How Should Poetry Look?
The Printer’s Measure and Poet’s Line

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY
Jean Alice Jacobson

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Michael Hancher, Faculty Adviser

July 2008
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my patient committee of excellent professors: Michael Hancher, Maria Damon, Rita Raley, and Janice Kmetz. I have a grateful obligation to the University of Minnesota Library for access to materials held in the Department of Archives and Special Collections and the James Ford Bell Library. I am also happy to acknowledge the kind assistance of staff at Trinity College Library, Cambridge in preparing a digital image of Joseph Moxon’s “Encomium,” and also in granting permission for its use here. Thanks are due also to librarians at Eton College for preparing and permitting the publication of a digital copy of Thomas Gray’s holograph of “Stanzas Wrote in a Country Church-yard.” Similar assistance was provided for use of images from the University of South Carolina Library, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the College of William and Mary Library, as well as the British Library, the Houghton Library at Harvard University, the Huntington Library, the Library of Congress, Oxford University Press, and the Library of the University of Michigan. I also thank the staff of Interlibrary Loan Services at University of Minnesota–Duluth, without whose help I could not have attempted this project. I am grateful for specific information regarding the work of Beatrice Warde provided by Dr. Shelley Gruendler. Furthermore, I could not have enjoyed this project nearly so much without the companionship and professional views of Minnesota poets, publishers, and presses, including Louis Jenkins, Connie Wanek, Hannah Dentinger, Bart Sutter, Jim Perlman, Tight Squeak Press, Hen’s Cackle press, Knife River Press, Will-o-the-Wisp Press, and Minnesota Book Arts. I thank those near and dear to me for their support: Ruth, Georgia, Ellen, and Leon; and finally, but not least, I thank my colleagues in the University of Minnesota–Duluth School of Business and Economics for their help and encouragement—and in particular, Jim Skurla and Rick Lichty.
for

Matt Ward
Abstract

I inventory printers' rules of thumb and consider their application to the first page of four iconic publications in English: Shakespeare's Sonnets, Gray's Stanzas Wrote in a Country Church-Yard, Whitman's Leaves of Grass, and Eliot's The Waste Land. To establish the history of the layout and page design for English and American poetry from the Early Modern period to the Modern period, I identify and discuss assumptions about poetry on the page that readers have lived with for four hundred years. Contrasting examples from contemporary poems are also considered. Comparisons for analysis are presented through a matrix of attributes which includes type face, graphic elements, spacing, indentation, page size, and pagination. Printing manuals and histories of printing make some rules explicit. Additional evidence is culled from the record of printing practice at presses, as well as the testimony of poets, printers, editors, and publishers. This account of the shape that poetry took in print leads to a consideration of possible shapes that it may take in the future after print.
# Table of Contents

Introduction--------------------------------------------------------------- 1

Chapter One: Shakespeare, Gray, and Moxon: The Wooden Press—With or without Springs, From 1683 to 1800----------------------------------------------- 28
  Overview --------------------------------------------------------------- 28
  Manuscript Practices for Writing Poetry----------------------------------- 28
  Printing Technology in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries--------- 30
  Printers’ Rules of Thumb: Caxton to Luckome------------------------------- 34
    William Caxton---------------------------------------------------------- 34
    Joseph Moxon----------------------------------------------------------- 38
    James Watson----------------------------------------------------------- 45
    John Smith------------------------------------------------------------ 48
    Philip Luckome--------------------------------------------------------- 53
  Printing Poetry in the Seventeenth Century: Shake-speares Sonnets---------- 57
    Practices in Eld’s Print Shop-------------------------------------------- 57
    Sonnets Comparables--------------------------------------------------- 62
  Printing Poetry in the Eighteenth Century: Gray’s Elegy--------------------- 69
    Dodsley’s House Style----------------------------------------------- 70
    Elegy Comparables---------------------------------------------------- 74

Chapter Two: Whitman and Stower: The Iron Hand-Press—More, Stronger, Bigger, and Smaller, from 1800 to 1900 ------------------------------------------ 102

  Printing Technology in the Nineteenth Century------------------------ 103
    Commercial Printers and the Industrial Revolution------------------- 104
    Fine Press and Private Printing during the Nineteenth Century------- 106
  Printers’ Rules of Thumb: Stower to Savage-------------------------- 107
    Caleb Stower---------------------------------------------------------- 107
    Cornelius Van Winkle----------------------------------------------- 112
    John Johnson--------------------------------------------------------- 114
    Thomas Hansard------------------------------------------------------- 119
    Thomas Adams--------------------------------------------------------- 127
    Charles Timperley---------------------------------------------------- 130
    William Savage------------------------------------------------------- 133

  Printing Poetry in the Nineteenth Century: Leaves of Grass---------- 137
    Whitman and Rome’s House Style--------------------------------------- 137
    Leaves of Grass Comparables------------------------------------------ 143

Chapter Three: Eliot and Morris: The Keyboard Beautiful or Cheap, from 1900 to 1922 ----------------------------------------------- 178

  Printing Technology at the Start of the Twentieth Century------------ 179
  Fine Press and Private Printing, and Mechanized Commercial Printing----- 179
  New Compositors’ Tools----------------------------------------------- 181
  Printers’ Rules of Thumb: Harpel to Morison-------------------------- 183
Oscar Harpel-----------------------------------------------183
Thomas MacKellar ----------------------------------------186
Henry Gold Bishop ---------------------------------------190
Charles Thomas Jacobi ----------------------------------193
William Morris -----------------------------------------196
Charles Ricketts ----------------------------------------200
Theodore Low De Vinne ---------------------------------203
Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson --------------------------207
Stanley Morison ----------------------------------------207
Printing Poetry in the Twentieth Century: *The Waste Land*-----------------------------------214
Hazell’s House Style-------------------------------------215
*The Waste Land* Comparables----------------------------221
A Typographical Comparison of Four Editions of *The Waste Land*-----------------------------233
Conclusion: Printing Up to *The Waste Land*, and After--------------------------------------240
Looking for a Trend: The Shared Matrix of Four Poems------------------------------------262
Four Poems Superimposed in One Image--------------------------------------271
Comparing Small Multiples---------------------------------------------------------------274
Beatrice Warde, Revisited------------------------------------------------------280
How Poetry Should Look Now: New Rules for Poets?-----------------------------------296
Materiality-----------------------------------------------------297
Persistence of Text------------------------------------------299
New Forms and New Media----------------------------------300
New Rules of Thumb----------------------------------------302
Appendix A: Matrix of print attributes for *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, Gray’s *Elegy*, Whitman’s *Leaves*, and Eliot’s *Waste Land*-----------------------------313
Appendix B: Glossary of printers’ terms--------------------------------------------------315
Works Cited--------------------------------------------------------------------------------320
List of Tables

