



To Do: A Book of Alphabets and Birthdays (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library)

Gertrude Stein

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"Alphabets and names make games and everybody has a name and all the same they have in a way to have a birthday," muses Gertrude Stein in *To Do: A Book of Alphabets and Birthdays*. Written in 1940 and intended as a follow-up to her children's book *The World Is Round*, published the previous year, *To Do* is a fanciful journey through the alphabet. Each letter is represented by four names (including Gertrude for "G") and features a short story told in verse. "[This is] a birthday book I would have liked as a child," said Stein of *To Do*.

Publishers rejected the manuscript as too complex for children, and it remained unpublished during Stein's lifetime. A text-only version issued from Yale University Press in 1957. Now, more than seventy years after Stein penned the story, *To Do* is appearing with illustrations, realizing the author's original concept for the book. Giselle Potter's witty and stylish illustrations provide a perfect complement to Stein's uniquely whimsical world of words, creating a truly delightful, often hilarious book that adults and children alike can appreciate and love.

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