

LARDEAU

F R E D W A H

This first book is for Susan Rudy
whose delight at making outer heat
inner world of language is a growing
and a showing up of a continuing
present world!

L A R D E A U

w/b
for admiration, and appreciation
for all you do and do and do

Selected first poems by

FRED WAH

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Some of these poems have appeared previously.
They were written between Fall 1962 and Spring 1965.

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ISLAND / 4

For Pauline...

A QUIET MORNING

Early morning
and fog my darling
you are sleeping
warm with sleep
cold floor
stretches in the dark
boulevard and headlights
past the glass
the start of day
eggs coffee cigarette
I walk before you
already tired of the morning
boring rhythms
in our breathings
nowhere beginning
but our sleep.

THE STEPPING BEHIND

hearing your feet
their steps to the door
or thighs sway
their hips
hang for the dress
and you want to come
I want you playfully
through my mind
like the mouth of a dream
and your open arms and
shoulders suddenly
to swim into

these steps
and you do

MY HORSE

I never had
who carries me
so secretly
is dead.

I think
he bucked
& threw me
on a mountain
at the bottom
of the path.

O my dead horse
I never had
such dreams
as dreams of you
not there
when I ride past.

THE RABBIT

is dead
I wonder, still there
in moss over large
fields patch fur
red clots, muddy
bed in peat

do you know
of peat moss
how it grows
under rain like
rice paddies
caked then in the sun
so soft and dry
enough for sleeping
on under summer stars
stumps a thousand years
old growing as the fields
sink around them

then one late August
afternoon with my shift
shift tractor cleats
spitting up sphagnum
in the corner field
edged with ditch
I spun & missed
dead rabbit
trick of twist
twist tracks
in the dust

SONG FOR SALLY

Sweet
drunk summer night
stumbling at yr window
yr eyes after
in the distant
boat lights on the inlet

hands fumble the smock
on hips which are not yr own
& walk in silence smoothly
yr thin legs
through the dark you
dream of love lust
pulls

you could have
cut into Mallorca
forgot about mother or
had some seacoast poet
play blues on spanish guitar
for you

go wrong in yr own mind
were naked
when I touched you.

THE SMILE

That is, the night
being dark & hard to see out of
by moonlight
but the next day
we are right out
from the southwest hills
on the level
road

 a trading-post
of red mud
& the good-looking Navajo girl
against it
stands in the morning sunlight
to let me see her figure's length
stretch

 in her velvet blouse
how
to beguile my looks
at her hand-woven shoulder-blanket
which is for sale
but she sort of smiles too

THE SEANCERS AT DEANESHAVEN

On a hill above green water
which is a lake runs by
becoming a river down or
further off to the south

still within this green valley
because it is July
left on the hill to the right
of Deaneshaven among trees

he
is a painter
of reason
for cash of his Roccoco things

and there for magical purposes
it is he and his friends' hill

and I and my wife
are on ours
as there is that renewal each summer
to look down upon the lake

what ritual on the other side
for evening thunderclouds
to ride us both as rails
down the range of peaks
which cup the lake going south

the lightning
cuts up the dark valleys
reveals them dancing among tall trees
their cabins the mysterious
Rococo canvasses jump
to the forks of the sky fire too

and it ends with the night everywhere
where we in the Queen's Bay orchard stand
I come into myself with the mountains
the dark paintings fall into me
across the green water on this side:

ARBUTUS ISLAND , AS I SEE IT

the first time
that tree softened
(in the mind)

the regular tundra
of my common hillsides

escorted by a man, Goody
through, on a Sunday
the bottom half island

struck
by an Arbutus tree
in the town, Ganges
gave way on a corner
suddenly
 though

for the better stuff inland
which, to be taken in quietly
was soft

in the distance of their groves
peeling
to go on
 seeing

red paper reaped
by the smoothest cut
I'd let on to be
thinking about.

