THE COLLECTED POETRY OF MALCOLM LOWRY:
A CRITICAL EDITION WITH A COMMENTARY

By

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Abstract

Although his literary reputation rests primarily on his novels, Malcolm Lowry (1909-1957) considered himself a poet, and he composed an extensive poetic canon. No reliable edition of Lowry’s poetry exists; increasing critical interest in all aspects of Lowry’s life and work prompted the preparation of this complete edition of his poetry, in which the poems are located, identified, dated, arranged, collated, annotated, and explicated in biographical, critical, and textual introductions. The sections of Lowry’s text are chronologically arranged to reflect his artistic development, and are preceded by short essays describing the specific issues raised by those poems. The opening section—Lowry’s poetic juvenilia—reflects his fascination for the sea, as does the ensuing section, The Lighthouse Invites the Storm, his first collection of poetry, a sequence of related semi-autobiographical poems, which depicts the adventures of the characters Peter Gaunt and Vigil Forget. Lowry composed most of the Lighthouse in Mexico; following it in this edition is a small group of uncollected Mexican poems. The next two sections of text—"Dollarton 1940-54: Selected Poems 1947" and "Dollarton 1940-54: Uncollected Poems"—reflect and record the experience of Lowry’s sojourn on the lower mainland, and its deep effect on him. A remarkably coherent group of love poems written between 1949 and Lowry’s death in 1957 follows the Dollarton texts, and the appendices contain sections of song lyrics and undated fragments. This edition provides Lowryans with ready access to the latest determinable authorial versions of, and the textual histories for, the canon’s four hundred and sixty-five poems, which range in date from 1925 to 1957.
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Abbreviations

1 Books - all editions are listed in the Bibliography unless otherwise noted.

Dark as the Grave: Dark As the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid
Hear us O Lord: Hear us O Lord from heaven Thy dwelling place
October Ferry: October Ferry to Gabriola
OF: October Ferry to Gabriola
SL: Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry
Volcano: Under the Volcano (page refs. Penguin)
UV: Under the Volcano (page refs. Penguin)

2 Poetic Volumes

Lighthouse: The Lighthouse Invites the Storm

3 Authors

Ackerley and Clipper: A Companion to Under the Volcano
Bowker: Malcolm Lowry Remembered
Day: Malcolm Lowry: A Biography
Salloum: Malcolm Lowry: Vancouver Days

4 Primary Sources

DM: David Markson Papers, U.B.C.
WTP: William Templeton Papers, U.B.C.

N.B. All location references to the Malcolm Lowry Papers in the Special Collections Division of the U.B.C. Library appear in round brackets. The first numeral identifies the box number; the numeral following the dash indicates the folder within the box.
INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS
MALCOLM LOWRY AND HIS POETRY

Although Malcolm Lowry (1909-1957) considered himself primarily as a poet, his literary fame and reputation rest exclusively on his fiction. He composed poetry during most of his adult life, and his correspondence reveals a consistent concern for his poetry. In 1937, a depressed and paranoid Lowry wrote his Mexican friend Juan Fernando Marquez:

The English are sufficiently stupid but the stupidity and hypocrisy of your detectives and the motives which are behind their little eternal spying—their activities—completely transcend any criminality and stupidity I have ever encountered anywhere in the world. Have these guys nothing better to do than to watch a man who merely wants to write poetry? As if I had not enough troubles on my mind! (SL 13-14)

Almost a decade later, in January 1946, when Lowry posted to Jonathan Cape his well-known and widely-quoted defense of the structure and style of Under the Volcano, he again highlighted the importance of poetry in his creative imagination. With reference to the problems the publisher's reader found in the novel, Lowry suggested that the situation was "irremediable:"

It is that the author's equipment, such as it is, is subjective rather than objective, a better equipment, in short, for a certain kind of poet than a novelist. (SL 59)

A decade later, in the last year of his life, Lowry wrote from England to Ralph Gustafson, who included two of his poems in the 1958 Penguin Book of Canadian Verse:

Sometimes I think I've never been able fully to understand the most elementary principles of scansion, stress, interior rhyme and the like with the result, by overcompensation, that my poems such as they are look as though they had a kind of wooden monotonous classical frame.... All this is very sad and complicated
to me because I think of practically nothing else but poetry when I'm not thinking about my old shack on Burrard Inlet. (SL 408)

Many critics no doubt agree with Lowry's self-assessment; however, the number of poems he composed and the significant position poetry held in his consciousness argue strongly for giving more critical and scholarly attention to Lowry's poetry. This edition seeks to make possible such attention by providing, for the first time, accurate texts and textual histories for Lowry's complete poetic canon.

Lowry critics interested in his poetry, unless they have access to the manuscripts in the U.B.C. Library, must rely on Earle Birney's 1962 edition of Selected Poems of Malcolm Lowry, published in San Francisco by City Lights Books. That any of the poetic texts has been available is owing to the efforts of Dr. Birney during the early 1960s. Single-handedly, he placed over one hundred of the poems in journals and little magazines. In those years, too, he prepared an edition of Lowry's collected poems, which, owing to textual disagreements between the editor and Margerie Lowry, has remained unpublished. Birney's intentions were clearly laudable; however, there are serious problems with Selected Poems. Beyond its incompleteness—the volume contains fewer than one-sixth of the total number of poems—the structure of the collection reflects Birney's, not Lowry's, vision of Lowry's volume The Lighthouse Invites the Storm. Birney's selection encompasses poems which date from every compositional period; yet, he insists on forcing them all into the Lighthouse structure on the basis that Lowry all his life apparently intended to revise this particular structure to include his
poetic canon, even though no bibliographical or contextual evidence for Birney's hypothesis exists; on the contrary, it is clearly evident that Lowry thought of and treated *The Lighthouse* as a discrete volume. Furthermore, Birney expands the original *Lighthouse* structure to include four section headings while omitting two authorial ones.¹ Far more serious is Birney's editorial policy of silently emending so many of the poems. While it is true that Birney's revisions often improve a particular poem, they also pose serious critical problems for readers familiar only with the texts as published in *Selected Poems*.

Malcolm Lowry's first recorded poem appeared under the pseudonym "Camel" in a 1925 issue of his school newspaper, *The Leys Fortnightly*; and during his literary apprenticeship, which spans the eight years prior to the publication of his first novel *Ultramarine* in 1933, published thirteen further poems in *The Leys Fortnightly*, in the programme for the Cambridge Festival Theatre, and in *Cambridge Poetry 1930*, issued by Leonard and Virginia Woolf at the Hogarth Press. His poems were among the first literary efforts Lowry showed his mentor, American poet and novelist Conrad Aiken (1889-1973), and in the summer of 1929, Lowry travelled to Cambridge, Massachusetts to study with Aiken.

In addition to poems, Lowry produced during his apprenticeship years a number of lyrics for songs, two of which, "Three Little Dog-gone Mice" and "I've Said Goodbye to Shanghai," he and his Cambridge musical partner Ronald Hill had printed by a London vanity sheet-music publisher in 1927. Five years later, he wrote the lyrics for two songs for the Cambridge Footlights
Dramatic Society's 1932 production of *Laughing at Love*, in which he appeared. He also experimented with jazz lyrics, several of which are included in Charlotte Haldane's 1932 novel *I Bring Not Peace*, and he is the putative author of bawdy variants to traditional sailor's songs.

Lowry's attention was not focussed only on poems and songs during his apprenticeship period. He also contributed short stories to *The Leys Fortnightly*, and worked from 1927 to 1933 on his novel *Ultramarine*, which is modelled closely on Conrad Aiken's *Blue Voyage* (1927) and Nordahl Grieg's *The Ship Sails On* (1924; trans. 1927). From 1929 to 1932, Lowry studied at Cambridge with varying degrees of diligence. He managed to convince his Cambridge examiners to accept *Ultramarine* as part of his English tripos requirements, and his graduation in 1932 marked the commencement of a two-year Bohemian period spent in England, France, and Spain. His next period—perhaps more accurately, his first period—of serious writing began in New York in 1934-36, when he started to compose *In Ballast to the White Sea*, which was later lost in a fire, and the novella now known as *Lunar Caustic*.

Lowry's taste for popular music, evident in his juvenilia, remained with him all his life. His battered ukulele and his fascination for American jazz were, together with his sea-faring persona and his devotion to alcohol, the characteristic features of his youth; it is not at all surprising that Lowry turned his hand to the composition of jazz tunes "with ukulele accompaniment." The wooden and somewhat superficial tone of his juvenilia poems is probably equally due to his inexperience and to the undisciplined and undirected literary enthusiasms of his
youth. The fourteen items of juvenilia included in this edition must represent only a fraction of the poems composed between 1925 and 1933. Lowry almost certainly composed more than the single 1933 poem this edition preserves, and additional juvenilia will undoubtedly appear as more primary material becomes available.

After leaving Europe in 1934, Lowry and his first wife, Jan Gabrial, were living unhappily, and more apart than together, in New York City. In 1935 they decided to maintain separate residences, and Lowry, desperately unhappy, set up housekeeping in a run-down basement room. Largely to blame for Lowry's desperation was his alcoholism. In June of 1935, Lowry, "incoherent, shaking, and hallucinating," was admitted to the Psychiatric Wing of Bellevue Hospital, where he gathered the material for *Lunar Caustic*.

