



Pages from Jas H Duke, *Dada Kampfen um Leben und Tod: A Prose Poem*, Katoomba, NSW: Waygoose Press, 1996. Rare Books Collection, RARELTFE 702.81 D885D

Wayzgoose Press Archive

Rare Books Collection RARELTF 702.81 D885D

Acquired 2011-15

The letterpress books and broadsides produced by Wayzgoose Press, a private press founded by Jadwiga Jarvis and Mike Hudson in Katoomba in 1985, first came to my attention via a prospectus for their 1992 publication *The Auld Shop and the New*. Recognising the obvious high standard of the letterpress printing, I embarked on a program to acquire their printed output for the State Library.

To date, the press has issued more than 50 limited-edition letterpress books and broadsides, as well as an illustrated history of the press, *The Wayzgoose Affair* (2007). In the mid-1990s, when Wayzgoose Press embarked on what is arguably their greatest work – a series of typographic renderings of works by contemporary Australian poets – it was clear they were producing typographic masterpieces unparalleled in Australian printing history. These seminal works, produced over a decade, include Jas Duke's *Dada* (1996), Ken Bolton's *Terrific Days of Summer* (1998), and πo's *Ockers* (1999). When we consider the labour involved in handsetting type, cutting woodblocks and lino for illustration, and printing and binding handmade books, this level of productivity is nothing short of astonishing.

In 2009, discussions were held on the possibility of State Library Victoria acquiring the publishing archive of the press. Following a successful outcome, with the acquisition supported by funding from the State Library Foundation, the first shipment of 45 parcels and boxes arrived at the Library in August 2010, with another 12 boxes landing a few months later. Further instalments will be added to the archive over time.

The archive includes over 6000 letters exchanged between the press and local and international letterpress printers, typographers, writers, artists, collectors, booksellers, librarians, curators, type founders, paper suppliers and academics. Of equal significance is the enormous amount of material that provides an insight into the creative process of book production. This includes typographic layouts, original drawings, proof prints, 'progressive states' of prints, typescripts of original texts, experimental cloth bindings, and an extensive collection of lino and wood blocks used in the production of books and broadsides.

The Wayzgoose Press Archive is, without doubt, the most comprehensive record of an Australian private press ever assembled. It provides a detailed snapshot of the creative process involved in making letterpress books, and the often hum-drum business of selling them. More importantly, it reveals the passion for books held by those who make them, and by those who collect them.