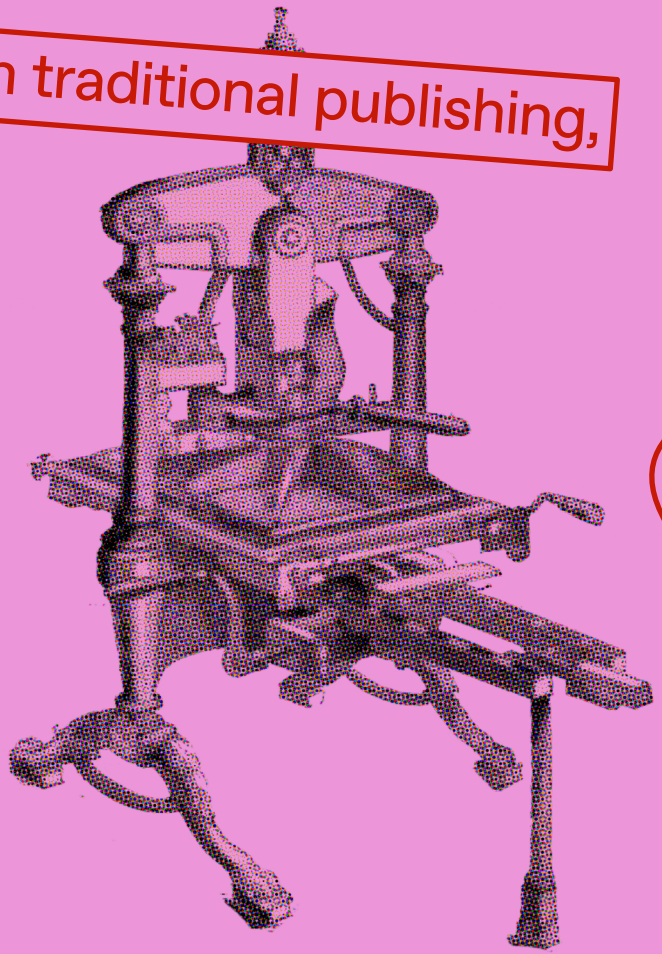
Do It Yourself!: Self-Publishing from Letterpress to LaserJet


do
SELF
it
PUBLISH
FROM
Letter
press
TO
Laser
Jet
your
self!

In traditional publishing,



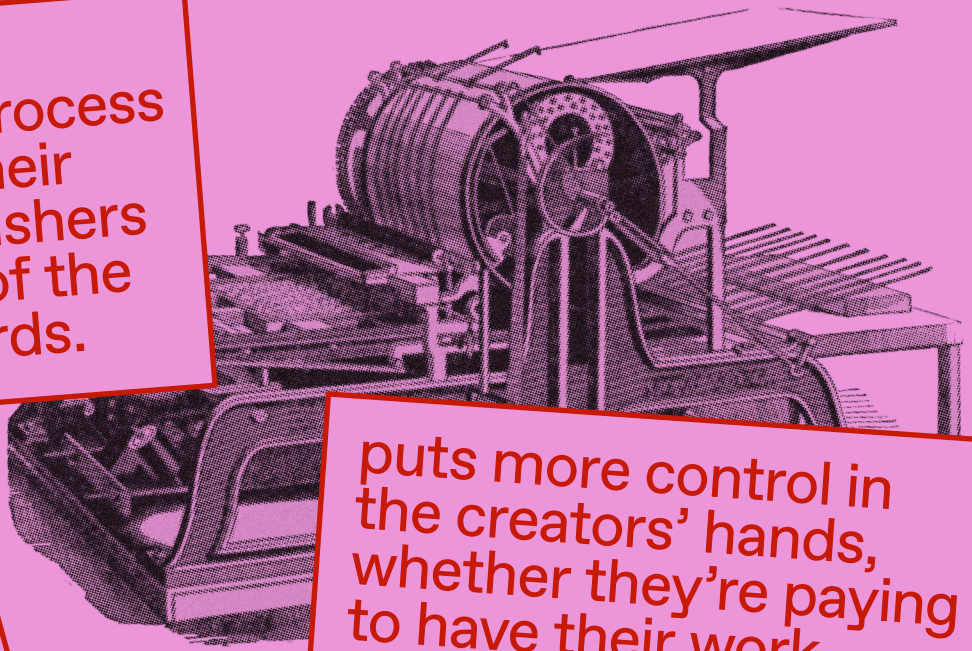
writers

and

artists

entrust editors, designers, printers, and many others with making decisions about how to produce and distribute their work.