Like most of Lowry's literary work, *Lunar Caustic* is strongly autobiographical, and the atmosphere of his New York experience is reflected in the novella, on which he worked after his release from Bellevue. At some point during the New York period, Lowry conceived his poetic project *The Lighthouse Invites the Storm*. Some poems from this collection appear on the same type of paper as the first typed draft of *Lunar Caustic* (15-12; WTP 1-25). All of the extant poems composed on New York paper were included in the *Lighthouse* collection. Several of the most prevalent unifying motifs of *Lighthouse*, including imagery of sea-faring and jazz, the sonnet form, and the recurring characters Vigil Forget and Peter Gaunt, make their first appearances on paper datable to the New York period. Relatively
few New York poems are extant; Lowry’s unsettled life-style made the preservation of papers difficult, but also significant is the fact that in New York, Lowry was—as far as writing is concerned—first preoccupied with In Ballast to the White Sea and then Lunar Caustic, so that he had relatively little time for poetry.

In the fall of 1936, Lowry and Jan Gabrial left New York for Los Angeles, and by December they had settled in Cuernavaca, Mexico. After a dismal year, Jan Gabrial left Lowry for the last time in December 1937; Lowry remained in Mexico until the summer of 1938. The nineteen-month Mexican sojourn, although by all accounts a wretched emotional experience, led to a blossoming of Lowry’s poetic work.

In Mexico, Lowry wrote the non-extant first draft of his great novel Under the Volcano, the entire known manuscript for which dates from the Dollarton period. However, during the Mexican period Lowry also substantially completed his first volume of poetry, The Lighthouse Invites the Storm, for which many manuscripts, in various states, exist. After 1940 Lowry did very little work on the Lighthouse; it was finished in 1939, when he probably had a triplicate fair copy manuscript typed in Los Angeles. That he sent the Lighthouse to at least one publishing house is evident in his correspondence; in late 1939 or early 1940, he informed Conrad Aiken that Whit Burnett, who had recently become an editor at Lippincott’s, was holding the Lighthouse typescript (SL 24). A year later, in the spring of 1941, Lowry, unsure of the location of the "hapless and ambulatory" typescript, wrote his agent, Harold Matson, for
information as to its whereabouts (SL 40). Matson had no success in selling The Lighthouse, and, to make matters worse, Lowry's friend, Irish writer and translator James Stern, reported a similar failure with "Eight Poems from The Lighthouse Invites the Storm," which Lowry had sent him in May 1940 in the hope that Stern would be able to sell it to Esquire (1-64). This appears to have been Lowry's final attempt to promote the collection, and, perhaps as a result of its lack of success, he did little further work on it. Only three of the eighty-three Lighthouse poems were included in Lowry's second unpublished volume of poetry, which he assembled in 1947, and only ten of the Lighthouse poems were revised after 1940. In 1939-40, after arriving in Vancouver and later settling in Dollarton, Lowry began an entirely new series of poems.

The Lighthouse Invites the Storm is textually, biographically, and critically representative of the New York and Mexican periods, and therefore can be most profitably studied in conjunction with the New York version of Lunar Caustic (more properly, for the period 1934-36, titled The Last Address) and certain aspects of Under the Volcano, the final version of which belongs to the first Dollarton period, during which Lowry rewrote it between 1940 and 1944. The only extant literary manuscripts which are reliably representative of Lowry's Mexican period are the ones for The Lighthouse Invites the Storm.

In 1940, the Lowrys moved to a shack on the beach at Dollarton, and, except for their extensive American and European travels from 1945 to 1949 and a few winters spent in rented
apartments in Vancouver, they remained at Dollarton until their final departure in 1954. During the first part of his Dollarton tenure, Lowry re-wrote and finished Under the Volcano; from 1949 to 1954 he wrote most of his volume of short stories Hear us O Lord from heaven Thy dwelling place, and wrestled with the unwieldy October Ferry to Gabriola. In addition, Lowry wrote half of his poetic canon during the 1940-54 Dollarton period. Of the four hundred and sixty-five poems collected in this edition, approximately two hundred can be assigned by paper analysis to Dollarton. However, the Dollarton poetic output is probably greater: from 1949 until his death in 1957, Lowry composed many love poems for Margerie. These poems, which in this edition are collected in a discrete section, overlap Lowry’s second Dollarton and England periods and appear on the same types of paper, so that it is difficult to determine precisely how many of the ninety-seven love poems were composed in Dollarton and how many in England. An analysis of the contents of the notes surrounding the love poems indicates that approximately one-third of them could be safely assigned to Dollarton, bringing his total Dollarton output to some two hundred and thirty poems: clearly Lowry’s most prolific poetry period.

In the middle of their extensive travels, the Lowrys made a brief eight-month return to Dollarton in 1947, when Lowry had Margerie type out some sixty poems, of which fifty-four were authorially selected and ordered into a second volume of poetry. Unlike the Lighthouse, which is an integrated and highly structured work, Lowry’s 1947 volume represents a selection of what he regarded as the most promising poems from the first
Dollarton period. The selection is typically Lowryan in that it is autobiographically organized. The typescript is divided into three titled sections: "Poems of the Sea," "Poems from Mexico," and "Poems from Vancouver." On 7 November 1947, the day the Lowrys left Vancouver by ship bound for Europe via the Panama Canal, Lowry sent the typescript to Albert Erskine, his American editor. Although he was self-deprecating in his attached note, this typescript bears a closer resemblance to a polished collection than anything else in Lowry's poetic papers. Erskine later returned the typescript with his comments pencilled on the sheets. In light of Erskine's editorial suggestions, between 1951 and 1954, Lowry further revised forty-six of the fifty-four poems, but nothing ever came of the revised selection. That he continued revising these poems, suggests that he may have had plans for submitting the selection to a publisher, but there is no evidence that he ever did so.

On 11 August 1954, on a final sojourn that would take him first to New York, then to Italy, and, finally, to England, Lowry left his beloved Dollarton beach for the last time. He was in a terrible condition; the ravages of his extreme alcohol consumption were evident in his appearance and conduct. David Markson's widely-published "Malcolm Lowry: A Reminiscence" paints a vivid portrait of Lowry's two-week stay in New York:

The man could not shave himself.... Mornings, he needed two or three ounces of gin in his orange juice if he was to steady his hand to eat the breakfast that would very likely prove his only meal of the day. Thereafter a diminishing yellow tint in the glass might belie the fact that now he was drinking the gin neat, which he did for as many hours as it took him to. Ultimately
he would collapse—sometimes sensible enough of his condition to lurch toward a bed, though more often he would crash down into a chair, and once it was across my phonograph. Then he would hack and sputter through the night like some great defective machine breaking apart.

It was in this condition—perhaps even worse—that Lowry was admitted to Brook General Hospital in London in September 1955, after spending a year in Italy and London. He continued to drink, and in November 1955 entered London’s Atkinson Morley’s Hospital for psychiatric treatment. After his release in February of 1956, the Lowrys settled into their last home, the White Cottage, in Ripe, Sussex. In June, July and August of that year, Lowry was again at Atkinson Morley’s, and in the fall Margerie was hospitalized for exhaustion. From the time of Lowry’s final discharge until his death on 27 June 1957, the Lowrys lived quietly in Ripe, departing only for a tour of the Lake District just before he died.

Despite his illness, Lowry engaged in some literary work while living at the White Cottage. Although he was revising the stories and composing a philosophical/political essay entitled "Halt! I Protest," he devoted most of his writing time to correspondence and October Ferry to Gabriola. The poems written during 1956 and 1957 were almost all a continuation of the type of love poem that he had commenced distributing around the shack for Margerie during the second Dollarton period. He sent a great many of these little "ditties" to his wife during her hospitalization in London.

On his death in 1957, Lowry left on both sides of the Atlantic a copious number of manuscripts in various states of
disarray. He never had the opportunity to complete the grand plan he conceived for his literary canon—"The Voyage That Never Ends"—because his own voyage ended much too soon.

Malcolm Lowry's literary reputation rests primarily, if not quite exclusively, on his 1947 novel *Under the Volcano*. Since 1960, when Earle Birney and Margerie Lowry began collecting Lowry's papers and publishing, with Douglas Day and Harvey Breit, posthumous editions, the Lowry canon has been extended to include the revised *Ultramarine* (1962), the stories in *Hear us O Lord from heaven Thy dwelling place* (1961), *Selected Poems* (1962), *Lunar Caustic* (1963), *Selected Letters* (1965), *Dark as the Grave Wherein my Friend Is Laid* (1968), *October Ferry to Gabriola* (1970), and other miscellaneous works. With the exceptions of *Selected Letters* and *Selected Poems*, all these posthumous editions have been of prose works, an editorial and critical emphasis that tends to be misleading. While it is arguable that the quality of his poetry palls beside that of his prose, it is nevertheless true that Lowry composed over four hundred and fifty poems, a fact which critics and scholars cannot ignore, especially in view of the importance Lowry attached to his poetry.

