Poet's Path to a  
Traditional Publisher

3rd Edition

*Authors Publish*

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The Poet's Path to a  
Traditional Publisher

Third 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?

Publishing collections of poetry 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,” 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 fifty 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 actively publish 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 claiming to be a self-publisher.

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. All of them have been positively reviewed.

Usually, only after you have published poems in literary journals, anthologies, and chapbook(s), do you 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. It's not something I endorse. I have actually spent many years working on creating and updating the largest list of fee free poetry manuscript publishers available. But when I

approach submitting my own work I still often pay fees just so that my favorite poetry presses will consider my work.

Also, unlike in other genres, literary agents rarely represent poets. Most poets that have literary agents are also actively writing in other genres as well, and their literary agent represents them primarily in terms of the other genres. Most very famous, established poets, still don't have a literary agent.

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. Authors of "instapoetry", poetry that is designed for and primarily published on Instagram also don't start out publishing in literary journals.

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**

I have received hundreds of questions over the years about what makes the ideal packet. My opinion has very much shifted over the years. The advice I give now is different than the advice I wrote in the first edition of this book.

One of the experiences that has really shifted my perspective is teaching the [Writers’ Room for Poets](#) twice a year for over three years now. As part of this class we have at least two editors visit every session. Some of the editors run large publications, with dozens of readers, and other editors have run small one to two person operations. We’ve had editors visit from established journals like The Harbor Review, The Adroit Journal, Sixth Finch, and Frontier, and also smaller publications like Radar, BRAWL, Sonic Boom.

One of the things I've learned from talking with the editors from these journals is that editors have very different perspectives on what makes a good packet.

No two editors have agreed on anything. Most give contradictory advice. Also if their publication relies on readers, their advice is not always helpful, because often the work they are reading is only the work that has already been approved by readers.

However all but one of the visiting editors have agreed that the strongest poem should go first in the packet, as it is what makes the first impression. This is advice I've taken to heart, and I now do always start with what I consider to be my strongest poem.

Some editors really want packets that are tight and cohesive, other editors ideally want to see a range in your work.

What I've settled on personally, is trying to find a happy medium between these two opinions. I try to make sure that every packet I put together has a "throughline." Sometimes this means they have overlapping subject matter. Sometimes they are all personal, or all idea focused. Sometimes all they have in common is tone.

But I try to make sure that they don't have too much in common, in that if the subject overlaps between the poem, then I make sure the tone shifts.

I also try to make sure that there's always some variation in terms of length as well as line breaks and stanza breaks.

When writing the query letter, unless it's really required, please don't explain the theme or tone, or add any context to the poems you are submitting.

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 has 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. The author Matt Bell has a popular submission tracker template that you can access [here](#).

At first, a submission tracker 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 (or less) 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, and the fact that many journals close during the summer, 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 distract 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 new literary journals in various ways. I keep tabs on the journals my friends publish. 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.

*Authors Publish* does not have a formal list or database of journals but we review one literary journal a week and regularly post curated lists of journals. In our longer reviews, we include submission guideline details, acceptance rates, and payment information.

The five biggest listing services all have pros and cons, but all are worth using.

### **Duotrope**

Duotrope lists almost all of the journals that are open to free submissions. They also list journals that charge a fee, but they always try to make note of that. However, journals are making 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 tells you 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 is a wealth of information. You can monitor the journals you submit to 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.

Unfortunately, over a decade ago Duotrope started charging \$50 a year to use most of its services. They often offer free trial memberships for thirty days, so if you are curious, you can always try that option.

I pay the fee and do not regret it, but honestly, it depends on how much you end up submitting. I also think the information they now have is skewed because it is primarily used by established poets in the U.S., whereas before, it had more variable contributors. Because all the information they provide 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.

Over the past two years particularly, I've seen the quality of information available on Duotrope decrease. Fewer users are inputting information, and many markets are poorly covered in terms of response statistics.

They've also expanded into other areas, including agent listings and having their own submission tracker, and their attention feels spread thin. None of the aspects of the site are receiving the amount of attention they deserve.

### **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 was started later.

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, in terms of general interest literary journals.

They have a fair amount of data in terms of Science Fiction and Fantasy publications. In general, they are much more likely to have accurate data on genre journals. Over the last five years, genre writers have started to actively use it and submit reports. So, while most literary journals do not have useful data attached to them on the site, most genre journals are covered in detail.