Table 1. Four poems: Press work attributes ------------------------------ 264
Table 2. Four poems: Layout attributes --------------------------------- 265
Table 3. Four poems: Typography attributes --------------------------- 268
Table 4. Which attributes changed over time? -------------------------- 270
### List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1</td>
<td>Chronology of authors of influential printers’ manuals, showing proximity to four poems.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2</td>
<td>Change in number of printers’ manuals published from 1683 to 1900, from Rummonds.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3</td>
<td>Importance of printers’ manuals 1683–1937, ranked by frequency of selected secondary source recommendation; from Rummonds, Pankow, Bigmore, Grabhorn, and Gaskell.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4</td>
<td>Printers’ manuals: Influence from Moxon to Morison.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5</td>
<td>Developments in relief printing technology from 1600 to 1922, from Moran, showing proximity to four poems.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6</td>
<td>Jean Jacobson, “Skater,” in draft, 1989.</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7</td>
<td>“Skater” in periodical publication.</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8</td>
<td>“Skater” from online periodical archive, persistent link.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9</td>
<td>Source code for “Skater” on EBSCOHOST.</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 10</td>
<td>“Skater” anthologized.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 11</td>
<td>“Skater” on author’s Web site.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 12</td>
<td>Opening of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, printed by William Caxton in 1477.</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 13</td>
<td>“Encomium” by Joseph Moxon, in Dansie’s A Mathematical Manual, printed by Joseph Moxon in 1654.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 14</td>
<td>“First Canto,” from Minerv; or, The Art of Weaving, by R. C., printed by Joseph Moxon in 1677.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 15</td>
<td>“A Contemplation Upon . . . The Mystery of Printing,” from The History of the Art of Printing, by James Watson, printed by James Watson in 1713.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 16</td>
<td>Constantia, printed by John Smith in 1751.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 17</td>
<td>From The History and Art of Printing, by Philip Luckome, printed by W. Adlard and J. Browne in 1770.</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 18</td>
<td>Printing on the wooden hand-press: authors of printers’ manuals, and a poem from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 19</td>
<td>Shake-speares Sonnets by William Shakespeare, printed by George Eld in 1609. (Signature effaced, [9])</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 20</td>
<td>Venus and Adonis, by William Shakespeare, printed by Richard Field in 1593.</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 21</td>
<td>The Passionate Pilgrime, by William Shakespeare, printed by Judson (?) in 1599.</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 22</td>
<td>Poems, by Wil Shake-speare, printed by Thomas Cotes in 1640.</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 23</td>
<td>An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard, by Thomas Gray, printed by Robert Dodsley in 1751.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 24. *Stanzas wrote in a Country Church-Yard*, by Thomas Gray, in manuscript, 1750? 74

Figure 25. “Stanzas written in a Country Church-yard,” by Mr. Gray, from *the Magazine of Magazines*, printed by William Owen in 1751. 76

Figure 26. *Designs by Mr. R. Bentley, for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray*, printed by Robert Dodsley in 1753. 78

Figure 27. *Poems by Mr. Gray*, by Thomas Gray, printed by Robert and Andrew Foulis in 1768. 80

Figure 28. Comparison of Two Poems as Benchmarks of Change (not to scale). 82

Figure 29. *The Press: A Poem, Part the Second*, by John McCreery, printed by John McCreery in 1827. 111

Figure 30. *Samor*, by Henry Hart Milman, printed by C. S. Van Winkle in 1818. 113

Figure 31. *Typographia*, by John Johnson, published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green in 1824. 117

Figure 32. “A Description of the Country’s Recreations,” from *Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*, edited by Sir Egerton Brydges, printed by John Johnson in 1813. 118

Figure 33. “Miss Carew,” from *Theatrical Portraits*, by Harry Van Dyk, printed by T. C. Hansard, in 1822. 125

Figure 34. *Christ’s Hospital, A Poem*, by Thomas Skinner Surr, printed by Millar Ritchie in 1797. 126

Figure 35. “Though hard’s our task,” from *Typographia; or, The Printer’s Instructor*, by Thomas F. Adams, printed and published by the complier in 1837. 129

Figure 36. “An Ode,” by Charles Henry Timperley, from *Songs of the Press*, printed by Fisher, Son, and Company in 1845. 132

Figure 37. *Stultifera Navis; or, The Modern Ship of Fools*, by W. H. Ireland, printed by William Savage in 1807. 136

Figure 38. “Song of Myself,” from *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman, printed by Walt Whitman and Andrew Rome in 1855. 139

Figure 39. *Myself to celebrate*, by Walt Whitman, in manuscript, 1855. 143

Figure 40. A legal form from the Dorothy G. Hathaway Papers, 1854–1983 (The Brooklyn Historical Society), printed in Brooklyn in 1854. 144

Figure 41. “Song of Myself,” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, printed by Fowler and Wells in 1856. 145

Figure 42. “Proto-Leaf,” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, printed by Thayer and Eldridge in 1860. 147

Figure 43. “Starting from Paumanok,” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, printed by W. E. Chapin and Company in 1867. 149

Figure 44. “Inscriptions,” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, electrotyped by Smith and McDougal in 1871. 151
Figure 45. “Inscriptions,” from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, electrotyped and printed by Rand, Avery and Company, Boston, in 1881. 153

Figure 46. “Starting from Paumanok,” from *Poems by Walt Whitman*, *Selected and Edited by William Michael Rossetti*, published by John Camden Hotten in 1868. 155

Figure 47. “The Poet,” from *Essays: Second Series*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, stereotyped at the Boston Stereotype Foundry in 1855. 157

