

Three Instant Accordions

When Purgatory Pie Press had an exhibit at Harvard, we went up to teach a weekend letterpress workshop at the Bow and Arrow Press in a Harvard building at the corner of Bow and Arrow streets. (I think of it as our Winston Churchill Memorial/Blood, Sweat, and Tears Letterpress Boot Camp Workshop.) Bow and Arrow Press had a collection of nineteenth-century wood type and several printing presses, but it lacked some necessities. There was no paper guillotine, and for edition books, you need be able to cut whole stacks of paper. One of the students rescued the workshop with this very cool accordion-book form. You fold your paper into quarters both vertically and horizontally, and then cut, alternating from side to side. It saved the project. We made a book about leap year that weekend.

Like the instant book, this form isn't perfect. But it's easy to do with just a bone folder and sharp scissors.

To learn the basic form, use office paper or any lightweight paper. Remember to burnish your folds as you go, always protecting your book with a clean piece of scrap paper.

YOU WILL NEED

One 8½ x 11" (21.5 x 28cm) sheet of paper

Scissors or X-Acto knife

Bone folder

1 Fold the paper in half crosswise and then fold both sides up to the middle {A}, open it, and flatten. *Note:* Flattening the paper before proceeding is important, because the folds should only be the thickness of one sheet of paper for accordion books.

2 Then fold vertically in half and fold both ends to the middle {B}. You will have sixteen pages.

FOR THE FIRST VERSION

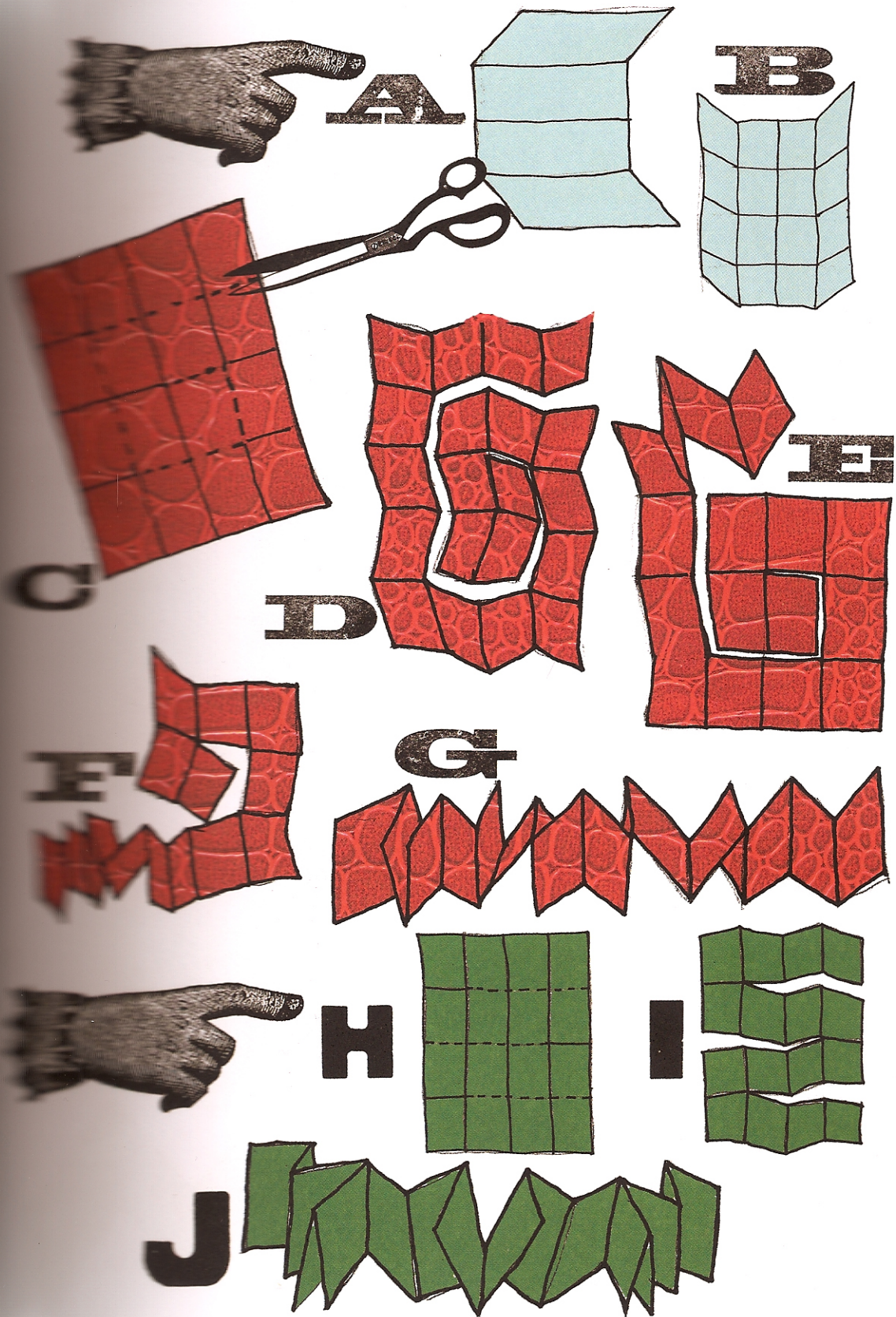
3 Cut in a spiral starting at the first fold in the upper right corner. {C}