In exchange for financing the process and applying their expertise, publishers assume most of the risks and rewards.



Self-publishing

puts more control in the creators' hands, whether they're paying to have their work printed, producing it entirely themselves, or something in between.

While the

digital era

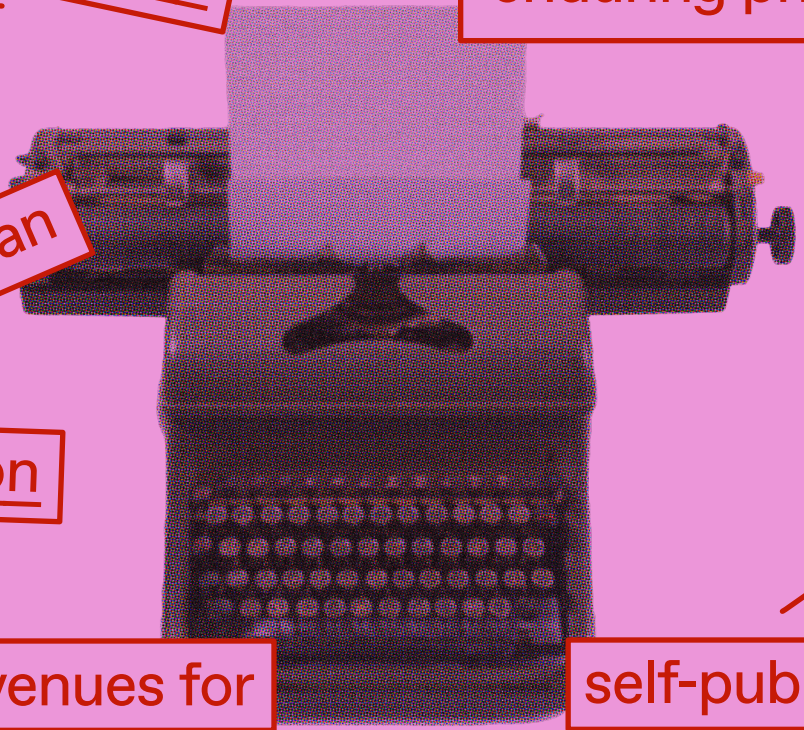
has brought an

explosion

of new avenues for

self-publishing,

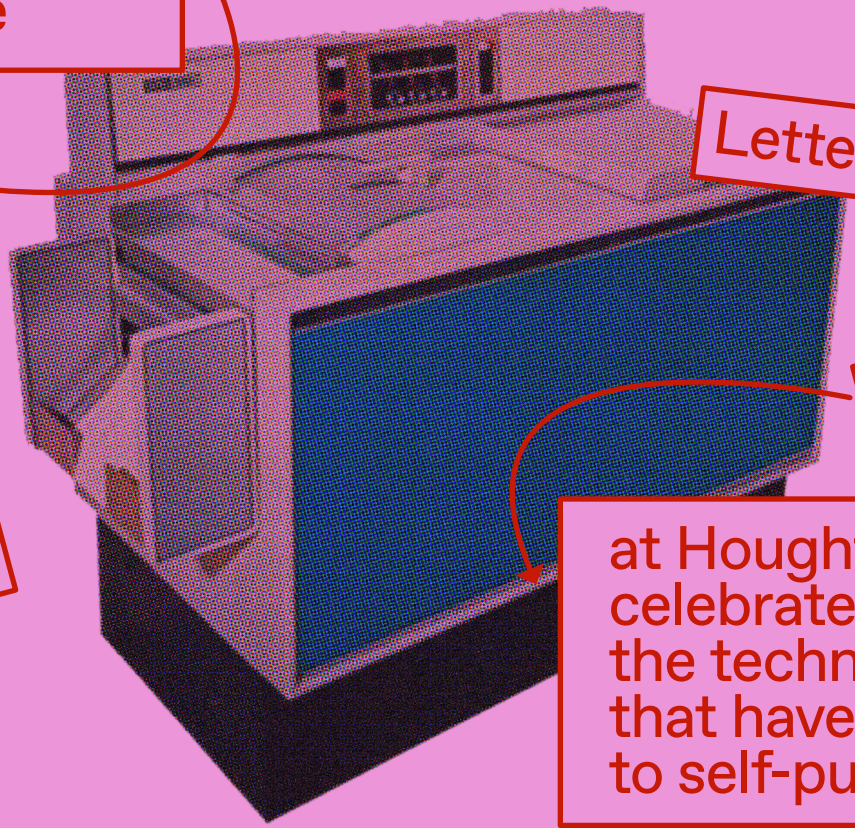
the practice is a much broader and more enduring phenomenon.