It's also important to note that if a journal doesn't honor contracts or behaves badly in some other known way they list that information, which is helpful. Duotrope does not disclose this information unless they formally delist a journal, and this is rare.

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 U.S. However, they still list over 2,000 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 say if the journal charges reading fees or not, which is 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 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 that 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 now.

### **chill subs**

chill subs is a newer sortable database of places one can submit to. As the name suggests, it is more informal than Duotrope and other databases, and

it embraces certain aspects of contemporary internet culture much more.

You can search by magazine or contributor name, response time, and vibe, and whether they are open for submissions and offer expedited submissions (mostly for a fee or to historically excluded communities). It also allows writers to see only publishers that allow reprints, simultaneous submissions, and free submissions. The fact that they allow you to filter out all the markets that charge submission fees is, personally, the most important for me, and something that's impossible to do with a number of other databases. You can eliminate all markets that don't pay, as well.

One of the aspects of the site I really appreciate is the promotion and hype section. They share how active literary journals are on social media, and they make it clear which publishers continue to promote the work of authors who previously published with them. I'm also grateful that they make it clear if they are available in print and whether examples of the work they've published are online.

When they initially launched they were extremely intuitive and easy to use, and over the years they've continued to expand into small presses and contests and other markets. The site has gotten more unwieldy over time and you now have to pay a fee to access certain information.

My major issue is that they are not very good at updating their database or marketing journals as defunct. I've found journals that closed their doors

three years ago. However, I'm hopeful that will change and they have already implemented some features that should help with that.

## 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.

In [Submit, Publish, Repeat](#), I share a long list of places you can start submitting to, and give more context for why I'm encouraging submitting to them. In this eBook

I think it's important to figure out what your goals are as a poet. If your goal is to be published by a specific literary press that you are a big fan of, start looking through the books they publish.

At the end of a book of poetry (or occasionally at the start), they will include a list of all the poems that were previously published in literary journals and anthologies before. The list will include the names of the literary journals and anthologies that initially published the poems. This is really helpful work, especially with newer poets, publishing their debut books.

It's good to focus on these lists in debut authors' books, because their work is less likely to be solicited by the press. Also, with very established poets, they sometimes find the publisher for the whole manuscript, before they place the poems.

Start making a list from all the lists you're reading in books. Write down all the names of the journals and then look them up. Some may well already be defunct (a lot of literary journals don't make it). But it can very much be worth submitting to the active ones.

If your primary goal is a book, it's also worth trying to evaluate how helpful a literary journal would be in promoting your chapbooks and/or books once they are published. Some journals have great systems in place to support poets who have previously been published by them, and some do not.

Most journals that are active on social media are more likely to promote the work of authors whose work has appeared in their pages (or on their website) in the past. This is because it's easier to do a social media post than to write up a whole review or interview.

Whenever I see a journal promoting the full-length work of a poet they've published in the past, I prioritize submitting to them, because I know they will help publicize my book or chapbook when it comes out.

When I published my second chapbook, almost half of the poems had

been previously published elsewhere. I reached out to all those journals and received a lot of promotional help in terms of reviews, interviews, and social media posts.

Promoting a book or a chapbook is really challenging, and having support from literary journals can really make a difference in terms of getting the work out there.

## 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 accept 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. We also include calls for anthologies as part of our Notes from the Editors desk column on the fourth Thursday of every month.

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

When vetting anthologies for your own purposes it is important to steer clear of submitting to anthologies that don't send out contributor copies. Some anthology publishers are essentially publishing mills, where they make all their money from the authors that they publish and not from readers.

These presses and anthologies are not highly regarded, and while publishing in them would not hurt your chances of publishing a book, it would not help either.

# 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

Chapbooks are very small books, usually between 15-30 pages in length, 50 at the most. They frequently have no spine and are often bound with staples but they can also be bound with ribbon or thread. They have been around for a long time, at least since the 16th century, when they were associated with fiction, but now they generally function as a vehicle for poetry.

There are several 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, often by selling the chapbook at open mics and other events.

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 re-published later on 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 dollars generally.

Poets that start writing outside of an established community, as 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 like 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 book takes 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. I have published three chapbooks now, all through chapbook publishers. I chose to go that route because the first two publishers were familiar with my work and approached me, the third was accepted not long after I started submitting.