Figure 48. *Maud and Other Poems* by Alfred Tennyson. Stereotyped by Hobart and Robbins, New England Type and Stereotype Foundry, Boston in 1855. 159

Figure 49. *Maud and Other Poems*, by Alfred Tennyson. Printed by Bradbury, Evans, and Company in 1869. 159

Figure 50. "Death of the Veteran Brooklyn Printer," signed "W. W.,” in the *Daily Eagle*, December 31, 1859. 162

Figure 51. “The Old Compositor’s Last Take,” by Oscar Henry Harpel, from *Poets and Poetry of Printerdom*, printed by Harpel in 1875. 185

Figure 52. “The Song of the Printer,” from *The American Printer*, by Thomas MacKellar, printed by Thomas MacKellar in 1874. 189

Figure 53. “So It Goes,” by Oliver Jenkins, printed by Will Ransom in 1922. Reprinted in *the Inland Printer* in 1922. 192

Figure 54. “The Song of the Vermonters,” from *Memoir of Benjamin Franklin Stevens*, by George Manville Fenn, printed by the Chiswick Press in 1903. 195

Figure 55. Opening of “The Knight’s Tale,” from *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer, printed by William Morris at the Kelmscott Press in 1896. 199

Figure 56. “From fairest creatures,” from *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, by William Shakespeare and T. Sturge Moore, printed by Hacon and Ricketts in 1899. 202

Figure 57. “The Sea-Gull,” by S. Weir Mitchell, printed by Theodore Low De Vinne in *the Century Magazine* in September 1899. 206

Figure 58. “Noel: Christmas Eve, (1913),” (sic) from *The Tapestry*, by Robert Bridges, printed by Stanley Morison in 1925. 210

Figure 59. “Verses Written to the Sound of Fire Engines,” by Beatrice Warde, from *the Monotype Recorder*, printed by the Monotype Corporation in 1941. 213

Figure 60. “The Waste Land” by T. S. Eliot, from the *Criterion*, October 22, 1922, printed by Hazell, Watson and Viney in 1922. 219

Figure 62. “The Waste Land,” by T. S. Eliot, from the Dial, printed by Schofield Thayer. ................................................................. 224
Figure 63. The Waste Land by T. S. Eliot, published by Boni and Liveright in 1922. ................................................................. 226
Figure 64. The Waste Land, by T. S. Eliot, printed by L. and V. Woolf, at the Hogarth Press in 1923. ................................................................. 229
Figure 65. Re-lineation of Eliot’s “The Burial of the Dead” according to audible and syntactical pauses. ................................................................. 231
Figure 66. Shake-speares Sonnets, An Elegy Wrote in a County Church Yard, Leaves of Grass, and The Waste Land, superimposed layouts, not to scale. ................................................................. 273
Figure 67. All images for study, presented as thumbnails, in chronological order. ................................................................. 276–279
Figure 68. “Setting Poetry,” from “The Book of Verse” by Beatrice Warde, from the Monotype Recorder, printed by the Monotype Corporation in 1936. ................................................................. 284
Figure 69. The English Galaxy of Shorter Poems, edited by Gerald William Bullett, 122–23. ................................................................. 289
Introduction

Research question

This dissertation begins with my excitement about what might happen to poetry in the digital world of the Internet. What will poets make of this inkless, paperless, colorful, animated medium? A question like this is entertaining for the way it summons the vast architecture of the World Wide Web and places readers and writers at the beginning of a new enterprise. We expect that poets will write new poems, and that some of these poems will show electrifying differences; but will these differences be geared to a new set of tools, or will poets and readers write poems according to notions of how a poem should look? Readers and poets have taken much for granted about the printed page: printed ink and paper, as conventionally understood, have seemed a transparent vehicle for the expression of the poem. Is there a trend to be extrapolated from the history of printing poetry that can inform speculation on future possibilities? How do we determine a bench mark from which to notice changes? We assume that the look of poetry has changed over time: if that is true, how would we show it? Were we to review the history of poetry printed with moveable type, when did “the look” start, and what has happened to it since?

Caveats

The possible pitfalls for a methodology addressing these questions are many and deep. To begin, there are large disagreements about which texts are poetry. Can poetry be written as prose? Are all song lyrics poetry? In terms of what can be produced on paper, are art works made of text also poems? Another concern is the arbitrariness of limiting the view of practice to the printing of poems in English. The need to limit our survey to a small sample of poems can be maddeningly strict, as well as misleading. Also beyond the scope of the research undertaken here are investigations into broad cultural or economic reasons for the phenomena described here. Nevertheless, this study attempts a meaningful gloss of printing practices for poetry across four centuries.
By “printing,” in this study, I mean relief printing of type on the wooden, iron, and mechanized printing presses, dating from Gutenberg to the early twentieth century. The time frame for my study engages poems in print in English soon after the experiments of the incunabular period but stops short of the introduction of photocomposition after the second decade of the twentieth century.¹ The design for study is constructed from a chronological short-list of texts, each having a wide consensus about their identity as poetry, and an account of printers—broadly interpreted as an increasingly complex group of workers, with increasingly varied skills—who determined how the poem looked on the page when it was first printed. In addition to addressing a specific time frame and range of technology, this study covers printers’ activities and rules of thumb. (A “rule of thumb” here means both rules written into printers’ manuals and trade practice passed from printer to printer, so that in the absence of specific direction, a printer will default to customary practice.²) These rules are understood to mean, most often, recorded practice, as written down by printers for printers, in the body of matter referred to as printers’ manuals. The record of printers’ rules of thumb is expressed in the terminology of the printers themselves, as they describe their work in the manuals from which I quote. I clarify these terms as they arise in my discussion and provide a glossary of terms used in this study as an appendix.

