

The largest print runs, from five to ten thousand, are given to children's books. Although they account for only 25 percent of the press's titles, Godine estimates that children's books bring in roughly 60 percent of its income. These titles receive the same rigorous attention to detail as the other books on his list. "Children's publishing has traditionally aimed at the lowest common denominator," Godine says. "We try for the highest."

The press publishes updated editions of children's classics like Longfellow's *The Children's Hour* and Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, as well as what some would consider modern classics, such as *The Man Who Lived Alone*, a collaboration between poet Donald Hall and woodcut artist Mary Azarian.

Godine's fiction list includes titles by Walter Abish, William Gass, Benedict Kiely, Harry Matthews, and William Maxwell. One of the most prestigious authors on the list is Andre Dubus, who died in 1999. Godine has published eight titles by Dubus, all of which remain in print, but the publisher says he is surprised that Dubus's work is not better read. "Even with the two films based on Andre's work [*In the Bedroom* and *We Don't Live Here Anymore*], there's been practically no jump in sales," Godine says.

"My single greatest challenge as an independent publisher in 2005 is reaching readers. My favorite times as a publisher are when I hear someone say, 'I didn't think I liked poetry, but I love this!' That's when I know I've found a new reader, someone who doesn't subscribe to *Poets & Writers Magazine*, who will never see my ad on *Poetry Daily*, who is taking her first step toward poetry. These new readers are who I believe should be reading the books Perugia Press publishes. Certainly, if I had more resources, if I were a better fundraiser, if my wallet were full, I'd have access to more venues outside the usual poetry circles for influencing readers. And I could publish more worthy books each year."

—Susan Kan, **Perugia Press**
(www.perugiapress.com)

"His son's success has helped, though."

Andre Dubus III, the author of *House of Sand and Fog* (W.W. Norton, 1999), says that, after his father discovered the short fiction of Anton Chekhov and dedicated himself to the short story in the 1960s, it was nearly impossible to find a publisher. "This was pre-Cheever and Carver, and my old man couldn't find a publisher to save his life," he says. When Godine published Dubus's *Separate Flights*, in 1975, it answered his father's prayers.

For that publication, and for Godine's commitment to keeping all of his titles in print, Andre Dubus remained with the press for twenty years, even as offers came from larger houses. Godine continued to publish Dubus until the accident, in July 1986, in which the writer was struck by a car while helping a disabled motorist near Haverhill, Massachusetts. His left leg was amputated above the knee and his right leg was shattered. The long recovery that followed necessitated his taking the money offered by Knopf in the '90s.

"Personally, I see a real benefit to the 'slow burn' that Godine gave my dad," Dubus III says. "My dad went to his grave grateful to David."

Fiction writer David Huddle says Godine's publication of his first book, a collection of short stories titled *Only the Little Bone*, in 1986, was a life-changing experience. "No one was interested in those connected stories," Huddle says, "and David finally took a chance on them." Godine published three books by Huddle, the last being *Intimates*, in 1993. Today, Huddle remembers the beauty of that first book. "It was just gorgeous," he says, "and David got it reviewed—and reviewed in places that mattered, like the *New York Times Book Review*."

Huddle, who has since published with bigger houses, such as Houghton Mifflin and Chronicle Books in San Francisco, says that he enjoys Godine's personal approach. "You can call the office, and David often answers the phone."

"It's quite a personal operation," Godine says. "I still write thank-you

notes to everyone that purchases books from us."

Despite the success of his backlist, today Godine is somewhat cautious about publishing fiction. "I'm not sure we're the right house to do it now. Fiction seems to be hopeless. It's just so expensive and risky," he says, citing the difficulties in launching a book without

"My single greatest challenge as an independent publisher in 2005 is planning for expanded activities in both publishing and marketing as Verse Press changes over to Wave Books at the end of 2005."

—Matthew Zapruder, **Verse Press**
(www.versepress.org)

a big publicity and promotions department. But if his list of new and forthcoming books is any indication, Godine hasn't given up on fiction just yet.

Recent books include *In the Flesh*, a novel by Christa Wolf, translated from the German by John S. Barrett, published in March; *The Golden West: Hollywood Stories* by longtime screenwriter Daniel Fuchs, with an introduction by John Updike (May); and *Here & Elsewhere: The Collected Fiction of Kenneth Burke* (June). Forthcoming fiction includes *The Tartar Steppe*, a novel by Dino Buzzati, due in November; and *Aftershocks: Seven Stories* by Grete Weil, due in March 2006.

While there is much to look forward to, Godine continues to keep his expectations "within the bounds of reality," and his view of the press's future reflects this. "I don't think it would be bad if [the press] just ended with me," he says. In the publisher's note to Godine's latest sales catalogue, he writes, "But if we leave any tracks in the sands of time they will be the books themselves, some memorable, some forgettable, but all announcing, in one way or another, that here are 'minds at work,' producing, more often than not, books that matter for people who care." ■