This companion zine to the

Do It Yourself!

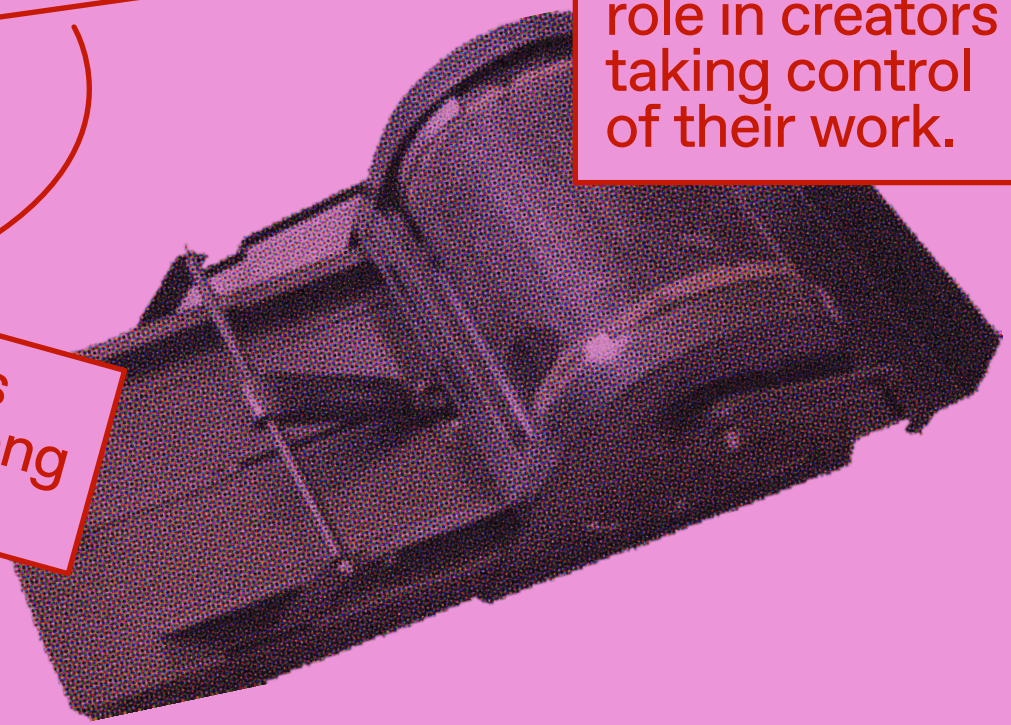
Self-Publishing from Letterpress to LaserJet



at Houghton Library celebrates some of the technologies that have been used to self-publish.

