

Fathom Books

written by Entropy | July 17, 2018



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Interview with Joseph Spece, Founder and Editor-in-Chief

How did Fathom Books start?

Stephanie Adams-Santos' *Swarm Queen's Crown* could not find a publisher. It occurred to me that we would die waiting on a commercial or university press to realize her work was vital—especially considering the sort of books in their catalogues. So we're building a grotto for the mongrels.

Tell us a bit about Fathom Books. What are your influences, your aesthetic, your mission?

We find the literary landscape lacking a space for the monstrous and Queer, so we'll carve that space out. We want text fit to meet—or be—the Gorgon.

Can you give us a preview of what's current and/or forthcoming from your catalog, as well as what you're hoping to publish in the future?

We inaugurated Fathom's second publishing year with a selection of our favorite work from *SHARKPACK Annual's* first four years. A lovely, chubby 108-page volume with thirteen colour plates. Next is Julia Rose Lewis' shortbook *How to Hypnotize a Lobster*, winner of our PITCH VIPER PRIZE call for 2017; then my longbook *BAD ZOO*; then *SHARKPACK Annual #1*, themed 'Play.'

We used to ask, "What about small/independent press publishing is particularly exciting to you right now?" We're still interested in the answer

to that, but we're even more interested to know what you think needs to change.

I am alarmed by the ubiquity of certain poetic styles and the far-flung presence of certain poetic 'personalities.' I think, flatly, that houses and magazines are in the business of acquiescing to trends they see more than seeking work that surprises them into love. I want more independence. Big open eyes. I want constructive attacks on the chicanery of bodies like the National Book Awards and AWP. I am an individualist and would prefer a small press community of individuals, not lackeys hoping to take up residence at court.

How do you cope? There's been a lot of conversation lately about charging reading fees, printing costs, rising book costs, who should pay for what, etc. Do you have any opinions on this, and would you be willing to share any insights about the numbers at Fathom Books?

Eric Westerlind and I both work in the service industry to support Fathom. Our printer, Eberhardt, is also run by an independent artisan, struggling month to month. The money's made on our backs and the books are too. We 'cope' by gritting teeth, keeping the friends and writers we admire close, and believing in our mission to make and share the dire books.

Recent releases from Fathom Books:



