English Faculty Publications and Presentations   English

6-24-2024

E-Lit's #1 Hit: Is Instagram Poetry E-Literature?

Kathi Inman Berens
Portland State University, kberens@pdx.edu

E-Lit's #1 Hit: Is Instagram Poetry E-literature?

Kathi Inman Berens
Portland State University

Preface to the Republished Essay

A lot has happened in the world, and in e-literature, since my essay débuted as a conference presentation then a publication in *electronic book review* in 2018. Global protests against the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor during the pandemic summer of 2020 sparked reckoning with how banal, mainstream, and lethal is white supremacy. Six months later, in response to specific critiques about access and equity inside the Electronic Literature Organization, its Board of Directors published a statement about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as a core value. As an editor of the *Electronic Literature Collective Volume 4*, I can attest that we centered EDI in our search for and evaluation of works to include in the fourth installment of the field's canonical anthology. In "Excavating Logics of White Supremacy in Electronic Literature: Antiracism as Infrastructural Critique," Ryan Ikeda shares his experience of searching the ELMCIP database for "'critical race theory,' 'Black feminism' and 'Asian American studies'— all of which yielded zero results." As a cultural act, "these serialized zeroes affirmed an all-too-familiar affective state …. Care and community building begin by organizing the symbolic structures of an institution to reflect its constituents" (2021).

The history of exclusion is Instapoetry's foundational moment. Instapoetry began with two immigrant, millennial women of color, Rupi Kaur and Lang Leav, selling directly to social media publics circa 2014 after having been repeatedly rejected by publishing house acquisitions editors. Today, Instapoetry's community of makers is too broad and diffuse to generalize about whether its practitioners "critically engage" readers, or otherwise meet the aesthetic standards articulated by editors in four volumes of the *Electronic Literature Collection*. But that

shouldn't stop us from taking a keen interest in Instapoetry's field development. It has morphed from the feminism of Kaur and Leav to that of Noor Unnahar (@noor_unnahar) and the humorous Arti Gollapudi (@artifartypoems) and Aly Dixon (@aly__dixon). Sylvia Castelán (@ 👻👻👻) and Liliana Vasques (@robot_sorridente [smiling_robot]) use the Instagram platform for wry self-expression rather than as springboards to book sales. The field is now distributed rather than centralized in a few hit makers, though Andrews McMeel Publishing remains the preeminent publisher of printed Instapoetry. Robert M. Drake (@rmdrk) and Reuben Holmes (@r.h.sin), both men of color, female-affirming, and self-published, have attained *New York Times* bestseller status.

Instapoetry gives agency to poets typically shut out of prestige economies such as book publishing and academia. Without gigantic social media response in 2014, and thousands of self-published book sales, publishers wouldn't have taken a chance on Instapoetry. Rupi Kaur doesn't code her Instapoems—that option exists for no one. But in 2014 Kaur wrote, edited, and hand-built the design of her first book, *milk and honey*, as an end-run around gatekeeping poetry publishers. This exactly the kind of digital self-agency the ELO EDI statement is meant to acknowledge and invite. Those of us who read the code of an e-lit work alongside its user interface find the experience of reading e-lit published in social media flat. Shorn of its code, a work can feel like just a fragment.

Although most readers may not think of it this way, to buy a printed volume of Instapoetry is to buy the entire meaning-making apparatus. It is a contestatory act, owning a book and doing with it what you will. Read and share the book without being tracked. Browsing and preferences are the mother lode of an individual's value to media platforms, which harvest one's data in exchange for serving algorithmically customized content for "free." Harvard Business School Professor Emerita Shoshana Zuboff calls this "surveillance capitalism": the commodification of personal data for the sole purpose of profit-making (2020: v). Users of social media have no idea whether giving away their browsing data in exchange for more relevant search returns is a fair exchange because no regulatory body has compelled media companies to disclose the value of the information, or give people the ability to opt out. Want to pay a subscription fee to stop the collection of your data? That option doesn't exist. The richest and most powerful global companies trade human-derived commodities mostly free from regulatory constraint. It's immoral.

In the context of limitless data surveillance, one printed copy of Rupi Kaur's third volume of poetry, *Home Body*, is a bargain. For just $7.48 you can have a private Instapoetry reading experience because Kaur's publisher, Andrews

McMeel, overestimated demand; the book is remaindered. Imagine! Private reading discounted 50 percent.

