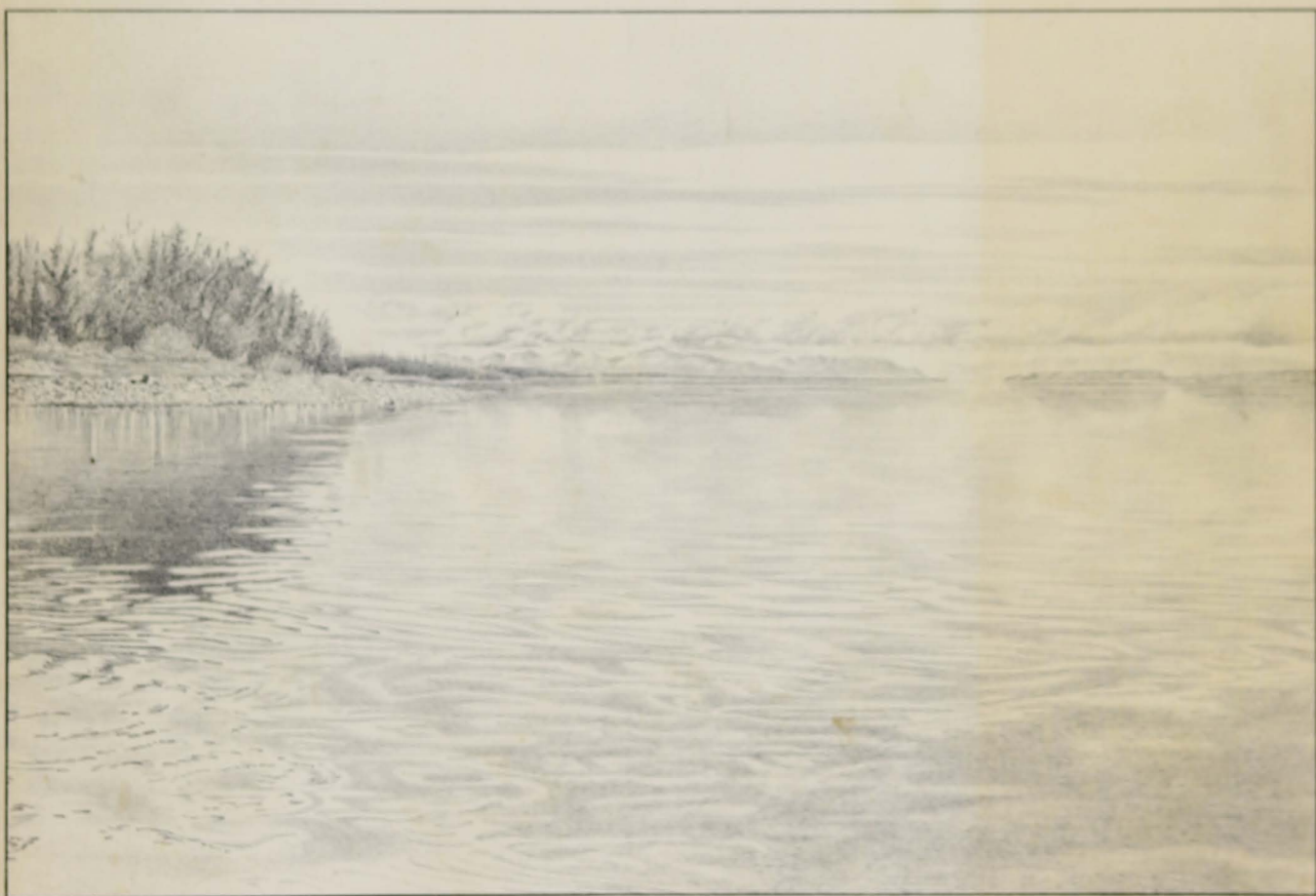


WESTERN WINDOWS
A Comparative Anthology of Poetry in
British Columbia



Julius McGowan

WESTERN WINDOWS



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Western windows : a comparative
anthology of poetry in British
Columbia.

WESTERN WINDOWS:
A Comparative Anthology of Poetry in
British Columbia

CommCept Publishing Ltd.

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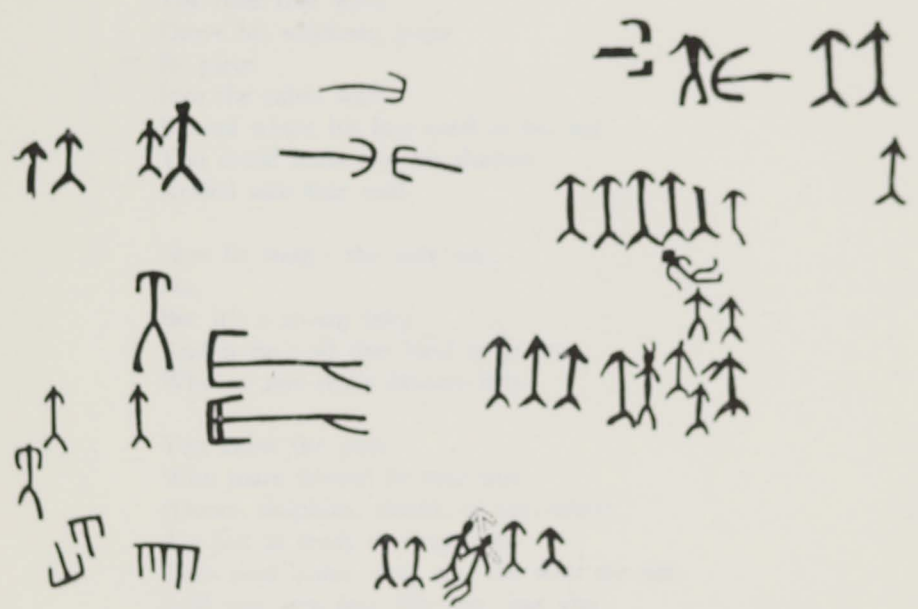
SEPTEMBER SPAWN

Fred Wah

September spawn
fish weirs everywhere
all through the narrows.

Upstream, upstream.

A feast for all of us
cousins and old friends
everybody dancing
like crazy, eh?



are beautiful beyond belief. The water from above was running across carvings of sea snakes and eels and the effect, which I am sure was intentional, is one of rich marine life swimming. A Chinese dragon of a beauty I have never seen anywhere, the hermaphrodite crouching on top of it all, reminding me of something I have seen before—a Maya glyph? Two dancing figures, one beautifully masked, almost Egyptian, the other with a huge phallus, the legs like a Buddhist statue, big feet. . . There seems to be a definite relation to the sun, which hit the figures from the west head on and made them dance, all facing east down slope. The whole site must have been worked, levelled, polished. . .”