Many of these conventions originate in manuscript tradition and were established by scribes before the invention of printing. Among these were the practice of writing poetry in lines, often one verse to a line, the practice of using capitals to begin each line, and the use of a large initial at the beginning of a poem. Other influential scribal practices included setting titles in large letters, and using small capitals for the opening phrase. Manuscript tradition also established orthography such as the deployment of the long s, as well as pointing conventions such as full-stop punctuation of the sentence. I describe these conventions for poetry in the manuscript tradition as preliminary to the printing practice of Caxton and George Eld in my “Overview” of Chapter One.
Methodology

The methodology that I use to explore the printing history of the four focal poems, and to discuss trends for printing poetry in relation to these four poems, is as follows: My source information is derived 1) from evidence on the first page of each of the four poems; 2) from accounts written by printers of each century in their printers’ manuals; 3) from the history of change in the tools and technology of printing; and 4) from assessment of a gallery of peripheral pages of contemporary printed poetry that I call “comparables.” My findings are arranged in three chapters of evidence, broadly organized under the rubric of three shifts in technology; these include a chapter on printing in on the wooden hand-press, a chapter on printing on the iron hand-press, and a chapter on printing when the keyboard has entered into the printing process. My conclusion summarizes trends for the printing of poetry, and also identifies practices for printing poetry after The Waste Land, taking special note of the influential opinions of Beatrice Warde.

Sources

Poems. I started my investigation of how poetry should look in print by focusing on four famous poems in English. The sample is further narrowed by limiting the analysis to printing practice exhibited on only the first page of the printed poem. The selected poems represent four centuries of printing poetry in English. William Shakespeare’s Shake-speare’s Sonnets (1609) represents the seventeenth century. Why did the first printer of Shakespeare’s Sonnets decide that page one could include a page turn which places the concluding couplet of the second sonnet on the next page? I pursue this question, and others, by examining the practices of printers in the seventeenth century—including the legacy of William Caxton, and the manuals of Joseph Moxon, John Smith and Philip Luckombe.

Thomas Gray’s An Elegy, Wrote in a Country Church Yard (1751) represents the eighteenth century. Gray’s Elegy has beguiled the popular reader and also fascinated scholars, who have inquired into the poet’s reluctance to publish his poem. Looking at the first printing—and the many reprints of that edition which quickly followed—a reader of
poetry might notice that Gray’s quatrains are not separated by the customary blank line. Why does Gray’s poem forgo this white space between stanzas? To supply an answer, I look to the poem’s printing history, including the record of the publisher, the poet and the printer, as well as printing practice from printers of the eighteenth century.

Walt Whitman’s ground-breaking poem, *Leaves of Grass* (1855), and Whitman’s own practice as a printer, changed the look of the printed poem in the nineteenth century. Or did it? What is unconventional about this poem, in terms of nineteenth-century printing practice? How did Whitman’s poem come to display such varying word spacing and line spacing? And what do his contemporary printers, working on the new iron hand-press, have to say about how Whitman’s poem should look? The manuals of London printers Caleb Stower, Thomas Hansard, Charles Timperley, and William Savage document the fine printing practices launched by their countryman John Baskerville. American printers Cornelius Van Winkle, John Johnson, and Thomas Adams ride the commercial expansion of the Industrial Revolution to devise practices to produce more and more books and newspapers. What were a Brooklyn printer’s choices in 1855? I look closely at the printing of this poem to address these questions.

T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) represents the early twentieth century in singular ways beyond the poem’s look on the page. But in print, Eliot’s poem appeared almost simultaneously in three editions. Which one shows how the poem should look? Early twentieth-century printers continued to be influenced by the work of late-nineteenth-century printers, such as the visual complications of Morris, carried on by Charles Jacobi and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson. Other turn-of-the-century printers, such as Henry Bishop and Theodore Low De Vinne, wrote detailed manuals which covered not only private hand-press printing, but also printing for the high-volume magazine trade. Printers had also been keeping pace with fast-moving technological changes, which for commercial purposes brought hand-set type to an end and launched high-speed newspaper and magazine production. What circumstances of printing and publishing combined to accomplish the first printing of *The Waste Land* through Eliot’s periodical the *Criterion*? What did the magazine printers Hazell, Watson and Viney make of this poem’s scrapbook structure? How were
Hazell’s compositors helped or hindered by the poet at the typewriter? Did the practices of T. J. Cobden-Sanderson at the Doves Press carry forward in the work of his son Richard Cobden-Sanderson, who was Eliot’s publisher? Printers’ rules surround these questions and can locate a response in the world of practice.

To frame the chronological relationship of poems and printers, I arrayed the following time line to show the authors of influential printers’ manuals and their proximity to the four poems of the study.

![Figure 1. Chronology of authors of influential printers’ manuals, showing proximity to four poems.](image)

Printers. I suggest that the hand of the printer determines many aspects of what we see on the page. Investigating the primary material of printers’ manuals, I have looked for specific evidence of printers’ practice through time. To read through an array of early printers’ manuals is to find the careful instruction of a master printer about the means to his livelihood. It is also to find a passionate account of the printer’s awareness of the power of print; the reader can be moved by the world-changing power that struck these printer-authors—their awareness that the press delivered ideas and aesthetics and influence,
through them to the world, as if by lightning. Keenly felt by printers and recorded in their manuals has been the seventeenth century’s excruciating anxieties over the printed word’s power to influence citizens and souls for good or ill, as well as printers’ struggle with patents and censorship. James Watson’s difficulty with Mrs. Anderson over the King’s patent is bitterly (and entertainingly) recounted at length in his manual of 1713. Printers’ pride in the lengthening history of their trade meant that printing histories are included in most of the manuals of practice from the eighteenth century. Also from the eighteenth century, eccentric and inspiring innovators like Baskerville get full treatment by printer-authors; Baskerville is saluted for his patient experiments with ink and paper and every aspect of hand-press production. For printers he is notable also for working to improve printing equipment, an aspect of the trade that had seen no significant change since Gutenberg. Many nineteenth-century printers write from the point of view of their exhilarated, business-oriented commercial success. Some of their printers’ manuals display illustrations of huge newspaper presses, and percolate with ideas about making money.

The change in the number of printers’ manuals published from 1683 to 1900, and their dramatic increase in the nineteenth century, is shown graphically in figure two.

Figure 2. Change in number of printers’ manuals published from 1683 to 1900, from data reported by Rummonds.
The prospect of reviewing hundreds of manuals for rules about setting poetry demanded a strategy to focus on the most important records. Fortunately, secondary sources about the catalogue of printing manuals have guaranteed that the bibliographic trail is well mapped.

