Apport Used Books Autumn 2023 Catalog



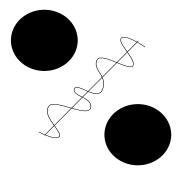
Oblivion

A selection of 50 twentieth century vanity press books

Candidates for Oblivion

A Selection of 50 Twentieth Century Vanity Press Books

Apport Used Books Autumn 2023 Catalog



Exposition • Vantage • Dorrance

Bookseller's Note

"A book is a book," said Edward Uhlan, founder of Exposition Press, and author of the memoir The Rogue of Publishers' Row. For the vanity press customer — in this case not just the eventual, hypothetical reader, but the author as well — the simple physical reality of a book can meet expectations. It's a challenge to imagine, in an age saturated with options for self-publishing, the power of Uhlan's model. Though he was not the first, nor the largest, vanity (or, as he preferred, "subsidy") publisher, he was the most outspoken about the legitimacy of the system behind it all. Today, "vanity" presses and the books they produced are seen mostly through the pastward lens of that casual epithet which stuck, "vanity." Common wisdom is like this: they're predatory, confidence tricks really, catering largely to a clientele of talentless narcissists and grandparents with "novels in them," always published to satiate that vain impulse to be read and, in posterity perhaps, admired. This may be the case for a portion of the unbelievable volume of books published through this model by the handful of successful vanity presses, but it was not at all the rule. In fact, Exposition, Vantage, and Dorrance, the three publishers highlighted here, facilitated the appearance of a great range of truly worthwhile literature.

For Black American writers and poets, presses like these proved sometimes to be the best route to print work in an otherwise rather exclusive mainstream publishing environment. You'll see available here several volumes of poetry, memoirs, story collections, novels, and weirdo musings in this category. They're often excellent, and call to mind the huge scope of literary output that never made it to the public at all. The vanity press model, though flawed and, in hindsight, doomed to die out (or at least evolve), provided a freeingly apolitical and artistically agnostic milieu for the incarnation of works that likely never would have left the pages of a manuscript. And yet... a wholly for-profit, cynically anti-editorial business model must have some skeletons in its closet.

Indeed, these vanity presses were notorious for bungling or intentionally failing in their responsibilities to clients' publicity and distribution. Several high profile lawsuits hit and eventually shuttered Vantage Press; Dorrance, the only of the three still active, eventually pivoted to a print-on-demand style, effectively becoming a competitor with Lulu or Createspace. The publishers had a reputation for promising much more than they ever intended, or perhaps were able, to give. Books were mostly sent to the authors, who were in charge of selling and distributing them, though the publishers did sometimes fulfill their promises, and one occasionally saw these texts enter into the public eye for serious consideration. It was an uneven and, I imagine, infuriating process that in the end made real that sought after, romantic designation: published author. Go to a used bookshop and find some old Exposition poetry collection— is it signed? Half the time, you bet it is. More likely than not, this book was gifted to a friend, as were most of the rest of the copies produced. These were talismans of one's talent, physical evidence of intellectual work, damn what the rejection letters from the fat cat publishers said, if they showed up at all.

Poetry was how Uhlan got his start in publishing, and Exposition published quite a bit of it, as did Dorrance and Vantage. The sweet thing about "subsidy" published poetry is that, after these 50 or so years have passed, we can see now how its quality, in general, was more or less on par with what the minor poets of the larger publishers were writing. One of my favorite feelings is picking up some "candidate for oblivion" (Uhlan's coinage) and finding in its pages good, if perhaps quaint, poetry. Sometimes you find a true piece of buried genius. What's better than that?

Vanity presses also, as one might guess, published the works of many eccentrics, madmen, and fringe-dwellers with the passion, confidence, and/or income to fund the process. These books are what first stoked my interest in this field. One work included here, *The Catchers of Heaven: A Trilogy* by Michael Wolf was, for me, a

formative foray into the fringes of UFO lore, and retains a special, if complicated, place in my collection and heart. This list comprises as deep and wide a survey as I as a bookseller could, in a season, sample from the ocean of books, many practically invisible, and some quite rare, published by the three major 20th century vanity presses. From grand unified theories of ____ and "satanist science fantasy" to trippy novels by mononymous hippie ladies and true tales of prostitution, the bizarrest, most rejected avenues of culture found their home in these cardboard publishing houses.

Just slip a check under the door and we'll get back to you.

Ben Roylance, Proprietor

Ordering Information

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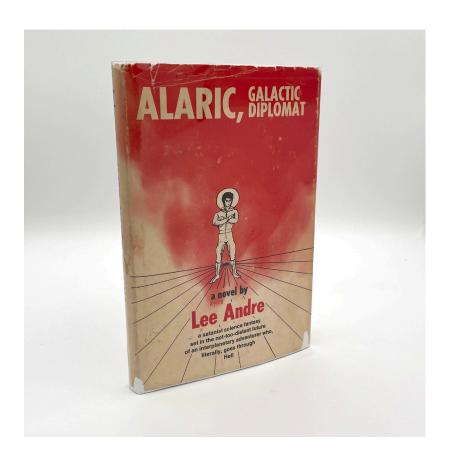
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Add \$5 for media mail shipping, or free with order of two or more catalog items.

Additional note: All books in this catalog are hardcover with cloth or, more frequently, faux-cloth boards, so the liberty has been taken not to include this information in each description. If a book is listed as a first edition, it is a first printing. With vanity press books, there were almost never subsequent printings, though a few exceptions exist herein, which are clearly marked with relevant printing numbers.

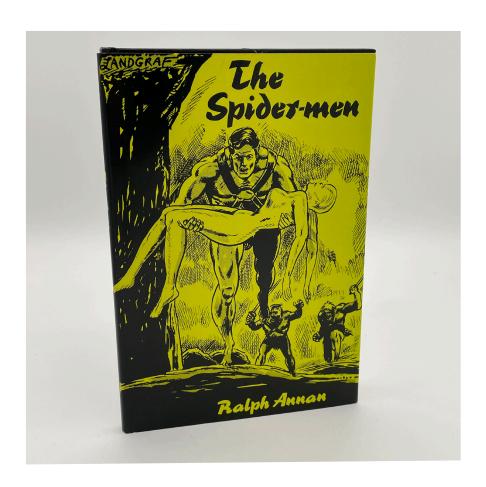
The cover features a press photo of Exposition founder Edward Uhlan.



1. Andre, Lee. Alaric, Galactic Diplomat.

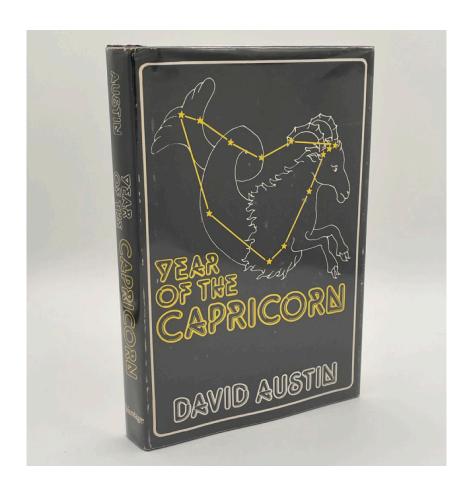
Exposition, 1974. First edition. 155 pp. VG+ in VG jacket with some edge wear and closed tears, now in protective sleeve. Toning to pastedowns. Set "after the great plague in 1978," this strange first (only?) novel is "a satanist science fantasy set in the not-too-distant future of an interplanetary adventurer who, literally, goes through Hell." Scarce.