& you naked
in the back seat
sleeping
the flat headlights
on either side
the cacti
became darkneses
rising
in the heat
the hot flatness
is us naked
here

(once
the trees hid us
from the moon & the lake
& I filled you

sweet granite boulders
which will suck this step
back quick
to the rock's warmth
& melt at the snow's
edge

which
is called
into the crevasse
by thinking back

the flat
between my seeing
I was riding
up
my middle
out
between the distant mountains
a rock
a wedge
coming back for myself
with you
flat out
behind my eyes

miles
is what was
the road sign says
(said) when looking back-
wards back up the road
where I'd come from
with nothing from the land with me
& I'm all there is here
& saying that is too hard
is like trying to

think mountain -like
add up, figure
out
the hazyness
our forests
our nakedness
& a way of looking at signposts
all myself
turning back into
standing
up
along the pea -vines
& peeling them
they rolled into the bowl
following one, one, one,
clanging bell-like
in my throat
on the desert. .

THE OCTOBER ARGUMENT

She says that I cling to the past
trees, places, people and things
but my cheeks are cold
in the walk around the block
tonight

we are both here together
now what more is present
than a memory
my cheeks get warmer
and the darkness is out there

my love there is no compromise
if you will not wait
while I drag my ass
in the past.

MOON DOG

the dog barks
on another street

two dogs bark
& the one in the sky

the stars
all bark at

the moon

stop yapping
& it hides in the mountains

EYES

Dog with three legs
with a name as round as
his head is as round
as his eyes are

his many
many other

bignesses

his eyes

come into

his eyes, look

at you, you

look back

howling
at the moon
in the morning

the moon

his big sky-eye

& wooing

at the sun

dog
with three legs
behind you
when you run he looks

for the stick you've thrown
hit

all falls into his eyes

his paws
his other
or
eyes are

his many
many other

ACROBAT ON A BALL

the boy stands
balanced on a ball
which does not move

the man
sits on a blue cloth
on a blue box
which does not move

on a hill behind
the woman
& two children
with a dog
do not move

a horse eats
on a further hill
but the eating
does not move

& the blue sky
is a blue sky too

behind the last hill
is not there
though a man runs
down a mountain path
which ends
when he steps into
a dark forest

the tall trees hide
where he runs on to
& sway in the wind

when the moon begins
by then
the man is not there

though the moon moves
behind the last hill
& the stillness is too

IN THE AFTERNOON, SUNDAY

Glance at its white
not
at its birch bark

where are
the bare grey branches branching
against the spring snow
which is melting

to where they
glance white
in grey bare
air, are dancing
on the hillside

a hill you look up
at the birches in March
which fill
the west side of the mountain
white

or part of a mountain
is part white
and the sun
not part white
at all.

To see this
is like a mud road
to pull over to
step out on the dirty snow, move
back from you
stop
smile
click
with the sun behind me
as close as I can plot
behind the clouds.

The picture comes out
most white, with a face
somewhere, I
remember the grey
but the trees
are not there.

A FABLE

There somewhere
a big pounded meatball went loping.
As it went loping along the road
one was lying there somewhere beside the road.
The loping one said
to him, that coyote

Are you lying here?

That coyote said

Yes, I am lying here
I am about to die of hunger.

That big meatball
said to him

You must take one big bite of me.

And he did take a bite of it
and ran along the road again
stopped and lay down over there
in front of it, the meatball,
where it was rolling here
loping along the road.

And are you lying here?
He is and with hunger also
and so that big meatball... said to him
that coyote

You must take one big bite of me.

And so he did three times
running down along the road again
to stop and lay down over there wherever
in front of where the rolling was
all the time for one big bite.

Oh, you are that same one
moving along cheating me
for he saw himself
in amongst the coyote's teeth.

THE FIRE

The international border
is a twenty -five yard cut
out of the green forest

and in the middle
right in the middle of the cut
is a fence
made of posts and wire

birds fly
a field hawk
& the pink sky turns brown
sun
(crackle crackle
a
wood burning July afternoon.

None said of where
the fire began on the Idaho side
but by two a clock three of us laughed
& pissed across the fence
to protect?
the untouched BC tamaracks?

so soon
it crowned the twenty -five yards

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& I'm running
to catch a ride out
with the pump truck but
the hose is caught, round a stump

& he says
when I'm looking at him
look
take the axe to it anyway
already the paint's peeling on my side

Beautiful

run because I have to
birds fly & pink smoke
how low the sky comes
the smoke comes

just as fast but low through grass & trunks &
run
&
run
&

a man is caught in a hollow
his name is Marvin.