The site may well be pre-Canadian, but geographically it lives at my back door. It adds a dimension to the pastness of where and how I, a Canadian, live. It beckons me into its wisdom. Soon I shall go and see it and try to read the signs and omens of those figures dancing for the sun. I think they will have something to say. (I may even find in them some Canadian content.)
—from *MacLeans Magazine*.

FROM IN HERE...

Fred Wah

Writing has a lot to do with “place”, the spiritual and spatial localities of the writer. I see things from *where* I am, my view point, and I measure and imagine a world from there. Oaxaca, Vancouver, the Kootenay River a thousand years ago or today, my father’s father’s birthplace, become “local” to me and compound to make up a picture of a world I am a native of. Writing is sometimes remembering this image, and sometimes it has to make it up. Malcolm Lowry says he thinks of himself as “a great explorer who has discovered some extraordinary land . . . but the name of the land is hell. . . It is not Mexico of course but in the heart.” Writers are wonderers. And wanderers. The American poet Ed Dorn reminds us that the stranger in town is interesting because he at least knows where he has come from and where he is going. Writing is sometimes useful that way, with news of the world out there.

But out there is only meaningful in its correspondence to in here. I live in the “interior” of British Columbia and such a qualification affects my particular sense of what the world looks like. We go “down” to the coast, which is the exterior, the outside, the city. The spaces between here and there are part of a vast similarity. The towns become predictable in their activities and

appearances. Castlegar and Prince George, though specifically themselves, share certain aspects of distance, colour and taste. One feels at home nearly anywhere there are rivers, pulp mills, trucks, the mysterious gravel roads further inward, and similar "local" inhabitants. Down and out there the exterior becomes more. Vancouver leads to other cities and countries, etc. But all of it, out there, is measured from in here. In the particularity of *a* place the writer finds revealed the correspondences of a whole world.

BIOGRAPHY: ON A REQUEST FOR

Daphne Marlatt

Is there a *bios* apart from *graphia*? How disentangle the story of my life from the life of my story, & which is writing which? Writers observe & writing see what surrounds them speak out of the story as if it had always lived there. When the story begins to live all i am given to say, it speaks for itself. & is it at this point story begins to order what happens, living its own writing as if it wasn't (& it isn't) being told? Well, there are always revelations & perhaps here the motive power is no longer any intention of a world i recognize. i dont know, i only know that sentences themselves speak, apart from what they have to say, just as events do, or trees, or people, that indeed we live in a voiced universe & the writer's task seems to be no other than to listen.

and the words turned green around us

Ken Cathers

writing on the west coast, the rain coast, can be a risky business. the very act is liable to be misunderstood, resented. oh, not in the city. cities are much the same anywhere. but 10 miles up from victoria, 30 miles outside of vancouver it's another world. and that's where it gets rough. writing is something you do there because you want to. it is not an occupation. you can't live by it. and living in the basic, fundamental milieu of the coast is synonymous with what you do and how much you make doing it. besides that, it's effeminate, somehow. sure, everyone has read some poetry: anything from "charlotte the harlot" to something about "splendor in the grass". but whoever wrote those things sure as hell didn't set chokers or pull on the greenchain for a

Biographies

KEN BELFORD

Born in 1946, Belford printed his first book of poems *The Hungry Tide* when he was 17, but after giving them away to his friends, he tried to collect all the copies back and destroy them. Bill Hoffer, a rare book dealer, says "The suppression is somewhat incomprehensible, since the 30 poems in the collection are particularly strong." In 1967 Belford printed *Fireweed* through Talonbooks and in 1970 he published *The Post Electric Cave Man*, again through Talonbooks.

He lived in Vancouver for some years, then moved up country near Hazelton, B.C., with his wife Alice and their child. He now writes poems which appear in *NMFG* (No Money From The Government), a newsletter of poetry with a private circulation, edited by Gordon Lockhead, and in the *New Caledonia Writing Series*, Prince George, B.C.

In a letter to the editor of this anthology he wrote, "...take care with poems, they are as light as cedar, glow cedar like, from the inside, split easily, have heavenly fragrance..."

BILL BISSETT

Born in Halifax, 1939, bissett has spent most of his writing life in Vancouver where he attended the University of British Columbia during the 60's and started *blewointment*—an experimental miscellany—in 1966. bissett himself tells us, in his poem "bare bones biography what els shudint i remember"

'collage makr i do poetry readings hitch hikd bak n
forth cross canada bout 7 or 8 times flew coupul a
times done sum time inside too playd with the mandan
massacre fr a whil hav bin welfare receiptent tutor
fens buildr ditch deggr wintr works art galley co-op
partnr th mandan ghetto help put out blewointmentpress...
...i was born late 39 got out uv th
reserve air force thru brain damage was a teen age disc

jockey early painter still am workd in garages very early
12 record stores librarees staking buks sign paintr whn born i
weighed in at 12 lb 8 ozes pray that th world be mor open
as what is possibul that ther be less imperial ism;;;;

...ive nevr graduated from
anything, nu buks cummin out from blewointmentpress
by maxine gadd, gerry gilbert, bertrand lachance,
px belinski, bpNichol, ken west, nd others, the wheel nd
th drum uv the gestetener, thers a fire on th hill, love
nd th blessing to eat th coals in th hot snow.

je.17/71

from *nobody owns th earth*.

bissett has produced records: "On record bissett's repetitive minimal word structures achieve a dimension halfway between mantra and jazz", Susan Musgrave said in her article titled "It Sounds Better Than It Looks" (Victoria Times, Jan. 4, '75). He has also published about three books a year since his first book appeared in 1966. Among them are: *fires in th temple; we sleep inside each othr all; Awake in th Red Desert!!; Drifting into War; Medicine My Mouth's on Fire; Nobody Owns the Earth*, edited by Dennis Lee and Margaret Atwood; *pass th food release th spirit book; space travl; living with th visbyun; stardust; plutonium missing*.

bill bisset is now writing and publishing in Vancouver, where he lives with his wife Martina and daughter Ollajh.

GEORGE BOWERING

Born in 1935 in Penticton, B.C., Bowering finished high school in Oliver, B.C. He has been an R.C.A.F. aerial photographer, itinerant orchard worker, packer, and library assistant. While at the University of British Columbia studying English and History, Bowering was part of the Tish Scene. He was one of them, yet he stood apart and observed. In 1960 he received his B.A. and in 1963 his M.A.

Bowering has published: *Points on the Grid; Sticks and Stones; The Man in the Yellow Boots; The Silver Wire; Mirror on the Floor* (a novel); *Baseball; Two Police Poems; Critical Study of Al Purdy; Sitting in Mexico; How I Hear Howl; Rocky Mountain Foot* (Governor

General's Award); *The Gangs of Kosmos* (Governor General's Award); *George, Vancouver; Geneve; Touch; Autobiology; The Sensible; Curious; The Flycatcher*—(a collection of short stories); *At War with the U.S.*; *My Lips Were Red*.