Sold.



2. Annan, Ralph. The Spider-Men.

Vantage, 1979. First edition. 56 pp. Fine in Fine jacket. With cover and interior illustrations by Ken Landgraf. Odd little fantasy novel, no relation to the Marvel superhero. Scarce.



3. Austin, David. Year of the Capricorn.

Vantage, 1982. First edition. 280 pp. Very Good+ in Near Fine jacket. Signed/inscribed by Austin on front end paper. Foxing to edges and some early pages, else near fine. Bizarre, astrologically themed novel of upper echelon intrigue from New York to Mexico. Scarce.

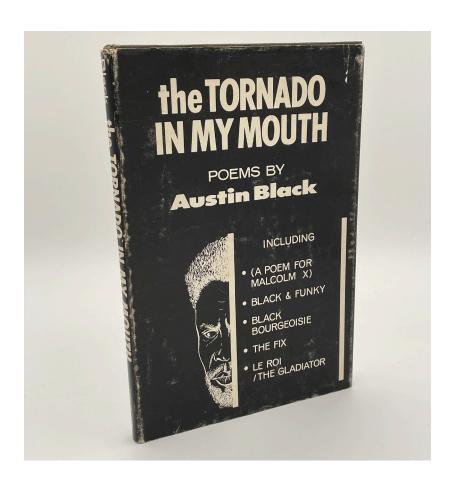
\$100



4. Benskina, Princess Orelia. The Inflammable Desire to Rebel.

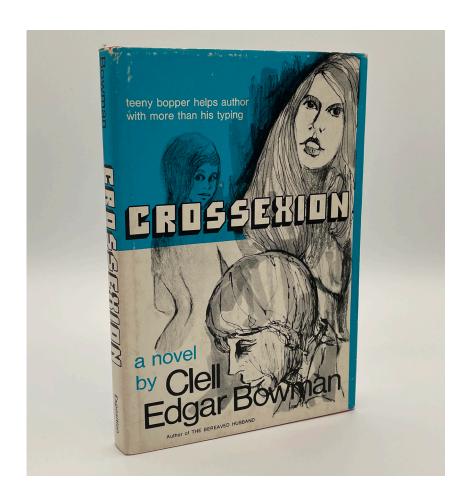
Vantage, 1973. First edition. 44 pp. Fine in Fine jacket. "A collection of poems about black people, their lives and experiences... what it means to be black in America." Benskina was a Panamanian-American jazz performer. Rare.

Sold.



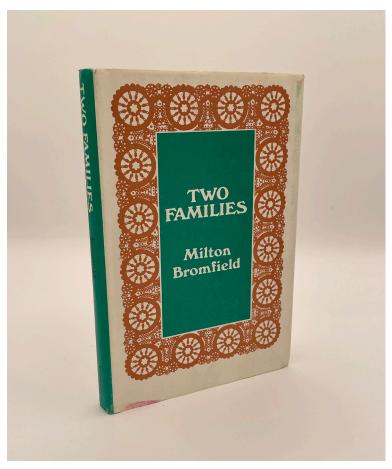
5. Black, Austin. The Tornado in My Mouth.

Exposition, 1966. First edition. 80 pp. Near Fine in VG+ dust jacket, light rubbing wear. Collection of poems by the Black radical, founder of the "militant human rights organization" BURN. Poems for or referencing Amiri Baraka / LeRoi Jones, Malcolm X, and other contemporaries. Rare, excellent collection.



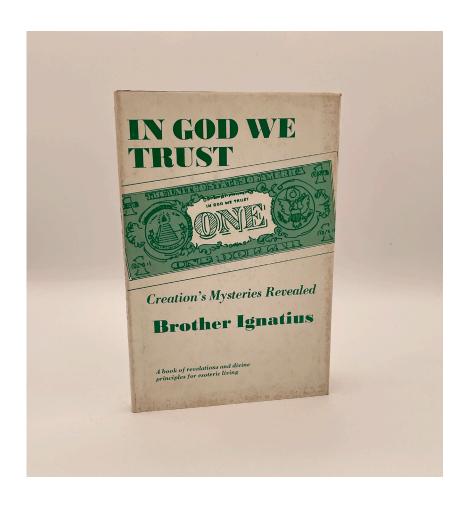
6. Bowman, Clell Edgar. Crossexion.

Exposition, 1976. First edition. 132 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine dust jacket. Inscribed by the author. Odd, sleazy novel with the all-youneed-to-know tagline: "teeny bopper helps author with more than his typing." Scarce.



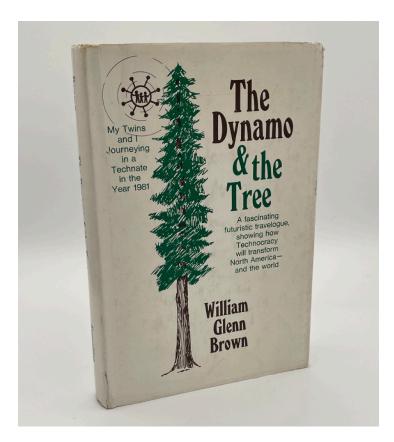
7. Bromfield, Milton. Two Families.

Vantage, 1972. First edition. 150 pp. NF- in NF-/VG+ dust jacket, corners bumped, a few very small closed tears at edges. Inscribed provocatively by the author, a Jamaican American, to Senator Birch Bayh, with a card including the author's mailing address. A crossgenre dystopian family saga on the political implications of interracial marriage and relationships. Rare.



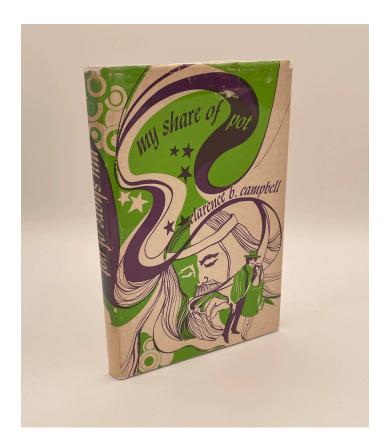
8. Brother Ignatius (pseud. N. I. Dennie Foster). In God We Trust: Creation's Mysteries Revealed.

Exposition, 1977. First edition. 76 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. A book of esoteric teachings by a Jamaican American researcher on the occult. The bulk of the book is dedicated to the secret meaning of the American dollar bill. Rare.



9 . Brown, William Glenn. The Dynamo & the Tree.