L A R D E A U

LARDEAU / SUMMER 1964

I said we slept in a shack
at the bottom of the valley
watched the sun set after supper
over an ice field to the north
an unnamed glacier, then
the mountains about us
left white by the moon.

And I said it was a hot day
where we were I had a headache
at noon the blue above turned
to a green blur of moving trees
the felled log rolled under me
and we began the afternoon's cruise
looking at ourselves in the forest.

About the Lardeau?
There is little to say.
It is green, it rains
often, the mountains
are very beautiful,
there is a moon at night,
the unnamed glacier is the shape
of a bird in flight, with stars
in its eyes, my logging boots
make me feel strong
but too heavy to use strength,

the rivers and creeks
flow south to the lake,
there are mosquitoes, the name
is Marblehead.

At the end of it
it was all a dream
I said from looking up
up an eighty-foot pole
at lunch and he:
well, I'll be here all winter
and the cruising's easy on snowshoes
though this summer has been a nice one
gotta get that left shock fixed next time in town

I said
you must be finishing labor
at the top of Meadow Mountain
for she was born at 9:15
and we neared the top then too
I had pains in my stomach.

SHAPE - OF - A - BIRD - WITH - STARS - IN - ITS - EYES

Unnamed glacier
north
25 degrees west
north
look north tonight
at white
the white hump of ice
the moon the snow
bright
shape -of-a -bird -with -stars -in -its -eyes
go morning north
road that way to dawns and breakfasts
morning grass boots wet
and some morning don't stop to eat
with the boots keep walking
ten miles and find out
then go into it and into it
the wet grass morning glacier the
shape -of -a -bird
there where I arrive
with my wet boots on
what should I name it

the roads

All the ways are gravel
or crushed rock or rock bed
in a pickup truck Al and I
switch -back up the mountain
until we get to the still
and hot afternoon stopped
on the side of Meadow Mountain
we mean to locate to a patch
of cedar 3500 feet away
at 5 percent and try to stick
to the benches he says though
I'm slow imagining these trees
make way, as we do, all 'round
to Gold Hill, Howser, etc.

the cruise

From 6349 we headed
down S 30 W salmon berry
mountain ash alder then
the damp gulleys pulled
out of the 105 chains
by ten, we sweat and puff
alongside a log at the edge
of an old burn, sitting
like that the horseflies
and mosquitoes the green
green leaves, type lines
on the map with a D
for "desiduous" 188
chains, down a couple miles
to the jeep by a creek
a drink alone and ...

WHEN

When it is hot
when in the afternoon
tomorrow
last night
today when
to expect
the way
to take
(of
the mind's meadows
yes)

I'll drive
to meet you thirty miles
of gravelly dust
greet you with smiles of
I love
and miss you Love
is a kiss
of dusty lips
spill out my heart
to you on this
o yes
I will when it is hot
when in the afternoon
the mind expects.

climb

Climb up get a way through to the top
of this rock face for a view much better
for the possible road into this canyon
no you climb and we'll wait here at the
bottom by the coolness of the creek meet
you in a while sure but the stupidity and
risk to get such a view on the way back down
weak muscles shake feeling a way through
this cliff I freeze on a shelf and cannot
go down and cannot go back up.

akokli (goat) creek

More music
in its name
than "goat"

Akokli rise
as the June
snow melts.

The forest
is dark above
the road above

the creek
the mountain
moves down

the jeep
moves down
the trees

the dark is
down among

the bumpy swells
of Akokli Creek.

GOLD HILL

We stood there in Gold Hill's forest
looking
at all that surrounded us
that rock
this rock here this one
was it here
he stopped by stooped down aside of
and grabbed from the rock
a piece of moss to wipe himself with
said shIT!
this granite boulder's gold
worth about
as he was an assayer also
\$70,000
but unable to move such a large rock himself
chipped some proof
then went away to find help
file the claim
but never found it after that day
so
we stood there in Gold Hill's forest
looking.