In this edition, Lowry's poetic material is organized chronologically to reflect accurately Lowry's artistic development. His poetry falls into the following major periods of composition: apprenticeship 1925-33; New York 1934-36; Mexico, Los Angeles, and Vancouver 1936-39; Dollarton 1940-54; England 1955-57. The poetic texts belonging to each period are presented in separate sections, with each section preceded by a short essay.
discussing the specific issues of biography, context, manuscript material and history, dating, arrangement, and emendations relevant to that period. The discreteness of the two collections Lowry made in his lifetime---The Lighthouse Invites the Storm and the 1947 selection—are preserved, and these collections appear in their proper chronological sequence. Such an arrangement is designed to be as editorially unobtrusive as possible, and to facilitate critical discussion either in a biographical continuum or in relation to the prose texts on which Lowry was simultaneously working.

NOTES


2 Day, 196.

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS: A CRITICAL APPROACH TO LOWRY'S POETRY

The simple Wordsworth,...
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose
(Lord Byron, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers)

Applied to Malcolm Lowry, Byron's wicked, satirical stricture would be hyperbolic; but Byron's formulation, nevertheless, does underscore a central dilemma Lowryan specialists face in attempting to evaluate critically his sizeable poetic corpus. A novelist, who regarded his essential creative "equipment" as poetic rather than fictional, Lowry left behind an enormous amount of poetry, most of it in manuscript form, but often in drafts for completed volumes, which owing to his occasional technical deficiencies as a poet, he was unable to place for publication. As this edition testifies, in terms of size alone, Lowry's poetic canon is too extensive to be ignored; but, more importantly, the poetry complements the fiction in so many ways—thematically, topically, and, especially, biographically—that it often serves as a convenient commentary on the prose, illuminating the mental and emotional processes that Lowry employed in adapting, translating, and transfiguring poetic impulses into language and strategies suitable for fiction.

With typical self-perception, Lowry's 1957 epistolary complaint to Ralph Gustafson, quoted in the introductory essay, strikes at the heart of his poetic problem. His comments reflect a discomfort with the forms of poetry, not with the particular type of vision it requires. It was Lowry's difficulty with "scansion, stress, interior rhyme and the like," and not a
problem with poetic conception, which resulted in his poetry's "wooden frame." Norman Newton, a Vancouver writer, was a visitor at the Lowry shack during the second Dollarton period (1949-54). In a 1986 letter, he remembers:

Malcolm had an intensely musical mind—his writing uses rhetorical devices in the style of an accomplished composer—but he had none of the physical endowments of the musician.... All of this, of course, went to feed his hatred of his body. It simply did not respond finely enough. I feel that his lack of physical finesse had something to do with his failure to master the craft of verse. The images are marvellous, but the ear is coarse so far as rhythmic detail is concerned. He needed the larger and looser swing of prose. (Salloum 88)

Lowry's discomfort with regulated form is marked: in 1940, a year after he had completed his first volume of poetry, The Lighthouse Invites the Storm, Conrad Aiken advised him:

I think it's good that you're writing poetry--but do try to keep your numbers and quantities straight--! Freedom comes after mastery not before—the sonnet consists of 14 lines of five-beat iambics, rhymed ababcddefefgg or abbaabbaabdecdece: it can't just be anything! (1-2)

As his correspondence with Gustafson indicates, Lowry felt inadequate and frustrated by his general lack of success in achieving poetic discipline. It is a traditional view among Lowryans that, because he never considered any piece of work complete, he had to be coaxed to send a "final" version to his publisher. This is true of the prose, but the number of first draft poems to which Lowry never returned is high, revealing both his frustration with the rigours of verse, and his preference for prose forms.
Lowry felt more comfortable with prose; in it, he could let a multi-layered, encyclopaedic narrative determine the form of the piece. According to Lowry, *Under the Volcano* displays just such a form: in his 1946 letter to Jonathan Cape, he argued vehemently for its carefully-planned "churrigueresque structure" (SL 61), a structure which is essentially poetical:

...I claim that just as a tailor will try to conceal the deformities of his client, so I have tried, aware of this defect [his poetic mentality], to conceal in the Volcano as well as possible the deformities of my own mind, taking heart from the fact that since the conception of the whole thing was essentially poetical, perhaps these deformities don't matter so very much after all, even when they show! But poems often have to be read several times before their full meaning will reveal itself, explode in the mind, and it is precisely this poetical conception of the whole that I suggest has been, if understandably, missed. (SL 59)

Lowry clearly viewed his approach to writing as poetical, regardless of generic conventions, and he shared this view with his mentors. In a lengthy letter to David Markson, a Columbia University graduate student who in 1951 was completing his Master’s thesis on the *Volcano*, Lowry described both Conrad Aiken’s *Blue Voyage* and Nordahl Grieg’s *The Ship Sails On* as works of poets (SL 265), an indication that his sense of poetics was not limited to verse. A study of his poems and their interrelationship with his prose is invaluable because of what it reveals about Lowry’s conception and use of language. In his best writing, Lowry strove to weave a net of language densely meshed with associative ideas, images, and reverberations, whose full set of meanings only gradually "explodes" in the reader’s mind. For example, to Cape’s reader William Plomer’s objection about
the vagueness of the *Volcano*'s characters, Lowry responded:

This is a valid criticism. But I have not exactly attempted to draw characters in the normal sense—though s'welp me bob it's only Aristotle who thought character counted least.... The truth is that the character drawing is not only weak but virtually nonexistent, save with certain minor characters, the four main characters being intended, in one of the book's meanings, to be aspects of the same man, or of the human spirit, and two of them, Hugh and the Consul, more obviously are. I suggest that here and there what may look like unsuccessful attempts at character drawing may only be the concrete bases to the creature's lives without which again the book could not be read at all.

(SL 60)

Lowry hoped to evoke a vision of the "human spirit" through an amalgamation of all four main characters. His comments on characterization prefigure Tzvetan Todorov's statement in the 1966 essay "Poetics and Criticism": "The literary work does not have a form and a content but a structure of significations whose relations must be apprehended" (*The Poetics of Prose* 41). Lowry's literary language operates on the principles of embedding, amplification, and resonance; the reader's conception of the novel or poem depends upon its sum total of effects, and the success of any of his works must be evaluated on the basis of its evocative impact upon the reader, and not, as Cape's reader assumes, on the merits of its plot, characters, and themes. Accordingly, in the 1946 letter Lowry suggested that the vettor's appreciation of the resonant, organic nature of the book would depend upon second and third readings. To Lowry, such a literary work was "essentially poetical."
Lowry's compositional method combined his verse and prose. In the collection of short stories *Hear us O Lord from heaven Thy dwelling place*, for example, the Dollarton uncollected poem "Pines write a Chinese poem upon the white-gold sun" [271] was composed on the holograph manuscript of the story "The Present Estate of Pompeii." Preceding the poem, at the top of the sheet, Lowry wrote:

> Also, in II, when Downey reflects at the top of the Wilderness steps, while they are swimming, I write this in poetry, which it is: possibly it is a fragment of "our play," possibly some of it belongs here, or in Eridanus, or even Gin and Goldenrod; but I think, if a long story, its substance should be here.

(22-23)

The two-page poem follows, after which the prose continues. Though the poem does not survive in the published story, it was an integral part of the story's composition and development. Thirteen of the Dollarton uncollected poems derive from prose manuscripts. Though they are not polished examples of verse, these poems are nonetheless significant as evidence of how frequently for Lowry the conceptual process for his prose began in what he considered to be a poetic vision. This relationship also exists between the poetry volume *The Lighthouse Invites the Storm* and the novel *Under the Volcano*. According to Earle Birney:

> ...[Lowry] was too self-centered, too inexperienced about others, to be contented with prose fiction alone; when he felt most deeply he turned to verse, especially after he came under the influence of Conrad Aiken. Indeed some of the most powerful passages in *Under the Volcano* were first written as verse. By the time he came to Dollarton he had the habit of recording whatever day-to-day
experiences most moved him in poetic form, seeing an eagle, finding a strange flower. And later he would re-work some of these poems into the prose of his Volcano and his later novels.

(Salloum 69)

Some of these initial Volcano versions are preserved as parts of poems in the Lighthouse Invites the Storm. For example, in the sixth chapter of the Volcano, the Consul stands musing in Jacques Laruelle's house in Quauhnahuac:

Suddenly he felt something never felt before with such shocking certainty. It was that he was in hell himself. At the same time he became possessed of a curious calm. The inner ferment within him, the squalls and eddies of nervousness, were held again in check. He could hear Jacques moving downstairs and soon he would have another drink. That would help, but it was not the thought which calmed him. Parian—the Farolito! he said to himself. The Lighthouse, the lighthouse that invites the storm, and lights it!

(UV 199-200)

In this case the opening line of a poem, and the title of the poetry volume itself, has moved from the poetry into the prose. The Farolito cantina beckons the Consul throughout the Day of the Dead, and, at the end of that day, he is murdered there. As Ackerley and Clipper point out (278), a lighthouse which invites the storm is a striking image of the Consul’s self-destructiveness. The image first appears in the poem "The lighthouse invites the storm" [87], composed in New York between 1934 and 1936, in which its purpose and effect is markedly different from its use in the Volcano. In the poem, the lighthouse appears only in the first line "The lighthouse invites the storm and lights it." The rest of the piece describes a storm at sea, and the final lines offer a sonnet-like philosophical observation:
And what shall we, what shall we not, tolerate
Today from chaos, what? -- by the unshot albatross and
Icarus' circus plunge?
(13-15)

The effect of the lighthouse image is weakened by its single appearance; after introducing the storm, the lighthouse disappears. The image of the lighthouse is more resonant in the *Volcano*; it is a perfect objective correlative for the Consul, whereas in the poem, the image, though striking, is diminished by Lowry's failure to weave it into the fabric of the text. The Farolito—the lighthouse—is mentioned frequently throughout the *Volcano*, and its associations with alcohol, death, and hell reverberate and effectively remind the reader that the Consul is lighting and inviting his own storm.