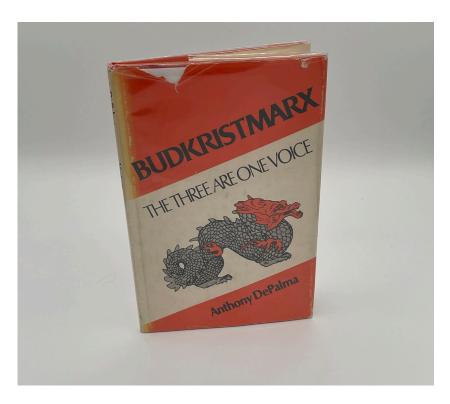
Exposition, 1977. First edition. 288 pp. Near Fine in Very Good jacket, corner wear and bumped corners. A "futuristic travelogue showing how Technocracy will transform North America— and the world." Unbelievably strange tale of the author and his twin children traveling in a near future world in which a "Technate" has taken control and instituted ecologically driven social reforms. Hmm. Several pages of color charts and illustrations. Rare.



10. Campbell, Clarence B. My Share of Pot.

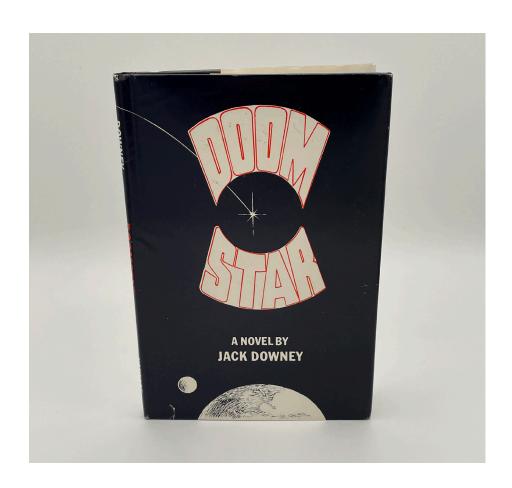
Dorrance, 1970. First edition. 65 pp. Near Fine in VG jacket, some cosmetic loss to jacket spine from sticker removal. An awkwardly hip collection of poetry by a Lehigh University Dean of Residence. The poems are interesting, if only as cultural curiosities. Gorgeous jacket design by V. M. Banfield. Rare.

\$125



11. DePalma, Anthony. Budkristmarx: The Three Are One Voice.

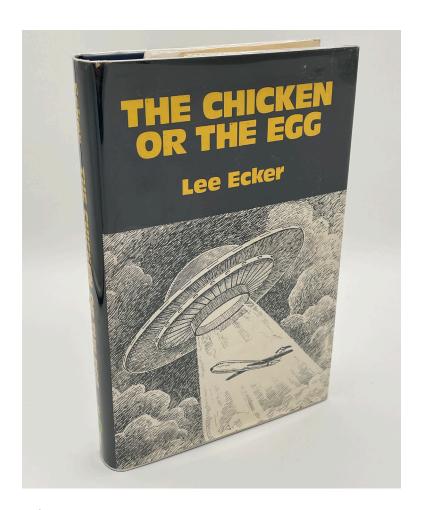
Vantage, 1977. First edition. 24 pp. Very Good in Good dust jacket. Loss to jacket at top edges, front and back, with significant loss to back. Now in protective sleeve, presents well. A volume of strange political poetry with religious imagery by onetime member of San Francisco's Coalition for Human Rights and Poetry for the People Collective. A few poems are in Spanish "Here we have a small volume that contains literally almost a complete world of religious, political, and philosophical thoughts." Rare.



12. Downey, Jack. Doomstar.

Vantage, 1980. First edition. 97 pp. Fine in Near Fine jacket. Science fiction novel in the doomsday genre written by a trial lawyer. "The star is on a collision course with the earth, and will consume it in only fifteen and a half years…"

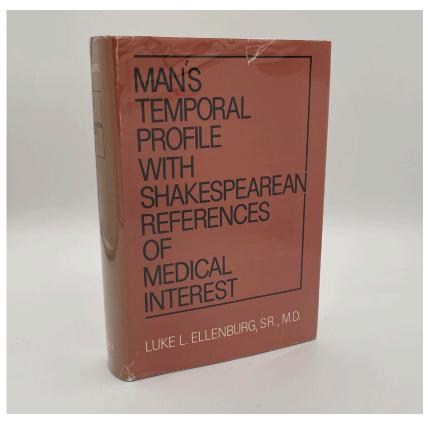
\$50



13. Ecker, Lee. The Chicken or The Egg.

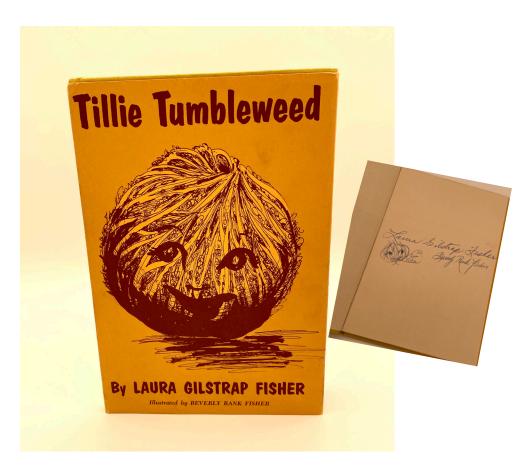
Vantage, 1991. First edition. 340 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine dust jacket. Foxing to edges, and DJ with small sticker to spine. Inscribed by the author, an airline pilot, to a colleague: "Enjoy the book, and keep 'em flying." A novel of a pilot's UFO encounter.

Sold.



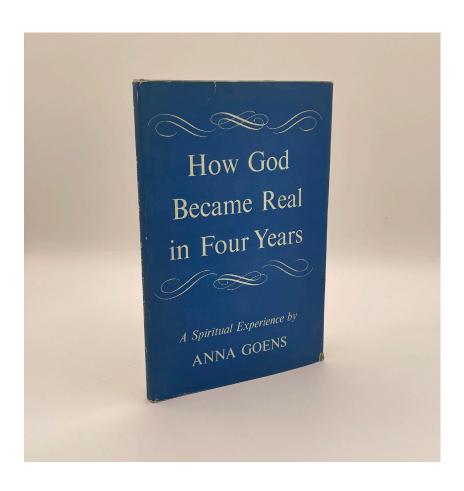
14. Ellenburg, Luke L. Man's Temporal Profile with Shakespearean References of Medical Interest.

Vantage, 1979. First edition. 527 pp. VG+ in VG+ jacket, small closed tear, now in protective sleeve. Foxing to top edge. Signed by the author on front pastedown. An absurd and therefore excellent project: medical references in the works of Shakespeare cataloged by subject and type, used as a crash course in medical history and terminology. The title of the book explains it about as succinctly as is possible. Rare.