Eugenio Tisselli and Rui Torres believe that "being peripheral may actually be the role of e-literature. To critically engage from the inside of a system is to guarantee that readers are not passive or merely entertained watchers." Critical awareness and resistance are excellent cultural contributions. So are access, inclusion, and community. This chapter is one exploration of the tensions between those things in Instapoetry.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Toward E-Lit's #1 Hit[1]

If ever there were e-literature that could fill a stadium, it's Instagram poetry.

This chapter, which I presented on the panel "Toward E-Lit's #1 Hit" at the Electronic Literature Organization 2018 conference in Montréal, responds to Matthew Kirschenbaum's keynote at the prior year's conference. Kirschenbaum traced the coincident development of stadium ("prog") rock—specifically Electric Light Orchestra—and electronic literature, a twinning that led some of us to speculate about what might constitute massively popular e-literature, its "#1 hit."

Formally more akin to a greeting card than traditional poetry because of its sentimentality and combination of text and image, Instagram poetry is a book publishing phenomenon, accounting for a stunning 47 percent of all the poetry books sold in the United States in 2017. In Canada, Instapoets' domination of the genre peaked in 2017 with their books making up 80 percent of all poetry books sold that year, according to BookNet Canada (2021). Since the peak year 2017, printed volumes of Instapoetry remained a market force: 52 percent of all poetry books sold in Canada were penned by poets with 50,000+ followers on Instagram in 2019; in 2020 "Instapoets held on to a respectable 49%."

Whether it is the top seller, Rupi Kaur, with her pen-and-ink feminist drawings and confessional verse, or R. M. Drake, whose Insta profile announces "$12 FOUR BOOK BUNDLE BACK IN STOCK: link below," or the handwritten-on-parchment and IBM Selectric typewriter aesthetic of Tyler Knott Gregson, Instapoetry is simplistic, little more taxing than reading a meme. It is almost always inspirational or emotional. Printed books of Instapoetry collect exactly the same content accessible for free in the Instagram app. Printed volumes

eliminate the social features of the app such as reader comments, nested conversations, and quantification of reposts and likes. In this sense, printed Instapoetry is more like traditionally printed poetry because it is deliberately sequenced in book form and stripped of the social features that make it "viral," or "spreadable." In *Spreadable Media*, Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green critique the metaphor of virality as too passive, undercutting fan agency in spreading content they like. Jenkins, Ford, and Green suggest instead that massively shared content is like peanut butter: "content that remains sticky even as it's spread" (2013: 9). Instagram poetry is peanut butter.

Year-over-year annual poetry sales indicate a walloping 21 percent annual compound growth rate 2013–17, a growth corresponding with when Lang Leav self-published the first volume of printed social media poetry *Love and Misadventures*, which originally appeared in Tumblr (NPD 2018). Rupi Kaur's début volume of printed Instapoetry, *milk and honey* sold three million copies worldwide and has been translated into twenty-five languages. NPD Group [now called Circana] reports 2,067,164 copies of *milk and honey* sold as of January 9, 2019. This figure does not include Amazon sales, which Amazon never shares. In 2017, Kaur's second volume *the sun and her flowers* outsold #3 on the poetry bestseller list, Homer, at a ratio of 10:1. But the hits are not just by Kaur: Instapoets comprised *twelve* of 2017's top twenty bestselling poets. That's *60% of bestsellers* in a publishing field that had been considered moribund.

Instapoetry is definitely a #1 hit. But is it e-literature?

More precisely, can a literary work be e-lit if it's not self-consciously engaged in the aesthetic of difficulty that characterizes e-literature's first and second generations?