The image of the lighthouse in the two pieces signals the diminishing importance of Lowry's sea experience in his work. He never abandons the sea motif, but as Lowry aged he was less insistent that all his male protagonists share his seafaring past. His placement and revised tonal shading of a favourite good line such as "The lighthouse invites the storm" reveal something about his conception of the new work's emphasis. The sea, and all its Lowryan connotations, is certainly less vital to the *Volcano* than to the *Lighthouse*. Although both Hugh and the Consul have had nautical experiences, Hugh is the character who shares the sailing experience of *Ultramarine*’s Dana Hilliot, and Lowry does not give his good line to Hugh, to be used in relation to the sea, as he does in the poem; rather, he gives it to the Consul, the novel's dominant, unforgettable figure, to express the Consul's essential characteristic: his alcoholic self-
destruction, and all that Lowry believes it signifies about the human condition.

Motifs which appear in embryonic form in the Lighthouse often come to fruition in the Volcano. For example, in "Another than Wordsworth dropped his live work" [45], Lowry mentions the Ohio, a ship which sits "smoking" off San Francisco. In the margin of the sheet, beside this line, the words "Dark as" appear in his hand. In Dark as the Grave (6-7), the ship reappears as the Pennsylvania, the same ship which brought Lowry and Jan Gabrial to Acapulco in September 1936. In chapter two of the Volcano, the Consul’s estranged wife Yvonne arrives at Acapulco on the Pennsylvania. Throughout that chapter, repeated references to the ship occur. Although Yvonne remembers sailing into a harbour alive with swarms of beautiful butterflies, the undertone of the Pennsylvania references is very dark, like the hopeless love Yvonne and the Consul share: through Yvonne, Lowry represents the Consul’s dire self-destructiveness in terms of the ship. A few moments after Yvonne has discovered the Consul in the bar, he informs her that

"It’s really the shakes that make this kind of life insupportable. But they will stop: I was only drinking enough so they would. Just the necessary, the therapeutic drink." Yvonne looked back at him. "--but the shakes are the worst, of course," he was going on. "You get to like the other after a while, and I’m really doing very well, I’m much better than I was six months ago, very much better than I was, say, in Oaxaca"--noting a curious familiar glare in his eyes that always frightened her, a glare turned inward now like one of those sombrely brilliant cluster-lamps down the hatches of the Pennsylvania on the
work of unloading, only this was a work of
spoilation: and she felt a sudden dread lest this
glare, as of old, should swing outward, turn upon
her.

(UV 54)
The tonal quality of this passage is heavily reminiscent of
"Another than Wordsworth dropped his live work," the last three
lines of which could provide an accurate depiction of the
Consul's morning:

Such is the nature of his doom
That like some infant Aeolus Dowson in tempest's tavern,
He claps for better thunder, wilder typhoon.

The theme of taverns and alcohol, essential in the Volcano,
also informs much of the Lighthouse, particularly the third
section, "The Cantinas." In chapter three of the Volcano, the
Consul, during his unsuccessful attempt to make love to his wife,
asks himself essentially the same question posed at the end of
the poem "Doctory Usquebaugh" [28]:

...So well might we inquire, content to rot,
What do you offer, love, which drink does not?
(17-18)

In fact, when he realizes he is impotent, the Consul visualizes a
bottle of alcohol: he cannot tell Yvonne that he loves her, but
he can recite the slogan on the labels of Johnnie Walker whisky
bottles (UV 95). Jan Gabriel's biographical short story "Not with
a Bang" (Story XXIX (1946) 121:55-61), a depiction of the
impossible Mexican situation she shared with Lowry, echoes and
corroborates the mood and tone of the final couplet in "Doctor
Usquebaugh." In the Lighthouse, in the Volcano, and in Lowry's
life, drink trumps sex.
The expression of Lowry’s personal conception of the essence of Mexico is an important component of the *Volcano*, as he makes clear to Jonathan Cape in 1946:

I feel the first chapter for example, such as it stands, is necessary since it sets, even without the reader’s knowledge, the mood and tone of the book as well as the slow melancholy tragic rhythm of Mexico itself—its sadness—and above all establishes the terrain...

(SL 58)

A similar concern for the land exists in Lowry’s Dollarton poetry and the posthumous novel *October Ferry to Gabriola*. Lowry’s ability to find the appropriate language to articulate an explicit sense of Canadian location links the Dollarton poems and *October Ferry*. It is worth noting that the sections of the 1947 selection are geographically grouped, and that roughly two-thirds of the selection’s poems are contained in the "Poems from Vancouver" section. The Dollarton manuscripts share the pattern manifest in the Mexican papers. For example, Lowry composed the uncollected poem "Lament in the Pacific Northwest" [241], which mourns the "progressive" changes in the Vancouver neighbourhood around Denman and Davie Streets, on the manuscripts for *October Ferry*, and a version of the poem closes chapter twenty-five.

Certain descriptive passages in *October Ferry* are reminiscent of the Dollarton poems:

For one fine morning near high tide they would rise to see a greet wheel of carved curling turquoise with flashing sleeked spokes sharp as a fin three miles long sweeping around the bay: crash, boom: the wash of a steamer coming in under the mist—paradisal result and displacement of that far distant and most malodorous cause, a dirty oil tanker which, with all its flags strung diagonally aloft above its bridges and catwalks, looked like a huge floating promenade.  

(Of 80-81)
Again, Lowry's descriptive method in this passage is poetical or "churrigueresque:" its effect depends upon the reader's "poetical conception of the whole." His characteristic technique of providing strings of multiple modifiers ("great wheel of carved curling turquoise") evokes the poem's sense of place through imagery, so that the reader is forced to interact subjectively rather than objectively with Lowry's landscape, as he does also in the poem "Happiness" [148]:

Blue mountains with snow and blue cold rough water -
A wild sky full of stars at rising
And Venus and the gibbous moon at sunrise,
Gulls following a motor boat against the wind,
Trees with branches rooted in air;
Sitting in the sun at noon
With the furiously smoking shadow of the shack chimney,
Eagles drive downwind in one,
Terns blow backward

Ben Maartman, a shack-dweller during the 1950s, remembers Lowry's characteristic poetic method of speech:

When he'd get drunk Malcolm would speak with a flow of thoughts and imagery. He would look at something like the local gravel pit and tell you all the shades of history, and classics down through the times, and out of it would come a kernel of why we were all in this moment in time. His knowledge, associations, and descriptions were phenomenal. He was a poet: we could all have the same experience, but he was the only one who could capture it.

(Salloum 96)

Lowry's method of speech is not the only biographical aspect of his poetry. His current biographer, Gordon Bowker, comments "that Lowry was actually a better poet than Selected Poems suggests he was. There were some very good ones in the selection, but there are many more just as good in 'the whole bolus'.... I am coming to the conclusion that the poetry is of greater
biographical value than I had previously thought" (letter to K.S., 25 April 1988). Most Lowyrans agree that Lowry’s works manifest a strong autobiographical component. The lyrical nature of the poems allows critics to gain more direct access to Lowry’s mind—both his immediate thoughts and more intimate concerns. Because a large proportion of Lowry criticism is biographical, the poetry is an invaluable and essentially unworked mine of information.

Like most of Lowry’s literary work, the Lighthouse is autobiographical. In it, Lowry’s devotion to various authors, including Conrad Aiken, Nordahl Grieg, and Herman Melville is marked. Other biographical motifs include references to Jan Gabrial’s desertion and Lowry’s ensuing desolation, expressed in his poem "Delirium in Vera Cruz" [27], and described by Aiken in Ushant. Drinking, alcoholism, and guilt also play large roles in the collection, particularly in "The Cantinas." While it is true that Ultramarine’s Dana Hilliot feels some guilt among the rough sailors for his comfortable, middle-class background, as Lowry did on his own 1927 voyage, it is not until the Mexican period in his own life that he begins to vent his alcoholic guilt. Although the Consul provides a vivid portrait of this guilt, Lowry’s poem "Most nauseous of all drinks, what is your spell?" [23] is perhaps its clearest lyrical statement:

Most nauseous of all drinks, what is your spell?  
You are cheap, you are the whore of potions;  
You are impalatable, you are the way to hell;  
You are insatiable of ravagement, you  
Are the worst of libations!
Under your acid spell, quite wanting only you,
Loving only you, we wait only our balm
For the heart’s next recession to its false calm.
-- But would you were only friend, not mistress too!

(1-5, 16-19)

Specific allusions to other biographical events continue into
poetry of the Dollarton period. In "Xocxitepec" [129], for
example, Lowry mentions the same two shrieking fawns that appear
in the Volcano's Hotel Canada (92). This hotel, which becomes the
Cornada in Dark as the Grave, was the scene of Lowry's final
break with Gabrial in December 1937.