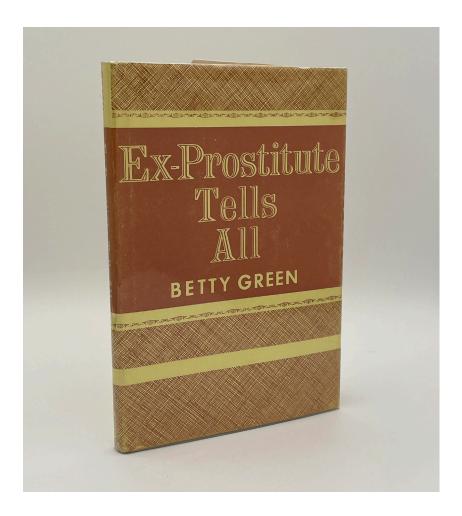
15. Fisher, Laura Gilstrap. Tillie Tumbleweed.

Exposition, 1960. First edition. 40 pp. Illustrated by Beverly Rank Fisher. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Nice, clean copy. Children's book about an anthropomorphized tumbleweed. Signed by the writer and illustrator, with illustrator's doodle of the titular character on front endpaper. Uncommon.



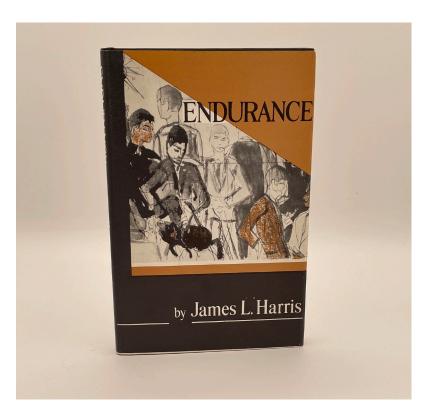
16. Goens, Anna. How God Became Real in Four Year

Exposition, 1957. First edition. 44 pp. Near Fine in VG+ jacket, some small tears to corners and age/dust toning. Memoir of the religious doings and life of a Black Chicagoan in the early 20th century. Rare.



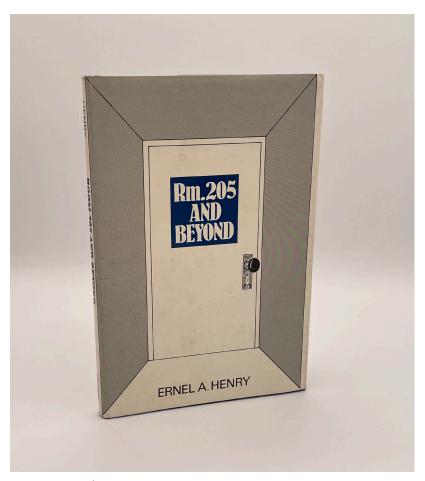
17. Green, Betty. Ex-Prostitute Tells All.

Vantage, 1960. First edition. 65 pp. Fine in Fine jacket. Pages age toned. True tales from the profession. Rare.



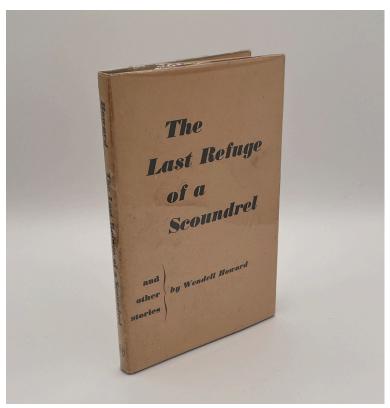
18. Harris, James L. Endurance.

Vantage, 1972. First edition. 109 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. With review slip. Pencil price to front pastedown, else clean. Novel by Harlem fashion designer. From the front flap: "The central figure and occasional narrator of Endurance is George Hais, a product of Harlem's Negro ghetto and the matriarchal family system that predominates there... a young man as attracted to his own sex as he is to the opposite one..." Murder accusations, entry into the Washington, D.C. gay subculture, and more follow. Rare.



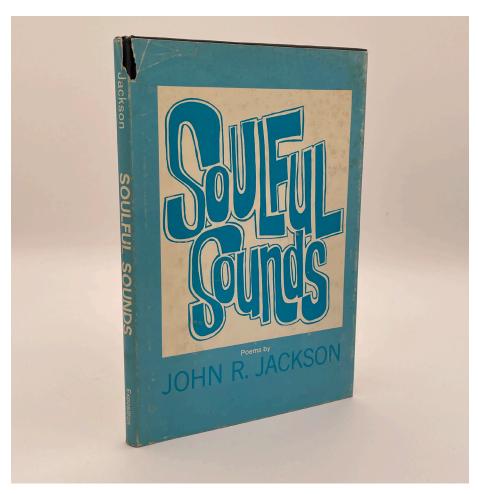
19. Henry, Ernel A. Rm. 205 and Beyond.

Vantage, 1978. First edition. 84 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Light edge wear to jacket. Pedagogical allegory by a Jamaican-born Kansas high school teacher, in which the objects of the school classroom speak the truth about the reality of American schooling. A critique of the educational system. Rare.



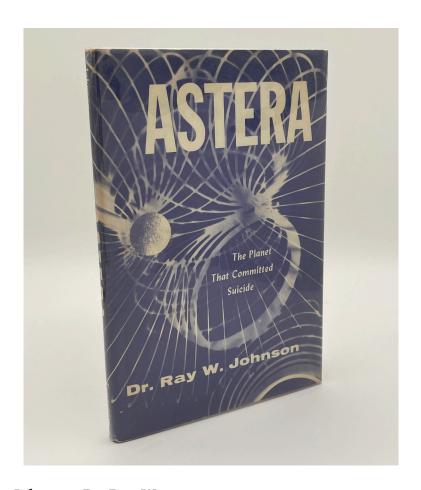
20. Howard, Wendell. The Last Refuge of a Scoundrel and Other Stories

Exposition, 1952. First edition. 85 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Collection of stories by a Black railway postal service employee, the author's sole book. From the jacket: "Murder, dirty politics, a blood-thirsty mob, a neurotic mule, a walking dead woman. all are here in one package of thrilling, dramatic, sometimes funny but often serious tales" Rare.



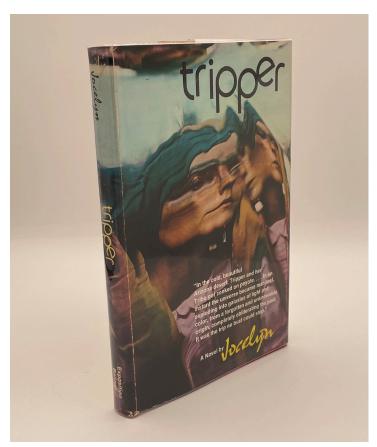
21. Jackson, John R. Soulful Sounds.

Exposition, 1973. First edition. 64 pp. With review slip. VG+ in Very Good jacket. Some loss to top edge of jacket, some mild staining. Pencil to ffep and front pastedown. A nice, presentable copy. First book by the Black poet, on subjects of race, soul, love, and faith. Scarce.