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. 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 10 and 25, 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.

There are some chapbook options for prose writers as well, although they are a little rarer. Porkbelly Press which we list in the next chapter also publishes prose chapbooks, as does [Wordrunner eChapbooks](#) (although they only have fee free submissions for some submissions).

## Chapbook Publishers

Please 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. Because most chapbook reading periods are so short, there are more publishers closed to submissions than most of our lists. Some of these publishers have limited demographics in terms of who can submit.

Many publishers not on this list charge reading fees. 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. If you are open to paying fees to submit, Poets & Writers has a good list [here](#) that works in terms of a starting place.

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

### **Porkbelly Press**

Letterpress, lithograph, and screen print are all used by this micro-press for their covers. Interior pages are printed the regular way. Poetry, prose,

and graphic narrative manuscripts are accepted. They publish 4 to 10 titles per year. They are generally open to chapbook submissions in January, and in July they accept micro-chapbook (8 to 10 pages) submissions. They have a print run of 200 and they give authors 10 copies and a discount on additional ones. The books they publish are beautiful and well curated.

### **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. They have rolling submission periods and alert their mailing list subscribers on when they open for submissions. They have a cap on submissions when they open. It can be very tricky to submit because of this. One generally has to submit to them within the first hour that they are open. They will consider projects of any length (for chapbooks and full-length books) in any of the following genres: poetry, experimental nonfiction, performance texts, books by artists, and work in translation, particularly from languages not widely represented in US-based English translations.

### **Glass Poetry Press**

This press publishes 3 to 5 poetry chapbooks a year plus a free literary journal. They are generally open to submissions in March but are planning to hold a different submission period this year. Payment to the author is 10 copies plus 15% of royalties on sales. The print run is between 100 and 200 copies.

## Origami Poems Project

They publish micro-chapbooks that contain between 1-6 poems . They are open to submissions year round except for July and August.

## Fifth Wheel Press

They only accept submissions from individuals who belong to the queer, trans, and/or gender-nonconforming communities. They publish chapbooks of all kinds, and are open to submissions in December.

## Seven Kitchens Press

They have a number of chapbook reading periods a year. Some have limited demographics, including regional. They do not charge for submission but encourage submitters to donate or purchase a past publication. Each of them have different guidelines and some of the guidelines involve limited demographics.

## Two Plum Press

Two Plum Press produces slim volumes of literary works both contemporary and classic, although they don't call them chapbooks most of what they publish seems to fit that description. Titles include works of poetry, essays, fiction, philosophy, visual art, travel, and food writing.

## Green Bottle Press

This UK based press is seeking chapbooks (or pamphlets as they are often called in the UK) from poets who have published work in literary journals before but have not published full length collections, though they

occasionally accept work from more established poets. Their open submission window is generally in April.

### **Parlyaree Press**

Parlyaree Press was established in 2023 in Atlanta Georgia. They are focused on publishing work that "expands, reveals, and interrogates the mainstream". They want their books to "exist in the liminal space between what was and what will be." In terms of poetry they want chapbook-length (or longer!) poetry collections.

### **Querencia Press**

Querencia Press is a small press that describes themselves by saying "Querencia Press is an independent publisher from the Chicago-land area amplifying marginalized voices & creating a safe space for writers and artists to share their stories. We are especially interested in work that has been looked over in the past and challenges conventional genre placement." They publish poetry, fiction, nonfiction and hybrid work. They publish a journal which we've reviewed [here](#) (back in 2022), as well as an additional journal named [Scavengers](#). They publish chapbooks as well as full length manuscripts. They are not open to submissions currently.

### **Bullshit Lit**

Bullshit Lit describes itself by saying they are, "Inspired by a stack of silly poems, *Bullshit Lit* is the antithesis to those flowery submissions calls for, like, "the deepest echo in your heartcanyon." We don't take ourselves too

seriously. We like to see your worst. Your trash. Get funky with it. We love silly poems, nonsense prose, and lazy lore." They were founded in 2021 in Philadelphia by [Veronica Bennett](#). They plan to reopen to submissions of chapbook length work (a minimum of 15 pages), in 2026.

### **Whittle Micropress**

This micro chapbook publisher focuses on publishing collections between 8-12 pages long. They publish digitally as downloadable PDFs and their website and covers are great. Their 2026 publication schedule is already full, so they are closed to submissions currently, but seem to be planning to reopen to submissions at some point in 2026.