THEY ARE BURNING

Pitch black up the valley
in front of us twenty miles
they are burning the mountains down
the sky is that kind of orange
the hillsides are outlined to us
in just that orange horizon
which will be gone with daybreak
when the smoke of their burning
hangs over the valleys rivers and trees
drifts slowly on the contours of the land
and the deadness where no birds fly.

Yes they are burning
for it is July
and August and the nights
with no wind the darkness is cool.

What I thought would be there is not
I'm sorry to say. What I had expected
was to sleep for the ride with eyes closed
not drive into a burning mountainside.

MORNING

Up

the mosquito
prong on the wall
at my head my
head tried in
splendecorous
colors the night's
rainbow slit
in the moon of morning
craving more sleep
and dream
the buzz of wings
sings at my head
my

THE COLD SNOW FEET

The cold snow feet
sweat
with all those clothes on
Eddy Thompson
ahead in the bushes
follow me
or maybe he, Steve Barrett
between the light bush
push
 with one leg
raise a knee
my big snowshoe
dives toe under the snow
toward the creek
which cracks with our weight and the sun
sweat steaming the taste of scarf
we say wobble and run
but I can't but trip
trying to lift one foot
the other sinks
webs dangling in the air
I become a ball of white
with all those clothes
and fall on my face
into the dark snow
my sweating face ...

Mike
use the shoes
its night
your skis are iced.
from that fall in the lake
Molly Gibson is
how many miles away now
use your shoes Mike
carry the skis
are you alone
how many miles behind us

Drummond Hadley's
snowshoes' tracks
disappear
toward Grover Cleveland Park's
golf course by Main Street
on the desert
coming up (out of) the arroyo
on snowshoes in December
among the galleta grass
like a green winter lawn in Tucson
bowlegged strapped in mukluks
gut web for feet
over all that desert

No

and so there somewhere
the watched bear paws
hang there all summer
there on my head
which is down on the tracks
or sometimes not the tracks
but the s8ssshhhhhhh-
in the feet

from MOUNTAIN

Mountain that has come over me in youth

Mountain green grey orange of colored dreams
darkest hours of no distance

Mountain full of creeks ravines of rock
and pasture meadow snow white ridges humps of granite
ice springs trails twigs stumps sticks leaves moss
shit of bear deer balls rabbit shit
shifts and cracks of glaciation mineral

O Mountain

that has hung over me in these years of fiery desire burns on your sides
your many crotches

rocked

and treed in silence from the winds

Mountain many voices nameless curves and pocked in shadows
not wild but smooth

your instant flats flat walls of rock

your troughs of shale and bits

soft summer glaci2r snow

the melting edge of rounded stone
and cutting of your height the clouds

a jagged blue
your nights your nights alone
your winds your winds your grass
your lying slopes your holes your traps
quick blurs with sweat of dreams and climbs
Mountain poem of life
true and real
reeling Mountain burning mind
stand word
stand
letter
voice in whisper secret repeating cries
stand in rock stretch out
in all ways to the timber line
spread over all valleys run cool the waters down
from luminous white snows
your cracks
O creek song flow always an utter pure of coolness
spring from the rocks
sing in the hot thirst my sticky tongue
my jaw catch below the bridge
Yes my jaw for your waters hangs
catch of water sooth the sweat
sweet cold on teeth in flow and eddy
in swirl my gut it fills and bloats with fluid Mountain

I stand the upright Mountain

at its base I stand in roads in valleys
in standing desire its quieting gravel ways
stand roots upturned at the roadside
turn in and twist deeper the head's nerves
and gentle sinking stump my body

warm

I look out at it to its tree branching
boughs birds' wings
flap in green in sun light light brown needles
ground is covered dried shit of deer bed
old the old tree stand my axe is melting
in bite the grain of the trunk
burning the fire down to its roots black the bark hard
the upright tree the Mountain's burn
look out at it
stand in it turn cover the ground
take off the thought's eyes

go in

go in

go in the flaming base
sink in the skins of the Mountain's earth
8.long the road
far from the road
in gravel

stand through the twist in desire the gravelled road inward
to the base of the upright Mountain
its quiet burning
its evening still
its my eyes have gone me eyes my birds wings
fluttering

O Mountain stand is set my roots the sun is in my legs.

June 1965 An edition of 350 of which 6
are specially bound and are not for sale.