In Dollarton, Lowry reached a literary maturity he did not
possess in 1937; more and more of his poems address the problems
of being a writer. In "Joseph Conrad" [118], Lowry expressed his
frustration with the rigours of poetic form:

This wrestling, as of seamen with a storm
Which flies to leeward - while they, united
In that chaos, turn, each on his nighted
Bunk to dream of chaos again, or home -
The poet himself, struggling with the form
Of his coiled work, knows...

(1-6)

In another Dollarton poem, "Bright as the Pleiades Upon the Soul"
[181], the storm motif again depicts his difficulty:

Wrestling with iambics in the stormy wood
I lost the joy that wind itself may bring:
And yet the wood must struggle with the form of the gale
As poets should with words from what quarter
Of the plains of sense
Bent by its fury
The gale is
The wood composed in peace once more the poem.

The frequency of poems about writing and writers increases in the
third section of the 1947 selection. In "Foul, Or Twenty-Five"
[144], Lowry employs a rugby conceit to express the writer's
struggle:
Gloomy is this weary scrimmage
Of my thoughts to heel some image
Out to where the scrum half-dancing
Of my will to write entrancing
Poems waits to fling the fated
Thing, that will arrive deflated
On the tryline of abortion.

Lowry regarded almost any idea or event as poetical fodder: while he and Margerie awaited mail from Scribner's Sons regarding Margerie's novel *The Last Twist of the Knife*, which was eventually published by that firm in 1946, albeit without its final chapter, Lowry composed "Scribner's Sons" [147], which records his reaction to this lack of mail. The poems are revealing autobiographical portraits because Lowry used them almost as an undated diary, recording and commenting on numerous and varied events. In an interview published in the *Paris Review Interviews* (London: Fourth Series, 1977), Conrad Aiken, responding to the interviewer's statement "[Lowry] lived through a lot that he was able to use very effectively," commented, "oh, he didn't miss a trick. He was a born observer." Lowry loved to collect and note bits of eclectic information, which were incorporated into one or more of his literary efforts. This methodology in part accounts for the encyclopaedic nature of his prose works, and for his wide range of poetic topics.

Related to biographical criticism, and extending beyond it, is the documentation of Lowry's imaginative universe: his reading, beliefs, fears, theories, and internal voices (or "familiars") all inform his writing. The more critics understand about Lowry's imaginative universe, the more they will be able to trace and explain the multi-layered complexities of his work. And
a study of the encyclopaedic nature of the poems and the eclectic array of information and references they contain, will help to illuminate the discursive, "churrigueresque" features of the prose. In the 1946 letter to Jonathan Cape, Lowry dates the Volcano's conception to his 1937 residence in Cuernavaca (SL 63). If this is accurate, Lowry must have composed parts of the lost Mexican manuscript of Under the Volcano while writing The Lighthouse Invites the Storm, which accounts for the similarity of information and allusion in the two works. Direct and indirect references to the works of Melville, Shakespeare, Shelley, Aiken, Grieg, Poe, Brooke, Bunyan, Chekhov, Dostoievski, Donne, Ibsen, Rimbaud, and Yeats abound in both texts, as do biblical and classical allusions, and references to jazz and geography. Both texts refer to some of the same historical and political events, such as the Spanish Civil war. Lowry's emphasis on this event provides a critical context in which critics may study Lowry in relation to other writers of his era such as Ernest Hemingway and George Orwell, for whom the Spanish Civil war was an ideological and moral issue, as it was for Lowry in a poem like "For Christ's sake and for mine" [73]. A reference book such as Ackerley and Clipper's A Companion to Under the Volcano (U.B.C. Press, 1984), which documents Lowry's multitudinous allusions in that novel, can also be used to illuminate the encyclopaedic nature of the poetry, which, after all, stems from the same imaginative universe that created Under the Volcano. In the same way, a thorough study of Lowry's poetry is useful in documenting aspects of his imaginative universe which are not as clearly revealed in his better-known prose and correspondence. For example, the
marginal text in Lowry's story "Through the Panama" acquires a deeper resonance when viewed in the light of Lowry's interest in the technological and symbolic accomplishment of the Panama Canal:

All in all though, gentlemen, what I would like to say about the Panama Canal is that finally it is a work of genius—I would say, like a work of child's genius—something like a novel—in fact just such a novel as I, Sigbjørn Wilderness, if I may say so, might have written myself--

(Hear us O Lord 62)

Lowryans unfamiliar with The Lighthouse Invites the Storm may not realize that its first poem, "Peter Gaunt and the Canals" [15], which commences with the name of the canal's builder, De Lesseps, introduces the theme of the canal to Lowry's work through the volume's recurring character Peter Gaunt, an adventurer and builder of canals, the character whose mythologized biography and romantic journey the Lighthouse represents.

Aside from those poems important because of contexts shared with the prose works, or because of their biographical relevance, there is in the canon a core of highly successful poems—works one might wish to anthologize as among the best or most representative of Lowry as poet. The Dollarton group, and especially the "Poems from Vancouver" section of the 1947 selection, are particularly good examples of Lowry's descriptive ability to capture the land and seascapes and to depict with poignant accuracy the squatter life on the beach. The best poems in this group place Lowry firmly in the tradition of Canadian regionalist poetry. "Indian Arm" [164], for example, presents a
vivid, natural picture of the beach on a late November afternoon. The language is marked by a control of imagery, syntax, and general lyrical quality that indicates a potential only occasionally realized:

Mill-wheel reflections of sun on water  
And the spokes of light wheeling on the shacks,  
Such freshness of wind in a spring quarter

Such radiance for November! While oil tracks  
Make agate patterns, a tanker passes  
- sudden sleeked lead boils on the beach, attacks

Boats under houses, the bowed band grasses,  
Reflections are shivered, wild spokes unreel  
The day booms a song of foaming basses.

...Softly renews the round of the mill-wheel  
Sun reflections winding longer shadows  
Turn pine bough into green chenille.

After the moonlight walks over windrows  
Mill-wheel reflections of moonlight later  
On water embroider waving windows...

What distinguishes "Indian Arm" and other collected and uncalled Dollarton poems, such as "The Wild Cherry" [152], "Port Moody" [165], "A Picture" [269], and "Pines write a Chinese poem upon the white-gold sun" [271], is the poetic vision that infuses the land-sea descriptions, capturing in the process that sense of the wildness of the landscape that inspires the best Canadian regionalist poetry. In "Pines write," for instance, Lowry describes the hardness and sharpness of the land:

Gigantic, the pines against the Chinese sun  
Illumined and embodied by light, the pines are real  
That were broken bottles guarding the hill.  
(3-5)

The lines echo similar sentiments in A.J.M. Smith's "The Lonely Land" (1936), in which "Cedar and jagged fir / uplift sharp barbs / against the gray / and cloud-piled sky" (1-4); but whereas
Smith seems to be striving, in both his descriptive sparseness and the brevity of his lines, for a kind of imagist effect. Lowry's perspective, with its longer line length, is softened and more expansive, and as a result more lyrical, more personal and subjective, in a word, more romantic—a quality, finally, that characterizes much of Lowry's poetry, accounting, paradoxically, for both its successes and its failures, and also for its fascination.
A NOTE ON THE TEXT

Most of Malcolm Lowry's poetic manuscripts are preserved in the Malcolm Lowry Papers in the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library. The Lowry collection is extensive, containing sixty boxes of correspondence, manuscripts, typescripts, published works, photos, and memorabilia, as well as a full complement of critical works on Lowry. The manuscripts and typescripts for the two hundred and ninety-six poems on the inventory are, with few exceptions, located in boxes four through seven, which contain individual files, alphabetically arranged, for each poem. Any given file contains all the manuscripts or typed drafts of a particular poem, except for the two unpublished authorial collections, which are filed separately—*The Lighthouse Invites the Storm* in box six, the 1947 collection in box seven.

The inventory arrangement of the poetic papers is logical for locating a particular poem; from a bibliographical point of view, however, the arrangement is chaotic. Far more serious than the organization is the fact that the integrity of the poetic archive has been violated. While collecting and arranging Lowry's poetic manuscripts and typescripts, Earle Birney and Margerie Lowry, to facilitate filing, separated sheets on which Lowry had composed more than one poem, thereby destroying invaluable evidence for the cluster-dating of related poems. By disbinding five of Lowry's manuscript notebooks, Birney made it virtually impossible to restore Lowry's compositional sequence, a loss that affects not only dating, but also critical analysis. In addition,
Birney scribbled—often, inexplicably, in ink—on many of Lowry's manuscripts and typescripts. Fortunately, Birney's hand is markedly different from Lowry's, so that his substantive emendations are easily distinguishable. However, it is very difficult to determine whether handwritten marks of punctuation are authorial. Editorially, this problem is especially irritating with regard to cuts indicated through lines or slashes. Equally irksome is Birney's inclusion in many individual poem files of his own unmarked typescript versions of the poems. Their presence necessitated examining papers in Birney's correspondence in order to generate a chart to identify the papers he typically used, to distinguish them from Lowry's and to preclude, or lessen, the risk of bestowing textual authority, or perhaps even copy-text status, on Birney's unauthorized revisions.

