Jeremy Bentham
Prose is when all the lines except the last go to the end. Poetry is when some of them fall short of it.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Prose = words in their best order. Poetry = the best words in the best order.

Samuel Johnson
Truth, Sir, is a cow which will yield such people no more milk, and so they are gone to milk the bull.

Elias Canetti
(The Human Province) He lays sentences like eggs, but he forgets to incubate them.

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Ballast is an acronym for Books Art Language Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching, as well as a distant allusion to Blast, the short-lived publication founded during World War I by Wyndham Lewis, the Vorticist artist and writer. Ballast is mainly a pastiche of astonishing passages from books, magazines, diaries and other writings. Put differently, it is a journal devoted to wit, the contents of which are intended to be insightful, amusing or thought provoking.

The purposes of Ballast are educational, apolitical and noncommercial. It does not carry advertisements, nor is it supposed to be purchased or sold. It is published approximately every three months, beginning in the fall (more or less) and ending in the summer.

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Ogden Nash
The song of canaries Never varies, And when they’re moulting They’re pretty revolting.
Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change;
Praise him.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS “Pied Beauty” (1877).

GELETT BURGESS
I never saw a Purple Cow,
I never hope to see one;
But I can tell you, anyhow,
I'd rather see than be one!

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart:
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple tart.

OGDEN NASH
The cow is of the bovine ilk;
One end is moo, the other, milk.

ANON
Little boy blue, come blow your horn,
The sheep's in the meadow, the cow's in the corn.
A friend of mine bought in a bookstore a copy of my book on [Picasso's] Guernica, which is titled The Genesis of a Painting. Since the sales slip records only a certain number of a title's letters, it turned out to say "genesis of a pain."

RUDOLF ARHEIM in a letter to Ballast (11 January 1998).

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Arthur Wesley Dow, Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). ISBN 0-520-20749-1. The American painter Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922) was greatly swayed by the Arts and Crafts Movement and by Japanese woodblock prints. In 1899, while Curator of the Japanese Department at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, he published the first edition of this famous illustrated handbook on five principles of composition: Opposition, transition, subordination, repetition, and symmetry. Reissued into the 1940s in more than 20 editions, it became one of the most widely-read art books of the century. This is a facsimile of the 13th edition (originally published in 1920), introduced by a new 60-page essay by art historian Joseph Masheck on the book's cultural context, its wide-ranging effects, and why it is all but forgotten today. To understand the extent to which Dow influenced Modern artists, teachers, and architects (among his students were Georgia O'Keeffe and Max Weber), we found it additionally helpful to read Kevin Nute, Frank Lloyd Wright and Japan (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), particularly Chapter Five, titled "Composition: The Picture, the Plan, and the Pattern, as Aesthetic Line-Ideas."

JULES RENARD The parrot's beak, black as the bottom of an old purse, with a leather tongue.
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Lyman Gilmore, Don’t Touch the Poet: The Life and Times of Joel Oppenheimer (Jersey City NJ: Talisman House, 1998). ISBN 1-883698-64-3. Oppenheimer (1930–1988) was an American poet (four of his books were published by Walter Hamady’s Perishable Press) who studied with Charles Olson at Black Mountain College and suffered throughout his life from agoraphobia, a variety of panic disorder. Despite its name, it is not a fear of open spaces, but a diffuse dread of existence (William James called its attacks “vastations”), like an intense, terrifying stage fright, in which, as Shakespeare said, “all the world is a stage.” In the case of Oppenheimer, who lived most of his life in New York, he “hated crowds, never learned to drive, feared travel, took cabs daily to and from the Lion’s Head Tavern five blocks from his apartment, tried to maintain absolute control of things and people around him, and stuck to such a rigid daily routine from place to place in the Village that people said they could set their clocks by his passing.” As self-medication, and perhaps from alcoholism, he drank heavily for 20 years (consuming daily, in later years, a shot of Heaven Hill Bourbon and a beer chaser every 45 minutes) until August 1970, when, diagnosed with liver disease, he “did not turn to Alcoholics Anonymous or psychotherapy; he just quit.” The title refers to certain moments at the Lion’s Head “when it became so crowded that drinkers had to squeeze in beside him to get to the bar. That’s when he would cry out: ‘Don’t touch the poet, don’t touch the poet.’” This candid, kind and sad account, written by a psychotherapist who knew Oppenheimer, is enriched throughout by photographs, comments from friends and relatives, and dozens of examples of his poetry.

