

A Few Things I Like

William E. Byrd

An Unreasonable Schemer Production

Book 05 of Will's ShovelWare Book Pack

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To the memory of Stage One Cinema in Charleston,
South Carolina.

About Will’ s ShovelWare Book Pack

In an experiment to see if I can train myself to finish writing a book on my own—instead of just poking at it for a few weeks before abandoning it and starting another—I have publicly committed to writing and releasing seventeen (17) books in one year, releasing one book every three weeks. I made the original announcement on Will Radio Part XXVIII¹ on September 15, 2025, with the experiment to end on September 6, 2026, when the 17th book is due.

Good or bad, short or long, my goal is to finish and release a book every 21 days, like clockwork.

The idea for this experiment came from my kiloTube Video challenge from a couple years ago. I had been wanting to make more videos, but was suffering from perfectionism—I would record 70 or 80 takes of a video before deleting it in disgust. So I publicly announced that I was going to make 1,024 (or 2^{10}) videos in a single year (one kiloTube worth), in an attempt to force myself to just make video after video, with the idea that I’d eventually learn the mechanics, and learn my own style for making videos. Although I didn’t come close to making 1,024 videos that year (partly because making videos involved making noise, which caused some social issues), the practice of making an average of 3 videos a day for weeks quickly got me over my perfectionism block. I now have no trouble sitting down and making a video in one take, editing it, and uploading it in a single sitting.

My hope is that after finishing and releasing a dozen or so books, I’ll start to relax out a little, and will be over the fear of releasing something less than perfect. There’s a go adage, “Lose your first hundred games as quickly as possible.” I’m trying to write and release my first dozen (or so) terrible books as quickly as possible. With 17 books to write, I might write a few decent ones, as well.

I am allowing myself to update books I’ve already released, so long as I continue releasing a new book every 3 weeks.

This is the fifth of the 17 books, due on Sunday, December 28, 2025, Anywhere on Earth (or whenever I go to sleep!). (Originally I was going to release the books on Monday nights, but Sundays work better.) The next book, book 06, will be due Sunday, January 18, 2025.

¹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6_cB-jtxYI

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Preface

This book is a collection of a few of the things I like, in the hope that others will enjoy them as much as I have.

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who has shared their favorite things with me.

Will Byrd
Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina
December, 2025

Chapter 1

Music

1.1 Albums

Kokoro vibration 「ココロバイブレーション – Shibayan

Europe'72 (double album) – Grateful Dead

Passover – The Black Angels

Hot Rocks 1964-1971 – Rolling Stones

In a Silent Way – Miles Davis

Diablo II soundtrack – Matt Uelmen

Sneakers soundtrack – James Horner, featuring Branford Marsalis

Escape from New York soundtrack – John Carpenter, with Alan Howarth (great background music for working)

Blade Runner soundtrack – Vangelis (great background music for working)

1.1.1 Album Covers

Alpha by Asia – cover painting by Roger Dean (The book 'Magnetic Storm' contains this painting and many of his other paintings and designs.)

1.2 Songs/Individual Tracks

Father to a Sister of Thought, Pavement, Wowee Zowee, 1995

La Femme d'Argent, Air, Moon Safari (Moon Safari album version, music video version, and all the live performances are all great)

Chime – Lucie, Too (great song and great music video)

'Round Midnight – Thelonious Monk

アモリタチテカミトミユ / Amoritachite Kami to Miyu – Shibayan

Tailwhip – Men I Trust

Tsugaru Jongara Bushi, Shamisen Girls Ki&Ki

Losing My Edge – LCD Soundsystem (Both the official version and the Live at Madison Square Garden version. For extra fun, change the lyrics to talk about programming languages research.)

Also Sprach Zarathustra, Deodato (I listened to the song countless times on vinyl when I was a kid, on a science-fictioned themed compilation record. Took me another two decades to find the song again on YT, since I didn't know the name "Deodato.")