Lowry's own method of composition and the state of his poetic papers complicates further the chaotic nature of the collection. The fact that he tended to compose on any paper at hand, whether a restaurant menu or the back of a sheet from a discarded draft of prose, compounds the task of compiling a chronological master-list of Lowry's poems. That these manuscripts can appear anywhere in the collection vitiates the value of the poetic inventory. Because Lowry also tended to compose poems in the margins of his prose manuscripts, the compilation of a complete listing of his poems necessitated consulting these manuscripts. For example, the three poems included in "Through the Panama," published in Hear us O Lord from heaven Thy dwelling place, must be traced back through the multiple drafts of that story. The poems in "Through the Panama"
as published texts pose no editorial problem; less easy to
discover, however, are unpublished poems jotted in the margin of
a draft version of a published prose work.

Lowry's eclectic methods of composing and revising his
poetry creates a bibliographically bewildering array of
manuscripts and typescripts in which little apparent pattern of
consistent compositional practice is evident. Some poems exist in
ten to fifteen drafts, some only in one. Some poems are
incomplete—the sonnet rhyme scheme, for example, may be jotted
beside a poem in which designated lines are missing—and yet
still exist in multiple drafts. The chronological line of
development for certain poems can be deceptively simple if the
editor naively assumes that a Lowry manuscript always precedes a
typescript. There is also the rather delicate question of
Margerie Lowry's role in the composition process. Mrs. Lowry was
responsible for transcribing on the typewriter Lowry's holograph
drafts. A close collation reveals occasional substantive variants
between a holograph draft and a typed version. In these
instances, the question of textual priority must be resolved.
Should the editor assume that the Lowrys discussed these
variants, thereby conferring authorial status on them? Or,
following Fredson Bowers' treatment of Hawthorne's text, simply
view the wifely variants as non-authorial and disregard their
textual relevance? Or should the editor acknowledge that the
variants are likely non-authorial, but still grant their
authority on the assumption that Lowry himself welcomed, perhaps
even needed, Margerie's literary imput? Despite the possibility
of Mrs. Lowry's editing, the final typescripts have been assigned authority on the grounds that Lowry probably saw them, and, unless further holograph revisions were made on these sheets, as they sometimes were, that he approved them. The hypothesis that Mrs. Lowry silently emended the poems during their retyping is difficult to prove without more evidence than survives. In any case, the number of poems which do not change from the final holograph draft to the typescript version is greater than those that do, so that the issue of Mrs. Lowry's possible emendations is not vital to the integrity of the text.

These are are just a few of the problems and questions raised by Lowry's poetic manuscripts, to which no single, global solution is possible. Accordingly, each poem is treated individually within guidelines based on a consistent over-all editorial policy, combining methodological principles derived from both the humanist and the scientific schools of bibliography. This edition aims to present a reliable text of Lowry's entire poetic canon, with copy-texts based on the latest determinable authorial versions of the poems, providing for each poem a complete record of the authorial substantive variants in every version preceding the final copy-text.

The preparation of the text for this edition has proved more onerous than originally envisioned and has involved five major editorial stages: location, transcription, dating, arrangement, and collation. The main contribution of the edition in the first category is the addition of some one hundred and fifty poems to Lowry's known poetic canon: the U.B.C. inventory includes only two hundred and ninety-six titles against four hundred and sixty-
five in the complete edition. Following the identification, verification, and transcription of each poem, the next step was to make a thorough paper analysis to determine a *terminus a quo* and *ad quem* for all manuscript and typescript variants of each title. Once the dates of each poem had been definitely, or at least satisfactorily, established, the poems were grouped according to their compositional periods to convey some idea of Lowry’s artistic development. Arrangement within the chronological sections depends on the nature of that particular group of poems. For example, the integrity of the authorial volumes has been preserved, while sections of uncollected poems have been arranged alphabetically except where dating is precise enough to justify a chronological arrangement. Once the order of the edition had been determined, the task of close collation of the multiple versions for each poem began in order to provide a detailed history of the poem’s text.

In the interest of providing what Lowry actually wrote, instead of conjecturing about his final intentions, which are now unascertainable, or trying to finish his poems, which is not the job of a textual editor, this edition contains no substantive editorial emendations. Silent emendation of accidentals is restricted to initial line capitalization, which Lowry sometimes ignored in drafts but generally used in his final typescript versions.

The specific bibliographical and textual details of each group of poems are discussed in the sectional headnotes; Appendix D contains a chart of the papers used by Lowry in his outgoing
correspondence preserved at U.B.C., which have been invaluable in
dating Lowry's poetry. The following survey, which supplements
the general introductions to each section, provides textual
details on the groupings of Lowry's poems in this edition.

Juvenilia/Apprenticeship 1925-33

No manuscripts have surfaced. Copy-texts for ten of the
fourteen items in this section are from published sources and may
contain non-authorial, compositional variants. The four poems
from the Conrad Aiken Papers in the Huntington Library are, for
lack of other evidence, dated 1929, the date ascribed to them
either by Aiken or the Huntington librarians.

The Lighthouse Invites the Storm:
New York/Mexico/Los Angeles/Vancouver 1934-39

The textual history of Lowry's first volume of poems, The,Lighthouse Invites the Storm, is extremely complicated. The
U.B.C. inventory terms its manuscript "Lowry's draft copy."
Whether this group of typescripts accurately reflects Lowry's
final arrangement is uncertain given the editorial modifications
made in the poetic papers. Fortunately, Lowry numbered the
Lighthouse poems; so, it is possible to reconstruct the volume's
intended order. The draft copy contains seven kinds of paper;
earlier and later versions--both typescript and manuscript--of
the poems in this draft are contained in the individual poetry
files. Also preserved in the individual files are poems which are
not included in the draft, but which appear numbered on one or
more of the *Lighthouse* papers. It is now difficult to determine whether the omissions are authorial or editorial, and, since the numbering recommences in each of the seven sections, in which sections the omitted poems belong. A combination of paper-dating from correspondence and the New York *Lunar Caustic* typescripts, and determining version priority through the tracing of authorial variants, eventually results in a clear stemmatic line for most of the poems. The earliest *Lighthouse* papers date from the 1934-36 New York period; the latest retyping of the entire volume probably occurred in Los Angeles in 1938-39.

**The Dollarton Years: 1940-54**

Lowry composed almost half of his poetry during his residence at Dollarton, and there is a correspondingly large number of manuscripts and typescripts for this period. Lowry's lengthy sojourn in the lower mainland and his wide literary network in the Vancouver area are largely responsible for the extent of U.B.C.'s holdings of manuscripts for the Dollarton period. Moreover, when the Lowrys left Dollarton in 1954, they entrusted to some Dollarton and Vancouver friends, notably Harvey Burt and Earle Birney, most of Lowry's papers, a decision which, considering Lowry's unsettled lifestyle, proved most beneficial to Lowry scholars.

The extent of the Dollarton manuscripts and the amount of documentation available on the typescripts, made it easier to be precise about Lowry's compositional practices during this period than about any other period of his life. At Dollarton, Lowry generally composed in pencil on cheap brown 8 1/2 x 11" newsprint
sheets, which are now faded and difficult to read. During the first year of his Dollarton tenure, he also used various types of 7 x 9 1/4" notebooks, and, although they appear infrequently throughout the rest of the period, in 1941 the frequency of notebook papers drops sharply in favour of the letter-size brown sheets. After one or more holograph drafts of a poem were completed, Lowry would leave Margerie the draft of his choice, and she would type it out, again on brown sheets. Very often three to five of these intermediate drafts appear on the same sheet—or would have, had the sheets not been severed. The poems would then undergo another round of holograph revision, after which they were typed individually on brown sheets or the bond papers listed in Appendix D. A frequently-used bond paper not present in the correspondence is cream-coloured 8 x 10" Voucher Bond. The fact that this paper is absent from the correspondence makes it difficult to date poems which appear on it. The variants in the Voucher poems suggest that this paper occurs late in the Dollarton period, as does the fact that it is typed in elite type characteristic of the second (1949-54) Dollarton period. Because the versions are late, their significance as copy-texts is obvious. There are photocopied 8 x 10" elite-type letters in Lowry's outgoing correspondence, but the watermark of the original is not visible, and because Lowry also used 8 x 10" paper typed in elite type in England, the dating of these versions becomes vital in the light of their possible importance as copy-texts.
Paper manufacturers' catalogues reveal that Voucher Bond paper was manufactured in North America during the 1950s. However, Lowry could presumably have taken a store of this paper to England in 1954, so that an English period date for these versions is not impossible, even though Voucher Bond paper does not appear in his outgoing correspondence for 1954-57. This paper certainly post-dates 1947, when Lowry selected and had re-typed the fifty-four poems which comprise his second volume of poetry, because forty-six of the fifty-four poems, plus nineteen additional Dollarton poems, were further revised and re-typed on Voucher Bond. Because the Lowrys travelled from 1947 to 1949, and because there is no evidence to suggest that Lowry worked seriously on any poetry in England, the Voucher Bond date almost certainly falls between 1949 and 1954. In 1951 Lowry revised thirteen of the fifty-four selected poems on Victory Bond paper; ten of these thirteen poems were further revised on sheets of Voucher Bond, so that the Voucher date can be narrowed to 1952-54.  