While I am persuaded by Leonardo Flores's argument that there's a wealth of digital writing among people who have never heard of ELO nor studied e-lit in college, I wonder if the radical expansion of e-lit's aesthetic from difficulty to ease violates one of e-literature's founding principles: that to read e-lit requires "non-trivial" effort, whether that effort is physical interaction and/or cognitive complexity? This 1997 definition from Espen Aarseth's *Cybertexts*, and N. Katherine Hayles's definition of *technotexts* (2002) describe the mechanics by which e-lit artists align its practices with modernist poetry, not populist bestsellers. The e-literature field remains committed to self-conscious reading practices, where the interaction between a work's physical properties and its semantic strategies engages in "reflexive loops" (Hayles 2008). Stephanie Strickland suggests that "reading e-lit requires taking an aesthetic attitude

toward the textscape as an object that stimulates the sense. To read e-works is to operate or play them (more like an instrument than a game, though some e-works have gamelike elements)" (2009). An experimental, hand-built interface is very different from a pre-packaged, self-evident social media interface. In this chapter, I explore whether or not Instapoetry participates in the defined aesthetics of electronic literature, and I argue that Instagram poetry's aesthetic is indivisible from the surveillance capitalism infrastructure of social media metadata that makes algorithms agentic in "reading" the reader.

I conceptualize Instapoetry as a watershed moment in bibliography, where scholars writing about digital literary interactivity must reckon not only with the gestures we can see—the "likes," comments, reposts, or "@s"—but the platform code and data harvesting we cannot see. Perhaps we could agree that a "like" is "trivial" engagement. But what about the terabytes of data shed by and then harvested from Instapoetry fans? It cannot be "trivial" when 160,000 people "touching" just one Instapoem leave behind so much information that is quite literally out of their hands—is, in fact, a loss they can neither feel nor tally?

Instapoetry is especially interesting generically because "poetry" connotes the pinnacle of the literary highbrow. Poetic language is the most condensed and figurative of literary modes and there's a special wing of the Interwebs devoted to explaining why poetry is so hard to understand, items like "how to read poetry like a professor" (hint: reread) and David Biespeil's list of "Ten Things Successful Poets Do." Number one: "embrace toxicity;" number two: "assume the worst;" number three: "Let negative thoughts hijack [your] brain," and so forth (2013). Poetry, since the early-twentieth-century moderns, has been a difficult business, both in the reading and making: think Pound's debt to Chinese ideograms, and Eliot's endnotes to *The Waste Land*, which reviewers at the time found both necessary and risible. It's no wonder there are guides today on Goodreads for how to make poetry less intimidating.

It is into this highbrow literary context that printed Instagram "poetry" became a phenomenon in 2013 when Lang Leav, a woman born in a Thai refugee camp, sold the rights to her self-published book *Love and Misadventures* to Andrews McMeel Publishing, who sold cookbooks, gift books, and comic strip collections until Instapoetry made its fortune. AMP understood the value proposition of moving *Love and Misadventures* onto their roster, and Leav, whose 5,000-unit print-run sold out in a week, understood she needed help to meet demand.

It's worth lingering over how self-publishing a poetry book is different from self-publishing poetry via a social media website like Tumblr or Instagram.

The most salient difference is in the type of capital that circulates in these transactions. Reposts, likes, and comments are the currency of social media, where the financial value of those transactions is harvested by media platforms, not the authors. Every form of interaction, from simply seeing the post in one's feed ("lurking") to reposting it with a comment sheds reader data that becomes volumetric with each increased level of engagement.

Think of the information on the user interface—that is, what the reader engages with on the screen—as the informational tip of the iceberg: the vast majority of data in any social media post is, like an iceberg, hidden from view.

A famous visualization of a Tweet's metadata made by Raffi Kirkorian (2010; viewable as a public resource) indicates the types of information Twitter collects on a single Tweet during this paleolithic era of Twitter. At the top of the image is the actual tweet that users would have seen in their feeds. The rest of the metadata is the invisible bulk of the iceberg. This is sheerly descriptive metadata. It is not the code that moves packets of information from author to device to server and out through a vast, dispersed distribution system.

It's interesting that this annotated metadata of a 2010 tweet is a rare disclosure of metadata that the company collects. Obviously, a lot changed for Twitter during the ten years since Kirkorian's annotation—not to mention the disruptions that have happened since Elon Musk bought Twitter. Some changes that happened between 2010 and 2020:

The text count doubled to 280 characters;

Tweets embed images and short videos;

Tweets harvest much more precise GPS data, down to what aisle one is standing in at a store.

Bots, hate speech, and "dog whistles" are effects of the platform.