The Day (We Fell In Love) – Appaloosa (great song and video)

Graham's Theme – Michel Rubini (Manhunter soundtrack)

Love on a Real Train – Tangerine Dream (Risky Business soundtrack)

Mornings – Georges (learned of it from the Yuna Room channel on YT, "Evening Jazz 100-120bpm JAZZ HOUSE MIX")

Red Hot Chili Peppers / snow 津軽三味線で弾いてみた cover by Sayo Komada

Gut Feeling, Devo

You Could Have It All, CSS

Rubberband Man, Detroit Spinners

Fall Out, The Police (1977. Apparently their first recorded song.)

shinku no hitomi (深紅の瞳) – Shibayan

stay crunchy, Ronald Jenkees

In the Evening, Led Zeppelin

When Do You Play, Arizona, Spooky Momento (featured in the closing credits of D.E.B.S.)

Le Tigre - Deceptacon (DFA remix)

Start Shootin', Little People, Mickey Mouse Operation

MONO NO AWARE 「かむかもしかもにどもかも！」, cover by haku (ハク)

MONO NO AWARE - Kamukamo-Shikamo-Nidomokamo!! “かむかもしかもにどもかも!”, Spanish cover by Dianilis

disco light (feat. Rainych), Shibayan

R.I.N., Syrufit (Studio “Syrup Comfiture”)

うさぎ大爆発 (D.Watt Remix), Shibayan

You, Mk.gee

ヒプノシスマイク Division All Stars 「ヒプノシスマイク -Division Battle Anthem-」

LIFE – Rude-

By-Tor and the Snow Dog, Rush

オーディエンスを沸かす程度の能力 【ill.bell ver.】

waters of home depot – EpicToast

オオカミ少女と包帯人間の観察 (Observations of a Wolf-Girl and a Bandaged Human) – Shibayan

Getsurei 11.3 no Candle Magic – ShibayanRecords (3L)

Luminous Bipeds, Orthotonics

Akiougi / 秋扇 – ShibayanRecords 「°Ciel」

May I Do You...?, Servant x Service × Miguel – nakinyko

Black and Yellow Sketch, Hidamari Sketch × Wiz Khalifa – nakinyko

MyonMyonMyonMyonMyonMyon! – Shibayan (The {Myon}ⁿ! series is the $R^n RS$ of Shibayan.)

Poolside Identity, Chuunibyou × Kendrick Lamar – nakinyko

It's Real Yo, Joshiraku × Real Estate – nakinyko

Monochrome in the Night (C ElectroBreaks Remix) / モノクロ・インザナイト (C ElectroBreaks Remix) – ShibayanRecords (3L)

Kokoro vibration 「ココロバイブレーション」 (Album) – Shibayan-Records

Getsurei 11.3 no Candle Magic – ShibayanRecords (3L)

Akiougi / 秋扇 – ShibayanRecords 「°Ciel」

Mac Sabbath (heavy metal parody band)

「Easy Breezy」, chelmico (the official music video is incredible, as is the introduction to the amazing anime, Keep Your Hands Off Eizouken! (Japanese: 映像研には手を出すな！))

「Disco (Bad dance doesn't matter)」, chelmico (another great chelmico song and music video)

Hayseed Dixie (hard rock parody band)

Avant Gardener, Courtney Barnett

Chapter 2

Dive Coffee Shops

Salt Lake Coffee Break, Salt Lake City

Chapter 3

Movies

Let the Right One In (Swedish: Låt den rätte komma in) (original 2008 version)

Love Serenade

Ravenous

Raw

May

Hear My Song

Shooting Fish

Delicatessen

In the Soup

Living in Oblivion

Night on Earth

Irma Vep (1996) (I watched this movie again a couple of days ago, on DVD, on an old Apple Superdrive with a new Apple Silicon MBP. I had to use VLC media player because DVD Player no longer reliably works, apparently. After some trouble with software, I was able to watch the entire movie in bed with the lights off, with the Superdrive noisily spinning away on my chest, since the USB cable is so short. After 20 minutes I thought to myself, “It was worth clearing out my storage facility and going through countless boxes

to be able to watch this movie again.”