## 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.

More and more people are doing readings online via video or podcast format. This works well too!

## 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 it 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.

## 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.

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.

# 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.

# 106 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. A few of the publishers are open all the time. Some have a limited window that can be as short as two days, or as long as three months. Some have newsletters that notify potential submitters when they re-open. If that is the case I mention that as part of the listing.

On most of our lists it isn't unusual for a few of the publishers to be closed, but the numbers are much higher here, because poetry publishers

generally have shorter submission windows, and some only read submissions through fee-free contests.

The presses listed here change dramatically every year, even if the number listed doesn't shift that much. That is because between presses closing (to submissions or period), or moving towards a paid model, it's normal for me to remove up to 20 presses a year, and then add 20 new ones.

A number 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.

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, but I still spend at least 15 minutes looking into most of the presses before adding them.

I eliminated any press that had glaring red flags, but please research any of the presses on the list you are considering submitting to. To learn more about what to look out for, please go [here](#).

Also it's important to note, that just because a press qualifies for this list, it in no way makes it an automatic good fit for your poetry manuscript.

There are a lot of presses on this list that I would not submit to. Some I admire, but my poetry would not be a good fit. Some don't have good enough distribution for my personal needs. These are just two examples, but I hope they help make my point, that you should make sure that presses meet your personal criteria and are a good fit for your work before submitting work to them.

It is also important to note that most poetry manuscript publishers want their authors to have a track record of publication. Most want to see a history of authors publishing their work in literary journals. If you haven't started submitting to literary journals yet, reading [Submit, Publish, Repeat](#) is a good place to start. This includes publishing poems that are in the manuscript you are submitting. If you open any traditionally published book of poems there is usually a list of poems that have been previously published in the back of the book.

In the free eBook, [Poem to Book](#), I talk more about the steps poets can take to make their manuscripts more publishable. The end of that eBook includes an outdated version of this list. Please refer to this list instead.

Please spend time with the presses catalog and submission guidelines before proceeding to make sure your work is a good fit, and appropriately submitted.

Three people work on this list every year, and I am grateful for everyone's contributions. On average it takes over 30 hours to update and add to this

list, a process we undertake yearly. It is far from our most successful list, but it is the one closest to my heart.

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](mailto:support@authorspublish.com).

Also, If you are not opposed to paying submission fees, [this Substack](#) focuses on poetry manuscript publishing opportunities, and they sometimes help writers pay the fees. I found some of the fee-free presses listed there and I think they are very much worth supporting.

### **Sea Crow Press**

A small press that publishes literary fiction and poetry that was started in 2020 that is seeking Eco-Poetry manuscripts only. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Arte P<sup>ú</sup>blico Press**

Arte P<sup>ú</sup>blico 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, refer to their [submissions page](#).

### **June Road Press**

A small US-based press that publishes wonderful poetry collections, and they do not accept work from international writers. This year they are not

reading for poetry collections, but are accepting individual poems for consideration in an anthology. You can learn more [here](#).

### **House of Anansi Press**

This is an established Canadian press that also publishes nonfiction and literary fiction. They only accept submissions from Canadian citizens and residents. They are generally open to submissions of prose and poetry. You can learn more about them [here](#). They are currently scheduled out to 2030 for poetry collections so if you want your work to be published on the earlier side of things, they are not the right fit for you currently. They also are currently going through some restructuring which you can learn more about [here](#).

### **Carcanet**

A UK-based publisher of poetry. They have one to two reading periods a year with specific limitations. They have yet to announce their 2026 submission period. To learn more about their submission guidelines, visit their website [here](#).

### **Ekstasis Editions**

A Canadian publisher of poetry manuscripts. They have been around since 1982. They usually consider submissions from Canadians only. To read their submission guidelines, go [here](#). You can visit their main page [here](#).

### **Coach House Books**

Coach House Books publishes innovative poetry, literary fiction, drama and select nonfiction, primarily by Canadian authors. They accept only 10

or so submissions per year. You can learn more [here](#). They plan to reopen to fiction and nonfiction submissions on January 15th, they are still open for poetry submissions.

### **Northwestern University Press**

A university press open to unsolicited poetry manuscript submissions.