A more recent analysis of Twitter metadata (Barrero 2017) includes new classes such as Klout scores, sentiment and "sentiment category probability," emotion and "emotion category probability." This is also a very basic view of contemporary social media metadata. The focus on emotion and sentiment is raw data for behavioral marketing. What Flores has dubbed "Third Generation E-literature" is inextricably co-constituted with such metadata, which is to say, engaging its literary and artistic meaning comes at the cost of shedding behavioral data that is collected, collated, and auctioned. Reading e-literature in this context inscribes the reading with acts of commercial marking that are locked away from the reader and visible to the human and nonhuman agents gathering and auctioning such information. In *The Metainterface—The Art of*

Platforms, Cities and Clouds (2018), Christian Ulrik Andersen and Søren Bro Pold track what it means that "today's cultural interfaces disappear by blending immaculately into the environment" (10) and propose net art and e-literature as materially self-conscious practices that reveal "fissures" in "habitual" (159) ubiquitous computing. What is the "metainterface"? It's the movement of human/computer interaction from the desktop to the smartphone and cloud. Humans are both agents and quarry, where they use smartphones to electively inscribe themselves on the network, but also shed enormous quantities of data harvested by media companies such as Facebook and Google. Instapoetry is the alluring blossom that attracts users' attention and engagement. Such readers' social media wanderings pollinate sites with data both shed and accumulated. The datafication of reader response *is an essential part of the poem*, one whose effects are visible to readers only indirectly in ads prompted by the reader's engagement with the poem. This is a new kind of "reader response," where algorithms are agentic: the human reader is herself "read" by behavioral targeting algorithms, parsed for commercial susceptibility, and served new information or ads designed to entice transaction, even if that transaction is only a click.

Let's imagine Instapoetry in the wild. One poem by Rupi Kaur about the Trump administration's policy of separating refugee families at the US border published June 19, 2018, illustrates what made Kaur a destination site for so many people, and revitalized sales of poetry books.

Kaur, speaking as an immigrant, excites a lively discourse in multiple spoken languages and emoji, a visual communication format underwritten by Unicode and meant to provide "all the characters needed for writing the majority of living languages in use on computers" (W3C, quoted in Reed 2016). The blend of spoken word and emoji is characteristic of the types of populist formats of third-generation electronic literature. Instagram organizes conversation into a time-stamped database too large for humans to read closely. Sample selection delivers a snippet of a political debate about whether incarcerating children is a just implementation of US immigration law. The problem for literary critics or book publishing scholars who are taking the measure of this kind of discourse is how to cull evidence and make the case for exemplarity when the dataset is so large? Some of the tools of distant reading [most frequent word counts or co-locations] are only so good as the query. How to measure significance in an environment of rapidly proliferating superabundance, where hundreds of thousands of pieces of data are created each day—and that's just what's visible

on the user interface, let alone the volume of invisible but material metadata sparked by each digital touch.

In the case of Instagram comments, to stabilize the data is to denature it.

To take the measure of Instagram as a platform for electronic literature, consider Shelley Jackson's *SNOW* (2014), a sequential text/image poem where each of the 428 lexia is hand-drawn with sticks and brushes to look like type pressed into snow in various stages of melt and drift. *SNOW* is a time-based work. Its first lexia was published January 22, 2014, and the most recent was published, at time of writing this chapter, March 3, 2023. The still-in-progress poem cuts off mid-sentence.

There are several aspects of *SNOW* that mark its second-gen e-lit aesthetic. First, it has reading instructions: "A story in progress, weather permitting. (Read in reverse order.)" Five of twenty-four comments on the first lexia also instruct others how to read it. Second, *SNOW* repays close reading. Anna Nacher, Søren Pold, and Christian Ulrik Anderson, and Scott Rettberg have all prepared conference papers or published work about *SNOW*. Third, Jackson's status as a vaunted first-gen e-literature artist imbues *SNOW* with literary prestige. *Patchwork Girl* is the second most frequently cited work of electronic literature, according to Jill Walker Rettberg's distant reading of dissertations about electronic literature. Jackson's reputation casts a highbrow aura of modernist difficulty despite this poem being set in a populist platform. Fourth, Jackson disengages from the circulation of social capital on Instagram. She treats the Instagram platform as a printing press that distributes a hand-drawn emulation of machine writing. Jackson does not respond to comments posted to lexia, nor does she "like" or repost them. The profile picture of Jackson in winter coat bending over a snow bank like a scribe leaning over vellum reinforces the materiality and ancient human labor of her endeavor. The profile picture frames Jackson in the act of writing. She is resolutely removed from the scene of reading, making *SNOW* categorically different from Instapoetry where authors interact with fans.