Some of these technologies are now household names,

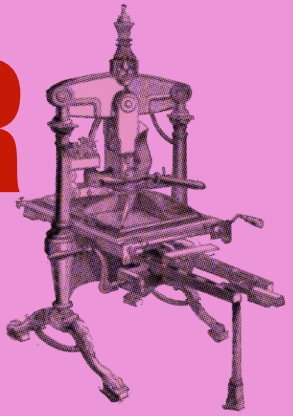
while others have been long forgotten,



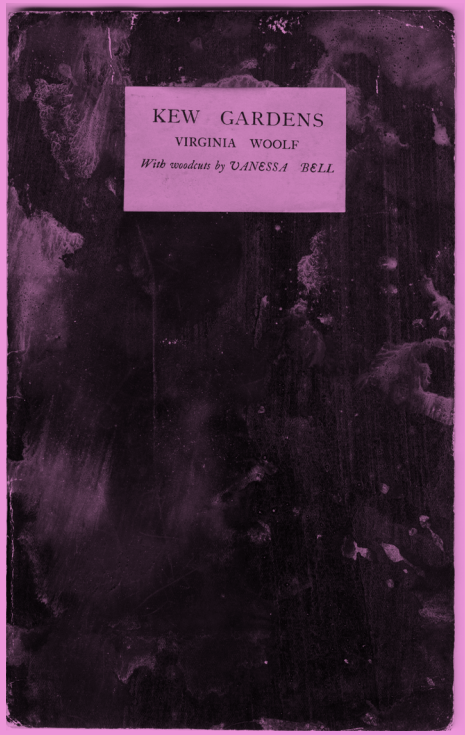
but all have played a crucial role in creators taking control of their work.

LETTER PRESS

1450



Letterpress printing uses a press to transfer ink from a raised surface to paper. For most of letterpress's history, that raised surface was composed of movable type: individual pieces of metal for each letter, space, and punctuation mark. This allows letters to be rearranged repeatedly to print new texts. Movable type itself originated in China in the eleventh century, but it kicked off a printing revolution hundreds of years later when mechanical printing presses and an efficient way to cast metal type were developed in Europe. Letterpress was the dominant means of printing books until well into the 20th century.

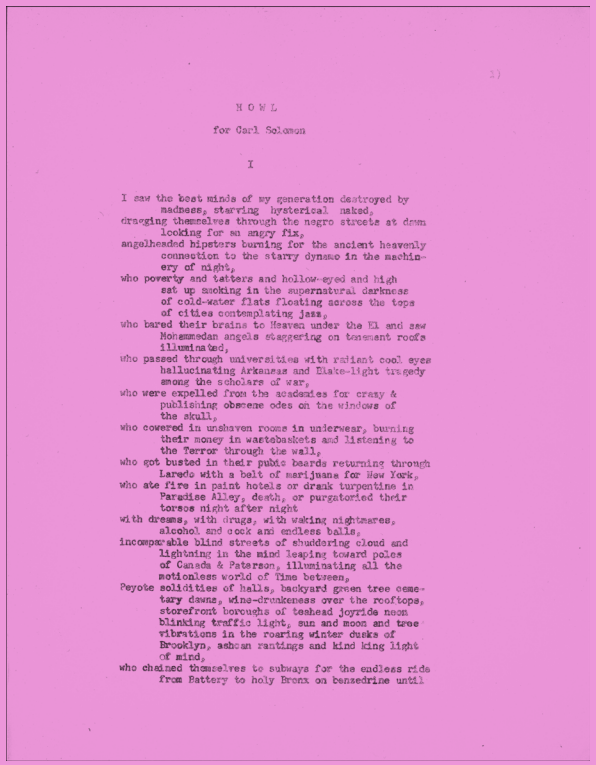


Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell, *Kew Gardens* (1919).
EC9 W8827 919k, Houghton Library.

TYPE WRITER

1874

A mainstay in offices by the 1880s, the typewriter is a mechanical (and later, electrical) machine that allows typists to produce text on a page through keystrokes: when pressed, each character key causes a corresponding piece of metal type to strike the machine's inked ribbon, transferring ink to the page. With the introduction of carbon paper—coated paper placed behind the original—typists gained the ability to create multiple copies without any extra labor.



