



# The Poetics of Information Overload: From Gertrude Stein to Conceptual Writing

*Paul Stephens*

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Information overload is a subject of vital, ubiquitous concern in our time. *The Poetics of Information Overload* reveals a fascinating genealogy of information saturation through the literary lens of American modernism.

Although technology has typically been viewed as hostile or foreign to poetry, Paul Stephens outlines a countertradition within twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature in which avant-garde poets are centrally involved with technologies of communication, data storage, and bureaucratic control. Beginning with Gertrude Stein and Bob Brown, Stephens explores how writers have been preoccupied with the effects of new media since the advent of modernism. He continues with the postwar writing of Charles Olson, John Cage, Bern Porter, Hannah Weiner, Bernadette Mayer, Lyn Hejinian, and Bruce Andrews, and concludes with a discussion of conceptual writing produced in the past decade.

By reading these works in the context of information systems, Stephens shows how the poetry of the past century has had, as a primary focus, the role of data in human life.

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