After watching the movie with the noisy, vibrating Superdrive, I check Criterion Channel once again—they have Irma Vep, with accompanying interviews! I’m sure I’ve checked Criterion Channel before for Irma Vep—maybe CC rotated in Irma Vep due to the TV series version (which I haven’t yet watched). Watching on DVD was interesting, in that I had less distractions, partly since I was acutely aware of the physical wear and tear I was putting on the Superdrive and the DVD, similar to how playing a 35mm print degrades it over time. I was happy to watch Irma Vep with that awkward setup, *because* of the physicalness and inconvenience and demand for immediate and undivided attention.)

The Dark Backward

Zero Effect

Run Lola Run (German: *Lola rennt*)

Sneakers

Galaxy Quest

D.E.B.S.

Chapter 4

Television Series/Episodes

The Larry Sanders Show

The Thick of It

The Ascent of Man

The Tracy Ullman Show

“Bad Blood” from season five of The X-Files (Season five is generally amazing.)

“Our Mrs. Reynolds” from Firefly

The Bureau (French: Le Bureau des Légendes) (At least seasons 1, 2, and 5. Thank you to N.P. for the suggestion.)

Chapter 5

Video Games

StarCraft (Broodwar, 2, and Remastered)

Angband

Faery Tale Adventure on the Commodore Amiga 500

N.O.L.F. 2 on the PC

The Ancient Art of War on the Macintosh SE

Jumpman and Jumpman Jr. on the Commodore 64

Baba is You on the Nintendo Switch (Thank you to E.K. for the suggestion.)

Splatoon 2 on the Nintendo Switch

Breath of the Wild on the Nintendo Switch

Soul Caliber on the Sega Dreamcast

Virtua Tennis on the Sega Dreamcast

Jet Set Radio on the Sega Dreamcast

5.1 Greatest Names of Video Games

(I've never played most of these games, but the names of the games make me day dream. I can only vouch for the English titles of these Touhou Project games.)

Highly Responsive to Prayers (東方靈異伝)

Embodiment of Scarlet Devil (東方紅魔郷)

Perfect Cherry Blossom (東方妖々夢)

Scarlet Weather Rhapsody (東方緋想天)

Antinomy of Common Flowers (東方憑依華)

Chapter 6

Fountain Pens

Platinum Century 3776 in Medium nib, with Platinum Carbon Black ink (I find the fine nib a little too scratchy on most paper. I write with the medium nib pen upside down when I want a finer line and more feedback.

I like the Platinum Carbon Black pigment-based ink because it doesn't seem to clog fountain pens (and indeed was designed for fountain pens), and is water and light resistant. After weeks of my own water-resistance and light-fastness tests of many inks from different manufacturers, I decided on Platinum Carbon Black ink as my daily ink for anything I might want to last longer term. India ink or iron gall ink with a dip pen may be even more robust, but I don't want to have to use a dip pen, and in the case of iron gall ink many formulations are acidic, and can degrade the paper. I use the Platinum Carbon Black cartridges for the Platinum Century 3776, and bottled Platinum Carbon Black for my other fountain pens (alas, Platinum uses a proprietary cartridge format).)

Pilot Custom 823 with Pilot Iroshizuku Yama-budo Ink (The Pilot Custom 823 is a vacuum filler design that can hold a vast amount of ink, is visually interesting, and is fun to refill.

There are many beautiful colors of Pilot Iroshizuku ink. I ink up a few pens in different colors if I am doing heavy editing. Just beware that these dye-based inks are not waterproof, so you are only one puddle or spilled glass away from disaster. Pretty, though!

I ink the Custom 823 on bottled Platinum Carbon Black when working on things I want to last; the bottled ink is inexpensive, but can

be messy when refilling.)

