



## 28 – J.D. SALINGER’S FRANNY AND ZOOEY

Curiously enough, thenovelist J.D.Salinger was outspoken on the subject of graphic design, and his antagonism was formative fo my own ambivalence. From the point of view of an angry young man, his was always a usefully offset vantage—that of an unusually invested author who was (via the bitter mouthpiece of Holden Caulfield) famously against “phoniness” in all its forms. This remains a fairly good euphemism for much that operates under the name “graphic design” these days.

In the wake of the success of *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951, which is to say, once he'd acquired a certain clout in the publishing world, Salinger tssued a caveat in his contracts that forbade illustrations to be used on the covers of his books. In effect, he was making sure to limit the amount of damage graphic design—then in the process of shapeshifting into “marketing” — could do. [...]

None are more in tune with Salinger’s attitude, though, than this set of covers, published by Little, Brown, and happily still in print. I like to imagine that Salinger himself was responsible for these editions, though obviously I don't think that he literally prepared the artwork or wrote a brief, only that they correspond entirely with the sensibility of his prose. That's to say, the Little, Brown books seem \*inevitable \*: a family of modest, diminutive paperbacks typeset without pretension or fancy, with an uncoated card cover only slightly stiffer than its light-as-a-feather interior, which makes them easy to pocket and cheap to mail, the title and author in unaffected, unspaced capitals; and literally cutting across such austerity, that still-surprising abstract rainbow at top left. All seems fully consonant with the maverick Zen philosophy Salinger was working out in and through his later fiction.

– “Hardy Perennials,” Stuart Bailey, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #6, 2013

Little,  
J. D. Salinger's franny and zooey, 1991,  
Brown paperback edition, 18 x 11.5 cm