

The Seed

Bibliography number: B004.1

Author: Spike Milligan

Publication Details: Toni Savage Press of Leicester
First edition circa 1977.

Format: Chapbook

Illustrations: Victorian engravings printed using wooden blocks

Physical Description: 8pp. 20 x 13 cm (8" x 5") printed on handmade white Sheepstor paper with the Spike Milligan signature and a ram watermark, blue string bound.

Print run: Limited to 45 copies.

May 2000: I have recently found two copies *The Seed* for sale at two UK bookshops, Clarendon books and Keogh Books, with Keogh Books supplying images. This book is new to me.

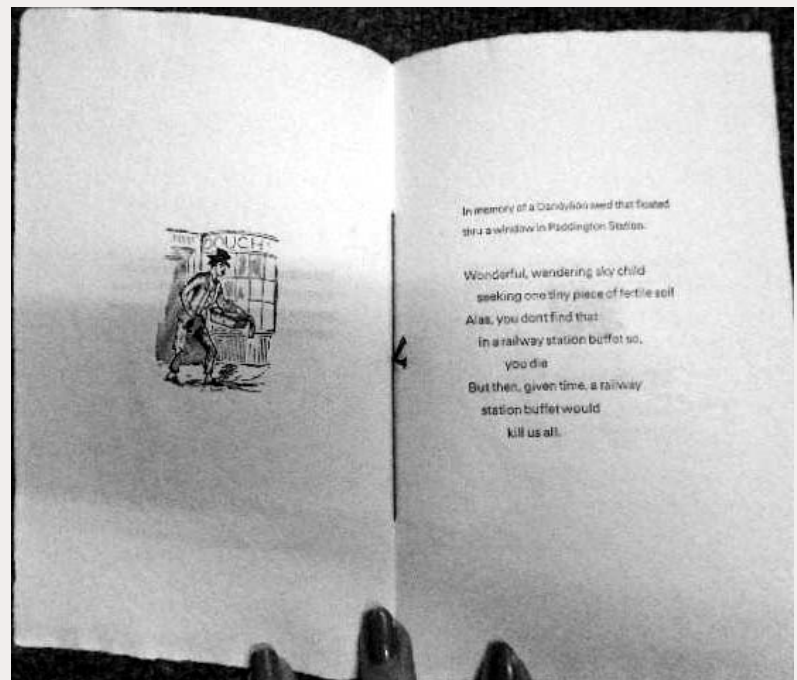
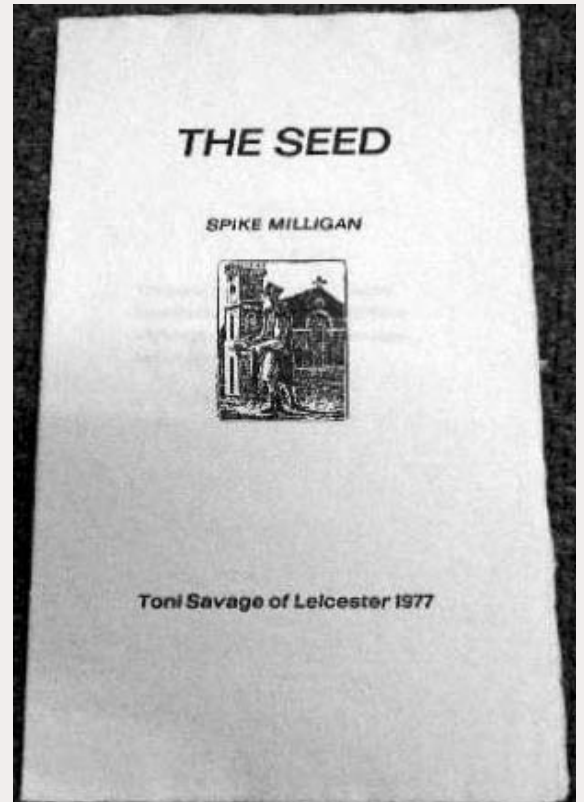
The book is described as having cream/white covers. The illustrations however appear to be different to the book of this title I had previously known. The two images seen here are those from Keogh Books. The title poem, *The Seed*, is on the middle pages without a title. There are four illustrations in the book but only the one poem. I assume the Clarendon books copy is the same. Both state a print run of 45 copies, neither is numbered.

This constitutes another edition as it is completely Different from the known blue edition which is un-named but referred to as *The Seed* in the correspondence found with the blue edition.

I originally thought this to be a second edition of *The Seed*, but it has to be a first edition in its own right. I also concluded it would be the first edition chronologically. My logic sees it as a first printing and then along came more poems and illustrations by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The blue book was the first time these illustrations had been printed.

It does look like the blue edition was as a printer's trial of the next Spike chapbook titles Poems.

Both appear to be very rare books.



Prices	
For Sale	£195-£200
F.S. signed	
Auction	

Un-named version of "The Seed"

Bibliography number: B005.1

Author: Spike Milligan

Publication Details: Toni Savage Press of Leicester First edition circa 1977.