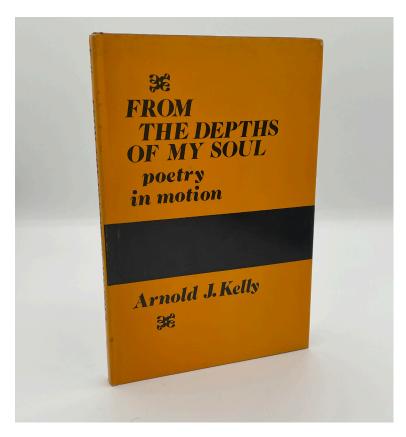
22. Johnson, Dr. Ray W. Astera: The Planet That Committed Suicide.

Exposition, 1959. First edition. 27 pp. Near Fine in VG+ jacket, now in protective sleeve. Inscribed with doodle by the author and his wife. A brief tale of "scholarly science fiction" about the discovery and message of a doomed civilization written by an Ohio scientist. Quite rare.



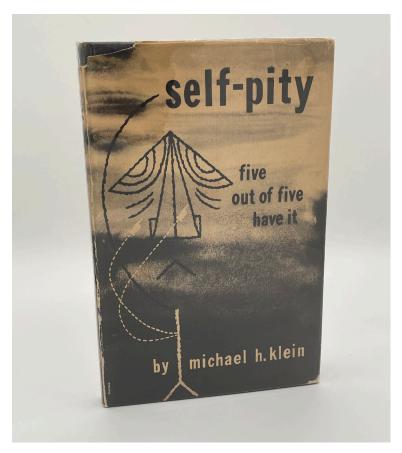
23. Jocelyn. Tripper.

Exposition, 1973. First edition. 143 pp. Signed by the mononymous author, with her phone number. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Some binding glue discoloration to front and back pastedowns. Striking jacket art by Vidyavrarta, in the style of Ira Cohen's Mylar Chamber photography. A well written novel of hippie desert shenanigans, drugs, and despair. A forgotten counterculture classic. Rare.



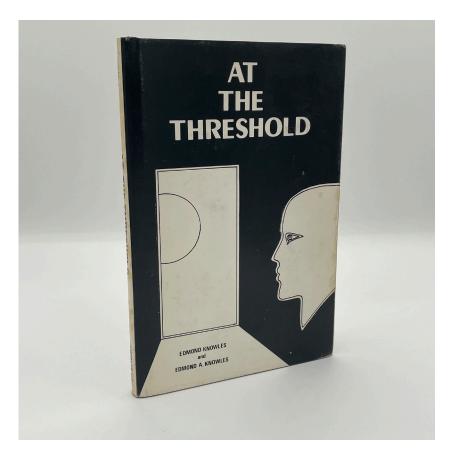
24. Kelly, Arnold J. From the Depths of My Soul: Poetry in Motion.

Exposition, 1974. First edition. 64 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Collection of poems on a variety of themes and subjects, mainly political, which "takes us into the world of the modern, young Southern Black — educated, politically savvy, cynical and yet consumed with hope for the future." Rare.



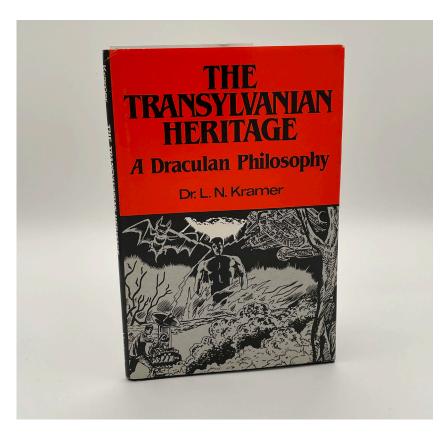
25. Klein, Michael H. Self-Pity: Five Out of Five Have It.

Exposition, 1951. First edition. 63 pp. Near Fine in VG+ dust jacket, some loss to edges, now in protective sleeve. A "heartening message of courage and self-confidence ... to help liberate us from the self-imposed bondage that circumscribes our efforts and... exhausts our best energies" written by a "renowned morale-services specialist." A fascinating self-help book from the post-war era. Scarce.



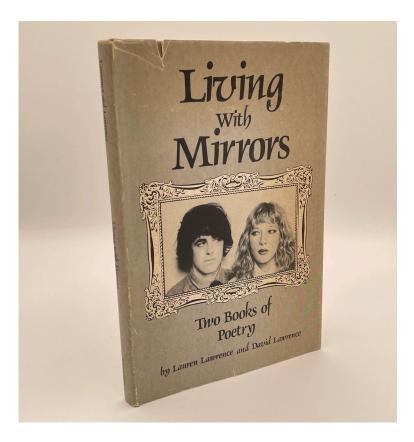
26. Knowles, Edmond; Knowles, Edmond A. At The Threshold.

Vantage, 1974. First edition. 86 pp. VG+ in VG jacket. Light crease between pages 30 and 31. Jacket with mild foxing to spine. A collection of poems by a father and son duo. With illustrations by the senior E.K., fascinating in their own right. Scarce.



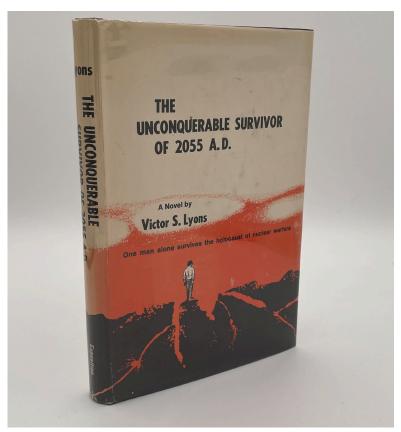
27. Kramer, Dr. L. N. The Transylvanian Heritage: A Draculan Philosophy.

Vantage, 1986. First Edition. 58 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. A grim fantasy tale of a future world ruled by a feudal monopoly, in which "the hope for man's ultimate liberation is carried by Dal Star and his noble Transylvanian friends and their vision of a just world."



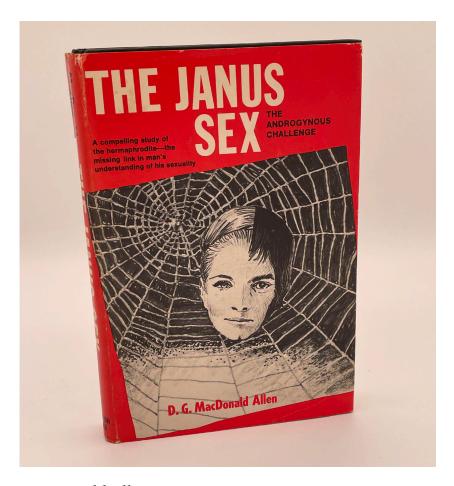
28. Lawrence, Lauren; Lawrence, David. Living With Mirrors: Two Books of Poetry.

Exposition, 1979. First edition. 72 pp. Near Fine in Very Good jacket, small tears near edges. Signed by David Lawrence on front end paper. Dual collection by husband and wife. David would go on to develop a love of hip hop and boxing which set him on a different path than the post-Beat poems included here. See his 1994 rap track, as "A to the D," "Renegade Jew." Lauren's poems are stronger. Scarce.