Aesthetically, *SNOW* has more in common with Jim Andrews' "Seattle Drift" (1997) than Instapoetry. As is the case of the one-word lexia in *SNOW*, each of the div tags in "Seattle Drift" holds one word of the poem. In the code comments of this visual, kinetic poem, Andrews says of "Seattle Drift":

> Stylistically … the text talks about itself. I like this approach because it focusses [*sic*] attention on the questions and also allows me to develop character. *The character is the text itself*. [My emphasis]

Both Jackson and Andrews are interested in the autonomous behavior of text, whether machine-mediated or snow-mediated. For them, text is a nonhuman "character," and "drift" is a pivot point of interactivity. Andrews's poem begs the reader to make it drift, to "do me." For Jackson, drift is non-interactive. Snow and climate, not humans, are the agents influencing drift and display. Visually the poem reinforces snow's way of looking like a blank page awaiting inscription; but unlike the nineteenth-century British male romantic poets, for whom nature was a handmaiden to their own poetic expression, *SNOW* is a page that resists human inscription by melting.

On the surface, assessing digital-born Instapoetry through close reading as I've just done with *SNOW* and "Seattle Drift," Instapoetry seems not to be a technotext. But ludostylistic scholarship gives us tools for reading Instapoetry's bibliographic code. Calling upon us to "keep in view the need to let go of the object-centered approach that is at the heart of book history," Johanna Drucker articulates a vision of book history that decenters the book as object and considers instead the logics by which a book is an "event space" (2014).

Book publishers have found a way to extract extraordinary financial value from printed Instapoetry as a dynamic playable event space. While social media capital is a routine part of any book marketing campaign, and influences which authors are or are not offered publishing contracts, converting social media capital into sales remains hard to correlate. In Instapoetry, book publishers have a direct conversion of social media capital to financial capital. Unlike other social media celebrities such as YouTube personalities, Instapoets don't face the awkward task of converting a fanbase from one medium (vlogging) to another (printed books). Printed Instapoetry shifts the "content" seamlessly from digital to print. But stripped of liveness, printed Instapoetry ends up looking banal. Its treacly insights, absent the warm glow emanating from fans inside the app, harden into branding. A Goodreads review, visible on the first page of returns about *milk and honey* circa 2018, sums up the skepticism Instapoetry can evoke outside the app:

> So if I
> write my review
> like this
> will it
> automatically
> become poetry?

I've argued in various contexts that even in physically interactive collaborative poetry such as *The Poetry Machine* and virtually interactive literary games like netprov (see my "Live/Archive" essay), printed or archival repositories of live experience always distort the live experience. Nothing, neither digital traces nor printed artifacts, replicates liveness. But that doesn't stop us from wanting mementos of pleasurable live experience: think about the enormous market for live music "merch" such as concert t-shirts, hats, programs, shot glasses. A printed book of Instagram poetry is also a souvenir, though one stripped of playfulness in a dynamic event space like the Instagram app. Nevertheless, printed poetry books participate in the ongoing flow of play and comment by stopping the flow, performing that it's possible to stop paddling in digital currents.

The bibliographic intervention I propose layers a new valence onto "play" where gestural interactivity is foundational, but not the primary object of study. This would be a new turn in ludosemiotic scholarship. Commenting on the book as a physical medium, Serge Bouchardon notes that "[w]ith the Digital, it is not only the medium, but the content itself which becomes manipulable. Manipulability is the very principle of the Digital" (2018: 25). Katarzyna Bazarnik defines *Liberature* as specifically "a Book-bound Genre … _better understood as 'expanded' literature, aware of its spatial, embodied nature" (2018: 43). Agnieska Przybyszewska suggests that liberature is not a genre, but can be classed according to gradations of physical play that transpire both within and outside the printed book format, such as in mobile electronic literature (her monograph *Liberackość dzieła literackiego* is cited and discussed in Bazarnik, particularly 103–4). Astrid Ensslin, in *Literary Games* (2014), situates works on quadrants where physical play is relative to literary ambiguity. Alexandra Saemmer has speculated that the intensity of physical touch in a digital-born literary work affects the reader's process of identification with the protagonist (2013). These and other scholars of ludosemiotics, including Amaranth Borsuk's recent *The Book* in the M.I.T. Press "Essential Knowledge" series, use close reading techniques to consider how play and physical manipulation influence how we read literature.