CHARLES DICKENS (Martin Chuzzlewit) We never know wot’s hidden in each other’s hearts; and if we had glass winders there, we need keep the shutters up, some of us, I do assure you!

MILTON GLASER Working on one thing at a time is like facing a rhinoceros; working on ten things at a time is like playing badminton.
JOSH BILLINGS
Flattery is like cologne water, to be smelled, not swallowed.

PETER DE VRIES
Everybody hates me because I'm so universally liked.

SAMUEL GOLDFWN
I don't want any yes-men around me. I want everybody to tell me the truth even if it costs him his job.

G. M. WEILACHER
The problem with tolerance is that you have to tolerate the intolerant as well.

EDMUND CLERIHEW BENTLEY
What I like about Clive is that he is no longer alive. There is something to be said for being dead.

When students ask me about training to be a scientist, I tell them to read broadly, not just in science. It's important because I believe that creativity really comes from a broad education. You can be technically skilled, but the ability to make connections requires borrowing and reformulating ideas from other places.


I'm more interested in wit than in humor. Humor is entertaining, but wit makes you look at something in a different way. Buster Keaton said that a comedian does funny things; a good comedian does things funny.


In pre-war Germany the actress Adele Sandrock was famous for playing tough old ladies. The story is told that she once visited a young mother, who showed her her baby, lying naked on the table. Adele, looking at the child, said: "A boy, if I remember correctly."

RUDOLF ARHEIM in a letter to Ballast (11 January 1998).
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED Kent Kleinman and Leslie Van Duzer, eds., *Rudolf Arnheim: Revealing Vision* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997). ISBN 0-472-10859. Arnheim, professor emeritus of the psychology of art at Harvard University, is famous for his writings on the application of Gestalt perceptual psychology to film, art and architecture. The author of 13 books (most recently *Film Essays and Criticism*), the 94-year-old psychologist and art theorist is still actively writing. This engaging, attractive anthology of 20 essays, exchanges, and short tributes is not by him, but about his work. Of particular interest to designers will be his dialogues (conversations, not interviews) with the late Paul Rand and architectural historian Vincent Scully, and a brief admiring note from Gyorgy Kepes. Among other familiar contributors are James Ackerman, Dore Ashton, Sir E.H. Gombrich, and William T. Mitchell. For related information, see an Arnheim bibliography, and the articles "Rudolf Arnheim: The Little Owl on the Shoulder of Athene" and "Art, Design and Gestalt Theory" at the Leonardo website at <http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/leonardo/home.html>.

**YOGI BERRA**
You can observe a lot just by watching.

**LADY DOROTHY NEVILL**
Ginea pig, there's a tasty dish for you, but it was always a job to make your cook do it. They want bakin' same as the gypsies serve the hedgehogs. I tried eatin' donkey too, but I had to stop that, for it made me stink.
IVOR NOVELLO
There's something Vichy about the French.

PETER USTINOV
Courage is often lack of insight, whereas cowardice in many cases is based on good information.

MAE WEST
You're a fine woman, Lou. One of the finest women that ever walked the streets.

LORD BOWEN
The rain it raineth on the just
And also on the unjust fella:
But chiefly on the just, because
The unjust steals the just's umbrella.

At first [Albert] Einstein found his students hard to handle. His intelligence and wry sense of humor eventually won them over. On one notable occasion, when a rambunctious youngster kept scraping his stool, Einstein asked, as if only mildly interested, "Is it you or is it the stool making such a noise?"


DOROTHY LANIER MERRITT
A wonderful bird is the pelican,
His bill will hold more than his belican.
He can take in his beak Food enough for a week,
But I'm damned if I see how the helican.

ANTHONY POWELL (A Dance to the Music of Time) One of the worst things about life is not how nasty the nasty people are. You know that already. It is how nasty the nice people can be.
“There’s been an accident!” they said, “Your servant’s cut in half; he’s dead!”