Love Poems 1949-57

In December 1987 the UBC Library acquired from Margerie Lowry and her sister, the conservator of the Lowry estate, Priscilla Woolfan, and their friend Dr. Elizabeth Moss, a new lot of Lowry papers which they date from the England period. A content analysis of these papers reveals that approximately one-third date from Dollarton. For the most part, this lot comprises 3 1/4 x 4 3/4" coloured newsprint sheets inscribed in pencil and blue ink. Lowry filled approximately two hundred sheets with
handwritten personal messages, poems, and song lyrics for Margerie Lowry, "ditties" which almost certainly he did not expect to publish. An explanation for their inclusion in this edition is provided in the introductory essay to that section.

Only four of the poems in this section come from sources other than U.B.C.'s most recent acquisition. The most interesting of these poems is "Lusty Advice of a Fortune Teller" [354], the only single draft poem which appears on Plantagenet Bond paper, one of the last papers Lowry used, datable to 1957. It is probably the last formal poem Lowry wrote.

Song Lyrics 1927-57 [Appendix A]

The fifteen items in this section come from various sources. Just under half of the lyrics date from Lowry's apprenticeship period. The copy-texts for all but one of these have been taken from published sources: "Ballad" [422], for which no manuscript exists in Lowry's hand, is a transcription of a recreation by Margerie of Lowry's verbal recitation of the poem—a kind of textual paraphrase, like an Elizabethan prompt book, it has great interest but no absolute authority. Two of the three song lyrics written at Dollarton appear in Lowry's outgoing correspondence; the third appears in the manuscripts and published version of "Through the Panama." The remaining lyrics are from U.B.C.'s most recently acquired manuscripts.
A Key to the Editorial Apparatus

The clearest way to explain the editorial apparatus is to provide a specific example:

1937 III [19.2]

MEMORY OF THE HOSPITALITY OF AMERICAN BARMEN

We reserve the right to refuse to anyone, pal.
Yeah, and that means you, four eyes, with the wheels,
[and hell!]

Don’t tell me you’re a diamond and put
It on the slate, or that your heart is fat,
Or that your landlord can’t wait to break it.
What’s that? It’s broken already? Well, that’s that.
A spade’ll pick your grave if grave you merit;
A spade’s a spade, that’s what they call it here.
We teach ’em bully the cabbage, never you fear;

In God we trust -- but only on the nickel.
Well, if you had a buck too bad you spent her,
-- But all who ask for trust distrust inherit,
And even God is fickle.

In the sample, which appears in the third section of the Lighthouse, the date of the poem is recorded on the left of the head line. If the date has been determined through non-bibliographical means, or if it is for any reason tentative, it is placed in square brackets. Many poems in the edition are dated only within a range of years. The centre of the head line records the authorial title or number of each poem. If the poem has both a number and title, the title appears on the next line of text, and if it lacks both, the head line remains blank in this area. The edition number of the poem, by which it is cross-referenced, is placed in square brackets on the right side of the head line. The figure following the decimal point indicates the number of
extant versions for that poem. Unless otherwise noted by a figure in round brackets following the number of versions, the copy-text is always the latest authorial version. The lines of the text are numbered by fives down the left side of the page. Any word in the poetic text of which the editor is unsure is square-bracketed with a question mark preceding the first letter of the suggested word. Unauthorized line breaks are marked by a single square bracket and are not counted as separate lines. The textual history and record of editorial emendations for each poem are combined and immediately follow the text of the poem. The sigla (or record of authorial variants in versions preceding the copy-text) and emendations are keyed by line number on the left. In the case of sigla, as distinct from emendations, the next figure represents the version number of the poem in which the variant occurs, and the variant line follows the colon. Any words which are not Lowry's—for example, "missing"—are placed in square brackets throughout the edition. In the case of editorial changes, such as line six in the sample, the emended word follows the line number and is underlined. The copy-text reading follows the single square bracket. If there is a justifying reference for the editorial change, for example an authorial appearance in an earlier version of the poem, its location is recorded and appears in pointed brackets following the copy-text reading. Ampersands and abbreviations are silently expanded, and any intended authorial changes indicated on the manuscripts, such as deleted or added lines, interlineations, and crossings-out, are followed and properly recorded in the sigla, as are title changes. If the
copy-text lacks a title which appears in earlier drafts, it is restored from the latest titled authorial version. Occasionally variant versions of a poem are so different that they are impossible to collate, as occurs in "A child may find no words for its sorrow" [185]; in such cases the parallel version is reproduced separately and follows the sigla notation. Poems published during Lowry's lifetime are included in the stemmatic line; posthumous poems are not.

A list of the abbreviations used in this edition is provided in the preliminaries.

NOTES

1 For a list of other libraries with significant Lowry manuscript collections, see the Bibliography. For Lowry's poetry, the most interesting accession outside U.B.C. is in the McFarlin Library at the University of Tulsa. For a further explanation, see Note 3.

2 In his introduction to the Centre for the Editing of American Authors' Centenary Edition of The Marble Faun (Ohio State University Press, 1968), Fredson Bowers provides a textual history of Sophia Hawthorne's manuscript emendations, as well as his rationale for excising all traces of her work from her husband's text. This introduction sparked a controversy in the American scholarly community, including Edmund Wilson's famous 1968 attack on the Centre for the Editing of American Authors, The Fruits of the MLA, originally published in the The New York Review of Books (26 September and 10 October 1968).
3 The McFarlin Library at the University of Tulsa possesses a collection of sixty-five typescript poems by Lowry, typewritten in black elite type on the 8 x 10" cream-coloured Voucher Bond paper. In response to a letter requesting information regarding the provenance of these typescripts, Sidney F. Huttner, Curator of Special Collections at the McFarlin Library replied:

As I mentioned, our provenance records are not always as complete as one desires, but reviewing them I am now reasonably convinced this group of poems was acquired in early December 1976 at a Sotheby's (London) auction with J. Howard Woolmer acting as our agent. (6 October 1987)

That sale, located with the assistance of C.F. Forbes, the Colbeck librarian in the Special Collections Division of the U.B.C. Library, was held at Sotheby's Chancery Lane, on Friday, 17 December 1976, and appeared as Lot 612, the literary estate of Lowry's friend, English writer and critic John Davenport (1910-63), in Sotheby's Catalogue 7 (1976-77). Included in this lot was a typescript of sixty-eight poems divided by separate title pages into "Sea Poems," "Mexican Poems," "Canadian Poems," and "Miscellaneous." The lot also contained some other items of Lowryana, including letters from Margerie Lowry to John Davenport dated between 1961 to 1963. The price list indicates that the entire lot was purchased by "Stanton" for £ 1100. "Stanton" may have subdivided and sold his lot, because the McFarlin has only their sixty-five typescript poems without title-pages or letters. How John Davenport came into possession of the typescript selection is probably revealed in Margerie Lowry's letters to him in the sale, but these have not been located. At the time, Margerie, who was heavily engaged with
Earle Birney in arranging and organizing Lowry's poems, may have sent Davenport the poems hoping he would be able to place them with a British publisher. Although Margerie and Birney retyped Lowry's poems in the early 1960s, the Voucher Bond paper almost certainly has a rightful place in the authorial stemma, since Lowry's hand appears on several of the Voucher sheets. The fact that these poems appear on one brand of paper, with only one typeface, probably from the same typewriter, and are divided by title-pages which bear a striking similarity to those in Lowry's 1947 selection, strongly suggests that the Voucher Bond sheets represent a third authorial collection, one which is a later and revised version of the 1947 selection, a theory further supported by the fact that forty-six of the fifty-four poems included in the 1947 selection were revised on Voucher Bond sheets. However, until more definitive evidence, such as the Margerie Lowry/John Davenport letters, comes to light, this theory is only conjectural, and, although the Voucher sheets are used as copy-texts because of their late date, the order of the poems in this edition follows that in the 1947 selection preserved at U.B.C.

Because Priscilla Woolfan has agreed to protect the forthcoming academic work by Dr. Moss on the new material, it is generally restricted from use by other scholars until August 1988. I wish to acknowledge and thank Anne Yandle, Head of the U.B.C. Library Special Collections Division, for her help in procuring permission from Mrs. Woolfan for me to use the restricted material.
THE TEXT
APPRENTICESHIP: POETIC JUVENILIA 1925-33

Lowry's first major literary success was the 1933 publication of his novel Ultramarine by Jonathan Cape. The fourteen poems here classified as juvenilia represent Lowry's known pre-1933 poetic efforts. From 1923 to 1927 Lowry attended the Leys School in Cambridge, where, in 1925, under the pseudonym "Camel" (based on his initials "C.M.L."), he began contributing stories, hockey reviews, and occasional poems to the school newspaper, The Leys Fortnightly. In 1927, Lowry left the Leys School to spend the summer and fall sailing to the Far East aboard the S.S. Pyrrhus. After spending 1928 in Bonn at Weber's School of Modern German, Lowry departed for the East Coast of the United States in order to study with Conrad Aiken. He remained with Aiken from April to September 1929, and in October of that year entered St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, where, except for a summer trip to Norway to meet Nordahl Grieg, he remained until his graduation in May 1932. Ultramarine was published in November 1933, eighteen months later.