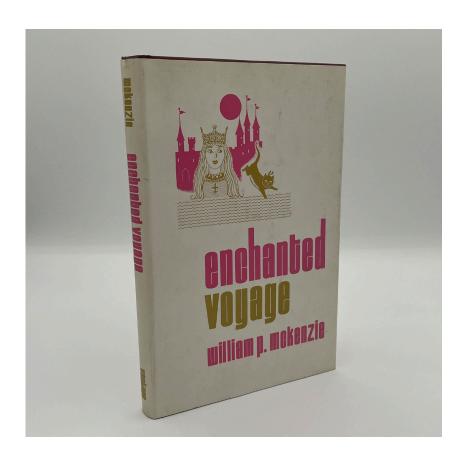
29. Lyons, Victor S. The Unconquerable Survivor of 2055 A.D.

Exposition, 1973. First edition. 201 pp. Fine in Near Fine dust jacket. A post-apocalyptic science fiction novel by "a senior attending Carroll County High School." A naive but effective novel of the sole survivor of a nuclear holocaust. Rare.



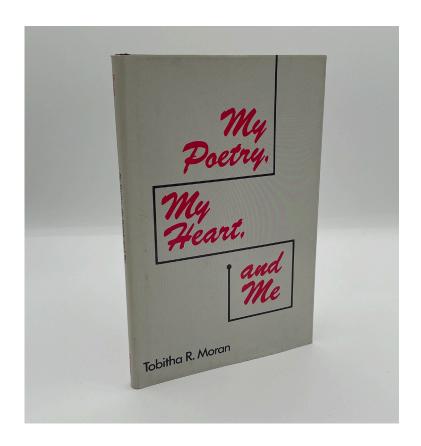
30. MacDonald Allen, D.G. The Janus Sex: The Androgynous Challenge.

Exposition, 1975. First edition. 254 pp. Near Fine in VG+ dust jacket, small tear near top of spine, now in protective sleeve. A peculiar approach to sexuality and gender phenomena which "... shows us the androgynous beginnings of all humanity and suggests we should cherish, not reject, this dualist heritage." A fascinating, if dated, text. Rare.



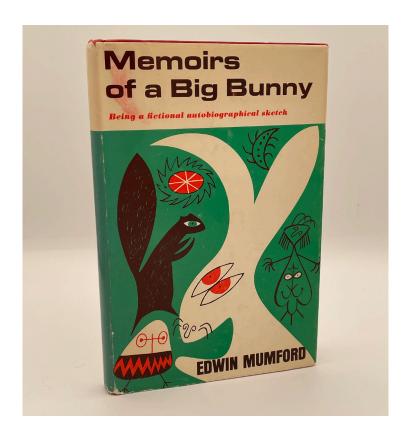
31. McKenzie, William P. Enchanted Voyage.

Vantage, 1972. First edition. 148 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine dust jacket. A novel based on a play by the same author, a former merchant seaman. "Set in a never-never land and time of palace adventure... its moral — if it has one — is feminist rather than philosophic." A fascinating work by a Black author in the tradition of *Candide*. Rare.



32. Moran, Tabitha R. My Poetry, My Heart, and Me.

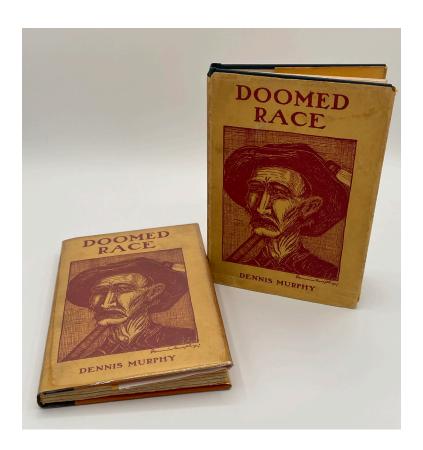
Vantage, 1987. First edition. 48 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Inscribed warmly by the poet. Poems of spiritual and romantic longing, center justified, by a Black Georgia-born New York City poet, her first book. Scarce.



33. Mumford, Edwin. Memoirs of a Big Bunny.

Exposition, 1964. First edition. 159 pp. Very Good in Very Good Jacket. Stain to jacket and front board, some sun fading to jacket spine, previous owner name in pencil on ffep, else very clean. "Being a fictional autobiographical sketch." Mumford's memoirs of mental illness and treatment, a continuation of his work in *Diary of a Paranoic*, here written from the perspective of the titular Big Bunny. The author's second book. Rare.

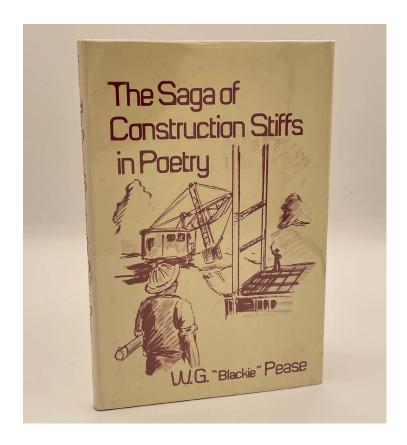
Sold.



34. Murphy, Dennis. Doomed Race.

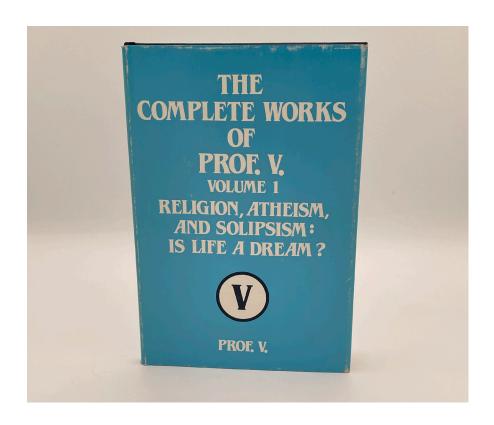
Dorrance, 1941. First edition. 95 pp. Two copies: A. Signed and inscribed by the poet. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. B. Near Fine in VG/G+ jacket, wear to edges and fading. Ozark poetry, the author's second book. With evocative illustrations by the author. A lovely, obscure book of folk poetry.

A. \$75 B. \$40



35. Pease, W.G. "Blackie". The Saga of Construction Stiffs in Poetry.

Vantage, 1974. First edition. 61 pp. Near Fine in VG+ dust jacket. Stamp/stain to front flap, else Fine. Shelf wear to bottom edges of boards. Illustrations by C. L. Ford Hastings. Rare collection of poems by former steelworker and journalist, mostly on the daily life of those in the construction business, but also love, friendship, and other popular poetic subjects.