Format: Chapbook

Illustrations: Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Physical Description: 8pp. 20 x 13 cm (8" x 5") Blue Sheepstor paper with Spike's watermark, black stamping illustration printed in dark vermillion.

Print run: Limited to 40 copies.

The booklet is not named; the name I have given is from the first illustrated poem within it.

The cover image is from an ad on eBay which include images of every page except the back which I presume was blank. The page 2/3 image shown here is from David Lay Auctions Penzance catalogue. I believe it is the same copy as that was advertised on ebay because Spike's signature is in the same position.

The poems in the book are: _

The Seed

Colours in Mind

Belief

To Jane

This booklet appears to have been a test run of some Spike Milligan poems. The claim is that this is the first time the Sheepstor paper, specially made for Spike with his own watermark, was used. But it seems to have been used in the Edition described previously.

This special Milligan Sheepstor paper came in sheets that were 25 x 20 cm so when folded produced the 20 x 12.5 cm (8" x 5") chapbook size.

The book has no title; the front page simply has a statement from Toni Savage. vis

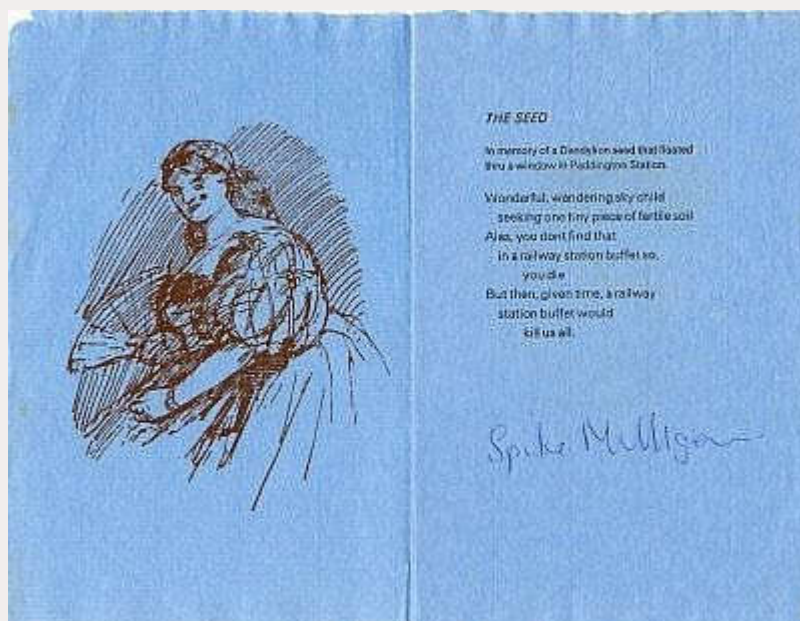
My thanks to Spike Milligan for the poems and Imogen Dennis for her permission to print the hitherto unpublished drawings of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

To Jane should read To Jane (my two year old daughter) and the show through is my heavy handedness on the uneven paper.

T.S.

The circumstances of this printing are detailed by two letters that have accompanied the two copies that I have found for Sale.

One from a letter of Rigby Graham's to his publisher when he sent four Milligan broadsheets and this chapbook to his agent to have them sold at auction. This quote from the letter written in 2001



Prices	
For Sale	
F.S. signed	£299
Auction	£170

“The Seed - This is the rarest of all the chapbooks / broadsheets / illustrated booklets as only 45(sic) were produced and Milligan had the lot except for one or two Toni [Savage] kept, I believe”.

I am embarrassed to reveal I have lost the details of where I got this information.

A copy of “The Seed” was in a David Lay Auctions (Penzance) in 2009 and later for sale on EBay. This auction included several Milligan broadsheets and chapbooks.

This book is accompanied by a note from Toni Savage.

2.3.93

Dear John

*This booklet started me moving to New Broom
- Not included is “Children from Aberfan” which
my partners at Offcut deemed unsuitable. I felt her
grief so printed a small pamphlet of 40 copies only.
Spike took all but 4. (I’ve none left now). This copy
I gave to my Mother, It was nice to have it for a
while – Please seal it with our loves.*

*Beathe agriss clainte
Toni*

Rigby Graham’s thought that this was the rarest of Spike’s chapbooks is borne out by the print numbers and also the distribution. I have not found it in any library; it is only known by the copy that I have found being advertised for sale... twice. I believe both times it appeared for sale it was the same copy that was advertised.

All of the poems including *Children of Aberfan* were in a later Spike chapbook, also published in 1977 entitled ‘*Poems*’.

Finally

Here is a clear image of the poem itself which has a charm of its own.

THE SEED

**In memory of a Dandelion seed that floated
thru a window in Paddington Station.**

**Wonderful, wandering sky child
seeking one tiny piece of fertile soil**

**Alas, you dont find that
in a railway station buffet so,
you die**

**But then, given time, a railway
station buffet would
kill us all.**