Bowering has taught at the University of Calgary, Sir George Williams University in Montreal, and is now at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C. He is also on the editorial boards of *Open Letter*, *B.C. Monthly*, and *Imago*—a magazine of the long poem. In the last poem of *In The Flesh*, Bowering says:

Don't try to
understand me, try to
stand in the high wind
I make passing you
& reaching out
to hold you off.

BRIAN BRETT

Born in Vancouver in 1950 and now living in White Rock, where he and Allan Safarik run Blackfish Press. In 1976 Brett published *Fossil Ground at Phantom Creek* through Blackfish Press.

JIM BROWN

Born in 1944. In 1966 with Patrick Lane and Seymour Mayne he formed Very Stone House, a co-operative non-profit organization intent on publishing the writings of new poets who would normally not attract the commercial publishers. When he left Very Stone House in 1967 he joined David Robinson, and together they started publishing Talonbooks.

In the 60's Jim says he was in such a hurry to do everything that he printed over eight books before 1970. His books include *The Circus in the Boy's Eyes* (drawings by bill bissett) *Toward a Chemistry of Reel People*; *Forgetting*; *West Coast Seen*.

In the introduction to *West Coast Seen*, Jim Brown writes to David Phillips, "Our conception that the scene here has not been easily defined since the early days of Tish is even more true today. There are so many writing here now that it would be impossible to say that this is a complete or absolute statement of the WC thing/scene in Canada, however, it is your/my

response to the writers that are here. . . . the thing that seems important is that every writer that comes out here has a response to the city and to the Pacific edge which is unique."

After travelling throughout the Americas and living in Nelson and Regina, Brown now lives in a cabin near Haney. He is setting up Blue Mountain Books and is about to publish a new book "*Northern Light: a glossary of brief pictures for the eager eye.*"

SKYROS BRUCE

Born a member of the Coast Salish tribe in 1952. She has published one book of poems, *Kalala Poems* with Lionel Kearns' Daylight Press and has been anthologized in several books, including Dorothy Livesay's *Woman's Eye*. Now living in Vancouver, Skyros Bruce teaches yoga and does some modelling.

KEN CATHERS

Born in 1951 and raised in Ladysmith, Cathers went to Malaspina College, the University of Victoria, and York University in Toronto. He has published *Getting There* and *Images on Water*, and is now living, working and writing in Ladysmith.

STANLEY COOPERMAN

Born in 1929 in Brooklyn "between the roller coasters of Coney Island and the elongated tombstones of Manhattan". Cooperman received a B.A. and an M.A. degree from the University of New York, and a Ph.D. from the University of Indiana. He lectured at the University of Indiana, the University of Tehran, the University of Oregon and Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, before coming to Simon Fraser University in 1966.

He said, "People either like my work, or they hate it. There is no in-between." On the book jacket of *Cannibals* Earle Birney says of Cooperman: "He's a fire-dancer, hopping, singing, prancing, swaggering, and always shooting with terrible energy forward and out." Earle Birney calls him "black-humoured and violent in his anti-romanticism" but ends by saying that he is perhaps "more wildly romantic than any of us." Gary Geddes described him as a "prolific and varied writer—a sort of Chagall turned loose in the rain forest." and in a review of Cooperman's book *Cappelbaum* Andreas Schroeder said "Through the frenzied light show of images and the strobe-like rhythm, Cappelbaum dances to stay alive, dances because he dare not stop; the entertainment masks the desperation of the dance":

Truth is nothing, everything
that won't stand still for
you
for me, or the man
with cotton proclamations
wrapped around . . .

Among his books are: *World War I and the American Novel*; *The Owl Behind the Door*; *The Day of the Parrots*; *Cannibals*.

Cooperman also wrote study guides on novelists Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Cooperman died on April 26, 1976.

JUDITH COPITHORNE

Born in Vancouver and raised in Saskatchewan, Copithorne spent some time in San Francisco and Mexico. She returned to Vancouver and attended the University of British Columbia during the 60's. She is widely known for the graphic poems she draws and writes. Her books include: *Returning*; *Release*; *Rain*; *Runes*; *Until now*; *Miss Tree's Pillow Book*; *Heart's Tide*; *Arrangement*.

Copithorne now lives in Vancouver.

ANNE CHARLOTTE DALTON

Born in Yorkshire, England in 1865, a childhood illness left her almost totally deaf and with impaired vision. In 1891 she married Willie Dalton and they moved to Vancouver, where Willie became a newspaper publisher. Both Mr. and Mrs. Dalton were actively interested in the Canadian arts and literature, giving generously of their time and energy to the developments of these pursuits in their community. They were part of the very active international scene during the 1920's in Vancouver, when poets like Rupert Brooke and Rudyard Kipling as well as Canadian poets such as Sir Charles G.D. Roberts and Bliss Carman visited the city. Mrs. Dalton was involved with the Vancouver Poetry Society, founded by Dr. Ernest Fewster in 1916, and the Canadian Author's Association.

She published: *Wheat and Barley*; *The Marriage of Music*; *Flame and Adventure*; *The Silent Zone*; *The Amber Riders*; *The Neighbing North*; *Lilies and Leopards*.

On June 3, 1935, she was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire, and in 1937 she was given the Tweedmuir Medal for her poem *Wheat and Barley*. *The Ear Trumpet* was written in answer to the poem "Solo for an Ear Trumpet" by Edith Sitwell in *Modern British Poetry* by Louis Untermeyer. In a letter written to Judge Howay, Anne Charlotte Dalton wrote, "Fifty years of deafness may make one invulnerable to its discomforts but cannot make one indifferent to the suffering of others, therefore wish me luck in my new role of missionary."

Mrs. Dalton died in 1938.

FRANK DAVEY

Born in Vancouver, B.C., in 1940, Davey was raised in the Fraser Valley at Abbotsford. While attending the University of British Columbia he became the managing editor of *Tish* in the late summer of 1961. Upon graduating from U.B.C. with a B.A. in 1961 and an M.A. in 1963, Davey taught English at Royal Roads Military College, near Victoria. He was subsequently the Writer-in-Residence at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. Davey now lives in Toronto, where he edits *Open Letter*.

His books include: *D-Day and After*; *City of the Gulls and Sea*; *Bridge Froce*; *The Scarred Hull*; *Four Myths for Sam Perry*; *Five Readings of Olson's Maxims*; *Weeds*; *Earle Birney*; *King of Swords*; *L'An Trentiesme: Selected Poems*; *Arcana*; *Clallam*; *Tish #1-19*; *From There to Here* (a survey of contemporary Canadian writing).

DAVID DAY

Born in 1947 in Victoria. Day attended the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. During his summer vacations he worked in logging camps. He travelled in England, where he married an English poet. Day was Writer-in-Residence at the Aegean School of Fine Arts. He has published *The Cowichan* and is now working on a book about Edgar Rice-Burroughs and an anthology entitled *Many Voices: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Indian Poetry*.