Learn more [here](#). Please note that you have to scroll down for the poetry manuscript guidelines. They are not open to submissions at the time of this update.

### **Cornerstone Press**

You can read our full review of the press [here](#). They publish a number of genres including poetry manuscripts. Learn more [here](#).

### **Salmon Poetry**

This Irish poetry press asks that you query first. They are currently closed to new submissions. Learn more about them [here](#).

### **Nine Arches Press**

A small poetry publisher. You must have a track record or a small audience in the UK to be seriously considered by them. They plan to reopen to submissions in August 2026. To learn more, refer to their [submission guidelines](#).

### **Unicorn Press**

A North Carolina-based poetry publisher. They have one reading period a year and do not consider work outside of that. In 2026, they will be open from May 1st through June 30th. Learn more [here](#).

## Faber

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

## Parlyaree Press

Parlyaree Press was established in 2023 in Atlanta, Georgia. They are focused on publishing work that “expands, reveals, and interrogates the mainstream”. They want their books to “exist in the liminal space between what was and what will be.” In terms of poetry they want chapbook-length (or longer!) poetry collections. See our review of them [here](#) and their submission guidelines [here](#).

## Bench

Bench is a new small literary press focused on publishing prose and poetry. They only publish 2-4 books per year. At the time of this update they are closed. To learn more, go [here](#).

## Querencia Press

We’ve reviewed this small press [here](#). You can see their submission guidelines [here](#). They are currently closed to submissions but plan to reopen in 2026.

## 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](#). They have an open reading period for poetry in January.

### **Persea Books**

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

### **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](#).

### **Puncher & Wattmann**

This small press tries to have a reading period every year. They haven't announced an upcoming one yet. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Turtle Point Press**

They accept only a couple of new authors a year, but they are open to querying. They only respond if they are interested in seeing more. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Great Place Books**

This small but ambitious press only publishes 1-2 books per year. They publish prose and poetry and you can read our full review [here](#).

### **Lamar University Press**

They publish poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and drama. They are only open to submissions in April and November. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Wolsak and Wynn**

They publish books by Canadian authors mainly, and discourage non-Canadian residents from submitting. They accept submissions from January 1st to March 31st each year. Learn more [here](#).

## **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](#).

## **Brick Books**

An established and respected Canadian publisher, they are open only to submissions from Canadians. They generally have only one submission period a year. To learn more, go [here](#).

## **Biblioasis**

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

## **CLASH Books**

CLASH Books started in 2015, They publish fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. They stress that they are “extremely selective about poetry”. Learn more [here](#).

## **Invisible Publishing**

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

## **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](#) and [here](#), make sure to click on the subheading for the University of Alaska Press.

## **Broken Sleep Books**

A UK-based company that publishes contemporary poetry and prose of a more experimental slant. They have four open reading periods a year each with different parameters. Learn more [here](#).

## **Deep Vellum**

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

## **Green Writers Press**

Green Writers Press is a rural Vermont-based publishing house that aims to spread environmental awareness and social justice. They publish poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and youth literature. They are open to submissions from March 1, 2026, until June 1, 2026. Learn more [here](#).

## **Changes Press**

They are planning to have a general open reading period for full length manuscripts in spring 2026. Learn more [here](#).

## **Game Over Books**

A press that publishes excellent work and is periodically open to submissions. They are not currently open to submissions. Learn more [here](#).

## **Bad Betty Press**

They are a UK-based publisher of chapbooks and full length manuscripts. Because of lack of government funding last year they did not have an open reading period in 2025. It's unclear if they will have a reading period in 2026, but I'm keeping them on the list for now, just in case. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Shearsman Books**

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

## **Luath Press**

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

## **Black Ocean**

They have a number of submission periods, some with limited demographics, others without. Learn more [here](#).

## **Vine Leaves Press**

They publish poetry under their Vignettes imprint, they also publish hybrid work. They generally have at least one submission period a year.

They are currently open to submissions through the 31st of January 2026. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Broadstone Books**

A small press that primarily publishes poetry. Their current reading period closes at midnight EST January 31, 2026. They have very detailed and helpful FAQs that must be reviewed. Submissions are restricted to authors living at least part-time in North America. Learn more [here](#).

### **Lily**

A small press that publishes excellent poetry. They charge for general submissions, but offer free submissions for poets who identify as Black. Learn more [here](#).

