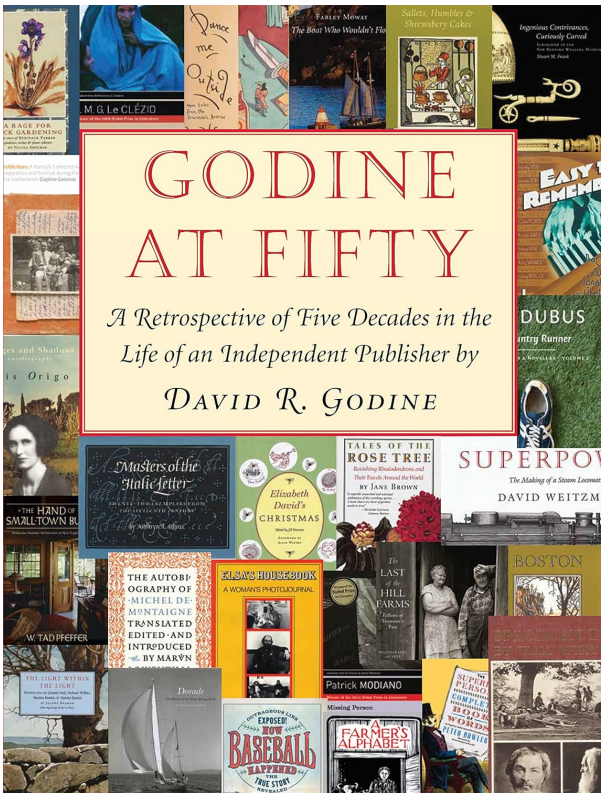
Book review: *Godine at Fifty* by David R. Godine

Karl Berry

David R. Godine, *Godine at Fifty: A Retrospective of Five Decades in the Life of an Independent Publisher*, Godine, 2021, 292 pp., hardcover (9x12), US$60.00, ISBN 978-1-56792-676-7.
`godine.com/book/godine-at-50`



This beautiful oversized volume celebrates a half-century of David R. Godine's publishing ventures. For an overview and brief history of Godine (as the publishing company is now known), please see Dave Walden's "Note on the publisher of the Bodoni book: David R. Godine" in *TUGboat* 37:1 (`tug.org/TUGboat/tb37-1/tb115walden.pdf`).

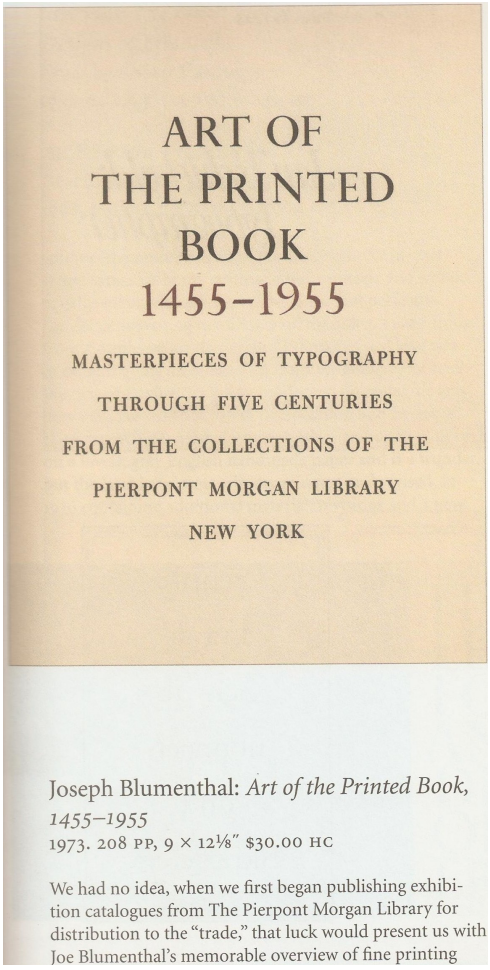
For this retrospective, Godine himself selected nearly 300 titles from his catalog. The cover of the book, shown above, shows a sampling — every book on the cover is included (and many, many, more).

Each entry includes an image or two, usually the cover (as shown here in the entry for Joseph Blumenthal's masterpiece), often also an interior page from the book, and a few paragraphs of commentary by Godine.

His text is engaging, usually remarking on how he came to publish the book, with notes on the design, typesetting, illustrations, sales, and any other interesting aspects of the particular book. He often points out salient aspects of his particular edition, and does not shy away from giving personal opinions, e.g., regret that a book did not sell as well as he had hoped, or gratitude that an author reached out to him to propose a publication.

Godine also wrote an introduction with a brief history of the press. He started his company (as printer as well as publisher) just as hot metal typesetting was reaching its end, through the brief interregnum of phototypesetting, and on into digital, and so is well placed to comment on printing and publishing through the last five decades. The book also includes a few welcome photographs of Godine, his family and associates at work, and some of the equipment used over the years.

Godine himself retired from the company in 2019; it is now ably led by David Allender. We can only be glad he created this book, a superb capstone to his remarkable career.



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