H O W L

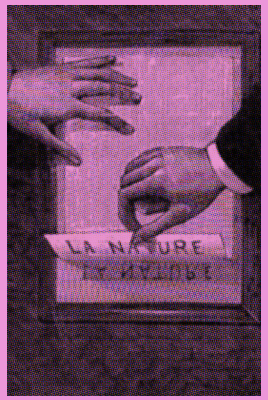
for Carl Solomon

I

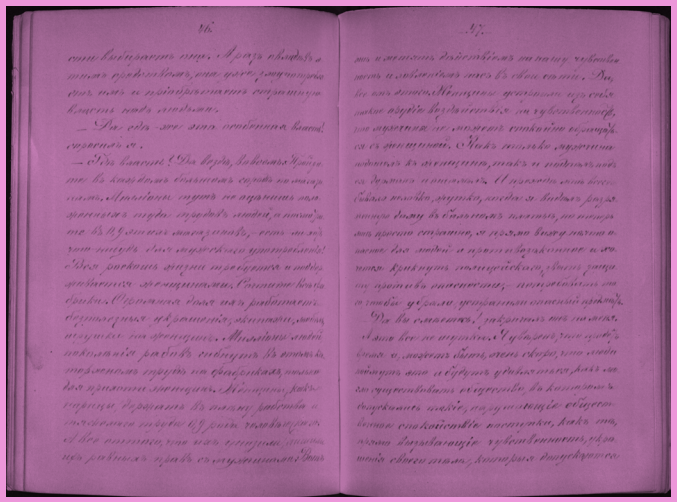
I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by
madness, starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
looking for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly
connection to the starry dynamo in the machin-
ery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high
sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness
of cold-water flats floating across the tops
of cities contemplating jazz,
who bared their brains to Heaven under the El and saw
Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs
illuminated,
who passed through universities with radiant cool eyes
hallucinating Arkansas and Blake-light tragedy
among the scholars of war,
who were expelled from the academies for crazy &
publishing obscene odes on the windows of
the skull,
who cowered in unshaven rooms in underwear, burning
their money in wastebaskets and listening to
the Terror through the wall,
who got busted in their pubic beards returning through
Laredo with a belt of marijuana for New York,
who ate fire in paint hotels or drank turpentine in
Paradise Alley, death, or purgatoried their
torsos night after night
with dreams, with drugs, with waking nightmares,
alcohol and cock and endless balls,
incomparable blind streets of shuddering cloud and
lightning in the mind leaping toward poles
of Canada & Paterson, illuminating all the
motionless world of Time between,
Peyote solicities of halls, backyard green tree ceme-
tery dawns, wine-drunkeness over the rooftops,
storefront boroughs of teahead joyride neon
blinking traffic light, sun and moon and tree
vibrations in the roaring winter dusks of
Brooklyn, ashcan rantings and kind king light
of mind,
who chained themselves to subways for the endless ride
from Battery to holy Bronx on benzedrine until

Allen Ginsberg, "Howl: for Carl Solomon" (1956). PS3513.I74 H6 1956b, Houghton Library.

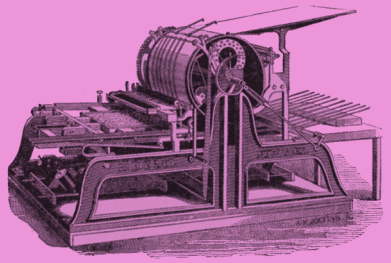
HECTO GRAPH 1874



A hectograph is a gelatin pad that can be used to transfer images or writing. Master sheets containing aniline dye, a chemical dye made from coal tar, can be written or typed on to compose a text. Laying the master sheet on the gelatin surface transfers the text to the hectograph pad, and laying blank paper on the pad lifts the dye off the gelatin and onto the paper. While they can only make a small number of copies, hectographs filled a niche for those without access to a press.

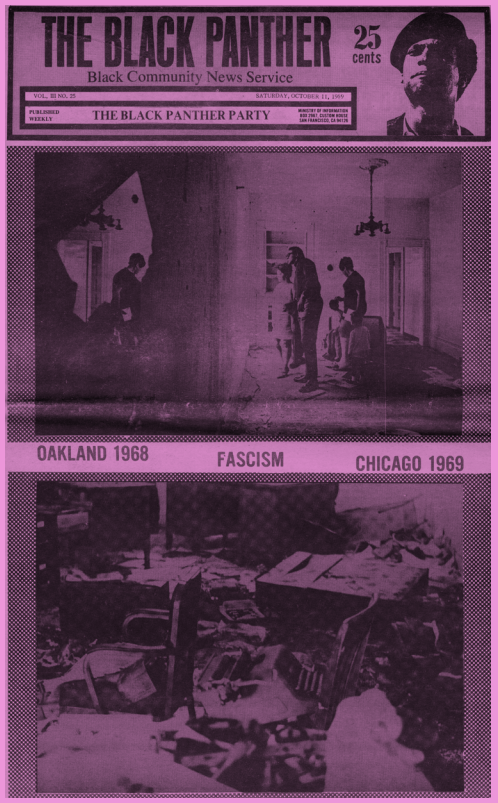


Leo Tolstoy, *Kreitserova Sonata* [Kreutzer Sonata] (1890).
RC8.T5885.890k, Houghton Library.