To open a volume of Bigmore and Wyman’s A Bibliography of Printing is to be amazed and then more amazed. Their encyclopedic entries are the records of lives spent recording the nuances of how things were done in the print shop and the history of printing in English over hundreds of years. Richard-Gabriel Rummonds has also supplied a magisterial two-volume compendium of practice in Nineteenth-Century Printing Practices and the Iron Handpress, although it is not a bibliographical collation or a complete comparative study like Bigmore and Wyman’s. Collation is important to this history, because in a curious way, perhaps specific to a history of practice, the best and most influential authors have faithfully copied each other’s descriptions and explanations, word by word, from author to author, and from century to century. The record in the manuals also shows the history of the printing profession to have been inchoate at first, but then regularized with standards. It also shows how the profession was allowed to operate through the self-monitoring of its activities, and how it earned a self-regulating authority. From secondary sources such as Bigmore and Rummonds, the best primary source manuals for extrapolating printers’ practices were reduced to a relatively short list. In addition to Rummonds and Bigmore, secondary sources consulted for this inventory included lists provided by David Pankow, Philip Gaskell, and the Grabhorn Library in San Francisco. Pankow is the current editor of Printing History: The Journal of the American Printing History Association. Pankow also recently wrote The Printer’s Manual: An Illustrated History (2005). The late Philip Gaskell, for twenty years librarian at Trinity College, Cambridge, and author of an essential bibliographical textbook, A New Introduction to Bibliography, published his list with Giles Barber and Georgina Warrilow, in the Journal of the Printing Historical Society, in 1968, as “An Annotated List of Printer’s Manuals to 1850.” For a second American perspective, I reviewed the “Checklist of Printers’ Manuals” deposited at The Robert Grabhorn Collection on the History of Printing and Development of the Book at the San...
Francisco Public Library, compiled under the direction of Alastair Johnston. The criteria for selection included manuals which were worthy of repetition among these secondary sources, and also those described well-enough to serve as instruction for apprentices.

A tabulation of the influence of printers’ manuals from 1683 to 1937, by frequency of selected secondary source recommendation, shows the core list of manuals consulted for printing practices in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manual author</th>
<th>Rummonds</th>
<th>Pankow</th>
<th>Bigmore</th>
<th>SF/Grabhorn</th>
<th>Gaskell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moxon -1683</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith -1755</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luckombe -1771</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stower -1808</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson -1824</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansard -1825</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timperley -1838</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watson -1713</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacKellar -1866</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Winkle -1818</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harpel -1870</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams -1844</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Vinne -1904</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop -1889</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobi -1892</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updike -1937</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Importance of printers’ manuals 1683–1937, ranked by frequency of selected secondary source recommendation; from Rummonds, Pankow, Bigmore, Grabhorn, and Gaskell.

I arrayed the authors of these short-listed manuals as an inter-related web of practice, flowing from the redundant treatment of manual texts by printers (see figure 4). This list of primary source manuals is also narrowed by a correlation I made with the specific printers’ rules of thumb used to print the four poems that I have selected as representative of how poetry was expected to look at four moments in time.
Technology. How could the wooden hand-press continue unchanged from Gutenberg into the nineteenth century? Are there implications for the shift from mechanical to digital technology that can be generalized from the history of printing practice correlated with the history of the supporting technology? Why did the printing press (and the tools of the compositor) as a means of production remain the same for the greater part of the history of printed poetry to date? What happened to the look of poetry when the iron press became available to printers? When the rotary press and mechanical type-casting followed the iron press, what happened to poetry? Why didn’t printing technology respond more quickly to changes in demand? James Moran’s Printing Presses is an invaluable source of information with which to correlate the position of technological
change in relation to printers’ practice and the four poems of this study. One could hypothesize that when technology changes, and presents new equipment to printers, the attributes of their output, in this case printed poetry, must also change. This assumption is discussed in the final chapter, in which conclusions about trends are derived. In that chapter, findings about three trends are discussed: 1) notions of change suggested by attributes in a table of printed attributes for the four poems in this study, 2) materiality of the text as reification or incarnation specific to poetry, and 3) the relationship between poets and printers.

Figure 5 shows a time-line correlation of developments in relief printing technology from 1600 to 1922, following Moran’s history and showing changing technology in proximity to the four poems.

**Developments in printing and related technology from 1600 to 1922**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1440</td>
<td>wooden printing press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1610</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1630</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1635</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1640</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1655</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1660</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1665</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1675</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1683</td>
<td>improving the wooden press, Blaeu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1725</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developments in printing and related technology from 1600 to 1922

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1745</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>Gray’s Elegy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804</td>
<td>Stanhope iron press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Koenig and the cylinder machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Columbian press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Albion press, first stages of cylinder machine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>iron hand-press after Stanhope and Clymer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>bed and platen press; jobbing platen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>rotary printing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>type-revolving machine and modern rotary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Whitman’s Leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>cylinder machine takes over</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>reel-fed flatbeds, sheet-fed rotaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>Linotype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>Monotype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>rotary press-final stages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>standardized front-strike typewriter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Eliot’s Waste Land</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Developments in relief printing technology from 1600 to 1922, from Moran, showing proximity to four poems.

Facsimiles. Information from images is central to this analysis. To look at printed poetry in order to determine evidence about how poetry looks is asked of the reader many times. The four poems for study are presented as images deployed through the Adobe
InDesign software. This interface permits quantifying aspects of the image, and helps describe text alignment, proportion, and word-, letter- and line-spacing. Also, each poem is discussed in a context of “comparables,” or a gallery of images which display the graphic result of printing practice. Images of poems both written and printed by an author of a printers’ manual are presented, as are images of other poems printed by these authors. As a technical accommodation, all images presented for comparison are formatted for the page size of this paper sheet (8.5 inches x 11 inches), and are sized to suit the required margin of this document, regardless of original size. Because page size designation is always desirable but not always possible or entirely necessary, a rationale for treating images in a standard size might be derived from some limitations of embedded facsimile objects: 1) The actual size of original pages is often unclear, as many books and pages displayed in digital libraries have been previously trimmed to fit new bindings, and page size is often not given. 2) For most study purposes in this project (with the exception of the table of print attributes) page layout is of concern and quantifying relative measurements is of most interest. 3) Electronic display of this document distorts any given image size without alerting the viewer.