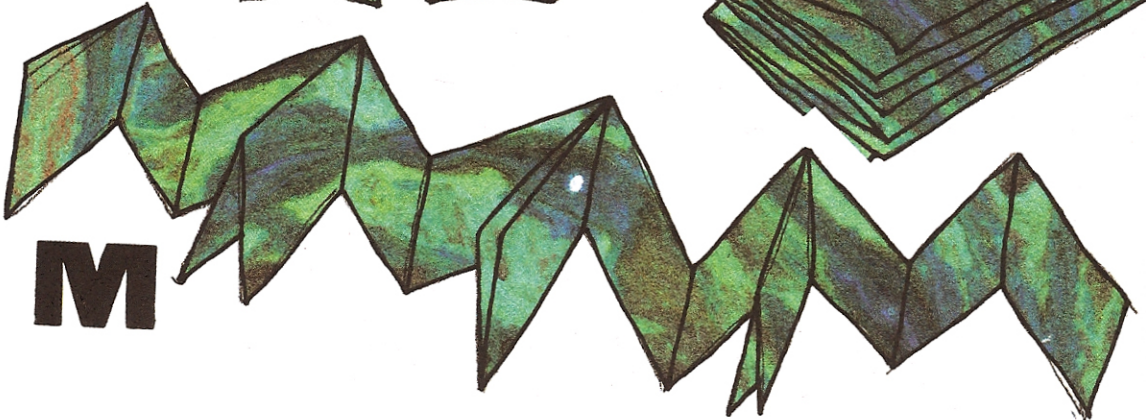
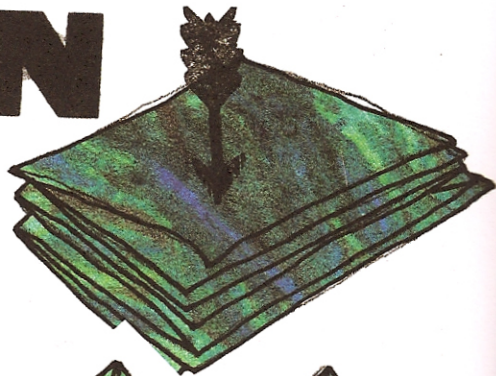
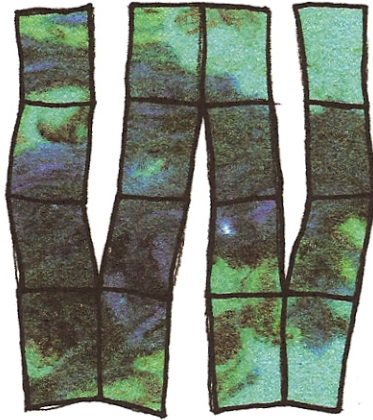
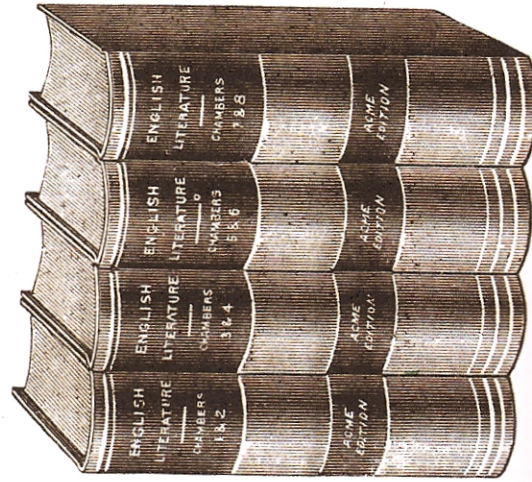
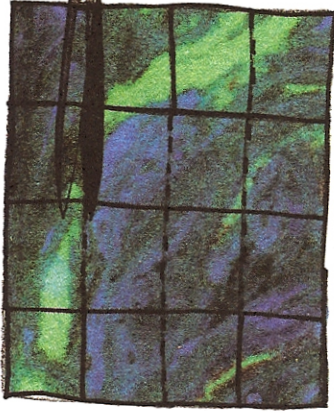
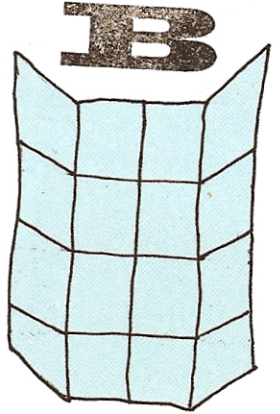
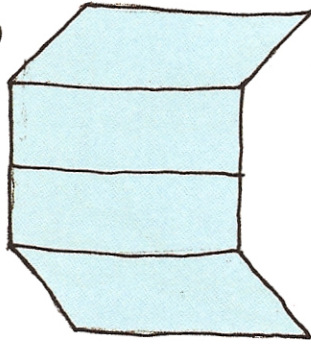
4 Fold, reversing folds as necessary until the book is complete. {D, E, F, G}

FOR THE SECOND VERSION

3 Cut from the left side, stopping at the first right fold. {H} Then cut from the right side, stopping at the first left fold, and then from the left side again, as shown. {I}

4 Fold, starting at the top corner, reversing folds as you go. {J}





FOR THE THIRD VERSION

- 3 Follow the instructions for folding and cutting in version two {A, B} but cut vertically instead of horizontally. {K, L}
- 4 Fold, following the instructions for the second version. {M}
- 5 Follow the instructions for weighting your book (below). {N}

These instant accordions are a little clumsy at the corners—sometimes I dab some glue there—but they are quick and easy and fun.

Once you understand these instant structures, try them with nicer paper. Since the paper needs to fold with and against the grain, use something that folds both ways—a light cover stock or heavy text-weight paper. Like the Instant Book (page 14), any size square or rectangle can work.

You can easily publish these 8½ x 11" (21.5 x 28cm) versions with a photocopier.

Make some light pencil markings on your dummy to see how the pages will work when they're unfolded (some will be upside down). Then switch to clean paper and make your camera-ready version (if you are using a black-and-white photocopier) with collage or drawings. Photocopy one, then adjust as needed. Photocopiers aren't completely accurate, and your results will vary from day to day, so don't plan something that will make you miserable if it shifts a little here and there.