1904 OFFSET

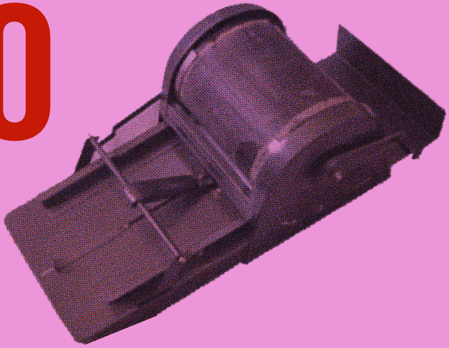
Offset printing takes advantage of the scientific principle that oil and water do not mix. Ink rollers apply ink to a plate cylinder moistened with water so that the ink sticks only to the image rendered in oil or wax. A third offset cylinder transfers the inked image to the page. The use of high-speed cylinders allows printers to run thousands of copies per hour. Since the 1960s, most commercial books and magazines have been printed offset.



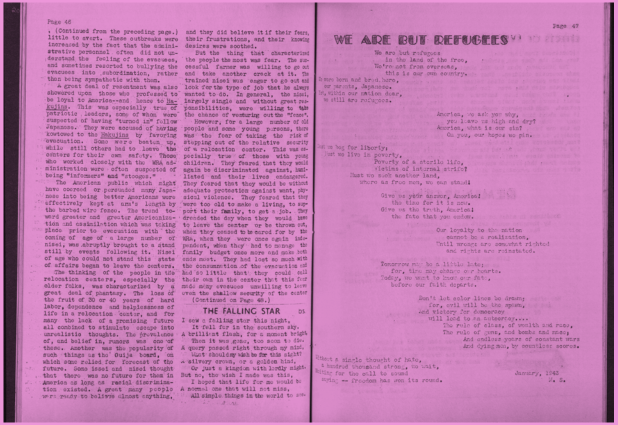
Emory Douglas and others, *The Black Panther Community News Service* (1969). AP95.B5665 (B), Houghton Library.

MIMEO & DITTO

1884; 1923



Used widely in offices, schools, and churches in the first half of the 20th century, mimeograph ("mimeo") and ditto machines were inexpensive and easy solutions to the tedious work of copy making. Both technologies rely on a rotating drum. Mimeographs make copies using a stencil that wraps around the drum and forces ink through the stencil's openings onto the page. Dittos use masters that transfer purple wax to the back of your typed page. The wax is ultimately dissolved with isopropyl alcohol and methanol, leaving behind the words and a characteristic Ditto scent. As Xerox machines began to replace dittos and mimeos in the 1960s, poets and writers purchased machines second-hand to create and share their work, kicking off the "mimeo revolution."



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. (Continued from the preceding page.) little to avert. These outbreaks were increased by the fact that the administrative personnel often did not understand the feeling of the evacuees, and sometimes resorted to bullying the evacuees into subordination, rather than being sympathetic with them.

A great deal of resentment was also showered upon those who professed to be loyal to America--and hence to Hakujins. This was especially true of patriotic leaders, some of whom were suspected of having "turned in" fellow Japanese. They were accused of having kowtowed to the Hakujins by favoring evacuation. Some were beaten up, while still others had to leave the centers for their own safety. Those who worked closely with the WRA administration were often suspected of being "informers" and "stooges."

The American public which might have coerced or persuaded many Japanese into being better Americans were effectively kept at arm's length by the barbed wire fence. The trend toward greater and greater Americanization and assimilation which was taking place prior to evacuation with the coming of age of a large number of nisei, was abruptly brought to a stand still by events following it. Nisei of age who could not stand this state of affairs began to leave the centers.