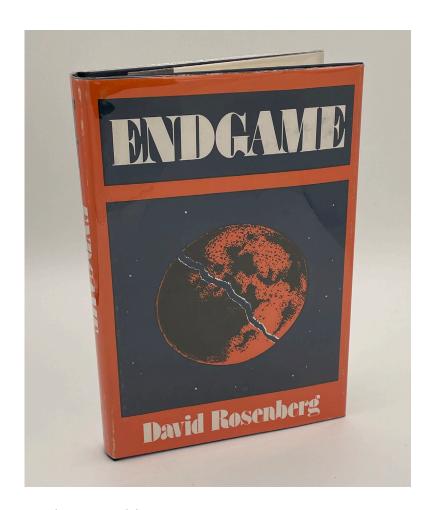
36. Prof. V. The Complete Works of Prof. V. Vol. 1: Religion, Atheism, and Solipsism: Is Life A Dream?

Vantage, 1989. First edition. 73 pp. Review slip included. Near Fine in Very Good jacket. Bizarre collection of theories on religion, reality, etc. via the author's "proofs." Scarce.



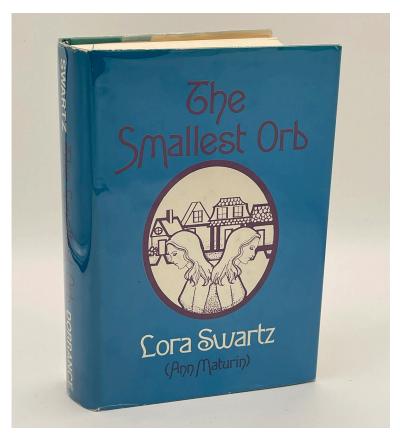
37. Rember, Winthrop Allen. Eighteen Visits to Mars.

Vantage, 1956. First edition. 439 pp. Very Good, lacking dust jacket. Foxing and light wear to cloth boards. Previous owner inscription. Uncommon and essential piece of space contact literature, the author's channeled messages from an etheric race of beings known as the *Evon-thia*. Rare.



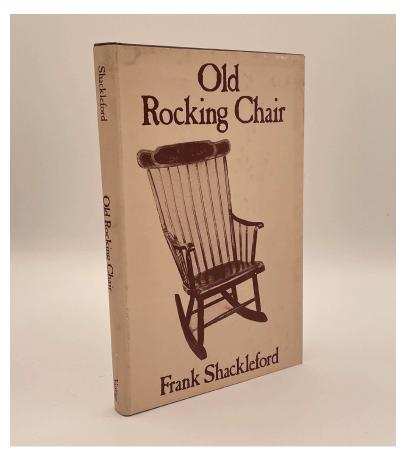
38. Rosenberg, David. Endgame.

Vantage, 1986. First edition. 223 pp. Fine in Fine jacket. Signed by the author on title page. A speculative thriller about a futuristic society's political strife, written by onetime mayor of David, CA. Scarce.



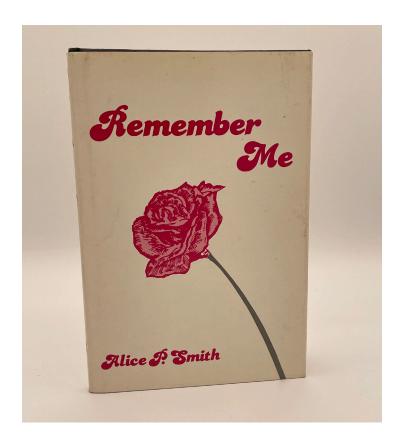
39. Schwartz, Lora (pseud. Ann Maturin). The Smallest Orb.

Dorrance, 1974. First edition. 455 pp. Map endpapers. Jacket design by Donya Melanson. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Intricate novel of twins, ESP, Baltimore, and more... Blurbs sing its praises: "...plumbed the deepest depths and scaled the dizzying heights of human experience..."; "...it comes closer to the older type of great literary achievement..."; "...derives special poignancy from its haunting refrain that the dance of lust is an insubstantial interlude in the relentless courtship of death..." Rare.



40. Shackleford, Frank. Old Rocking Chair.

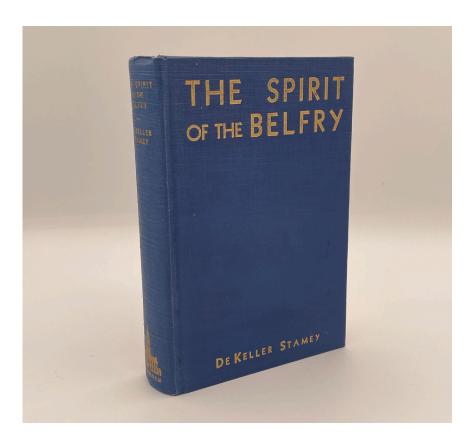
Vantage, 1975. First edition. 110 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. A novel chronicling the goings on in a Greenwich Village apartment building from the vantage of an old woman in her rocking chair: "the world of whores and pimps, of 'gay' people of both sexes, of alcohol and drunkenness..." A fascinating piece of cultural observation, though fictional, by a South Carolina Navy man and theater actor. Scarce. Two copies in similar condition available.



41. Smith, Alice P. Remember Me.

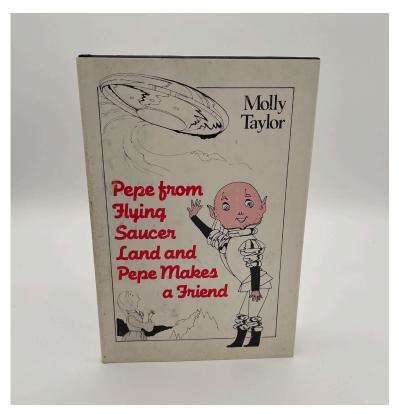
Vantage, 1994. First edition. 88 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Inscribed by the author. A collection of poems, most brief, on romantic and spiritual themes. Included here for their relative strength when set against most Vantage Press poetry. The poet has "designed homes...lectured on graphology, the components of design, and Mayan culture..."

Sold.



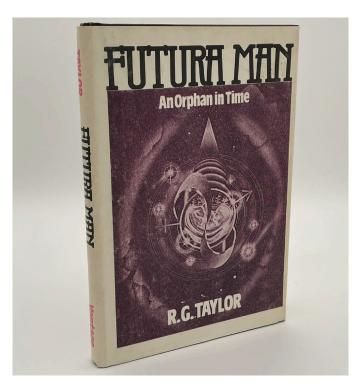
42. Stamey, De Keller. The Spirit of the Belfry.

Dorrance, 1935. First edition. 270 pp. Very Good, lacking dust jacket. A collection of inspirational poems, including the titular epic. Subject matter includes religious devotion, children's verse, folklore, and others.



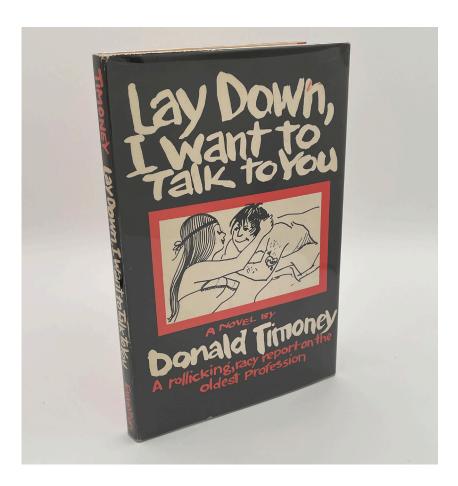
43. Taylor, Molly.
Pepe from Flying Saucer Land and Pepe Makes a Friend.