“Indeed!” said Mr. Jones, “and please Send me the half that’s got my keys.”

...as the designer you wind the spring, and it is released in the mind of the viewer.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED  Billy Klüver, A Day With Picasso: Twenty-Four Photographs by Jean Cocteau (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997). ISBN 0-262-11228-0.  Billy Klüver (b. 1927) is a scientist with a Ph.D. in electrical engineering, who is also an experimental artist. A founder of EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology), he collaborated with Julie Martin in recent years on two books about Kiki (Kiki’s Paris and Kiki’s Memoirs), the Queen of Montparnasse, a model and cabaret singer who was the companion of artists in Paris in the 1920s. While preparing those books, Klüver unexpectedly discovered (in different archives) a series of similar but previously unconnected snapshots of Pablo Picasso, Max Jacob, Amedeo Modigliani, and others, all taken in Paris by the poet Jean Cocteau on August 12, 1916. The 24 photographs are reproduced in this art historical detective’s account, accompanied by site diagrams and Klüver’s step-by-step narrative of how he observed details in the participants’ appearance, calculated the lengths and angles of shadows on background buildings, and used historic scientific charts of the sun’s movement to determine the photographs’ exact sequence and time of day. The resulting reconstruction of the day’s events is nearly as complete and fascinating as the forensic analysis of a crime scene.

JULES REYNARD  It should not be thought that laziness is unproductive. Within it, you live intensely, like a hare listening. You swim in it as in water; and are brushed by the grasses of self-reproach.
PAUL HARVEY
If there is a 50-50 chance that something can go wrong, then 9 out of 10 times it will.

CHARLES DICKENS
(The Pickwick Papers)
Miss Bolo rose from the table considerably agitated, and went straight home, in a flood of tears and a sedan chair.

JULES REYNAUD
One should operate by dissociation, and not by association, of ideas. An association is almost always commonplace. Dissociation decomposes, and uncovers latent affinities.

COLIN TURBAYNE
The invention of a metaphor full of illustrative power is the achievement of genius. It is to create by saying “no” to the old associations, the things that have constantly gone together, the things already sorted, and “yes” to new associations by crossing old sorts to make new ones.

Joey [Swick] was the one who taught me how to trace naked pictures out of the funnies of Maggie and Jiggs, ignoring everything else and just tracing Maggie’s body you could see through the dress and putting in the appropriate hair and nipples. Hot stuff! Hot stuff! This was a benighted time I grew up in, the thirties.


SIR FRED BURROWS
Unlike my predecessors, I have devoted more of my life to shunting and hooting than to hunting and shooting.

YOGI BERRA
We made too many wrong mistakes.

ANON I’m not an actor. I just play one on tv.
RECOMMENDED Lawrence Rinder, ed., Knowledge of Higher Worlds: Rudolf Steiner's Blackboard Drawings (University of California at Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive / Distributed by University of Washington Press, 1998). ISBN 0-295-97684-5. Artists who know about Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), the Austrian-born mystic, are likely to have heard of him in connection with the painters Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian, both of whom were drawn to the “theosophy” of Madame (Helena) Blavatsky, as well as the “anthroposophical” views of Steiner on “the spiritual in art.” In the final 25 years of his life, Steiner traveled throughout Europe and delivered more than 5000 lectures. He illustrated his talks with drawings made with colored chalk on a blackboard, which he erased at the end of each lecture. Beginning in 1919, one of his associates began covering the blackboard with large sheets of black paper, to preserve Steiner’s lectures. No one thought of these as “art” during Steiner’s lifetime, but the boundaries have moved, and this is the catalog for an exhibition of 40 of his curious diagrams, made in connection with lectures he gave from 1919 through 1924. It will travel this fall to the Slusser Gallery at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. For related information, see Mike King, “Concerning the Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art and Science” in Leonardo Vol 31 No 1, pp. 21-31 (1998).

An executive I know keeps a “Too Hard” file. Into it goes the occasional matter that is so complicated, so difficult, so clearly without an apparent solution that it cries out for immediate procrastination.