The thinking of the people in the relocation centers, especially the older folks, was characterized by a great deal of phantasy. The loss of the fruit of 30 or 40 years of hard labor, dependence and helplessness of life in a relocation center, and for many the lack of a promising future all combined to stimulate escape into unrealistic thoughts. The prevalence of, and belief in, rumors was one of these. Another was the popularity of such things as the Ouija board, on which some relied for forecast of the future. Some issei and nisei thought that there was no future for them in America as long as racial discrimination existed. A great many people were ready to believe almost anything, and they did believe it if their fears, their frustrations, and their knowing desires were soothed.

But the thing that characterized the people the most was fear. The successful farmer was willing to go out and take another crack at it. The trained nisei was eager to go out and look for the type of job that he always wanted to do. In general, the nisei, largely single and without great responsibilities, were willing to take the chance of venturing out the "fence".

However, for a large number of old people and some young persons, there was the fear of taking the risk of stepping out of the relative security of a relocation center. This was especially true of those with young children. They feared that they would again be discriminated against, humiliated and their lives endangered. They feared that they would be without adequate protection against want, physical violence. They feared that they were too old to make a living, to support their family, to get a job. They dreaded the day when they would have to leave the center or be thrown out, when they ceased to be cared for by the WRA, when they were once again independent, when they had to manage the family budget once more and make both ends meet. They had lost so much with the consummation of the evacuation and had so little that they could call their own in the center that this fear made many evacuees unwilling to leave even the shallow security of the center

(Continued on Page 48.)

THE FALLING STAR — bs

I saw a falling star this night,
It fell far in the southern sky.
A brilliant flash, for a moment bright
Then it was gone, too soon to die.
A query passed right through my mind,
What should my wish be for this sight?
A silvery crown, or a golden hind,
Or just a kingdom with lordly might.
But no, the wish I made was this,
I hoped that life for me would be
A normal one that will not miss,
All simple things in the world to see.

Page 47

WE ARE BUT REFUGEES

We are but refugees
in the land of the free,
We're not from overseas,
this is our own country.
We were born and bred here,
our parents, Japanese.
But, within our nation dear,
we still are refugees.

America, we ask you why,
you leave us high and dry?
America, what is our sin?
On you, our hopes we pin.

Must we beg for liberty;
Must we live in poverty,
Poverty of a sterile life,
Victims of internal strife?
Must we seek another land,
where as free men, we can stand!

Give us your answer, America!
the time for it is now.
Give us the truth, America!
the fate that you endow.

Our loyalty to the nation
cannot be a realization,
Until wrongs are somewhat righted
and rights are reinstated.

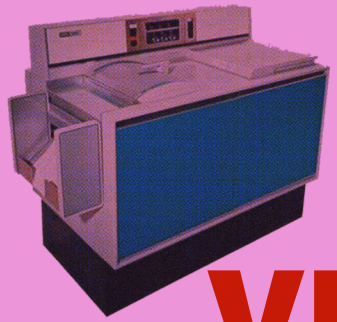
Tomorrow may be a little late;
for, time may change our hearts.
Today, we want to know our fate,
before our faith departs.

Don't let color lines be drawn;
for, evil will be the spawn,
And victory for democracy
will lead to an autocracy....
The rule of class, of wealth and race,
The rule of guns, and bombs and mace;
And endless years of constant wars
And dying men, by countless scores.

Without a single thought of hate,
a hundred thousand strong, we wait,
Waiting for the call to sound
saying -- freedom has won its round.

January, 1943
M. S.

Barry Saiki, editor, *The Pen* (1943).
2021-185, Houghton Library.



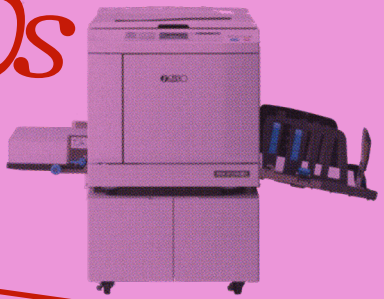
1959 XEROX

Xerox machines project an image from a scanning bed to a drum, which is electrostatically charged to attract particles of powdered ink called toner. The toner is ultimately fused onto paper, copying the original photographed page. Photocopiers were incredibly easy to use, with no fussy stencils and no per-copy labor—as long as the machine didn't jam. The machines quickly became common in offices and copy shops, leading to an unprecedented proliferation of copied memos, chain letters, and activist artworks.