MAXINE GADD

Born in 1940 in England during the blitz, Gadd came to Canada in 1945 and grew up in Kitsilano. She was a fringe radical during the politically active late 60's at Simon Fraser University. Her published books include: *Guns of the West*; *The Book of Practical Knowledge*; *Hochelaga*; *Air*; *Westerns*.

GARY GEDDES

Born in 1940 in Vancouver, Geddes grew up on the B.C. Coast, except for four years spent on the Prairies. Geddes has fished with his father, worked in factories, and operated a water taxi. He studied at the University of British Columbia, in England, and at the University of Toronto. He now teaches at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. His poetry publications include: *Rivers Inlet*; *Snakeroot*; *Letter of the Master Horse*; *War and Other Measures*. He has edited: *20th Century Poetry and Poetics*, (with Phyllis Bruce); *15 Canadian Poets* and *Skookum Wawa*.

He is general editor of Copp Clark's *Studies in Canadian Literature*. He reviews regularly for various newspapers and magazines including the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

GERRY GILBERT

Born in 1936. He has worked as a television cameraman and journalist and was part of a group of young writers in Vancouver during the 60's. Gilbert spent some time in England from 1963 to 1964. His books include: *White Lunch*; *Quote*; *Phone Book*; *Skies*; *Money*; *Journal to the East*; *AND*; *Lease*.

Gerry Gilbert now lives in Vancouver and can be seen on CKVU Channel 13 as the station's on-air-poet.

PAULINE JOHNSON (TEKAHIONWAKE)

Born in 1862 on a Mohawk Indian reservation near Brantford, Ontario, she was the youngest child of a family of four born to G.H.M. Johnson-Onwanonsyshon, Head Chief of the Six Nation Indians, and his wife, Emily S. Howells, an English woman.

Although lacking traditional schooling, Johnson acquired a wide general knowledge through her own reading.

In 1892 Johnson was invited to read her poetry at an evening of Canadian Literature sponsored by Frank Yeigh, the President of the Young Liberals Club of Toronto. She was a great success. She spent the season of 1894 in London, England, and her book of poetry, *The White Wampum* was accepted by John Lane of the "Bodley Head".

Upon her return to Canada she made her first visit to the Pacific Coast, giving recitals in the cities and towns across the country. In late years she toured Canada extensively, giving recitals in communities from Halifax to Vancouver.

She eventually settled in Vancouver. Her years as a traveller and outdoors-woman began to

tell on her health. After a two year illness Johnson died in Vancouver on March 7, 1913. She was buried in Stanley Park at her own request.

"At her recitals she proudly wore the pagan attire of her nation, Mohawk jewellery, ojstoh (dagger) and a necklace of cinnamon bear claws. . . From being a protagonist for her wronged people she became a patriot in a wider sense, her view including the Empire. And then, finally, breaking through the last barrier, she embraced the world and sang of humanity. But to the end there remained a note of unrequited love, passionate and poignant as in 'Overlooked'."

From *Outline of Canadian Literature*

Lorne Pierce

Her books include: *Canadian Born*; *The Trail to Lillooet*; *The Lost Lagoon*; *Legends of Vancouver*; *Flint and Feather*.

LIONEL KEARNS

Kearns was born in 1937 in Nelson, B.C., where he grew up with Fred Wah and the Lane brothers and a slightly younger Jim Brown. When he was a student at the University of British Columbia during the 60's he was interested in linguistics and was loosely associated with the Tish group of poets. He is often thought of as the most out-going and generous of the Tish poets. Kearns has travelled extensively in England, Europe, and Mexico—where he played professional hockey briefly, before pursuing graduate studies at U.B.C.

In an article called *Mr. Kearns is Getting Through*, Andreas Schroeder writes: "Kearns' progress has me interested, because it demonstrates with almost text-book clarity the course of a 20th century poet who began writing to determine what writing was about, eventually made up his mind and began to apply his art to his surroundings, then ran full tilt into the "communications crash" (now popularized by Marshall McLuhan), and found himself starting all over again, re-evaluating the entire business of the alphabet and words and the printed page and art." (Sun, Feb 23, 1971)

His books include: *Songs of Circumstance*; *Listen, George* (written to George Bowering while Kearns was living in England); *Pointing*; *By the Light of the Silvery McLune: Media Parables, Poem Signs, Gestures, And Other Assaults on the Interface*; *Another Time*.

Lionel Kearns now lives in North Vancouver, teaches at Simon Fraser University, plays hockey for fun and thinks about time some of the time. He is also "engaged in writing a vast cycle of poems based on West Coast history which focuses on the circumstance, experience and emotion generated by the clash and interaction between the new and the indigenous cultures."

JOY KOGAWA

Kogawa was born in 1935 in Vancouver. Her father was an Anglican minister. In 1941, along with thousands of Japanese-Canadians, living on the Pacific coast, Joy Kogawa and her family were evicted from their homes and "re-settled" in the interior of the province or on the prairies. She grew up on Coaldale, Alberta, and attended the University of Calgary. In Toronto for one "lovely" year she studied music at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. In 1969 she was awarded a Canadian Council Award and went to Japan to explore her Japanese heritage. She has worked as a correspondent in Prime Minister Trudeau's office and is now travelling in Europe.

Her books include: *The Splintered Moon*; *A Choice of Dreams*; *Jericho Road*.

PATRICK LANE

Red Lane's younger brother, Patrick was born in Nelson in 1939. His work history is one of general construction jobs, sawmill and logging work. Lane has travelled widely in North and South America. In the fall of 1966, with Jim Brown, Bill Bissett and Seymour Mayne, Lane started Very Stone House—a co-operative non-profit house organization intent on publishing the writings of new poets who would not normally attract the commercial publishers. When he was travelling, Lane would edit Very Stone House in transit. Lane has lived in Vancouver and Vernon and now lives and works up the coast from Vancouver at Madeira Park. He is currently assistant editor of *The Malahat Review*.

Patrick Lane's books include: *Letters From a Savage Mind*; *Newspaper Walls*; *Separations*; *Mountain Oysters*; *Hiway 401 Rhapsody*; *The Sun Has Begun to Eat the Mountain* (illustrated by himself); *Passing Into the Storm*; *Beware the Months of Fire*; *Unborn Things*.

Lane has also published numerous poetry broadsheets and posters.

RED LANE

Lane was born in 1936 in Nelson, B.C. While in the R.C.A.F., George Bowering interested Lane in poetry.

A brain haemorrhage took his life suddenly in 1964 when he was 28 years old. There are three books of Red Lane's Poetry: *1962 Poems*; *Collected Poems of Red Lane*; *War Cry*.

