

Really Serious Literature

written by Entropy | July 30, 2019



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Interview with C.C. Hannett, Editor

How did Really Serious Literature start?

@rlysrslit started in late August of last year. My partner at the time was an Instagram influencer and we experienced some pretty stellar rewards from that venture and I began to wonder how the literary arts or personal endeavors could benefit and thrive in that format, if at all. I began tinkering around and noticed posts had a cap of ten slides each, which is like a mini-chapbook. Naturally, as most small presses start, I experimented with my own work to measure sustainability by posting "PXZA MNTN", a short hybrid collection of deconstructed concrete poetry and prose. To gain traffic to the page, I reviewed the promotional strategies of a number of online journals and saw a similar trend; many of the publishers and poets hardly ever shared the links more than once. It was like, always a one-off. A "set it and forget it" type of approach. I'd scroll through to issues posted months or a year or so prior and was astonished to see very little continuous or current traffic. Having been an events curator for several years and a writer myself, I presumed the initial struggle to overcome is that writers generally suck at promoting themselves, and readers often think "well, it's online. I can check it out whenever." And in many cases, never do. I wanted to find an approach that would encourage writers to promote their work while also creating an urgency for the reader. The answer was *Disappearing Chapbooks*. Collections with a shelf-life of 72hrs. Hostage via promise of deletion. Once I tried this with "PXZA MNTN" I garnered more attention on that post in comparison to

previous posts regarding publishing acceptances, etc... I was annoyed about it, yeah. But the traffic was there (it's built into the app, essentially) and with the right amount of engagement and hashtag usage, the experiment proved somewhat of a success. I also received a fair amount of positive feedback. So, once my collection expired, I opted to continue with the project by soliciting fellow writers I was either friends with or greatly admired from a distance and, since then, have posted almost 100 Disappearing Chapbooks.

Tell us a bit about Really Serious Literature. What are your influences, your aesthetic, your mission?

We focus on digital ephemera and unconventional literary objects. Much of the concept was birthed through influences such as Inside the Castle, HOOT Review, Meow Meow Pow Pow, Joe Milutis, Russell Jaffe and Amaranth Borsuk. Entities or writers that explore the delivery of language. Who both intrigue and surprise. As far as the aesthetic and mission, I'd say those go hand in hand. I want @rlysrslit to make "poetry fun like candy". To be the Willy Wonka of publishing in a way, and I think we're getting there, especially with this last array of contests we've wrapped up. Between publishing a "Mutant Broadside" of Austin Charcoal's poetry on a t-shirt designed by Alex Vincini, having Never Angel North tattooing Kim Vodicka's winning "Cravan & Bronson Dilemma" poem on my right bicep, to throwing together our first ever Edenfield-orito Residency where the winner (recently announced as Sarah Rodriguez) wins a \$100 stipend, \$200 gift card to Taco Bell, a week of free lodging in downtown Everett, WA, two featured readings, and a published limited run of fifty pamphlets. We want to promote work with merit through punkish methods. And memes, of course.

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?

As of 2020, @rlysrslit will move forward into publishing two physical full-length collections a year, kicking off with works by McKenna Clarke and Giles Eckenbom. We will continue with the aforementioned contests but may experiment with murals, pins, and other apparel as well. I'm still obsessed with the idea of an "edible broadside" so if you know of any mad culinary artists, please send them my way.

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.

Honestly, I'm thrilled with the community I've met simply by starting this project. The small/indie press world online has been so receptive and kind. A lot less stuffy and more supportive than what I've experienced locally, personally. If anything needs to change, I'd be interested in seeing how we can all bridge that sentiment over into the flesh. Myself included. I just

want there to be more wild thinkers and hype troupes.

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 Really Serious Literature?

Many writers are quick to condemn a press (regardless of size) for exploiting writers by holding submission fees without doing any research on the press or what expenses are going into the end-product. Many of us are without outside funding and pay for everything out-of-pocket through low-bar wages. But, having been someone who has thrown a ridiculous amount of money into submission fees myself, I can understand the anger and outcry. We're often helpless out there. Rejections are hard enough, with the loss of money to go with it—despite how meagre—it can feel like a double whammy and leave you resentful. So, I get it. It's very gray and depends on intention, I suppose.

Recent releases from Really Serious Literature:

