

"flowers that may / happen if they come out notes": Zukofsky's Notebooks

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Of the substantial repository of Zukofsky's papers and correspondence held by the Harry Ransom Research Center (HRC), arguably the most significant, intriguing and befuddling are his notebooks, which cover the period from the early 1950s until the end of his life. Broadly speaking there are two distinct types of notebooks, what I will refer to as the working and draft notebooks respectively. In the former Zukofsky collected materials, out of which he directly composed the later long movements of "A", from "A"-13 to "A"-23 ("A"-24 was assembled by Celia), and continuing into *80 Flowers* and the final project he was working on at his death, *GAMUT: 90 Trees*. As I will explain in a moment, these working notebooks are generally more interesting than the drafts in revealing Zukofsky's compositional practice and its implied poetics, and they also evidence a development over time, becoming increasingly integral in organizing the more programmatic late works, "A"-22 & -23 and *80 Flowers*.

I will begin the following description and tentative analysis of the notebooks with a broad brush description and characterization of the notebooks, which is followed by a more detailed description presented in a loosely narrative manner, paying attention to both the relationship between specific notebooks and the movements of "A" written out of them, as well as to the evolution of Zukofsky's use of his notebooks. For anyone new to the notebooks, the simple quantity can be bewildering, and at times there are further confusions caused by the manner in which they have been archived and cataloged. Therefore I also have an extended detailed appendix that attempts to offer some navigating tips to anyone working directly with the notebooks. I have not included this appendix here, but anyone is welcome to it and to offer improvements—simply let me know. There are two individuals I need to thank for discussions on some of the notebooks and sharing their insights: Gianni de Falco on the notebooks for "A"-22 & -23 and Alex Grafen for those on *80 Flowers*.

While the following will focus on the working notebook, a brief description and explanation of the draft notebooks is in order. For drafting the later long movements of "A", from "A"-12 on, Zukofsky used blue exam books or, more often, pocket-sized spiral notebooks (A5 size), writing on the verso pages and then making a neat fair copy on the facing recto page, since he never typed himself. For "A" 13-21 the drafts on the verso pages of his notebooks are notable for how comparatively little revision there is, whereas those for "A"-22 and -23 tend to be heavily worked. In all cases, however, the evidence indicates that Zukofsky worked passage by passage without going back to revise, much less going through multiple versions of or polishing the poems as a whole. His focus is on the lines under hand and once satisfied that a given passage was finished he did not go back over it with the entire work in mind. It is also characteristic of "A" that Zukofsky did not subdivide the long movements into more digestible units, as is almost always the case with other poets, the exception being the five-part partita conception of "A"-13. The point here is Zukofsky's resistance to allowing these long movements to be subordinated to overriding thematic or stylistic consistency, to a totalizing conception, and in an important sense his and the reader's attention is on the immediate qualities of the verbal texture and its variations. This of course allows any verbal matter to come in, and the notebooks always manifest a wide variety of textual matter, whether from the perspective of content or of language. The randomness of this collecting of materials and how they come into the poem is integral to Zukofsky's working practice. Although given his Spinoza inflected mind-set, he did not really believe in randomness, only the infinite density of contingency. The heavy working of the drafts in "A"-22 and -23 is probably explained by the fact that these poems

are pretty much entirely worked up by direct massaging of quotations. This includes a good deal of homophonically suggested transcription (especially from Hebrew, Greek and Latin), which invariably involves trying out various sounded possibilities until he decides which he prefers. In any case, since little if any of this involves writing a version and then revising through rethinking, it is questionable how much can be gleaned of Zukofsky's creative process from these drafts beyond characteristic preferences, such as greater concision, more word or sound play and the like. Nevertheless, these draft notebooks require closer examination than I can pretend to at this point. The working notebooks consist primarily of quotations, only occasionally preliminary drafts of passages and little in the way of self-reflection, both in general and on his specific intentions for given poems. Baldly stated, we have the raw materials in the working notebooks and the largely finished poems in the draft notebooks, without a great deal in between.

I - A general description of the notebooks

Zukofsky's characteristic mode of composing his longer poems from at least "A"-12 on was to collect textual materials more or less randomly without preconceptions and then to work up the poems from the mass of notes he had at the time. In other words, Zukofsky usually composed directly out of the notebooks. Beginning with "A"-8 virtually all of "A" is written with or out of other textual materials and only a minuscule percentage of lines are simply written straight out of the poet's head. This reflects Zukofsky's abiding sense that writing is intrinsically and, for him, self-consciously social and collaborative—"objectivist" in the sense of an infinitely layered and contextualized social practice and product. This practice also suited Zukofsky's inclination to resist organizing his long poems according to a theme or argument, instead creating a field and play of verbal textures.

Typically the working notebooks are pocket-sized loose-leaf, which allowed him flexibility in reordering and adding pages. Zukofsky numbered the pages, but also usually dated each entry, which he used as a reference system, particularly when he began composing and wanted to make various links between disparately placed materials. As mentioned, there are only occasional self-reflective remarks on the poems themselves, a high proportion of these mere reminders of cross-references or linkages. Whatever planning Zukofsky did was done in his head, and the evidence of the notebooks is that for most of the later long movements of "A" he worked up the material he had gathered to that point. The materials included in the notebooks are quite diverse. They can be bits of conversation (usually quips or epigrammatic remarks), newspaper items (the *New York Times* is a frequent source) or other popular media, extracts from correspondence and reading notes—almost always quotation rather than paraphrase or summary. Sometimes there are more personal or subjective thoughts, although these are mostly in the nature of descriptions of the view out the window or domestic details, or responses to someone or some event, although it is often difficult to determine whether these are Zukofsky's direct musings or overheard remarks. Virtually all the materials are meant to go directly into the poems, at least potentially, which is to say he does not use the notebooks for diaristic self-reflection or as a record of personal activities. The partial exception to this, especially in the earlier notebooks, is that he notes down major news events, many of which of course make their way into the poems but just as often they do not; nonetheless it is a characteristic of "A" to remind the reader of contemporary history.

As a general rule Zukofsky used everything he had on hand when composing these long works. This is both a character trait and a compositional principle: Zukofsky rarely wasted anything and he never left anything unfinished. Near the end of "A"-12 he catalogs his notes for various still-born projects from the 1930s, but of course in doing so he is putting those old notes to good use. A few of these same notes were also worked into "A"-

13. Since the poems are worked up from rather than fit into a predetermined schema, theme or argument, anything could find its place, and this is a crucial aspect of his poetics. Whatever small quantity of notes were not used in the poem he was working on would usually be carried over and copied into the front of the next notebook.

The working notebooks tend to be quite crammed with notes and heavily marked up. This is hardly surprising given that he composed directly out of them, so that as he went back through the notes he had gathered, he made connections or inserted new notes next to related previously entered notes or simply where he found free space. Zukofsky used various practical means to retain readability as pages filled out, not only writing along margins but using different colored pens. As one would expect, in preparing for composition, he would mark in the margins or underlining specific sentences, phrases or words for potential use, and then indicate when he had used given notes, usually with checks, and would cross through large parts or complete pages when done. All this is fairly normal and reasonably straightforward, although often varied with different notebooks/movements and sometimes puzzling in specific instances.

The Harry Ransom Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin holds seven working notebooks as follows:

- “A”-13 notebook (dated 1952-1960)
- “A” 14-19 notebook (dated 1961-1966)
- “A”-21 notebook (dated 1966-1967)
- Black notebook (dated 1967-1971) [used for "A"-22 & -23]
- “A”-22 & -23 notebook (dates ending 1974)
- 80 Flowers* notebook (dated 1968-1976)
- GAMUT* notebook (dated 1969-1978)

There is an additional notebook left at Zukofsky's death, which includes further notes for *GAMUT: 90 Trees*, both those in the notebook at the HRC plus additions up to a week and a half before his death.

Composition Chronology

1951	"A"-12
1958	<i>Catullus</i> 1-5
1960	<i>Bottom: on Shakespeare</i> finished (8 May; begun in 1947)
	“A”-13 (i – July; ii – 18 Aug.; iii – 12-13 Sept.; iv – 17 Sept.; v – 23 Sept.)
1960-1966	<i>Catullus</i> 6-116
1963	“A”-17 (12 - 13 March)
	“A”-16 (23 May)
	“A”-20 (30 Oct.)
1964	“A”-14 (13 Aug. - 14 Sept.)
	“A”-15 (3 Oct. - 1 Dec.)
1966	<i>Catullus</i> finished (1 Feb.)
	“A”-19 (12 Feb. - 29 May)
	“A”-18 (8 March - 28 April) prelude 26 Dec. 1964
	“A”-21 (18 Aug. - 11/13 May 1967)
1967-1969	<i>Little</i> (Aug. 1967- 28 July 1969)
1970-1973	“A”-22 (14 Feb. 1970 - 14 April 1973)
1973-1974	“A”-23 (13 April 1973 - 21/22 Sept. 1974)
1974-1978	<i>80 Flowers</i> (27 Dec. 1974 - 21 Jan. 1978)
1978	<i>GAMUT: 90 Trees</i> (first and only poem 5-11 Feb.)
	Death of LZ (12 May)

II - A narrative account of the notebooks

Prior to the "A"-13 notebook (begun in 1952), the surviving materials related to Zukofsky's compositional process are spotty. There are substantial drafts for many of the major poems, although not much in the way of notes. All of these are on very miscellaneous pieces and sizes of paper indicating he was not then in the habit of using a notebook. He must have had a large number of notes at least for the long movements of "A"-8 and -12, but most were evidently thrown away once used. Probably the most substantial set of notes and drafts we have are for "'Mantis'" and its "Interpretation" and for "A"-9. For the first half of the latter Zukofsky published a mimeograph edition of his workshop, reproducing all the main source materials plus explanations of the form, as *First Half of "A"-9* (1940), in addition to which there are manuscript drafts.

Although the composition of "A"-12 established the general *modus operandi* for the subsequent movements of "A" and beyond—that is, the gathering of materials out of which the poem is composed—there is no surviving notebook for this movement. As mentioned, toward the end of "A"-12 (250-257) there is an extensive catalog of old notes as the poet is apparently clearing out his desk. Indeed "A"-12 has the feel of a huge collage whose centrifugal propensities counterpoint the nominal structure provided by the B-A-C-H (Spinoza, Aristotle, Celia and Paracelsus) fugal form. Quite possibly the experience of writing "A"-12 out of a large mass of loose notes prompted Zukofsky to be more orderly for future compositions, and the "A"-13 notebook begins within a year after the composition of "A"-12. On the other hand, a pragmatic reason for preserving the notebooks and other related materials was that around 1960, when the Humanities Research Center first contacted him, Zukofsky realized there may be some monetary value in such papers. There survive a small number of loose notes for materials that went into "A"-12, but this does not necessarily indicate there was no notebook since it was common that Zukofsky had on hand various notes he did not bother to copy into the notebooks and seems to have kept in a separate folder. Nevertheless, although the answer is necessarily speculative, it is probable there was no notebook for "A"-12. Having said this, he apparently did keep a notebook for *Bottom*, which he destroyed for whatever reasons. At least this is the story indicated by a note on a broadside, "'An Alphabet of Subjects,' (contents this notebook)" published posthumously in 1979 but presumably under the auspices of Celia—the broadside reproduces a blown up organizational page for *Bottom* torn out of a spiral notebook (for an image, see Z-site page on Limited Editions).

"A"-13 notebook

The "A"-13 notebook has the feel of a halfhearted adoption relative to the subsequent notebooks. Although it covers almost eight years (17 Nov. 1952 - 2 July 1960), it is not particularly large, 56 numbered pages, and includes drafts of quite a few short poems of the period, although he did not consistently do so since as many other short poems were written outside the notebook on loose leaves. However, retrospectively we cannot automatically assume these drafts of short poems were not intended for "A", since in at least one or two cases there are indications these drafts might go into some future movement of the long poem (a notable instance is the original draft of the poem on Pound, "'Nor did the prophet'" (CSP 146-147)). The dating of entries does not start until page 5, as if only after a bit of a start did it occur to him he would need some sort of reference system to work with the randomly entered materials, and there are significant gaps in the dated entries. This of

course may be because during the period his main focus was on *Bottom* and so most of his reading would have gone into that project.¹

Another indication that Zukofsky is not fully committed to his notebook at this time is the substantial number of loose sheets appended to the "A"-13 notebook. Such separate items are not unusual and were kept either at the back of the notebooks or in a designated file, and the most obvious reason is simply that at times he did not have his notebook ready to hand. Zukofsky seems to have been in the habit of carrying around in his wallet a very small paper pad ("the size of / a / vis- / iting card" he says in "A"-13.303), on which he would jot notes or drafts. In the case of the loose "A"-13 related notes, these include some old notes going back to the 1930s, drafts of pieces of a novel, *The Little Girl*, and a set of notes on the radical economist J.K. Ingalls, both mentioned in "A"-12, plus miscellaneous other quotations that were worked into "A"-13 (for further details on these loose items, see appendix). The most substantial loose items, however, are five sheets of letter writing paper written front and back with notes mostly used in the first partita of "A"-13. These include notes on perhaps the oddest source Zukofsky ever used, the oracular book often referred to as Napoleon's *Book of Fate*, copying out an extensive selection of the epigrammatic answers in two or three columns. There are further notes on Aristotle's *Politics* and *Parts of Animals*, and finally a bit more than a page of notes from Spinoza. The *Book of Fate* and Aristotle are the major sources used in the first partita from which Zukofsky worked substantial passages, although there is a good deal more miscellaneous materials from the notebooks as well. Spinoza on the other hand only appears in a highly abstracted and condensed form as part of the conclusion of "A"-13 (312-313).

If one subtracts the drafts of short poems in the notebook for "A"-13, Zukofsky used practically everything he had gathered in it up to the time of composing and the next notebook starts virtually from scratch. There are a few notable exceptions: brief reminder notes for a translation from Job and from Plautus, which obviously would manifest themselves in the opening of "A"-15 and in "A"-21 respectively. However, at this point there is no reason to believe that Zukofsky was thinking in terms of the homophonic rendition of Job that we now have. He made a tentative start on *Catullus* in 1958, but these versions are not notably homophonic, but rather in an identifiably modernist Poundian manner. When he returned to this project in 1960 after composing "A"-13 he continued in this general style for a further handful of poems before taking a fairly abrupt turn toward the more radical manner we typically associate with *Catullus*. It is perfectly characteristic that Zukofsky did not go back and revise the early versions to bring them in line with the bulk of the volume. Once he finished a poem to his satisfaction, he did not second guess it but instead pursued new possibilities in new poems. Another way to put this is that Zukofsky rarely denied his initial sense that a given poem was finished, and if there was a question of reflective doubt, then that was to be worked out in another poem not by tampering with those once "finished." Nor was it important to present a consistency of manner or texture in *Catullus* any more than in "A", and in fact the textual surface of the Zukofskys' rendition of *Catullus* is quite various, as is the canon of *Catullus* himself, despite the common impression based on a small selection of his work.

"A" 14-19 notebook

Once "A"-13 was written in 1960, Zukofsky turned his full attention to *Catullus*, which would preoccupy him until the latter half of 1964 and finally be completed in early 1966.

¹ I have not looked closely at the considerable surviving materials for *Bottom* held at the HRC. A large number of the quotations used were copied onto about 200 index cards which could be shuffled around, and there are nine spiral draft notebooks, but there are no working notebooks proper.

However, about a year after composing "A"-13, he began a new notebook and from this point there is an unbroken sequence of working notebooks until the end of his life. The followup to the "A"-13 notebook covers the period Aug. 1961 - Dec. 1966 and would be used for the four long movements "A"-14, -15, -18, -19. Unfortunately in the HRC this notebook has been broken up and placed in two separate folders in two different boxes, but the continuous pagination and entry dates allow one to reassemble it.² The first part of this notebook contains, as with the "A"-13 notebook, drafts and pieces for short poems that ended up in *After I's* (1964), Zukofsky's last booklet of short poems. Of particular interest is the serial poem, "The Old Poet Moves to a New Apartment 14 Times," which not only consists of 14 separate poems but many of the individual poems were pieced together from many disparate pieces collected in the notebook (this is also the case with "Atque in Perpetuum A.W." composed at the same time). However, after *After I's* Zukofsky no longer wrote short lyrics and everything went into "A"—with the publication of the collected short poems as *ALL* (1965, 1966), he considered that a complete and completed work. As usual, this generalization needs qualification since the voice-offs interpolated into the rendition of Plautus' *Rudens* in "A"-21 are essentially a booklet of short lyrics, and furthermore the late long movements of "A" almost always begin and sometimes end with what are essentially stand-alone poems and usually were originally written as such.

Quickly it should be noted that the three short movements, "A"-16, -17 and -20, were all written in 1963 when he was still primarily focused on *Catullus*, and none of these were written from working notebooks, although there are draft notebooks or, in these cases, blue books. "A"-17 and -20 are essentially assemblages of well-defined materials. These movements are occasional, which is why they are numbered outside chronological sequence and their numbering had more personal correlations.

"A"-14 and -15 were composed in a concentrated period from August - Dec. 1964, when Zukofsky took a break from *Catullus*. He used most of the materials he had from the notebook, while continuing to add to them, with whatever was added or carried over going into "A"-18 and -19. These latter two movements were written in an even more intense burst of writing in March - May 1966, following the completion of *Catullus*, and, unusually, were virtually worked on simultaneously as Zukofsky went back and forth between them, mining the same group of materials from the notebooks for two extremely different poems—"A"-18 dark and heavy, overshadowed by the Vietnam War, while "A"-19 is sprightly and musical. Although one imagines that especially for "A"-18 and -19 Zukofsky probably went through the notebook and marked what he thought should go into this or that movement, it is difficult to be certain whether such markings preceded composition or indicate what had been used as he went along. In any case, all this strongly suggests that Zukofsky did not gather notes with a predetermined conception of a movement in mind, but simply collected what he found verb-ally interesting and diverse, out of which he more or less improvised the poems, which would take on their own character in process. Notably from "A"-13 on he adopted a distinctly different base form for each of these movements—mostly various word-count lines and sometimes regular stanza forms as well—into which he worked his raw materials (for more on this, see Z-Notes commentary on the Forms of "A").

² Apparently either Zukofsky or someone at the HRC attempted to distinguish those parts of the notebook that were used for "A"-14 and -15 and that for "A"-18 and -19, but there is simply no neat division, and this only leads to confusion. A better guide is Zukofsky's markings as he worked, indicating what material is used in a given movement.

"A"-21 notebook

The relatively short "A"-21 notebook (34 pages plus one loose sheet) was used to compose the voice-offs interpolated into the translation of Plautus' *Rudens*. These are essentially distinct short poems, and for the most part do not give the impression of having been written in close coordination with the play but rather as intruding variety and contrast with the relative formal homogeneity of the drama itself, while at the same time functioning as choruses offering oblique commentary on the play. In contrast to previous notebooks, the "A"-21 notebook is predominately reading notes: Veblen, Izaak Walton, Buckminster Fuller, John Quincy Adams, Bach's biography, colorful names of Texas towns (from an article on "South-Western Slang") and Spinoza (the political treatises and correspondence, not *Ethics*). This foreshadows the type of materials that go into the "A"-22 & -23 notebooks, as well as *80 Flowers*, which reflect Zukofsky's reading in retirement and less the conversational, anecdotal and newsy materials that are common in the earlier notebooks.

While "A"-21 sticks out as an oddity in "A" and Zukofsky's work generally, in certain respects it marks a decisive turning point in how he composes the last movements of "A" and *80 Flowers*. That is, he becomes interested in more programmatic large structures within which to work, and the notebooks become more integral to these organizational structures. Upon finishing "A"-21, Zukofsky gave himself a period of time to prepare materials for the final two movements, although he had a number of loose ends he wanted to tie up first: finishing *Little* (begun in 1950) and publishing a substantial list of completed projects: *Catullus* (1969), "A" 13-21 (1969), *Autobiography* (1970), *Little* (1970), "A"-24 (1972) and *Arise, Arise* (1973). Typically these various projects were wrapped up ahead of his own schedule, and having now cleared his desk, he was already at work on "A"-22 in Feb. 1970.

"A"-22 & -23 notebooks

The notebooks used for "A"-22 & -23 are quite complicated and I will only give a summary here.³ On finishing "A"-21 in May 1967, Zukofsky began a new notebook, the so-called black notebook because of the binder for the loose leaf pages. He copied a modest number of unused notes going back to 1964 and then continued in his usual manner of randomly collected dated entries. However, at a certain point (probably in early 1970), he determined on the basic structure of the last two movements, that is, 1000 lines each consisting of an 800-line main body with materials presented in chronological order framed by two 100-line segments in which the materials are more subjectively ordered. The distinction between the materials to be used for the main bodies was nominally history and literature respectively, although this has to be understood quite flexibly, particularly given that in Zukofsky's textual vision there really is no such distinction, simply an arbitrary, i.e. socio-historical, set of ordering rubrics, as is the case with chronology itself (on this question, see the Z-Notes commentary on "A"-22 & -23).

For the chronological ordering of the main bodies, he started a new spiral notebook split in half for the two movements and then with pages designated for chronological periods of time from Pre-3000 BC to the 20th century. Then he systematically organized the notes in the black notebook according to this chronological schema, either referring to or copying from relevant notes in the black notebook. Of course a large amount of new notes

³ Michele Leggott has given detailed descriptions of the notebooks for "A"-22 & -23, as well as *80 Flowers*, in the first and still most detailed examination of Zukofsky's notebooks in *Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1989), 34-52. Although there are differences in some details and I do not always agree with her analysis of what is going on in the notebooks, her work remains impressive and authoritative, which anyone interested in the notebooks should consult.

were added to this chronologically organized notebook, which spill out all over the place, but can be traced since Zukofsky indicates where sets of notes continue. Despite this spillage, it is clear in the spiral notebook that he wanted as much material as possible on a given page from which to compose any given passage, as he tended to write a block of lines from a given "period," and many notebook pages are intensely crammed. But if this often endangered read-ability, it also helped him see connections or suggested contiguous juxtapositions between random notes (there are unquestionably some instances where consciously or not Zukofsky's end result is a consequence of misreading his notes).

Looking at all this more closely, the principle working materials for "A"-22 & -23 consist of four notebooks:

- 1) the black notebook: a pocket-sized, loose-leaf notebook in which Zukofsky jotted down dated notes on whatever took his interest.
- 2) "A"-22 & -23 spiral: a thick spiral notebook divided in half for the two respective movements and arranging materials in rough historical chronological order and according to whether their content is historical or literary.
- 3 & 4) two spiral draft notebooks: a notebook each for the two movements in which Zukofsky followed his usual practice of drafting the poems on the left hand page and then writing out a fair copy on the right for Celia to type up.

The black notebook continues what had become a well-settled practice of keeping a handy place to write down randomly whatever he thought of potential use: news items, conversational remarks, reading notes, etc.—sometimes but not often including plans or thoughts for movements and rough drafts of miscellaneous passages. Technically the dates of these entries range from 19 Aug. 1964 - 17 Sept. 1974 (these are the dates on the cover page), although in fact there are only a few pages from the earlier years, which are old unused notes, with new notes beginning in the latter part of 1967, when Zukofsky finished "A"-21 and began thinking about "A"-22 & -23. The later dates in the range, which go up to the completion of "A"-23, are actually in the back part of the "A"-22 & -23 spiral (chronologically ordered) where he had some spare space rather than in the black notebook itself (in other words, although one would reasonably assume that the dates on the cover page of the black notebook refer to that notebook, they in fact encompass the notes in the back of the spiral notebook as well).

It is evident that when he began the black notebook, Zukofsky did not have the structural plan for "A"-22 & -23 in mind, but it contains indications that move toward his eventual adoption of the basic overall structure of the poems. When he composed the opening block ("AN ERA / ANY TIME / OF YEAR") on Valentine's Day 1970, he clearly indicates this will be the beginning of "A"-22 (top of p. 74 black notebook) and in an unscholarly manner etymologically took apart "AN ERA," which offered various seeds that are worked out in the lines that would immediately follow.⁴ Within a few weeks there is the first clear indication of a chronological presentation "without explicit references to dates" (p.75), and in May he began the 100-line section, which he gave the title and published as "Initial," which was completed in August. "Initial" was composed out of the black notebook since he had not yet begun re-organizing his notes into the chronologically arranged spiral notebook, but on finishing this segment he promptly set about doing so at the end of August 1971 and continued adding copious new notes directly into the new notebook. He would not return to the poem itself until March 1972, from which point he works quite steadily until finishing "A"-23 in September 1974. As was his usual practice he constantly added to the notebook as he worked on the poems.

⁴ See Leggott, 34-52, who examines in detail "AN ERA" and the following lines with extensive reference to the black notebook.

The two halves of the spiral notebook are sectioned off by millennium and century—usually a century is given two facing pages, although the earliest sections go by millennium or a century is only given a single page, presumably on the assumption that there would be less materials for these archaic periods, although in the event this did not necessarily prove to be the case. Zukofsky then transferred materials from the black notebook into this chronological arrangement, and the earliest entries on each page represent this process—usually simply noting the relevant references to the black notebook. For this purpose he listed in three columns the entry/note dates on the left, page numbers of the black notebook or of specific books down the center and short notations indicating the author/work on the right. However, Zukofsky preferred to have as much of his materials directly in front of him, so he often transferred short notes into the spiral which also accumulated new notes as he pursued his reading program. As a result the neat listing/reference system tends to be overwhelmed by later additions, and individual pages are often exceedingly crammed with Zukofsky's small script, later notes filling whatever free space can be found. The same source material might be continued in several different spots or sideways along the margins, occasionally upsidedown and/or written in-between the lines of a previous note. To help distinguish these notes from each other, he used different colored pens—black, blue and red. As Zukofsky went through his notes in preparation for composition, he would mark specific passages and phrases, often with a magic marker (before felt-tip pens were common).⁵ As he used materials, he would check them and then cross out large sections or pages. The end result is that many pages are difficult, even impossible to decipher (the broadside reproduction of "An Alphabet of Subjects" from the *Bottom* notebook gives a fair sense of what many pages in the spiral notebook look like, although it is not the most congested example one can find and lacks the additional interference of Zukofsky's systematic marking and crossing out of sections as he used them; see Limited Editions page of the Z-site).

The spiral notebook contains considerable notes for the 20th century for both "A"-22 and -23, although almost none of this appears in the poems. Apparently he simply ran out of space, and after all these are "histories" without dates.

80 Flowers notebooks

By the time he turned his attention to *80 Flowers*, Zukofsky has quite methodical ideas about how to use the notebooks and this project evidences a thoroughly organized approach. Leggott has described in considerable detail the working materials and the permutations in the notebooks as Zukofsky proceeded, and here I will give only a descriptive summary. I have already mentioned a general shift in the types of textual materials gathered in the notebooks from a high proportion of everyday ephemeral materials (bits of conversation, letters, newspapers) mixed with more formal reading quotations to an almost complete reliance on the latter in "A"-21 through -23. This tendency continues into *80 Flowers*, but what is now notable is that for the first time reference works predominate: on the one hand botanical/gardening encyclopedias and plant identification guides and on the other word reference books, a wide range of dictionaries and glossaries. Zukofsky certainly also allows in whatever his personal reading happens to be, which at this time included a good many novels, an indulgence he allowed himself in his retirement, particularly those of

⁵ Leggott's claim that Zukofsky used green and blue markers to sort out materials for "A"-22 and -23 respectively seems to me doubtful or else he subsequently changed his mind in many cases. Admittedly it is not always clear what he has in mind with these various markings. The evidence of different markers and colors suggests he went systematically through the notes a number of times and quite probably with somewhat different or revised ideas about what he is looking for.

Thomas Hardy and Henry James. Even in these cases he tends to note down botanically related de-tails. In any case, the nominal botanical focus of this work and its conception as a sequence of formally well-defined units allowed Zukofsky to collect and organize his materials in a quasi-systematic manner.

In the working notebook, Zukofsky started as usual by carefully gathering old notes that might be of use, some unused but others for potential reuse. He also made a reading list of botanical related authors that became the core of the sources he used, as well as short lists of classical and modern literary authors that might be relevant. He proceeded by simply making lists of potential flowers and then looking up relevant materials in the various reference books he had to hand, as well as adding whatever other reading he was doing. The lists went through a number of permutations and revisions, and at one point early in the process he seems to have simply flipped through his primary reference work, noting down various flowers and information of potential interest, whether or not in the end he includes this or that flower. One of the self-imposed requirements was that he had to have actually seen the flowers included, but this was not much of a restraint, particularly since he made notes on exotic plants in the botanical garden on a visit to Bermuda in 1972 and on the elaborate gardens at Bellagio on Lake Como later the same year. Also the Zukofskys ordered a good many seeds and bulbs to plant around their house in Port Jefferson (Long Island), which not only provided new observed possibilities but the catalogs provide some details in his notes. Although Zukofsky consulted a considerable list of reference works, there is one that served as the primary backbone source, *Taylor's Encyclopedia of Gardening, Horticulture and Land-scape Design*, 4th edition, ed. Norman Taylor (Houghton Mifflin, 1961). This is the work Zukofsky flipped through looking for possible flowers, and he consulted it for virtually all the flowers he used, with the various other botanical sources tending to function as supplements to Taylor. However, it was not necessary for Zukofsky to accumulate exhaustive information on the given flowers (more precisely, plants), only enough to work with for his purposes, that is, all he needed was verbal material. Careful readers of *80 Flowers* will have noticed how often other plants and flowers appear in a poem nominally concerned with the single flower the title designates, which may or may not have any botanical kinship. But these are poems, verbal contraptions, and not really about flowers (*anthology* < ἀνθολογία, a gathering of flowers; see "A"-18.391.10). Any given flower name is as much as anything a means of gathering raw textual material in the systematic random manner Zukofsky preferred. Every flower or plant has a variety of names, both technical and common, which are cultural and suggest all manner of possible relations far beyond any strictly botanical concerns. Add to this mix Zukofsky's penchant for homophonic suggestion and transcription, which is simply a standard part of his repertoire by this time, then any word can lead to any other word. It does not take much plant-word matter to go a long way. This is of course where all those word reference works come in, supplying names or words with polysemous definitions, etymological entanglements and, for good measure, quotations as sample usage (the *Century Dictionary*, which Zukofsky drew upon extensively, is especially biased toward the use of literary, particularly poetic examples—plenty of Shakespeare). A complete annotated bibliography of the sources Zukofsky drew on can be found on the *80 Flowers* page of the Z-site.

Since *80 Flowers* consists of well-defined short poems, Zukofsky was able to more easily focus whatever materials he wanted for a given poem. In drafting the poems, Zukofsky worked on them in the order as determined by his lists, and when he finished one he moved on to the next without further revision, which as we have seen is characteristic manner of working. For a given poem-flower, he would copy relevant notes directly into the draft notebook and then draft the poem immediately below in pencil, which may or may not involve a fair amount of erasing and reworking, and then a second draft in ink,

which is usually the final, fair copy. The draft spiral notebook is continuous, rather than his previous practice of drafting on the verso pages with a fair copy on the right—once a poem was finished he would draw three lines in different colors under it and move on to the next. Although the list of flowers was revised at several points, this never effected those composed, which were never revised nor re-ordered, only new poems extending the sequence concerned him. As in *Catullus*, Zukofsky did not suppress the arbitrariness of the compositional process, and Leggott details how quotidian details and events happen to come into the poems. As a final stage Zukofsky wrote out a complete fair copy of the entire sequence to be typed up, although in this case he personalized this copy by including dates of composition and dedications, although instructing that they were not intended for the published version, and signing each poem (there are actually two of these fair copies, virtually identical).

GAMUT: 90 Trees

For this last, never realized, project the notes remain at the preliminary stage of collection materials, which he continued to do up until nearly a week before his death on 12 May 1978. As with *80 Flowers* he went through Taylor listing and taking notes on trees of possible use, but interestingly he also has substantial notes on non-trees: house plants, creepers, lichen and the like. With his usual impatience he wrote an epigraph, "The Overworld," well before he finished *80 Flowers*, carved entirely out of the concluding section of Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts*. For whatever reason, he decided against this and instead incorporated some bits from this poem, including the title, into "Windflower" (*CSP* 343). Only the first poem of the sequence was composed and eventually published as "Gamut" in *CSP* (a transcript of the draft of this poem with Zukofsky's notes can be found on the *GAMUT* page of the Z-site).

4 Dec. 2022