CHARLES LILLARD

Born in 1944 on the coast of southern California, Lillard was raised in Alaska. When he was a teenager he worked in logging camps. After a couple of sessions at the University of Alaska, he

went to Germany to study the language and to immerse himself in European culture. Encouraged by Michael Yates, Lillard arrived in Vancouver in 1967 to take a course in creative writing. The next year he won the Huntington Poetry Prize. Lillard has taught at the University of British Columbia and is now teaching at the University of Victoria. He is currently assistant editor of the *The Malahat Review*.

His books include: *Cultus Coulee*; *Drunk on Wood*; *Volvox: Poetry from the Unofficial Languages of Canada* (co-edited with Michael Yates); *Jabble*; *Last Drive on the Indian*; *On the Way to the Ring*; *B.C.—A Literary Geography*; *Words From the Inside—Prose From the Unofficial Languages of Canada*, edited by Lillard.

DOROTHY LIVESAY

Livesay was born in 1909 in Winnipeg where she lived until she was ten, at which time her family moved to Ontario. Her mother, Florence, was one of the first women reporters on the Ottawa Journal and the author of several books. Her father, J.F.B. Livesay was second general manager of the Canadian Press from 1920 to 1939. Florence Livesay sent her daughter's poems to the Vancouver Province where one was printed when she was 13 years old.

Dorothy Livesay graduated in Moderns from the University of Toronto in 1931 and went to the Sorbonne, in Paris, to pursue post-graduate work. In June 1932 she received her Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures and worked on a thesis "Symbolism and the Metaphysical Tradition in Modern English Poetry", which was not completed.

On her return to Canada, Livesay entered the Department of Social Science at the University of Toronto for a year of theory, followed by a year of field work in Montreal. She obtained her degree in 1934. That autumn she went to Englewood, New Jersey, where she did social service work until she became ill and returned to her father's farm in Clarkson, Ontario. While convalescing she wrote *Day and Night*. E.J. Pratt published it in 1935. It may well have been the first poem of social protest ever published in Canada. In 1944 it won the Governor General's Award.

In 1936 she moved to Vancouver where she married Duncan McNair in 1937. They had two children, Duncan born in 1940 and Marcia born in 1943. In the spring of 1939 she worked with Alan Crawley presenting a series of poetry readings over Vancouver radio and later she contributed to *Contemporary Verse*, an influential little magazine which appeared from 1941-1952. In 1946 the Toronto Star sent Livesay on a three month tour to get the woman's point of

view on post-war Europe. She spent two years with the Y.W.C.A. as an education director. She has taught in high schools and at the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, and the University of Alberta. She has also been Writer-in-Residence at the Universities of New Brunswick from 1966-68, and Manitoba from 1975-76. She spent three years teaching in Zambia under UNESCO auspices.

Dorothy Livesay now edits *CV11*, a quarterly of poetry criticism and is Writer-in-Residence at the University of Ottawa. Her publications include: *Green Pitcher*; *Signpost*; *Day and Night*, [Governor General's Award]; *Poems for People*; *Call My People Home*, (documentary poem for C.B.C. Radio, 1949); *New Poems*; *Selected Poems 1926-1956*; *The Unquiet Bed*; *The Documentaries*; *Plainsongs*; *Collected Poems*; *Two Seasons*; *Ice Age*; *Beginnings: A Winnipeg Childhood* (a memoir). She has edited: *Forty Women Poets of Canada* and *Woman's Eye*.

In *Leading Canadian Poets* (edited by W.P. Percival, 1948) Livesay said, "My interest lies both ways, in the personal and family relations, marriage, birth and child rearing, and in the social scene. The two directions will be found in my poetry."

MALCOLM LOWRY

Born in 1909 to a family of wealthy Liverpool cotton brokers. At 17, after an expensive education, Lowry shipped on board a freighter bound for the Orient. His experiences as a fireman's boy on the freighter became source material for his first novel *Ultramarine*, which was written while Lowry was still an undergraduate student at Cambridge University in 1932. After graduating from Cambridge, Lowry went to the United States to be taken in tow by Conrad Aiken, who found Lowry "the most engaging and volatile and unpredictable of geniuses." Mrs. Aiken, however, asked her diary, "How much longer will Conrad put up with this madman?"

Lowry drifted around Europe, married a girl from New York named Jan Gabriel and took her to Cuernavaca in 1936. It was here that Lowry first began working on his classic novel *Under the Volcano*. He wound up in jail as an "undesirable alien" and upon his release, fled to California where he was a successful, though miserable, studio scenarist in Hollywood. In 1939 Lowry and his wife again went to Cuernavaca, but this time the trip ended in a divorce.

In 1940 Lowry married Margerie Bonner, a Hollywood starlet and writer. They moved to Dollarton beach, now Cates Park near Deep Cove, where they lived in a squatter's shack without plumbing or electricity. It was here that Lowry seemed to have found the paradise his troubled soul needed. Here he spent his most productive years writing and rewriting many things.

including *Under the Volcano*. Towards the end of his book, *Under the Volcano*, the consul's half-brother discusses with the wayward wife the possibility of moving to B.C. His description of Vancouver must have echoed Lowry's own feelings:

"It has a sort of pango pango quality mingled with sausage and mash and generally rather a Puritan atmosphere. Everyone fast asleep and when you prick them a Union Jack flows out of the hole. But no one in a certain sense lives there. They merely, as it were, pass through. Mine the country and quit. Blast the land to pieces, knock down the trees and send them rolling down Burrard Inlet. . . . The thing to do is to get out of Vancouver as fast as possible. Get down one of the inlets to some fishing village and buy a shack. . . be a squatter."

Lowry himself once said that he was not writing, but being written. In *The Forest Path to the Spring* Lowry describes the happiness of his life in Dollarton. But, as *The Times* said "Lowry had no regard for the instinct of preservation." This first novel *Ultramarine* had been stolen and had to be completely rewritten. In 1944 his shack burned to the ground, luckily his wife was able to rescue the third draft of *Under the Volcano*.

When *Under the Volcano* was finally published in 1947 after rejection by at least four publishers, it was received on both sides of the Atlantic as a classic. Yet, when the CBC did a special on him Lowry wrote, "It may interest you to know that there is a long broadcast tonight or tomorrow night on the subject of Malcolm Lowry, Canada's most successful writer, which we cannot listen to because our radio has run down and we cannot afford to replenish the battery. The unkindest cut of all."

He left Canada in 1954 and for a short time he lived in Sicily and England. Near the end of his life he wrote a letter to his American editor, "I am going steadily and even beautifully downhill. . . I have reached a position where every night I write five novels in imagination, have total recall (whatever that means too) but am unable to write a word. . . A night dove has started to hoot and say incessantly the word 'dream, dream.' A bright idea."

In 1957 Lowry suffocated in his sleep. The inquest mentions death by "alcoholic misadventure." At the time of his death he had been working on an article about the meaning of freedom. It was entitled "Halt! I Protest."