BERENICE ABBOTT People say they have to express their emotions. I’m sick of that. Photography doesn’t teach you to express your emotions; it teaches you how to see.

BRIAN FRIEL The hell of it seems to be, when an artist starts saving the world, he starts losing himself.

JANET FRAME There is no past present or future. Using tenses to divide time is like making chalk marks on water.
ELSIE DE WOLFE
(on first seeing the Acropolis)
It's beige! My color!

JULES REYNARD
Sometimes conversation dies out like a lamp. You turn up the wick. A few ideas bring out another gleam, but, decidedly, there is no oil left.

A painter's eye memorizes, as does a musician's ear. The memory-banks they create are fundamental to their training. Memorizing poems gives all of us, amateurs of language, our own memory-banks. Sentimental, lyric, narrative, adventurous, dramatic, bombastic, gothic, facetious, satiric—we heap the phrases up and our amazing brains keep them ready to leap out, hidden or unbidden—all accessible—in milliseconds.

SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON
We used to think that if we knew one, we knew two, because one and one are two. We are finding that we must learn a great deal more about "and."

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Chronicle Books publishes some of the finest and least expensive titles on graphic design. A few years ago, it launched several sets of small format, full-color paperbacks, each about 130 pages in length, on trademarks, typography, and various episodes in design history. Flawlessly produced, each begins with a brief essay, followed by at least 100 illustrations, sometimes as many as 600. Taken together, at a price of about $17 each, there is no equivalent series of books on design-related subjects with such an abundance of high quality reproductions. Teachers, design studios, and libraries would be wise to obtain all the volumes (probably 12 have been published so far), of which these three are the most recent.

[American poet Charles] Olson’s methods of teaching [at Black Mountain College in the early 1950s] were unique...He would lecture passionately and endlessly about a great variety of seemingly disconnected subjects—Mayan glyphs, the American Federalist period, Leo Froenius, Homer’s Odyssey—while his students struggled to keep pace and make sense of the performance. Olson had a basket on his desk into which students were supposed to deposit their poetry for criticism and class discussion, but sometimes he would ignore the basket for weeks “while class after class went on about physics or mathematics or anthropology or whatever Charles was interested in at the time.” Then one day he would notice that nobody was submitting any writing and he’d say, “There are no poems in the hopper, and there better be some before the next morning.”

Mr. Magoo bids the normally sighted, or the smug spectacle-wearers, laugh at uncorrected myopia. He shakes hands with a bear he takes to be Dr. Milmoss, thinks a skyscraper scaffolding a restaurant, believes the seabed to be a motorway, but he always comes through unscathed and disabused. My adventures have been less sensational. I once entered a bank in Stratford-on-Avon and ordered a drink. I have waved back at people waving at someone else. There was an electric skysign in All Saints, Manchester, which said UPHOLSTERED FURNITURE and I read as UPROARIOUSLY FUNNY. In the army I failed to salute officers and, fiercely rebuked, then saluted privates. I have spoken to women in the streets I thought I knew and thus got to know them...The myopic eye is not lazy: it is too busy creating meanings out of vague données. Compensation for lifelong myopia comes in old age: presbyopia supervenes on the condition and cancels it. I am forced now into perfect sight and I am not sure I like it.


Once he [A.S. Neill, the founder of Summerhill school in England] visited a school in Stockholm, and was taken in to a geography lesson. He went up to the map on the wall, pointed to Italy, and said: "This is London." The pupils stared at him in surprise. At Summerhill when he did things like that, they laughed and told him he was a silly fool.


FRENCH PROVERB Spinach is the broom of the stomach.
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**George Ellis**  
(*The Pilgrimage*)

The city dweller who passes through a country town, and imagines it sleepy and apathetic is very far from the truth: it is watchful as the jungle.

**Ogden Nash**

Progress might have been all right once, but it has gone on too long.

**Anonymous**

The four seasons: Salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar.

**James Joyce**

All moansday, tearsday, wailsday, thumpsday, frightday, shatterday.

**The Queen Mother**

(when her daughter, Queen Elizabeth, was offered a second glass of wine at lunch)

Do you think it's wise, darling? You know you do have to rule this afternoon.