BOOK WEIGHTS

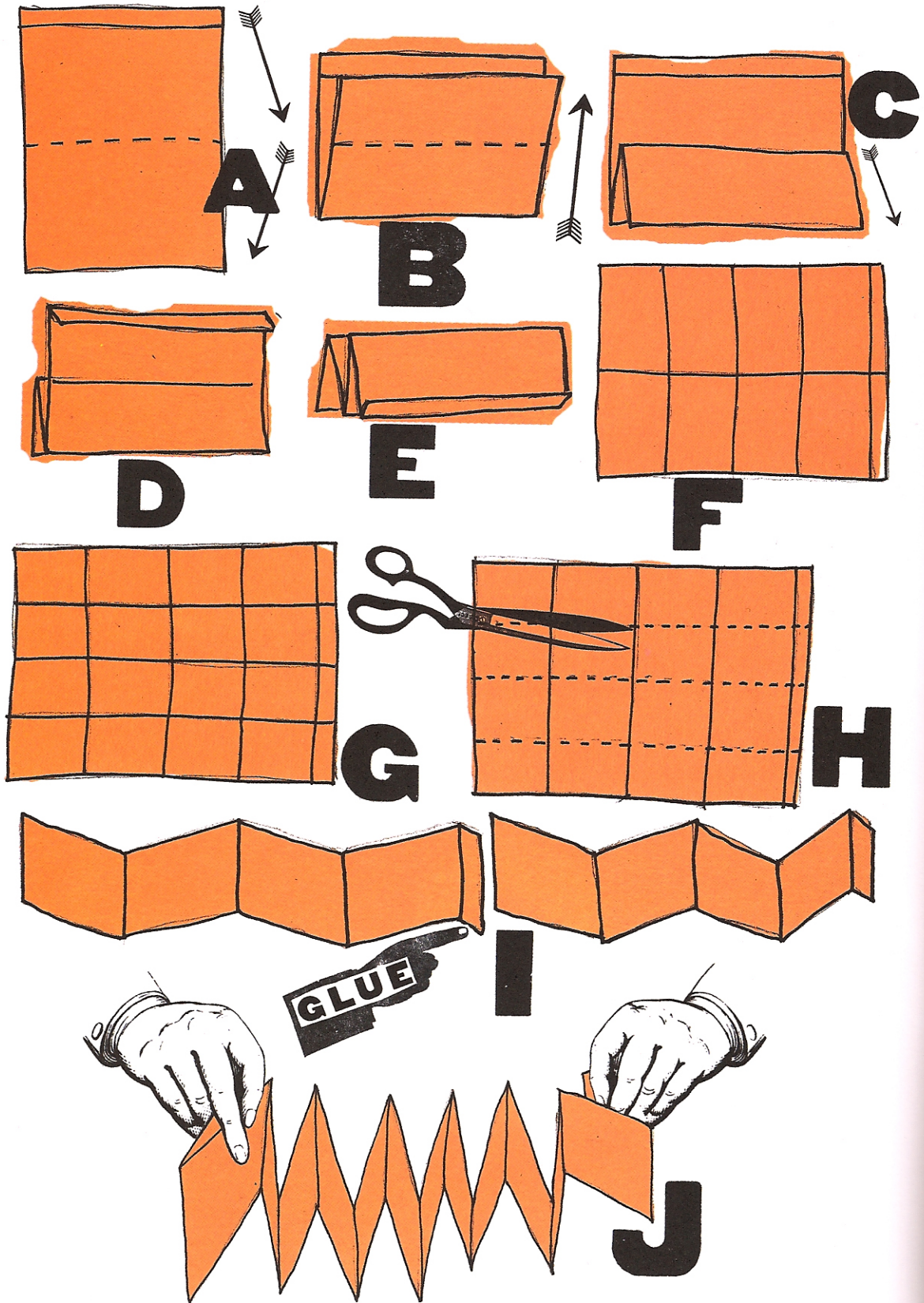
After folding an accordion, you may notice that it doesn't want to stay folded. You need to press accordions under weight to instill molecular memory.

You can buy a book press at an antique store or flea market—it looks like a wine press, only smaller. Or weight your book with a cold flat iron—those antique irons that were once heated on an old iron stove. One student of mine makes book weights by filling Altoid tins with pennies. Some binders wrap bricks or cinderblocks with cloth or heavy paper, gift-wrap style, and adhere with tape or glue. In *The Perfect Spy* by John le Carre, the protagonist's wife is a bookbinder. She uses her husband's old socks to cover bricks for her book weights—a quick method!

At Purgatory Pie Press, when we are making editions, we fold all the books, spread them evenly on a counter, put waste sheets on top, and then lay metal galleys of heavy type on top to press all the books at once. We have a small binding press, but it won't hold enough books at one time to be useful for a limited edition.

For a single book, you can cut two pieces of heavy cardboard the size of your book and tie it tightly around or secure it with multiple rubber bands. I've used this method when I've shipped books before they were weighted sufficiently (after having the recipient swear to keep the book under weight when it arrived).