Malcolm Lowry regarded himself as a Canadian. He lived in British Columbia for a longer period than anywhere else in his adult life. Mrs. Lowry wrote to a Sun columnist (March 22, 1961). "He loved Vancouver, he wanted to be known as a Canadian author." Yet it was not until he was a certified success in the eyes of the British and American intellectuals that the Canadian Cultural elite claimed him as one of their own.

Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place published five years after his death was one of five works which won the Governor General's award for Literature in 1961. In 1975 the National Film Board of Canada made a stirring documentary "Volcano: an inquiry into the Life and Death of Malcolm Lowry."

His squatter's shack was levelled by bulldozers to make way for Cate's Park. Later, a street called Park Lane was changed to Lowry Lane in memory of this literary giant. In his introduction to *Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid* (1968) Douglas Day analyzes the relation of the book to the rest of Lowry's work. He starts by suggesting that Lowry "was not really a novelist, except by accident," and that he could equally well be characterized as "diarist, compulsive note-taker, poet manque, alcoholic, philosophizing rambler and genius. "Lowry," he writes, was "a man sly and deceptive, yet shy and ingenious; a drunk of gargantuan proportions, yet a man who seems never to have let go an almost preternatural degree of self-awareness, even when face-down on the floor of a pub or a cantina; a great liar (or, more charitably, inventor of autobiographical fictions) but—in his writing especially—one of the most painfully honest men who ever lived."

PAT LOWTHER

Born in 1935, she grew up in the woods above North Vancouver where her father was the caretaker at a water-board intake area station. Lowther was an exceptionally bright child. When she was ten years old she won a poetry contest sponsored by the Vancouver Sun's Sun Ray Club. At sixteen she left school and took office jobs. She became a keypunch operator at a North Vancouver shipbuilding company and a night shift supervisor with a business machine company. When she was eighteen she married Bill Dompouse and they had two children, Alan (1954) and Kathy (1956) but the marriage lasted only four years. Pat went with her young daughter to live in the basement suite of her parents' home and continued to work and write poetry.

In 1963 she married Roy Lowther, a working-class poet who had run unsuccessfully as an NDP candidate for the Vancouver Parks Board, and taught school from time to time. Through her husband she came in contact with other poets. In 1970 Andreas Schroeder wrote in the *Province* that Pat Lowther was "the uncontested number one poet in the city." A few months later Viveca Ohm (writing for the *Sun*) described her as "a woman with a striking mixture of delicacy and strength about her" and her poems as "clean, hard-driving, relentless."

Patrick Lane, whose press Very Stone House had printed Pat Lowther's first book *This Difficult Flowering* in 1968, said "Hers was very, very tough woman poetry. It had to be,

considering what she had been through." Lane describes her as "an outsider, almost a maverick."

In the summer of 1975, things seemed to be looking up for Pat Lowther. She had been given a job teaching a senior poetry workshop at U.B.C.'s Creative Writing Department, she had been elected co-chairman of the League of Canadian Poets and was actively organizing a major poetry conference at the Empress Hotel in Victoria and she had just negotiated a contract with Oxford University Press for a new book of poetry.

On September 25, 1975 she failed to show up for a poetry workshop at U.B.C.; two days later she failed to appear at a poetry reading at which she was the featured speaker. She was listed as a missing person. Her husband went to Mayne Island with the two children and in a telephone interview said: "I last heard from my wife about September 25, when she phoned me to say she was going east. She said she was going to Ontario. But no one has seen her."

On October 13, a sports fisherman found her body in Furry Creek, near Squamish. Four days later positive identification was established after dental x-rays were matched with those of the victim's former dentist. Pat Lowther had been killed by a blow to her head which fractured her skull.

On October 23, her 52 year old husband, Roy Lowther, appeared in Provincial Court charged with murder. He was remanded in custody. As of December 1976 the case is still awaiting a trial date.

At the time of her death, Patrick Lane said, "She was the finest woman poet in the country."

She didn't get half the acclaim she deserved," said Allan Safarik, "but every major poet in the country has said for years she was equal of Margaret Atwood and Gwendolyn MacEwan. She was one of the better writers we had in this country."

And in the Georgia Straight, George Woodcock, editor of *Canadian Literature*, called Pat Lowther, "A poet of versatility, of an impeccable verbal appropriateness."

Dorothy Livesay, in a radio memorial said, "Her death is a body blow to the cause of poetry in Canada. She has for ten years been producing, I felt, the most stirring, lyrical, meaningful, and committed poetry of any written by man or woman in Canada."

Her published books are: *This Difficult Flowering*; *The Age of the Bird*; *Milkstone*. Soon to be released by Oxford University Press: *A Stone Diary*.

DAPHNE MARLATT

Born in 1942 in Melbourne, Australia, Marlatt grew up on a South Sea Island where her father was a chartered accountant.

She attended the University of British Columbia during the 1960's and had poems printed in *Tish*. After receiving her B.A. from U.B.C. she spent four years in the United States where she got her M.A. in Comparative Literature at the University of Indiana. She is the winner of the MacMillan and Brissenden awards for Creative Writing. Her books include: *Frames; leaf leaf/s; Rings; The Vancouver Poems; Steveston*, (photos by Robert Minden).

Marlatt now teaches at Capilano College. As she says: "The business of poetry is to make people see."

ANNE MARRIOT

Born in Victoria in 1913. Her chapbook *The Wind Our Enemy*, printed by Ryerson in 1939, was commented on by the University of Toronto as "the most impressive, single poem of the year."

In 1940 she worked with Margaret Kennedy on a documentary drama in verse and prose with original music by Barbara Pentland (C.B.C. Nov. 8, '40). While working for the C.B.C. in New Brunswick, she was able to renew her friendship with P.K. Page, who also lived in the Maritimes at that time. Marriot worked at the National Film Board of Canada writing verse commentary for films.

She has published: *Calling Adventurers*, (Governor General's Award); *Salt Marsh and Other Poems; Sandstone and Other Poems; Countries*.

Anne Marriot is now living in North Vancouver where she holds creative writing workshops for 8 and 9 year olds. At present she is busily engaged in the production of a poetry workbook for elementary schools.

ANNE MCKAY

Born in Ottawa, Ontario, McKay has been living in West Vancouver since the early 1950's with her family and her cats. McKay has her registered nurse's degree. Her poems have appeared in *Hakyon, Bright Suns Productions, Black and White Number 2*, as well as on the B.B.C. and the C.B.C. She hopes to publish her first book of poems in 1977.

FLORIS McLAREN

Born in 1909 in Skagway, Alaska, McLaren trained as a teacher at Washington State University, and later married a Canadian civil servant and moved to Whitehorse.

During the 1920's and 1930's she published poems in the Vancouver Province. In 1932 she moved to Victoria and in 1937 she published *Frozen Fire*.