### **Texas Review Press**

They have a number of reading periods a year, some are paid contests, some are free. All have a cap on 300 submissions so please submit early in the month that they are open (the first day is safest). Some of their submission periods are open to all authors and some have geographic limitations. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Green Bottle Press**

A small UK press. They have no strict geographic restrictions but state “if you are submitting from outside the UK or Ireland, please consider if you have any friends or fans of your work in these islands. If you live in the US for example, you should have a strong network of readers here, otherwise it will be very hard to sell your work. It would be better for you

to seek publication in your own country.” They are currently closed to submissions but will have their next reading period in April. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Jackleg Press**

This small press primarily focuses on publishing poetry and short story collections. They only consider queries from US-based writers. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Arc Publications**

This established and respected UK based press is open to unsolicited manuscripts for its UK & Ireland list once a year, from the 1st through the 15th of June. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Emma Press**

This small but established UK based press tries to have one open reading period per year. At the time of this update no schedule has been shared. You can learn more [here](#).

### **The Gallery Press**

An Irish poetry press that publishes work by Irish and Ireland based poets. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **BloodAxe Books**

This UK-based press is established and respected, and will only consider poets who have not already published full-length collections, but have published widely in literary journals. They do not plan to be open to submissions this year because they currently have a full schedule. They

are remaining on the list because they have a long track record of regularly being open to submissions. I will remove them from the list next year if things have not changed. Learn more [here](#).

### **Action Books**

A small press that publishes a range of genres including poetry, you can learn more about them [here](#). You can sign up to be notified of when they reopen to submissions [here](#).

### **Fernwood Press**

A small royalty-paying press that publishes poetry. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Woodhall Press**

A small press that publishes a variety of work, including poetry. You can read our review of the press [here](#). They reopen to submissions on January 15th, 2026.

### **Circling Rivers**

A small press that is open to poetry and nonfiction submissions. They are closed to submissions at the time of this update. Learn more [here](#).

### **Hub City Press**

A respected press with great distribution. They publish books of literary fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, regional nonfiction, nature, and art. They only publish writers living in or from the southern US. They charge for some submission periods but not others. Some submission periods allow poetry, others do not. Learn more [here](#).

## **Giramondo**

Giramondo doesn't have any strict guidelines in terms of geography, but they do appear to have a track record of publishing primarily writers from Australia and New Zealand, and they expect submitting writers to be familiar with their catalog. They publish quality poetry, nonfiction, and fiction. They have limited submission windows. On their website you can sign up to be notified when the next one opens. Learn more [here](#).

## **Fremantle Press**

They accept submissions of unsolicited manuscripts from authors of Western Australian origin or whose main place of residence is Western Australia, or non-Western Australian authors whose work has a strong Western Australian focus. They publish nonfiction, fiction and narrative nonfiction, poetry, and books for children and young adults. They reopen to poetry submissions on 28 February 2026. Learn more [here](#).

## **Bottom Dog Press/ Bird Dog Publishing**

They focus on publishing working class literature. Books must be a minimum of 80 pages. To read their submission guidelines, go [here](#).

## **Black Lawrence Press**

This press charges fees for most submissions but has one series that focuses on publishing the writing of Immigrants to the US, and is open to fee-free submissions by authors that are immigrants to the US. Learn more [here](#).

## **Ben Yehuda Press**

They only publish the work of Jewish poets and writers. Learn more [here](#).

## **Arteidolia Press**

An artist-run press based out of Ridgewood, Queens with focus on publishing collections of poetry, visual poetry, essays & experimental writing. You can learn more [here](#).

## **World Poetry**

This respected press has good distribution and is open to queries, but only of collections by single authors of poetry translated into English. They are also open to proposals in early June. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Blue Cactus**

They accept submissions for full-length manuscripts by women, transgender and gender-nonconforming People of Color in the Pacific Northwest on a rolling basis. They are not interested in receiving manuscript submissions from someone who doesn't match this description. They are not open to poetry submissions during every submission period. Learn more [here](#).

## **Yellow King Press**

A small press open to submissions of poetry and short stories. They ask that you submit “no more than five poems or two short stories in a single word doc.” They are currently closed to submissions. Learn more [here](#).

## **Peepal Tree Press**

Peepal Tree specializes in Caribbean and Black British writing. They publish poetry and fiction. Learn more [here](#).