Beyond the empirical question of size of printed output, the images of pages exhibited are not the artifacts themselves but rather facsimile images, which do not reproduce all print attributes of the page accurately. Where possible, verification of print attributes has been researched, for example page size, font, type face, and text leading used. That said, the images remain facsimiles and as such do not replace the originals in what they warrant. As William Ivins has shown, a photographic facsimile frees us to show rather than tell and is better than a drawing or description. A further justification for including dozens of facsimile images in the discussion follows from the fact that a most faithfully observed printers’ rule, as well as compelling printers’ practice, has been imitation of exemplary printed pages.

The lists included in each chapter of evidence are formidable. However, these lists of practice are used to reduce the discursive content of the manual to evident rules about printing poetry. Each manual has been approached from a printer’s point of view and the contents are reviewed in relation to the question “How should printed poetry look?”
An additional technique for analysis is presented as the inventory of print attributes. The inventory is arrayed in a matrix showing fifty-five attributes for four poems. In the concluding chapter, a general direction for change is suggested by looking for attributes retained or discarded over time. For instance, the full-stop punctuated title line disappears (at last!) in Eliot’s poem, although it is present from 1609 to 1855, and the drop cap initial continues throughout all poems and at all times.

Chapters of Evidence

The exposition of printers’ rules is organized around the hypothesis that printing technology drives practice and that changes with printers’ practices can be registered most efficiently by clustering the manuals that were written for printers using similar equipment. Technological proximity, in this case, is also chronological proximity. Grouping printers by technology suggested three chapters that follow practice according to the wooden press, the iron press, and the keyboard.

The Wooden Press. In the first chapter I review printing technology for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and exhibit printers’ rules of thumb from the most important printers’ manuals of the period, as they determine the setting of poetry. I am most interested to follow the rules for the compositor—the craftsman responsible for page design and type setting. I begin with William Caxton, who has not left a record of his practice other than artifacts from his press, but whose legacy as England’s first printer is too important not to gloss, and whose practice has been detailed by William Blades. The years between Caxton and Moxon (1474 to 1683) have no explication of practice directly represented by printers until Moxon’s famous Mechanic Exercises, which is acknowledged to be the first printers’ manual in any language, anywhere.15 I touch on the Scottish printer James Watson’s manual in 1713, as the manual extant between Moxon and the most important printers’ manual of the seventeenth century John Smith’s Grammar (1755). Philip Luckombe’s interesting but less important manual from 1771 is also reviewed. As will be seen for each group of printer-authors, their manuals and contemporary sources confirm
that most of these printers wrote poems themselves. Where possible, I display and comment on some of them as exemplars of their practice.

Following my review of printers’ practice for poetry, I inventory the print attributes of two famous poems printed on the wooden press. I coordinate where possible the list of practices presented in the relevant printers’ manuals with the choices made for the printed poem. In chapter one, page one of Shakespeare’s Sonnets is presented in the context of practices in Eld’s shop, and Gray’s Elegy in the context of Dodsley’s house style. Finally, I am interested to note a gradual diversification of the work of printing.

The Iron Press. In the second chapter, I focus on the iron hand-press and on the changes for printers of poetry brought about by the new equipment of the nineteenth century. Earl Stanhope’s cast-iron printing press was the major technological change in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Important changes in supply and demand for commercial book manufacture changed practices for printers and compositors. Nineteenth-century printers’ manuals regularly included discussions on the topic of fine printing, which contributed to changes in how poetry looked. After hundreds of years of undocumented printing practice, important manuals from printers such as Caleb Stower (1808), Thomas Hansard (1825), and William Savage (1841) were accompanied by many lesser and diverse dictionaries, grammars, and typographical guides. Many of these printers left us a demonstration of their preferred style for poetry by printing poems they had written. Again, some of these exemplars are displayed and the printers’ practices are annotated. Printing practices for poetry from English and American printers are reviewed, and page one of Whitman’s first edition of Leaves of Grass from 1855 is inventoried for attributes of the printed page. The poem is then used to show changes in the way poetry could look. Whitman’s role as both printer and poet serves to focus the question of who controls the way the poem will look in the nineteenth century.

The Keyboard. A third chapter covers changes at the beginning of the twentieth century. I present printers’ practices for a fine-printing revival through the private-press refinements of the Arts and Crafts movement in England. Turn-of-the-century printers’ manuals also included practices for printers in relation to the power of the newspaper
press, working with mechanized, steam and electric presses, led by American industry. The bottleneck caused by industrial operations of hand-set type and the labor-intensive activity of the compositor was resolved by the appearance of mechanized type-casting. The hand setting of pieces of pre-cast metal type by compositors was replaced by “hot” type, or metal cast and re-cast for each job by operators of keyboards. The preparation of copy for printing was also sometimes “pre-printed” as typescript from the typewriter. Printing practice for poetry as described in twentieth-century printers’ manuals shows widening scope—from the continuing, artful refinement of hand-press job work, including small-business jobbing presses, to the development of publishing house style sheets. The manuals covered in this chapter begin with Harpel’s sampler of handbills and advertising copy. The review of practice moves to cover several private press successes and failures, such as those associated with Charles Thomas Jacobi, William Morris, and Charles Ricketts. Periodical printing is covered in the manual of practice by Henry Gold Bishop of the Inland Printer, and that by Theodore Lowe De Vinne of the Century Magazine. Some of Stanley Morison’s contributions to compositors’ rules for book manufacture are reviewed.

Eliot’s The Waste Land is presented in this chapter. An exemplary page is inventoried for print attributes and examined to identify twentieth-century changes in how poetry is printed. Among the many simultaneous complexities of twentieth-century printing rules, those related to The Waste Land, as printed by Hazell, Watson and Viney, and published by Cobden-Sanderson, are researched. The position of Hazell’s is discussed, as representative of large-scale, commercial, periodical printers.

