

Biographical Note

Nelson Ball was born in Clinton, Ontario, in 1942. He briefly studied psychology at the University of Waterloo, where he co-edited the literary magazine *Volume 63*, before launching Weed/Flower Press in 1965. Through Weed/Flower, he published about forty mimeographed (on a pre-World War II machine) books of poetry—often featuring visual contributions by his artist wife, Barbara Caruso—as well as the poetry magazines *Weed* and *Hyphid*. He issued early books by Carol Bergé, Bill Bissett, George Bowering, Victor Coleman, David McFadden, bpNichol, and others, as well as many of his own. Over the years, Nelson worked variously as a labourer, chauffeur, seasonal forest ranger, record store clerk, and janitor. He and Barbara moved to Toronto in 1967, where Nelson worked as a library assistant at the University of Toronto and then at a bookstore. In 1971, Canada Council grants allowed Nelson and Barbara to spend three months in Europe, to explore some of that continent's literature and visual art. The following year, Nelson opened his bookstore, and in 1973 he suspended the publishing, and soon his own writing, to become a full-time seller of used and antiquarian Canadian literature as William Nelson Books. In 1985, he and Barbara moved to Paris, Ontario, where they occupied a three-story former Domtar building, which became their home as well as Nelson's bookshop (now Nelson Ball, Bookseller) and Barbara's painting and drawing studio. In the late 1980s, Nelson began writing again, and several full-length collections of his work have been published by various Canadian literary presses. In 1993, he again began self-publishing chapbooks and ephemera, this time under the imprint Rubblestone Press. Since Barbara's death in 2009, Nelson has continued to write, and his work has been published in book form in Canada, and in chapbook form in Canada and the US. In 2016, his first book of poems for children was published.