What I'm proposing is slightly different.

A book of printed Instapoetry is not like a gem in a setting that is somehow lifted up and out of the data-harvesting context. Instead, such a book is brought into being by the social media transactions that make Instapoetry phenomenal— even as the printed volume seems to offer respite from tracking and behavioral marketing. In fact, the site of tracking and reader datafication shifts from the social media platform to the book distributor, whether it's Amazon or a

brick-and-mortar bookseller. Even books purchased anonymously with cash are still tracked as sales. *The reader being converted into a datastream is not a byproduct of reading poetry. It is part of the poem itself.* As we think about the memetics of Third Generation electronic literature, an aesthetic inextricable from tactical media and surveillance capitalism, we ask: What does it mean that the first highly profitable digital-born literature, Instagram poetry, makes its money in the walled gardens of the "post-Web" in ways we can only imagine because the code on which those proprietary social media platforms are built is not inspectable, even to government regulators?

Nick Montfort asks:

> [W]hat has happened to Hypertext in the post-Web world? Just to stick to Twitter, for a moment: You can still put links into tweets, but corporate enclosure of communications means that the wild wild wild linking of the Web tends to be more constrained. Links in tweets look like often-cryptic partial URLs instead of looking like text, as they do in pre-Web and Web hypertexts. You essentially get to make a Web citation or reference, not build a hypertext, by tweeting. And hypertext links have gotten *more* abstruse in this third, post-Web generation! When you're on Twitter, you're supposed to be consuming that linear feed—automatically produced for you in the same way that birds feed their young—not clicking away of your own volition to see what the Web has to offer and exploring a network of media. (2018)

I began this research project wondering why people would pay $13 for a book that reprints exactly the same content that can be had for free, on-demand, in the Instagram app. Why buy the book? Now I understand that printed Instagram poetry wouldn't be a phenomenon without its origin in post-Web, walled-garden engagement. Is Instapoetry e-literature? Yes. The performative materiality of social media platforms reshapes the contemporary literary field. The e-lit aesthetic of difficulty moves from close reading the medium-specificity of first- and second-generation works, to skimming the content and close reading the promiscuous read/write capacities of social media metadata, and guessing at the black-boxed code that undergirds third-generation e-lit.

Note

1   This version of the chapter strips all figures from the chapter and replaces them with textual description to comply with permissions restrictions.

References

Anderson, Christian Ulrik and Søren Bro Pold. 2018. *The Metainterface: The Art of Platforms, Cities and Clouds*. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

Andrews, Jim. 1997. "Seattle Drift." *Vizpo*. http://www.vispo.com/animisms/SeattleDrift.html

Barrero, Carlos. 2017. "The Metadata from a Single Social Media Post." October 2. https://www.crimsonhexagon.com/blog/metadata-from-a-social-media-post

Bazarnik, Katarzyna. 2018. *Liberature: A Book-bound Genre*. New York: Columbia University Press [U.S. distribution of original publication by Jagiellonian University Press, 2016].

Berens, Kathi Inman. 2015. "Live/Archive: *Occupy MLA*." *Hyperrhiz: New Media Cultures*, 11 (Spring). http://hyperrhiz.io/hyperrhiz11/essays/live-archive-occupy-mla.html

Biespiel, David. 2013. "Ten Things Successful Poets Do." *The Rumpus*. https://therumpus.net/2013/12/david-biespiels-poetry-wire-10-things-successful-poets-do/

Borsuk, Amaranth. 2018. *The Book*. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

Bouchardon, Serge. 2018. "Mind the Gap! 10 Gaps for Digital Literature?" Keynote presentation at the 2018 Electronic Literature Organization Conference. Montréal. http://www.utc.fr/~bouchard/Bouchardon-ELO18-English.pdf

Castelán, Sylvia. 🦊🦊🦊, https://brokenenglish.lol/🦊🦊🦊/

Dixon, Aly. https://www.instagram.com/aly__dixon/

Drucker, Johanna. 2014. "Distributed and Conditional Documents: Conceptualizing Bibliographical Alterities." *MATLIT: Materialities of Literature*, 2 (1): 11–29. https://doi.org/10.14195/2182-8830_2-1_1

Electronic Literature Organization. 2021. "Addressing EDI in ELO." March 8. https://eliterature.org/2021/03/addressing-edi-in-elo/

Ensslin, Astrid. 2014. *Literary Gaming*. Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

Gollapudi, Arti. https://www.instagram.com/artifartypoems/?hl=en

Hayles, N. Katherine. 2008. "Distributed Cognition at/in Work: Strickland, Lawson Jaramillo, and Ryan's *seippingglimpse*." *Frame*, 21 (1): 15–29.