Conclusion

After sampling printers’ rules, reviewing print attributes over time, and examining page images, I conclude that the trend for change in how poetry looked from the seventeenth to the twentieth century has been remarkably conservative for some attributes of print, though not for others. But both the poet and the printer are inclined to break the rules. Shakespeare’s pentameter sonnet line is a mnemonic device that coincides with the horizontal space of the page but is not determined by it. The poet’s line is intact but the
printer has chosen from two sets of precedents in print: either to print one sonnet per page, or to fill each page with lines of text to the bottom. Eld’s page breaks the second sonnet by filling his page to the bottom, presenting the reader with the page turn-over. Gray directs his printer to ignore the conventional horizontal space between stanzas, here: the elided space was determined by the poet, not the printer. Whitman’s poetic line has no measure on the page, but Whitman as printer uses the vehicle of type to realize his speech. Eliot disrupts the reader’s assumptions about what a poem should look like by dismantling the poetic line and stanza both; and he prints his measureless line enjambments for the reader on the typewriter.

As can be seen in my examples, both the printer’s measure and the poet’s line can determine the look of poetry. By sorting lists of print attributes for all four poems, by looking at four poems as one superimposed image, and by comparing “small multiple” images of all the poems surveyed in this study, I arrive at a printer’s expectation of how poetry should look. The look will involve the materiality of the text, the possibility of new forms and media, a regard for the persistence of text, and some new rules of thumb. However, I also note the influence of the poet’s line to change the printer’s measure, as changing technology offers new opportunities for poet/printers to realize poems.

Finally, I include here a personal note. It is perhaps true that a scholar would ask “how has poetry looked?” but a poet would ask “how could poetry look?” I have been interested to think about how my poem should look, and like most poets, I have experienced the fact that printers sometimes operate by rules other than observing authorized copy. What are the differences between the poet’s line and the printer’s measure? What has happened to printed layout and lineation in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and how does the printer control aspects of how the poem looks? I introduce my first chapter, therefore, with a short printing history of one poem, in order to mark the distance that printed inflections can travel from an authorized version. The first of six printings in this demonstration was
the draft of my poem “Skater,” which I sent to the *New Republic* magazine in 1991, typed on an IBM “lunchbox” compact computer. It looked like this:

Skater

Not a sound but the creak of ice,
the screeking of white leather;
Not a sound but a huffing of breath;
skater alone here, age twelve, silent
arms symmetrical as branches and hands
counterweights adjusting her balance,
higher, or lower, riding the glide
of the body; not a notion but the narrow
feel of the stiff boots and the quickness
of steel skating the rough ice with
a guttering sound, she begins a long curve,
on one foot, on the outside edge,
free leg a pendulum swung at the turn:
This is The Figure Eight. Finished,
she looks back, fists tucking the waist,
begins again

the continuous figure.

Picture a woman of middle age,
drowsy among the squeaks of age
and the sharper precision of memory;
picture the pen nib skating a page,
a sound of scratches and looping.
The cold draft from the past steadies
the skater, sets a blade deeper
into the ice, on the inside edge; the pen
draws its figure: Little skater
dipped in ink, curving back along this long
figure, passing smoothly, pressing
her likeness into the icy page, look in,
look out, knowing what it is
to be alone with the feel
of that steel neatly cutting
the fresh surface.

Figure 6. Jean Jacobson, “Skater,” in draft, 1989.

Notes on this figure: Produced using 12 pt. Courier type on an 8.5 x 11 sheet, printed on an electric impact printer. For me, as for many writers in the twentieth century, the typewriter came to be intimately involved in the making of the poem, and the change from typewriter keyboard to computer keyboard was less of a change than the change from the handwritten page to typed page. The typewriter’s hallmarkCourier font is still used and often preferred by contemporary writers; these writers explain that the font they write with matters little, except for legibility and a certain drafted potential in the type. An important feature on this page layout is the challenge to reorder one of the most persistent attributes of poems on printed pages, the ragged-right and flush-left margins. Note that the computer is needed to make the calculation of where the second stanza lines begin easy enough to be an option (the typewriter would hardly allow this). Note too that here the poet is
operating as a printer, recognizing the assumptions of alignment but re-deploying white space from right to left. To what degree can technology inspire the poet and the printer to innovate?

The poem was printed in the magazine to look like this:

Figure 7. Skater” in periodical publication.\textsuperscript{16}
Notes on this figure: The poem has been reset in a proportional font, which increases the readability but narrows the poem, somewhat obscuring its symmetrical shape (which is like that of a figure eight). The narrow column width also forces a turn-over (not properly indented) for the phrase “a long curve”—undercutting the mimetic length of the line.

This poem remains part of the digital archive of the *New Republic*, but there it has been further changed by the migration from print to electronic archive in the following ways:

Figure 8. “Skater” from online periodical archive, persistent link.¹⁷
Notes on this figure: This version has been produced by optical character scanning and repeats neither the poet’s line nor the printer’s measure from previous versions. The scan does repeat the erroneous turn-over line, and adds some arbitrary indentation. The style of the archive has returned the poem to the original non-proportional font, but delivers the poem in a format farther from the original than the printed magazine copy.

Even further from the original is the HTML source code for the archive web page, which looks like this:
Figure 9. Source code for “Skater” on EBSCOHOST.