## **Book \*hug Press**

A Canadian small press that focuses primarily on publishing Canadian authors. They publish a range of literary works, including poetry. They will reopen to submissions in 2027 Learn more [here](#).

### **Counterpath Press**

This small literary press only responds to queries they are interested in. Assume rejection if you have not heard from them in 90 days. Learn more [here](#).

## **The African Poetry Book Funds Award: Sillerman First Book Prize**

### **University of Nebraska Press**

This prize is for poets born in Africa, or who are nationals of an African country, or whose parents are African, and who have not yet had a full-length poetry book published. It is open to submissions annually between September 15<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. Details [here](#).

## **Beautiful Days Press**

A small press that focuses on poetry. They are closed to submissions but have an email list you can sign up for that announces reading period openings and publications. Learn more [here](#).

## **Princeton Series of Contemporary Poets**

They accept submissions every May for this prestigious and highly competitive series. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Codhill Press: Guest Editors Poetry Series**

In 2022 Codhill Press launched this series. They plan to be open to submissions again this May. They still have the guidelines up from last year's session [here](#).

## **Moon Tide Press**

A small poetry focused press based out of Southern California. They only accept postal submissions. You can learn more [here](#), and [here](#).

## **Phoenix Poets Series: University of Chicago Press**

The 2026 reading period opens on October 1st. All submitting poets must be over 21 and publishing their first or second book. Learn more [here](#).

## **Nightwood Editions**

A small press focused on publishing work of literary merit in Canada. They are only accepting work from Canadian writers. Learn more [here](#).

## **The Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize**

The Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize supports the publication of a first full-length book of poems by a Latinx poet residing in the United States. It is awarded every year and generally submissions close in February. The title will be published by the University of Nevada Press. The winner for 2025 has yet to be announced but the judge for 2026 is the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize winner Rigoberto González. You can learn more [here](#).

## **At Bay Press**

A respected Canadian publisher, they only accept submissions from Canadian authors, something they only make clear as part of their submission form. They only publish a few titles every year, including poetry and literary fiction. Learn more [here](#).

## **Louisiana State University Press**

They accept a wide variety of submissions, including poetry. Learn more [here](#).

## **Wet Cement Press**

They publish 3-5 books a year, and poetry is one of the genres they publish. Learn more [here](#).

## **Wayfarer Books**

This book publisher and literary journal is currently only open to direct submissions from marginalized creators. You can learn more about that call [here](#) and you can learn more about the press [here](#).

## **Turnstone Press**

A small Canadian press, open to submissions from Canadian authors only. Learn more [here](#).

## **Third Man Books**

They publish only six titles a year across many genres, but are open to submissions. Learn more [here](#).

## **8th House Publishing**

They took a few years off from publishing, and at one point, I thought they were fully defunct, but for over a year now they are back, actively publishing and open to submissions again. Learn more [here](#).

## **EastOver Press**

They publish collections of short stories, essays, and poetry, as well as the literary journal [Cutleaf](#). They are currently closed, but when they have been open in the past, there is a cap at 100 submissions. To learn more, go [here](#).

## **Wakefield Press**

This small Australian press mostly publishes work from Australasia, including poetry collections. Although they don't appear to have any strict guidelines about geographic limitations, I personally wouldn't submit to them unless I was based in the region. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Ronsdale Press**

This Canadian small press is only open to submissions from Canadians with a track record of publishing their work. To learn more, go [here](#).

## **Shanti Arts**

Shanti Arts describes itself as “a fiercely independent publishing company whose work is grounded in nature, art, and spirit”. They publish poetry primarily. Learn more [here](#).

## **Ranger Press (RPRESS)**

RPRESS is “an avant garde micro-press specializing in showcasing the

best visual and concrete poetry, as well as all hybrid and uncategorizable genres (text + visual)”. If they are interested they respond within 30 days. Otherwise assume rejection. They are currently closed to submissions. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Plough Publishing House**

Plough Publishing House was founded in 1920, and they publish books on faith, society, and the spiritual life, including collections of poetry. They have a very specific faith-based perspective. Please spend time on their site and with their catalog before submitting. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **The University of Calgary Press; Brave and Brilliant Imprint**

This University press’s literary imprint publishes poetry alongside other genres. They are currently closed to submissions but plan to announce their next reading period in April. They are only open to submissions from Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Learn more [here](#).