Ikeda, Ryan. 2021. "Excavating Logics of White Supremacy in Electronic Literature: Antiracism as Infrastructural Critique." *Electronic Book Review,* January 3. https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/excavating-logics-of-white-supremacy-in-electronic-literature-antiracism-as-infrastructural-critique/ DOI: 10.7273/cctw-4415.

Jackson, Shelley. 2014-present. SNOW. https://www.instagram.com/snowshelleyjackson/

Jenkins, Henry, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green. 2013. *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. New York: NYU Press.

Kaur, Rupi. 2016. *Milk and Honey*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Kaur, Rupi. 2018. "You Split the World into Pieces." *Instagram*, June 19. https://www.instagram.com/p/BkOyGTxlAWf/

Kirkorian, Raffi. 2010. "Map of a Twitter Status Object." *The Wall Street Journal*, April 18. http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/TweetMetadata.pdf

Kirschenbaum, Matthew. 2017. "ELO and the Electric Light Orchestra: Lessons for Electronic Literature from Prog Rock." Keynote at the 2017 Electronic Literature Organization conference. Porto, Portugal.

Mongeon, Monique. 2021. "Stars and Stanzas: Social Media, Stardom, and Poetry in 2020." *BookNet Canada*, January 7. https://www.booknetcanada.ca/blog/2021/1/7/stars-and-stanzas-social-media-stardom-and-poetry-in-2020

Montfort, Nick. 2018. "A Web Reply to the Post-Web Generation." August 26. https://nickm.com/post/2018/08/a-web-reply-to-the-post-web-generation/

Nacher, Anna. 2017. "The Creative Process as a Dance of Agency: Shelley Jackson's Snow: Performing Literary Texts with Elements." In *Digital Media and Textuality: From Creation to Archiving*, edited by Daniela Côrtes Maduro, 169–86. Bremen: Transcript verlag.

NPD Group. 2018. "Instapoets Rekindling U.S. Poetry Book Sales." https://www.npd.com/wps/portal/npd/us/news/press-releases/2018/instapoets-rekindling-u-s–poetry-book-sales–the-npd-group-says/.

Reed, Rob. 2016. "Everything You Need to Know about Emoji." *Smashing Magazine*, November 14. https://www.smashingmagazine.com/2016/11/character-sets-encoding-emoji/

Rettberg, Jill Walker. 2013. "A Network Analysis of Dissertations about Electronic Literature." Paper presented at the 2013 Electronic Literature Conference. Paris. http://conference.eliterature.org/sites/default/files/papers/Jill-Walker-Rettberg-A%20Network%20Analysis%20of%20Dissertations%20About%20Electronic%20Literature.pdf

Rettberg, Scott. 2019. "Room for So Much World: A Conversation with Shelley Jackson." *EBR*, January 6. https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/room-for-so-much-world-a-conversation-with-shelley-jackson/

Saemmer, Alexandra. 2013. "Hyperfiction as a Medium for Drifting Times: A Close Reading of the German Hyperfiction *Zeit für die Bombe*." In *Analyzing Digital Fictions*, edited by Alice Bell, Astrid Ensslin, and Hans Rustad, 176–96. London: Routledge.

Strickland, Stephanie. 2009. "Born Digital." *The Poetry Foundation*. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69224/born-digital

Tisselli, Eugenio and Rui Torres. 2020. "In Defense of the Difficult." *electronic book review*, May 20. https://electronicbookreview.com/essay/in-defense-of-the-difficult/ DOI: 10.7273/y2vs-1949.

Vasques, Liliana. "The Name Is Woman" [Instagram account]. https://www.instagram.com/robot.sorridente/

Zuboff, Shoshana. 2020. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: PublicAffairs.