Chapter 7

Paper

Midori MD Notebook Cotton (20% cotton pulp) (This lay-flat notebook comes in different sizes. I prefer the medium sized versions, which are a good tradeoff between portability and usability.)

Strathmore 500 series, 100% cotton, 24 lb weight (For anything I really want to last. When using the Platinum Carbon Black ink, this paper and ink combination seems very robust, and likely to last a very long time if stored reasonably. I find the paper bit too heavy and expensive and nice for scratch notes and the like, though.

In the past I bought the paper loose in bulk, in US Letter size (8.5 inches x 11 inches), and used a spring-loaded thesis binder to hold the pages for convenience, and protection, although using the binder ends up creasing the paper heavily, which isn't ideal.

I'm rethinking how I want to use this nice paper—one (expensive) option would be to use the paper for *everything* I do, to avoid feeling that I have to have Great Thoughts whenever I use the paper.

Since I first wrote about this paper, I discovered a stack of loose Strathmore 500 paper, including pages with my handwritten notes(!), at the top of the communal paper store for my house's laser printer. The danger of having really nice loose paper of US letter size is that it can be mistaken for printer/copier paper or scrap paper. Fortunately I rescued the Strathmore paper (and my notes!) before it was used for printing computer science papers and online shopping receipts.

From what I can tell, Strathmore no longer makes the natural white version of the paper that I prefer, and now are only selling the

bright white version. I'm suspicious of how the brightener might affect the paper's longevity. I also noticed that the price for the paper has more than doubled since 2017, with a 500-page ream now more than \$80 USD online. I may have to rethink my plan of using this paper for everything...)

Chapter 8

Movie Theaters

Stage One Cinema, Charleston, South Carolina (Defunct, sadly. I've seen the dates 1989–1993 on the Web, although I thought that's where I saw *Safe* with Julianne Moore, which was released in 1995. I'm probably just confused about where I saw *Safe*.) (My favorite movie theater ever. A tiny art house theater featuring “high performance racing pews” for uncomfortable seating (smart viewers brought cushions). A one-man operation: ticket taking, concessions, introductory remarks, running the projector, tracking down the last remaining print of a 1960's cult classic, etc. My brother and I saw countless amazing movies there in the early 1990's, including *Reservoir Dogs*, *The Player*, *Delicatessen*, *Night on Earth*, *Hear My Song*, and *Images*.)

AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, Silver Spring, Maryland (Saw *Apocalypse Now Redux* in 70mm with friends.)

Hollywood Galaxy, Los Angeles (Defunct, sadly.) (Saw *Aliens* and *Flash Gordon* in 70mm with a friend.)

Chapter 9

Restaurants

Kyushu Jangara Ramen, Akihabara, Tokyo (I get the vegan ramen, ramune, and gohan)

Original location version of Kyoto, West Ashley, South Carolina (Defunct, sadly.)

The Pie Hole, Salt Lake City

Giordano's, Chicago

Pies & Pints, Birmingham, Alabama (Pesto pizza with draft root beer!)

Sam Woo Restaurant, Los Angeles (Defunct, apparently.)

Coldwaters, Manhattan (Defunct, sadly.)

The Medici, Hyde Park, Chicago

The Helmand Restaurant, Cambridge, Mass.

Source Restaurant, Cambridge, Mass.

Pasta Plus Restaurant & Italian Market, Laurel, Maryland

Kid Caschew, Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina

Sharkey's Pizza, Charleston, South Carolina (Defunct, sadly.) (Home of the delicious "Sharkey's Fin" calzone.)

The Goodie House, Charleston, South Carolina (Defunct.)

Michael Jordan's Steakhouse in Union Station, Manhattan (Closed,

but locations still exist.)

Houston's Restaurant, Rockville, Maryland (Closed, although other locations may still exist, some under the "Hillstone" name.)