Keep the book under weight until it no longer expands when released. A few hours, overnight, several days, a week—the longer the better.



Self-Hinged Accordion Dummy

This quick exercise shows you one way to make an accordion that is longer than your original piece of paper. Although there are quite a few kinds of papers that you can buy in rolls, you may want to work with sheets of flat paper. Just to get the idea, make a quick dummy of this one with your handy letter or scrap paper.

- 1 Fold a little hinge—about $\frac{1}{2}$ " (13mm) across the short edge of your paper. {A}
- 2 Fold the bottom end up to the fold. {B}
- 3 Fold that end back to the middle, as shown. {C}
- 4 Do the same on the back, folding from the middle to the hinge fold. (D, E)
- 5 On the vertical, fold as you did for the Instant Accordion (page 14): in half and then both ends into the middle. {F, G}
- 6 Cut into vertical strips, as shown, leaving a hinge on the end of each strip. {H}
- 7 Glue or tape together at hinges {I} to make one long accordion. {J} There will be one extra hinge, which you can chop off or use to glue the book to a cover.

Another approach is to take a few strips of paper and start folding a page size that pleases you or with dimensions that are right for the content you plan to include—with a margin around photos or postcards, for example. When you have accordion-folded the whole strip, it may come out even, but you will probably have a piece left over. You can use that as a hinge if you need to attach other folded strips to make your book long enough.

HINGE OPTIONS

If your page paper is too thick for self-hinging, make hinges (think of these like strips of tape) from lighter, strong pieces of paper—Japanese papers are great for this. Prefold these hinges, trim to the page height, and line them up with the edges of the two pages you want to join. Adhere with paste, glue, or archival double-stick tape.

I have experimented with having hinges show, using them as interesting visual elements in the book, like newel posts on a stairway (I often think of books in architectural terms). Try making tall hinges with interesting shapes—just be sure that the hinge lines up at the bottom so that the book can stand.

YOU WILL NEED

- 1 piece of $8\frac{1}{2}$ x 11" (21.5 x 28cm) office paper or other scrap paper
- Bone folder, fingernail clippers, or paperclip
- Scissors or X-Acto knife, straightedge, and cutting mat
- Glue stick or archival double-stick tape

SPINES

Spines make it possible for you to find books on a bookshelf. As I write this I am working on the design of this book's spine—I am hoping to make it an open spine with exposed stitching and a small label with the title and necessary info. (Take another look at it now and see if my publisher agreed with me!)

At a Small Press Center Book Fair, I met a publisher whose books were straightforward, but there was something I really liked about their design. She said she had worked in advertising, but left Madison Avenue to start a small regional Hudson River Valley history imprint. She told me that the spine was the most important part of the book. In bookstores, most books are shelved spine out. This publisher said her modest publishing venture never expected to have their front covers shown—that bookstore space is taken up by bestsellers and celebrity tell-alls. She said she would pay much more for cover images—a tall ship mast or a mountain peak—that would look intriguing when wrapped around the spine.

ABOVE: *Purgatory Pie Press, Candace's K-1 Class Picture Alphabet. Letterpress from Styrofoam drypoint and handset wood and metal type.*



Since then, I've been more aware of spines in bookstores and in the library. The spine entices you. It makes you pull the book off the shelf.

In your own home library, a book without a spine gets lost. *The Washington Cornmeal Company Cookbook* is my favorite baking book. It has some easy cakes, an impressive four-minute fat-free fluffy frosting, and good muffins and biscuits. But it's a stapled pamphlet, so I can never find it. If you can't find a book, does it cease to exist? It's like that silent tree that falls in the woods when no one is there to hear it. Well, now we are getting into philosophy—but seriously, folks!

COVER WITH SPINE

- 1 Starting at the front edge, lightly wrap a strip of cover-weight, short-grain paper around the spine of your Self-Hinged Accordion Dummy (page 34). (The paper should be short grain so that it folds without cracking.) {A}
- 2 Open the cover-weight paper and score the width of your spine using a metal triangle. Then fold the cover to fit. {B}
- 3 Glue the extra accordion hinge on your book left from the margin, into the fore edge {C}, spine {D}, or back edge {E} of the cover, trimming excess as necessary.

