

# INVISIBLE PUBLISHING

Trade Paperback  
ISBN: 978-1-98878-404-5  
Price: \$16.95  
Trim: 4.75" x 7" / 96 pp

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Picton, ON K0K 2T0  
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Distributed to the trade by  
Canadian Manda Group  
1.855.MANDA.CA



## READING GUIDE: Cameron Anstee's *Book of Annotations*

Hi Reader!

First, thank you for being interested enough to pick up *Book of Annotations*, for supporting Invisible Publishing (and the small press!), and for finding the book compelling or infuriating enough to seek out this reader guide. I've tried to identify a few of the larger (and smaller) concerns running through the book. I hope it helps to open some of the work, and I hope it prompts re-reading. More optimistically, I hope some of the questions here prompt you to write a new poem or ten.

*Book of Annotations* traces my process of deciding (and then learning how) to write small poems. It is engaged with the history of 20th and 21st century minimalist poetics, and in its engagement with these histories, I hope it will incite you to ask (and perhaps answer for yourself) some fundamental questions that I asked while writing it: What is the smallest piece of writing you're willing to accept as a poem? In what ways can a small poem feel expansive? How does it feel different, as a reader, to encounter an entire book of small works as opposed to one or two small works within a collection of longer pieces?

It is also a book of responses. Phyllis Webb, in "There Are the Poems," writes, "[t]he proper / response to a poem is another poem." This book takes that statement seriously, and looks outward from individual works to larger movements and modes. In doing so it asks you to consider how you feel about revisiting existing texts to create new works. For example, the middle section is a set of erasures—how do these interact with their source texts? Do they engage directly with the original content? Do they disagree with their source poems? Are they interesting as individual poems in isolation from their source texts? Other works in the book engage with other poems with greater and lesser degrees of transparency, and I hope they'll lead you to seek out work that is unfamiliar to you.

I love repetition. I love found poems. I love typos and slips (both human and mechanical error). I love the potential of a restricted vocabulary. I love a poem that speaks to another poem. I love when a kind of poem shows up in different places in a book in different contexts. I love how a poem sits in the space of a page, and how differently sized poems occupy the uniform trim size of a bound book. These small poems wander across the page, and through different ways of being small, and I hope that is exciting to you.

These questions and ideas are but a few of the many I have in relation to the book, and I hope they're a productive place for you to start or to continue your engagement with these poems. Thanks once again for reading the book, and thanks if you read this far in the guide. I'd love to hear what you think of it all.

Cheers, Cameron Anstee