Floris McLaren was business manager and associate-editor of Alan Crawley's influential publication *Contemporary Verse* during 1941-1951.

She is presently living in Victoria.

FLORENCE McNEIL

McNeil was born in Vancouver in 1940. In 1965 she won the MacMillan Co. of Canada Ltd. Prize for Poetry. A graduate from the University of British Columbia's Creative Writing Department, Florence McNeil has taught at the University of Calgary and State College in Bellingham, Washington. She now teaches at the University of British Columbia and lives "with her husband, cats, and a view of the mountains." She has published: *A Silent Green Sky*; *Walbachin*; *The Rim of the Park*; *Ghost Towns*; *Emily*.

RONA MURRAY

Spent her early childhood in India before coming to British Columbia. An M.A. graduate from the University of British Columbia's Creative Writing Department, Rona Murray has taught at Selkirk College in Castlegar and is now teaching at Douglas College. She lives in Surrey with her husband, Walter Dexter—a potter.

Her publications include: *Blue Duck's Feather and Eagledown*—a one act play; *The Enchanted Adder*; *Power of the Dog*; *Ootishchenie*; *Selected Poems*.

SUSAN MUSGRAVE

Born in 1951 in California, she grew up in Victoria. When she was 16 years old Robin Skelton first published her poems in the Malahat Review. Her interest in the Haidas drew her to live for three years on the Queen Charlotte Islands at Port Clements. She has also lived in Ireland and England and is presently living near Sidney, B..C.

She has published: *Songs of the Sea-Witch*; *Entrance of the Celebrant*; *Grave Dirt and Selected Strawberries*; *Gullbrand* (Poems for Children); *The Impstone*.

"Life and death are the two things that seem to have meaning for me," she says, "and I see them as closely linked."

P.K. PAGE

Born in 1916 in England, Page came to Red Deer, Alberta, in 1919. She studied in Calgary then worked back east at various jobs. She wrote her first poems when she was a member of the *Montreal Preview* group in the 40's. She published *Unit of Fire* in 1944 and *As Ten As Twenty* in 1946. One of her jobs was as script writer for the National Film Board of Canada. In 1950 she married Arthur Irwin, film commissioner at the N.F.B. His career as a diplomat led P.K. Page to Australia, Mexico, and Brazil from 1953-1964. Her book *The Metal and the Flower*, published by McClelland and Stewart in 1954 won the Governor General's Award for Literature that year.

She has never been a prolific writer. "I haven't really produced much in 30 years and have been fortunate to have had most of it published," she says. She draws and paints under the name P.K. Irwin. Her work has been purchased by the National Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Ontario and other galleries.

Her other publications include: *The Sun and the Moon*—a novel; *Cry Ararat, Poems New and Selected*; *The Sun and the Moon and Other Fiction*; *Poems, Selected and New*.

She has lived in seven of the ten provinces but Victoria is now her home.

ALLAN SAFARIK

Born in 1948 in Burnaby. A graduate of Simon Fraser University, Safarik has spent a considerable amount of time in the schools of British Columbia reading and promoting Canadian writing. With Brian Brett, Safarik now runs Blackfish Press, a self-supporting press operating out of Burnaby and Whiterock. In 1975 Safarik published *Okira*.

JOHN SKAPSKI

Won the Huntington Poetry Award in 1967. He graduated with an M.A. from the Creative Writing Department of the University of British Columbia. He is a successful fisherman now living at Madeira Park, B.C.

ALEXANDER MAITLAND STEPHEN

Born near Hanover in Ontario, 1882, and was educated in the public schools of that town and in the

Walkerton Collegiate Institute. His father, a school teacher, had built up a library of over 2,000 books which he dearly loved and he imparted this love to his young son. At the age of 14, A.M. Stephen left his home and went west to Kamloops to study law under his uncle, W.H. Whittaker.

Within a few months of his arrival in Kamloops, his father died suddenly. After the death of his father, A.M. gave up his studies and moved to Seattle. For a while he worked as a volunteer attendant on the hospital ship "Idaho"—a free clinic for derelicts. His mother and brother moved to Victoria and he joined them there for a time. He was an insurance agent and then a school teacher at Rock Creek and then Squamish Valley where he made contact with the labour movement and the labour press.

Again he drifted to the States where he met and married an Oregon girl. They had two sons. When the First World War came along A.M. enlisted in an Imperial regiment. A few weeks after landing in France, he was wounded and sent back to Vancouver—his right arm and hand incapacitated for life.

A.M. became very interested in theosophy, a philosophy encompassing the mysticism underlying all religions and expressing itself in a broad humanism. A.M. was a teacher in the schools of Vancouver and an active member of the Vancouver Poetry Society.

His published works include: Poetry—*The Rosary of Pan*; *The Land of Singing Waters*; *Brown Earth and Bunch Grass*; *Verendrye*. Novels—*The Kingdom of the Sun*; *The Gleaming Archway*. Plays—*Classroom Plays from Canadian History*; *Classroom Plays from Canadian Industry*. Anthologies—*The Voice of Canada*; *The Golden Treasury of Canadian Verse*.

With the advent of the depression Stephen became politically involved. His social ideals led him to join the CCF party. However, he was narrowly defeated as a candidate in a Vancouver Island constituency.

He died July 1, 1942.

His definition of a poem was "the symbol of a spiritual experience." As such it must be, of necessity, a thing of beauty and endowed with that life that lifts, which stimulates, which impels the listener to emotional and mental response. He believed implicitly that the poet must possess the faculty of intuition which, in moments of

inspiration enables him to "enter into the nature of the thing to be known" as expressed by the philosopher Bergson.

by his brother W. Gordon Stephen
taken from *Leading Canadian Poets*
edited by W. P. Percival
Ryerson Press, 1948

Mr. Stephen is President of the Vancouver Poetry Society, a member of the Canadian Authors' Association, the Society of Authors, Playwrights and Composers of Great Britain, Canadian Representative on the Western Writers' League of America. In his personality there is a rare blending of the creative and executive faculties. While president of the Child Welfare Association of B.C., he addressed the Executive Council and the public on behalf of women and children and was largely instrumental in placing upon the statute books the outstanding laws protecting their interests. Educational reform and the initiation of new artistic movements have also engaged his untiring pen at various times. He is an active force in the building of our young nation along the lines based upon spiritual verities. His greatest achievements, however, are due to the fact that he is a poet, writing in a manner worthy of the great masters of the art and interpreting life of Canada in terms of Truth and Beauty.

from a Recital Tour flysheet
no date.

CHARLES TIDLER

Tidler was born in Ohio in 1946, emigrated to Canada in 1968, and became a Canadian citizen on Queen Victoria's birthday in 1976. His published collections of poetry are *North of Indianapolis*, *Straw Things*, *Whetstone Almanac*, and *Flight: The Last American Poem*. His unpublished collections include *Against The Shot* and *Chips & Gravy*. He has lived in British Columbia with Carol Tidler and their young son, Sam, since 1969.

PETER TROWER

Born in 1930 in England. He came out to British Columbia in 1940. He left school at 17 to work

in a hospital laundry. He has worked most of his life in the woods as a logger, but he has also worked in a pulp mill, a bakery, and a tractor factory. Trower went to art school for two years and his cartoons have appeared in various newspapers—mainly for local union publications. In 1967 Peter Trower won the Borestone Poetry Award.

He has published: *Poems for a Dark Sunday*; *Moving Through the Mystery* (illustrated by Jack Wise); *Between the Sky and the Splinters* (served as the basis for a C.B.C. film); *The Alder and Others*.

Peter Trower now lives with his family in Gibson's Landing where he writes and is associate editor of *Raincoast Chronicles*.

FRED WAH

Born in 1936. He came to the Kootenay's when he was 4 years old. When he was a student at U.B.C. he was thought of as the gentleman of the *Tish* poets. Wah did graduate work at Albuquerque, where he published *Sum Magazine* (publishing David Dromidge, the last of the *Tish* poets who had come out to Canada from England). He then went to Buffalo's Suny University to work with Charles Olson. It was here that Wah published *Mountain* in 1967 (Audit East/West).

His other books include: *Lardeau*; *Among*; *Tree*; *Earth*; *Pictograms from the Interior of B.C.*

Fred Wah now lives in a farmhouse on the banks of the Kootenay River and teaches at Selkirk College in Castlegar.

JOE WALLACE

Born in 1890 in Toronto, Wallace's family moved to Nova Scotia during his childhood. He spent part of his early youth in St. Patricks home, a local reform school, "more because of family trouble than maliciousness".

Wallace's first job was with the International Correspondence Schools selling mail-order courses. Following that, he and his brother formed the Wallace Advertising Agency in Halifax. He married and had two children before his wife's death in 1927.

He became interested in politics and in 1912 he worked for the Liberal Party. He became allied with the labour cause and became a Labour candidate in Halifax.

In 1941 Wallace was interned for eighteen months in a succession of prisons. The charges against him were never defined but had to do with "alien opinion".

Upon his release Wallace worked as a lathe operator in a munitions factory. After the war he worked for eight years as a caretaker at the Muskoka Sanatorium and then at St. Michael's Hospital.

Wallace's first book *Night is Ended* was published in 1943, followed by *All My Brothers* in 1953.

A year after his second book was published, Wallace was invited by a cross-cultural group in the Soviet Union to visit Roumania, Poland, and Hungary. This was his first trip abroad and all expenses were paid for him. He returned with a highly favourable impression of the "Russian experiment". In 1956 New Frontiers published his third collection *Hi Sister, Hi Brother!*

Meanwhile he was gaining a formidable international reputation. His poetry was translated into Russian and Chinese. He was again invited back to Russia and China in 1956. The direct outcome of this trip was the publication of *The Golden Legend* by the Foreign Language Publishing House in Moscow.

For a number of reasons, primarily his socialist sympathies, Wallace's books have rarely been reviewed in Canada and none of his poems have appeared in the standard Canadian anthologies. Wallace says he has been banned.

TOM WAYMAN

Born in 1945 in Hawkesbury, Ontario. Wayman moved to British Columbia in 1952. He obtained his B.A. in Honours English at the University of British Columbia in 1966, and was subsequently awarded the U.B.C. English Honours Medal and a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. He then took his M.F.A. in English and Writing at the University of California, Irvine, California, in 1968.

Wayman's career has included such posts as: English Instructor, Colorado State University; Advisor to the English Committee, B.C. Institute of Technology; Writer-in-Residence, Department of English, University of Windsor, Ontario; Poet-in-Residence, C.B.C. (FM) "Entertainment Section" program; and Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, English Department, Wayne State University, Michigan.

His publications include: *Waiting For Wayman*; *For And Against the Moon*; *Blues, Yells and Chuckles*; *Money and Rain*; *Tom Wayman Live!*; *Free Time/Industrial Poems*. Wayman has edited the following: *Beaton Abbot's Got the Contract*; *A Government Job At Last*.

PHYLLIS WEBB

Born in Victoria, 1927. Phyllis went to school in Victoria and attended the University of British Columbia. At the age of 22 she ran, unsuccessfully, as a CCF candidate for the Provincial Legislature. In 1950 she went to Montreal where she was secretary to David L. Thomas—Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at McGill University. "Working for him helped me organize my mind," Phyllis told Gwen Cash in a newspaper interview (Victoria Colonist, April 6, 1957). After one year of graduate studies Phyllis's poems appeared in *TRIO*—along with poems by Gail Turnbull and Eli Mandel. She has lived in England, Paris, San Francisco, and Toronto. From 1957-1963, Webb taught English at the University of British Columbia. In 1964 she was given a job at C.B.C. Toronto as programme organizer, where she worked for four years. The series "Ideas" owes much of its success to Phyllis Webb. But Webb chose to return to the West Coast.

Phyllis Webb has published: *Even Your Right Eye*; *The Sea is Also a Garden*; *Naked Poems*; *Selected Poems 1954-1965*.

She now lives on Salt Spring Island with her white cat. "I am absorbed in the fitting together of pieces."

MICHAEL YATES

Born in 1938 in Fulton, Missouri. He spent his pre-university years in Mexico, Germany, and the U.S.A. He attended Westminster College and received his B.A. and M.A. at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. He then studied Comparative Literature for two years with Austin Warren at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. After a year of teaching at Ohio University, to use a line from *Canticle for Electronic Music*: "By and by the wilderness came over me." He accepted a position at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

In 1967 Yates came to the University of British Columbia's creative writing department and a year later he began operating Sono Nis Press. The name Sono Nis is a combination of Italian and Anglo-Saxon meaning "I am is not."

Disenchantment with the academic life spurred Michael Yates to move himself and Sono Nis Press to the Queen Charlotte's in 1971, two years before he got "bushed". "The sort of downtown giddiness that one gets after a while in the big city, after seeing too much concrete, is exactly the same as bush fever. It's the other side of the same coin. I discovered in the Charlottes that after a while you almost forget you have a mind because everything you talk about gets

reduced to the level of logging, fishing, mining, that sort of thing." Sono Nis and Michael Yates relocated at Mission but once again he became disillusioned. He is now living in the American Midwest.

His books include: *Hunt in an Unmapped Interior*; *The Man in the Glass Octopus*; *Great Bear Lake Meditations*; *Parallax*; *The Abstract Beast*; *Nothing Speaks for the Blue Moraines: New and Selected Poetry*; *The Qualicum Physics*. He edited *Contemporary Poetry of British Columbia*.

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