### **Third Hand Books**

They describe themselves by saying they “promote experimental writing with core commitments to the lyric, which is equipment for exploring the nature of human experience at the limits of language”. They are closed to submissions at the time of this update. To learn more, please visit their website [here](#).

### **DarkWinter Press**

This small Canadian press publishes novellas, novel-length manuscripts (85 000 words or less), short story collections, and poetry collections

“with a twist. We do not publish creative non-fiction”. They are reopening to submissions only from Canadian writers in March 2026. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Silver Bow**

This small press based out of Canada is open to poetry manuscript submissions, as well as other genres. They have specific submission guidelines that must be followed. Learn more [here](#).

### **Palimpsest Press**

They only publish Canadian authors. They are open to submissions from authors who identify as BIPOC, Deaf, or Disabled, all year round. They accept submissions from authors who do not identify as BIPOC, Deaf or Disabled from February 1st through March 31st. They publish poetry and other literary genres. Learn more [here](#).

### **Pen & Anvil**

This small press publishes a wide variety of literary work but are particularly interested in first collections by poets with a relationship to Boston or New England. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Red Rook Press**

This student-run press focuses on publishing work by new and upcoming writers. To be eligible for publication, they state “you must be enrolled as a graduate or undergraduate student (at any institution) during the semester of publication”. They are open to submissions till 1st April 2026. To learn more, go [here](#).

## **Serving House Books**

They are open to fee-free submissions of poetry collections once a year. In 2026, the fee-free reading period is until 28th February. To learn more, go [here](#).

## **The Poetic Justice Institute Prizes**

Formerly called the Poets Out Loud Prize, they have free submissions for BIPOC writers. They only have one reading period a year, in the early fall. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Perugia Press Prize**

This feminist press publishes women, inclusive of gender-expansive identities. Their reading period is during the fall. They have a submission fee, but waive it for all BIPOC submitters. You can learn more [here](#).

## **White Stag Publishing**

They describe themselves by saying “White Stag is looking for full length poetry manuscripts in the scope of our thematic elements, which can include themes of alchemy & the occult, mysticism & spirituality, folklore & mythos, the speculative or supranatural, or intersections of witchcraft & activism.” They are open to submissions including poetry manuscripts, only from US residents or individuals with a US mailing address. Their open reading period closes February 1st, 2026. You can learn more [here](#).

## **Lit Fox Books**

This nonprofit press is based in Austin, TX. They offer a fee-free period

for a book award every year, usually in December. The 2026 fee-free period ends on 15th January. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Andrews McMeel Publishing**

We've reviewed this established and well distributed press [here](#). In the past five years they have focused more on publishing a very specific kind of poetry, generally classified as "[instapoetics](#)". They are very successful in this space, and you can see what they currently publish [here](#). To learn more or submit, go [here](#).

### **Inanna Publications and Education Inc**

This Canadian feminist press allows international submissions and publishes poetry as well as other genres. They plan to reopen to submissions in 2026, but have not announced an exact date. You can learn more [here](#).

### **Wildhouse Press**

Wildhouse Press (WHP) is a small press based in Boston that started actively publishing work in 2021. Their tagline is "Adventurous Spirituality – for unconventional people." You can read our full review of them [here](#). They generally have one reading period a year, usually in the fall. You can learn more on their website [here](#).

**Yale University Press** They are only open to submissions of poetry in translation. You can learn more in our full review of the press [here](#).

### **Another New Calligraphy**

This small but established Chicago based literary press. They have a very

distinct catalog which you can get a feel for [here](#). Their submission guidelines are [here](#).

### **Bainbridge Island Press**

This small press is open to submissions from poets for their first book only. Manuscripts should be approx 80-120 pages in length. They publish many books a year. To learn more, go [here](#).

### **Doubleback Books and Sundress Publishing**

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 from May to August with submissions made via email. Sundress Publishing as a whole has an open reading period for books that have never been previously published, and they offer free submissions to BIPOC poets, they also are starting to have a fee-free period during some reading periods. You can learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

# 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@authorpusblish.com](mailto:support@authorpusblish.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 a 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](#), [Submit, Publish, Repeat](#), and [The 2025 Guide to Manuscript Publishers](#). She regularly teaches three acclaimed courses on writing and publishing at [The Writer's Workshop at Authors Publish](#). You can follow her on Facebook [here](#).