Notes on this figure: This “printing” of the poem is the source code for the magazine’s archived page. The coding assumption is that the text will be treated according to a preformatted version (<pre>), although the formatting that is assumed as original is actually twice removed from the poet’s intention and distorted in the ways noted above. How successful are printers at re-presenting text assumed to be in final format? If deliberate imitation is indicated, how faithful are the copies?
A fifth iteration of this poem is an anthologized version, which looks like this:

\begin{figure}
\centering
\begin{quote}
\textsc{Jean Jacobson (b. 1948)}

\textit{Skater}

Not a sound but the creak of ice,
the screeching of white leather;
Not a sound but a huffing of breath;
skater alone here, age twelve, silent.
arms symmetrical as branches and hands
counterweights adjusting her balance.
higher, or lower, riding the glide
of the body; not a notion but the narrow
feel of the stiff boots and the quickness
of steel skating the rough ice with
a guttering sound, she begins a long curve.
on one foot, on the outside edge.
free leg a pendulum swung at the turn.
This is The Figure Eight. Finished,
she looks back, fists tucking the waist;
\begin{flushright}
the continuous figure.
\end{flushright}
\begin{quote}
\begin{flushright}
Picture a woman of middle age.
drowsy among the squeaks of age
and the sharper precision of memory;
picture the pen nib skating a page,
the sound of scratches and looping.
A cold draft from the past steadies
the skater, sets a blade deeper
into the ice, on the inside edge, the pen
draws its figure: Little skater
dipped in ink, curving back along this
long figure, passing smoothly, pressing
her likeness into the icy page, look in.
look out, knowing what it is
to be alone with the feel
of that steel neatly cutting
the fresh surface.
\end{flushright}
\end{quote}
\end{quote}
\caption{"Skater" anthologized.\textsuperscript{18}}
\end{figure}

Notes on this figure: Would the poet have changed these lines, given that the line length is now based on proportional type rather than the original fixed pitch?
Some of this poem’s meaning is represented by the text’s ability to figure an “8” shape. The IBM computer print-out shows the author’s intended use of white space and line breaks. The magazine layout prints a version in which the line is narrowed and line breaks are superseded by the column requirement. The HTML code “pre” preserves errors from the first typesetting and displays further rearrangements of line breaks. The anthology reprints the poem closer to but not identical to the poet’s draft.

The most recent “printing” of the poem is from the poet’s Web site, where she is contemplating coding a digital watermark, for tamper-proofing.

Figure 11. “Skater” on author’s Web site.
Notes on this figure: Is the poet is in control of this image? The challenge of coding this text presented some unsolved problems: As the poet I can vouch for the fact that there should not be a white line between the two stanzas of this poem. However, in order to left- and then right-justify the column of text I inserted each stanza into a table cell. The cell embedding grants this extra white space, and as “printer” I have not learned to adjust the vertical space so the first stanza can immediately move into the second (as Thomas Gray asked of his printer for stanzas of his *Elegy*). Can the poet shorten the distance between the poem and reader by becoming the printer? Will the printer always stand between the poet and the reader? 19

The printing history of this poem is, I think, more interesting than problematic. Although it offers a review of the limitations of the printer it also opens up opportunities for the poet. The contemplation of this history of printing “Skater” began to suggest more interesting and wider questions about how printers might have ruled in the production of poems throughout four centuries of printing history. What have been printers’ rules of thumb for printing poetry? According to printers, how should poetry look? In chapter one I review printing on the wooden hand-press, the practice of printers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the printing choices that influenced the look of the poems on the first page of *Shake-speares Sonnets*. 
Notes to the Introduction

1. Although Friese Greene is credited with the invention of phototypesetting in England in 1895, and phototypesetting or photocomposition was possible as early as 1917, practical phototypesetting does not become a reality until 1947. Even so, it is not until the 1960s that daily newspapers in the United States switch to phototypesetting machines and completely abandon metal type.

2. For “rule of thumb,” I use an expanded definition which includes several elements: 1) rules written in printers’ manuals, 2) inferences about printers’ practice derived from artifacts, 3) a loose but important set of hearsay and unwritten practice perhaps so common that notation is considered unnecessary, and 4) a continuing legacy of practice in contemporary printers. Attribution of the rule of thumb often combines these elements.

Rules of thumb can alter, passed through the genealogy of printers. Consider, for example, the quotation famously attributed to Frederic Goudy, “Anyone that would letterspace blackletter would steal sheep.” This is more often than not quoted as “A man who would letterspace lower case would steal sheep.” Although spacing blackletter and lower case are two different tasks, the change is considered by printers not as much a misquotation as an evolution of the same rule. See a Typophile thread at http://www.typophile.com/node/13406.

3. I have limited the study to include page design of the first page of the first edition of each poem. However, a bibliographer’s view, a page designer’s view, and a printer’s view of page layout more typically treats the two-page layout of books as the image of interest. My project’s eventual discussion of the poem on the screen, and its relation to the page, and the need to constrain my discussion to a limited field of variables to keep this project manageable, has inspired my decision to present only the poem’s first page. Also, the restriction of the area of study to the first page reflects a difference between books of poetry and other books: a prose work, for example, establishes a design which remains the same throughout the book; but each page in a book of poetry can be different. Finally, as this study concerns the layout of the page for the printer, readers are asked to reflect on a printing process which at times includes the hand-press’ page galley and the proof press, both of which most typically print single pages; the preliminary review of the individual page in proof has significant influence on the design of the page.


8. Bible printing is of course front-and-center for printers with a mission, and printers’ manuals from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are glad to offer examples and recommendations about ecclesiastical printing practice. Printing poetry, much a secondary effort compared to bibles, begins to look suspiciously like bible printing, as does all printing of a certain age. However, the secular humanist influence comes on powerfully through the roman and italic fonts, and through the printed examples of classical poetry. Attributes of printed poetry such as the drop cap initial have direct linkage to the bible page.


11. If I had another year to devote to a demonstration of this web of texts, I would design a hypertext to show by collation of texts which printer borrowed from his predecessor, and how many paragraphs, pages, and whole sections of practice were written, repeated, and repeated again in the publication of manuals from Moxon in 1683 to Morison in 1930. I believe the exercise would confirm the view that printing technology changes over time but strategies of reading and writing remain from previous practice, even to the extent that a multiplicity of manuals in a time series can represent the strategy of what we now call hypertext.


13. The front strike typewriter became standard because it allowed the typist to see what she had typed; the machine printed on the front of the platen. A helpful time-line on typewriter history can be found at http://www.officemuseum.com.

14. William Mills Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953), 2, 95. Part of Ivins’s argument involves Senefelder (inventor of lithographic printing), and the engraver Bewick (illustrator of Gray’s *Elegy*), who is discussed below.

1958), lii. “There was no book on printing; for nobody would remember Plantin’s brief essay in the *Dialogues français pour les jeunes enfants.*” The text of this edition is reprinted from a copy of *Mechanick Exercises*, vol. 2, 1683, in the Bodleian Library, and is hereafter cited as *Mechanick Exercises*.