Chapter 10

Inspiring Hardware

Atari Video Computer System (later renamed the Atari 2600)

Tandy Radio Shack TRS-80 Color Computer (original model)

Commodore 64 (breadbox model)

Vectrex

Commodore Amiga 500

Hewlett-Packard HP-28S scientific calculator

Fluke 87 multimeter

Apple Macintosh SE

Apple Macintosh PowerMac 7100/66

Meade LX200 8-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope

Televue telescope eye pieces

Nikon 7x50 binoculars

Victorinox Cyber Tool 41 Swiss Army Knife

Apple iPhone

Nintendo Switch

Canon 15x50 image stabilized binoculars

Teenage Engineering OP-1/OP-1 Field

Chapter 11

Inspiring Software

THINK's Lightspeed Pascal on the Macintosh SE

ResEdit on the Macintosh SE

CodeWarrior on the PowerMac 7100/66

Doug's Math Aquarium on the Commodore Amiga 500

Chapter 12

Most Impressive and Annoying CRT Monitor for Retro-gaming/computing

Sony BVM 20F1U (The original version, not the “D” version.)

Chapter 13

Books

Big Dead Place, Nicholas Johnson. (One of my comfort books—I’ve bought at least three copies over the years.)

Gravitation, Misner, Thorne, and Wheeler (I ended up with three copies, one of which I’ve given away. The first copy I got at a used bookstore in Pasadena—it was a bit expensive, and the math and physics clearly too advanced for me, but it was such a beautiful book, with such wonderful descriptions, that I had to have it. I had two copies of reprints in hardcover, with a new Foreword that talked about how many non-physicists had enjoyed the book over the years. I ended up with three copies due to moving around the country, combined with my longing for a few inspiring and comforting books to be near at hand.)

Convenience Store Woman (Japanese: コンビニ人間), Sayaka Murata (村田沙耶香)

New Roadside America: The Modern Traveler’s Guide to the Wild and Wonderful World of America’s Tourist

Remembering the Kanji, James Heisig

The Kodansha Kanji Learner’s Dictionary, Jack Halpern (I find the SKIP indexing system fascinating)

Japanese the Manga Way: An Illustrated Guide to Grammar & Structure, Wayne P. Lammers (This book made me fall in love with 夏子の酒.)

Natsuko no Sake (Japanese: 夏子の酒), Akira Oze (尾瀬あきら) (I fell in love with this series from Japanese the Manga Way. I ended up finding a complete set of the manga at the Akihabara Mandarake, which indirectly led to me discovering Kyushu Jangara Ramen, my favorite restaurant in the world, and even more indirectly to becoming a Z-list celebrity in Japan.)

Impro, Keith Johnson (Thank you to M.B. for the suggestion.)

How Children Fail, John Holt (The behaviors adopted by struggling elementary school students look uncomfortably similar to the behaviors of adults in large institutions.)

How to Write Macintosh Software, Scott Knaster (I first learned assembly language, for the Motorola 68000, by reading the appendix of this book.)

Open Circuits: The Inner Beauty of Electronic Components, Windell Oskay and Eric Schlaepfer

Practical Electronics for Inventors, Fourth Edition 4th Edition, Paul Scherz and Simon Monk

Infrastructure: A Guide to the Industrial Landscape Revised and Updated Edition, Brian Hayes

Café Monster, Mari Iizuka (Series of coffee house doujinshi with water color paintings and food descriptions from cafés in Japan.

In Japan, “doujinshi” just refers to fan-made works, regardless of media and content. There are computer science, electronics, and food-oriented doujinshi in book or magazine form, music doujinshi released on compact disc, and more. Far, far more. More than you can imagine. In English-speaking countries, the term “doujinshi” has become associated with the, shall we say, *spicier* fan-made works that are kept on the top-floors of doujinshi shops in Akihabara.)

13.0.1 Book Covers

New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos – artwork by Jason Van Hollander (The original black and white dust jacket artwork, not the cheesy update.)

Colophon

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