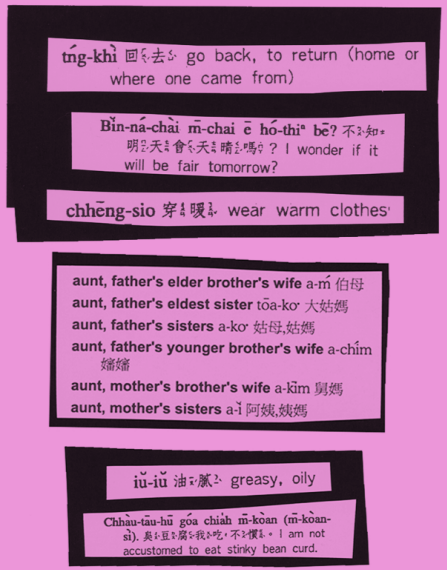
Linda Simpson, *My Comrade* (1987).
MS Typ 1295, Houghton Library.

DIGITAL

1980s



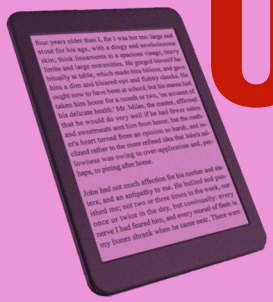
Office, home, and commercial printers have all gotten new digital updates in recent decades. Laser printers slowly replaced photocopiers, using digital image-making instead of photography. Inkjet printing, a process where ink droplets are sprayed from a nozzle, has become popular for home printing. Both technologies allow you to design a publication on a computer and send it directly to the printer. Commercial digital printing—essentially a scaled-up version of office printing—is faster and cheaper than offset printing for smaller print runs. Zine creators and small press publishers often use these options, plus digital spins on old technologies like the Risograph, which puts a Mimeograph-like drum inside a copier body.



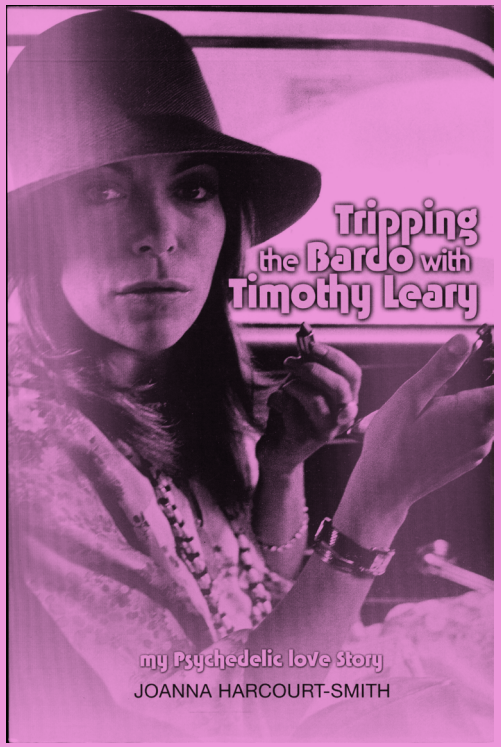
Alice Wu, *(tng2-khi3)(tng2-lai5)* (2021). 2023H-17, Houghton Library.

ONLINE

1990s



Self-publishing has never been more accessible thanks to the advent of the internet. The rise of e-commerce coupled with digital print technologies has allowed authors to self-publish through "print on demand," a service model which prints books only once they are ordered and avoids the initial investment of a large print run. Creators can also publish their work without printing it at all, though eBooks, online publishing platforms, or even social media accounts.



Joanna Harcourt-Smith, *Tripping the Bardo with Timothy Leary: My Psychedelic Love Story* (2013). PS3608.A73 T75 2013, Houghton Library.

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ZOË PULLEY, DESIGN

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MIMEOGRAPH- SCREEN PRINTING MACHINE. 1909 BY ADOBE STOCK
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