Vantage, 1982. First edition. 55 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Illustrated throughout by Warren Harlan. Children's book featuring a lovable ET and his adventures. Odd little piece of the flying saucer literature. Rare.



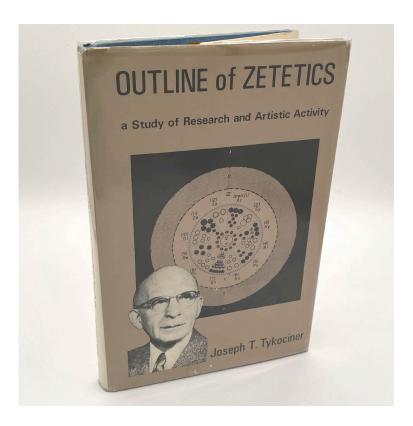
44. Taylor, R.G. Futura Man: An Orphan in Time.

Vantage, 1979. First edition. 198 pp. Near Fine in VG+ dust jacket, small closed tear and light rubbing wear. A groovy science fiction novel by a West Texas a "full-time night teacher." Lots of references, oddly, to 20th century psychiatric drugs and terminology A story in which "every spaced-out event absorbs into 3-D holographic pictures that also become flesh and blood experiences" including "...the planet Terzerima where the heavy sepia-filled chemical atmosphere or drugged airy beings assemble in the symbolic capitol of Tricyclia, where the ageless allegory of incest takes shape with Empress Nadril and offspring Demerol..."



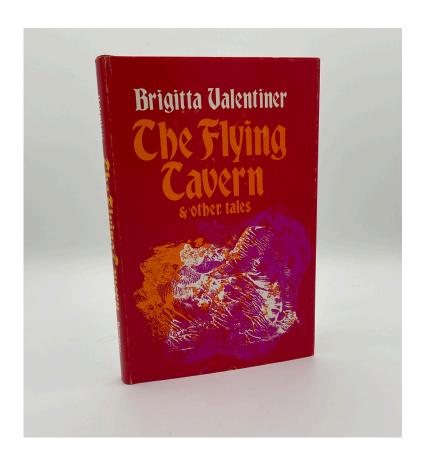
45. Timoney, Donald. Lay Down, I Want to Talk to You.

Exposition, 1974. First edition. 79 pp. Near Fine in Near Fine jacket. Signed and inscribed by the author. A brief novel about "Organa, the gorgeous prostitute… a gal with something extra right from the start… two guardian angels, Moe and Rudolph…" I love vanity press novels. Rare.



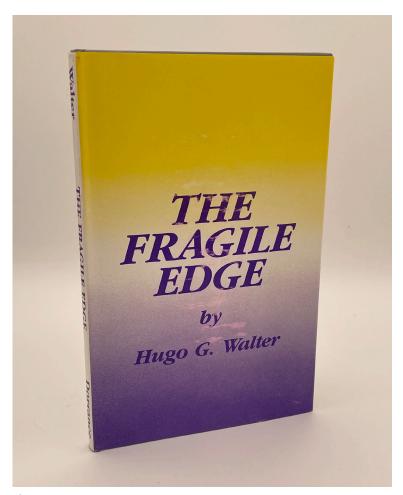
46. Tykociner, Joseph T. Outline of Zetetics: A Study of Research and Artistic Activities.

Dorrance, 1966. Third printing, 1971. 170 pp. Near Fine in a Very Good dust jacket with some very mild staining at bottom. Previous owner bookplate. The "definitive book on the subject of zetetics... by the man who conceived it." The study of combining previously unrelated sciences and arts. You'll have to read the book to know exactly what that means. A fascinating and deeply obscure text by the Polish-born scientist, a researcher in piezoelectricity, staff member of the Marconi Wireless Company, and later professor at the University of Illinois.



47. Valentiner, Brigitta. The Flying Tavern & Other Tales.

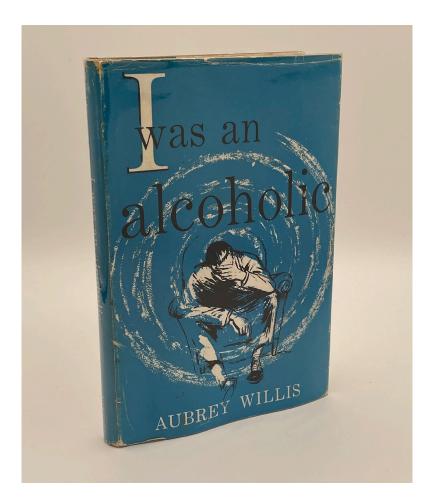
Dorrance, 1977. First edition. 175 pp. Near Fine in VG+ jacket, light rubbing and one closed tear to back. Signed and inscribed the author. Jacket design by Donya Melanson. A collection of tales of occult fantasy by a Berks County, PA-based and German-born writer. From the book-scouting collection of Tom Verlaine, with his slip stating "SIGNED."



48. Walter, Hugo G. The Fragile Edge.

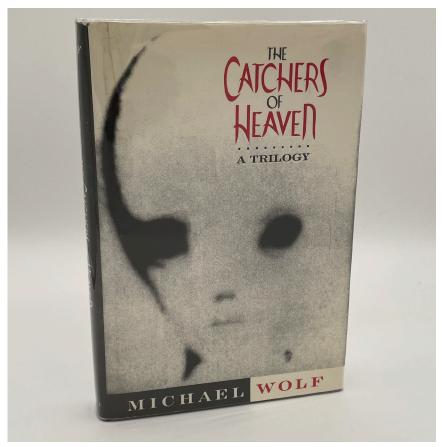
Dorrance, 1988. First edition. 27 pp. Fine in Near Fine dust jacket. Early collection by this cult favorite poet. His overwhelmingly adjective/adverb-laden style was still ahead of him here, but the tendency toward the hallucinatory Romantic is quite present.

Sold.



49. Willis, Aubrey. I Was an Alcoholic.

Vantage, 1956. First edition. 132 pp. Near Fine in Very Good dust jacket with light soiling, now in protective sleeve. The author's memoirs of the ill effects of alcohol, and the process of kicking his addiction. An "utterly frank" account from a Georgia piano shop owner. Rare.



50. Wolf, Michael. The Catcher of Heaven: A Trilogy.

Dorrance, 1996. Third printing. 402 pp. Near Fine in Very Good dust jacket, one tape-mended tear and one small blemish to rear, presents Near Fine in protective sleeve. A book about which your bookseller, I, could expound at length. A 1990s UFO / secret government tall tale, written as a novel-as-memoir. Prose which breaks into poetry. The Great American Novel? Could be... Rare.