The first seven poems in this section appeared in seven issues of The Leys Fortnightly between 1925 and 1928, three of them [5-7] after he left the Leys School: "The Glory of the Sea" [5] is dated "Yellow Sea, August 1927"; the two others are undated, but, like "The Glory of the Sea," they reflect Lowry's new-found interest in the sea and foreshadow its thematic importance in his later literary works. The four 1929 poems [8-11]--dated by Aiken--are included in the Lowry/Aiken correspondence in the Huntington Library. Lowry sent Aiken these

Since all the poems in this section survive only in printed texts, the problem of copy-text does not arise, though the authority of the accidentals in the printed text is, of course, uncertain. The paucity of poems dating from this period of Lowry's career makes it likely that additions to the juvenilia may surface in the future, but there is no basis at present for projecting any substantial extension of his early canon. The fourteen poems, all datable, are arranged chronologically.
(In which the author, having, as he endeavours to show, bats in the belfry, disregards any attempt to write correct poetry.)

On every Friday afternoon,
Before the sky is tinged with moon
And stars whizz round the hor-i-z-on,
One writes from Postgate this and that
5
Of sibi, and of capiat
And all the other verbs in at;
Of alvus, and of carbasus
And all the other nouns in-yus;
In Rutherford, of dear old Zeus
10
(I often wonder what’s the use)--
My kingdom for a San-excuse!
Then might I willingly refuse
To state my views upon the Muse,
Sadly to wait my graphic fate,
15
Receive my weekly evening hate,
Give in my imposition late,
Obtain three raps upon the pate,
Rewrite again on paper green:
(Next afternoon may I be seen
20
Partaking not of Pork and Bean
But writing Postgate--by the ream!)
With twitching face and doddering limb
I tentatively hand it in:
"Won’t do!” says He--"Omissions...sin!"
25
Then like some Bagdadanian djinn
He wafts my efforts towards the bin:
Again I try, again I fail--
Again at all the words I quail....
Until at last with mouth afoam
30
I go, quite dippy in the dome,
Into my narrow padded room,
Where Colney warders glibly boom
At little me....Ah! me putes
Amentem, quite! ('Tis cruel, very,
35
Thus to abuse a dromedary).

Jones took the little daily dose
Of Kruschen in his tea,
And cleaned his teeth with Pepsodent,
That filmless they might be.
5
And when J. went to bed at night
He left his windows wide,
And slept not on his back, for J.
Preferred to on his side.
Again, J.'d take a dose of salts
   On rising from his bed,
And if he'd not a sixpenny bit
   Six pennies served instead.

J. had a little bread-and-milk,
   Some Liver Oil and malt,
And finished off his breakfast with
   An "Andrews' Liver Salt."

Concerning J. had I the art,
   I might for ever sing,
If only J.'d not just succumbed
   To septic poisoning.

THE OLD WOMAN WHO BURIED CATS

There was an old woman who lived in a nice
Little house that was badly infested with mice:
"Ah, ha!" said the woman, "I'll have to stop that;"
So she squandered some money in buying a cat.

From that cat not a mouse, nor a sparrow could hide,
Until at long last the poor cat itself died.
The woman donned black, as was proper and fitting,
And wearily, drearily, wept in her knitting.

As that cat had behaved as a cat should behave,
It behoved her to find it an honourable grave.
"'Tis a difficult job, far alas!" so thought she,
"There's nothing near here like a cats' cemetry."

"I can't drop, I won't drop, my cat down a well..."
In the meantime the cat was beginning to shrink
"Aw! wheel it away," said the cook, "in a barrer."
"What'll I do?" wailed the woman, just like MISS GWEN FARRAR.

She attempted to bury the corpse in the Park,
Quite late on a night which was reasonably dark;
But was scared by a Robert, who, noting the time,
Had (naturally rather) suspected a crime.

At last in a frenzy she rang up a friend,
And asked her politely if oh! could she send
Her a dead pussy-cat; and the friend replied, "Right,
But you must come yourself, dear; in fact, come to-night."

The train it was crowded; indeed 'twas a feat
For our heroine e'en to get hold of a seat.
She had packed the poor cat in her dead husband's case,
And mem'ry brought tears with the sweat down her face.
Her friend at the station asked, "Is this the bag? My dear, you look tired, for these trains are a fag. We'll just have some tea and be happy and merry: The cat—(oh, don't worry)—the gard'ner will bury.

The gardener opened the suitcase and said... "I'm dashed!" and the mystified man scratched his head; For lying inside, stark, immaculate, mute, Was — a perfectly pressed Pope and Bradley dress-suit.

1926

THE RAIN FELL HEAVILY

Among the wet and sodden grass
A lonely little graveyard stood
Within the precincts of a wood
Where men are seldom known to pass.

The wood was gaunt. I saw the wreath—
The mourners murmuring silence kept:
Forlorn the naked willows wept;
A toad sat corpulent beneath.

The mourners slowly crept away
And left me to my solitude.
I read the legend on the nude
Small gravestone in the blackened hay.

When I am dead
Bring me not roses white,
Nor austere lilies grimly bright;
But bring me from the garden roses red.
Roses red, wind-blown, sun-kissed;
The roses that my life hath missed—
When I am dead.

Bring roses red! There was no sun
To shine. The grey and yellow sky
Wept in the month of February;
Each pine—a dripping skeleton.

1927

THE GLORY OF THE SEA

The tramp sailed grimly on her track;
A sickly haze shut out the sky;
The air was green, the sun was black;
The sea was calm like molten lead.

An engineer came staggering by:
"Another Chink gone west!" he said.

"Another Chink!" The purser's tastes Were delicate. He loathed the sight
Of bare-backed stokers, sweaty waists.
"By crimes, sir, don't it make you think,
That death should touch an Annamite?
That God should stoop to kill a Chink?"

"You pen-push clerk! you pursing thing!"
The chief spat out: "you dog-eared clump!
You goat-skin rotten in Tin-Sing!
I'd like to throw you down the hole;
I'd see them firemen made you jump,
To sweat your lifeblood in the coal.

"I'd like to see you doss on straw,
And live on samshaw, fleas and rice,
Or suck the ling fish from the floor,
Or drink the fly-bejostled muck
They get for tea with foc'sle lice....
Perhaps your soul would come unstuck."

The cook stood at the galley door
To sup the calmness of the night;
His lips were parched, his back was sore
With bending o'er the galley stove.
He looked for Chang the Annamite,
A lad whom he had learned to love.

"Where's Chang to-night?" he asked the Third;
"It's past the time he came off watch:
Half-hour ago eight bells I heard;
I've got a cake of Kobe trout,
Tinned, by crimes! I bed you'd scotch—"
"Chang? Chang's dead: his heart came out."

The panting sun droppped in the sea;
All hands but five stood on the poop;
The cook sank quietly on his knee,
His shadow cast upon a winch.
It was a melancholy group;
And no man breathed or moved an inch.

* * * *

The owners lolled in office state;
The typist took her files away.
"Good business, Ephraim! How I hate
These rainy summers here, I guess!"
"My wife and I at Biarritz stay....
A coffee? Thanks, you've said it. Yes."
THE COOK IN THE GALLEY

He knows the ship, its dizzy flight,
The upward thrust, the sinking plunge
Into the infinite;

When pans and dishes crash and slide,
When green seas crash through milk-white doors,
And stewards saloonwards staggering wide,
Knee-deep in water, splash like cows;
When wind reverberating roars
And whips his dishcloth overside
He knows, and, reeling, turns the chops;
The cook has served ten thousand chows;
The mad ship trembles, falters, drops...

He comes outside when weather's fine
To hang his singlets on the line,
And then returns—he needs no bell--
The scouse, or Sunday's duff to share;
The stoker's tabnabs need his care;
The sea sounds far away in there,
Ssssssssh, like the hush in a conch-shell.

NUMBER 8 FIREMAN

Blackened and firescarred,
Up from the stokehole,
Supping the wind--
Cold clean scourge of the ocean--
Stood No. 8, Fireman--

"Jesus in heaven
Counts sands on the seashore;
The gulls that wheel, Klio,
And mew round the funnel;
The sharks and the dolphins;
Red sponges, fiddler crabs,
Snouted squids umbrella-winged
Squeezing and buzzing,
Coiling and heaving;
Stars that are reeling;
And all of his children
He counts for His Father.

But I have no father;
The fire is my mother,
And roaring she bore me;
She washed me in coal dust,
And fed me on cinders;
She parched me, then maimed me;
And I am her stoker.
"As God cannot count me,  
The Board of Trade count me,  
Like winches and derricks  
Or boilers; like pistons  
Revolving and gleaming;  
Like brass-silled white cabin-doors  
Windily creaking."

...creaking."] ...creaking".

**[1929]**

**ALCOHOLIC**

I died so many times when drunk  
That sober I became  
Like water where a ship was sunk  
That never knew its name.

Old barnacles upon my sides  
Ringed round with pitch and toss  
Were given me by mermaid brides,  
Immaculate as moss.

Here now, with neither kin nor quest,  
I am so full of sea  
That whales may make of me a nest  
And go to sleep in me.

(Those angels of the upper air  
Who sip of the divine  
May find a haven holier  
But less goodbye than mine.)

**[1929]**

**DARK PATH**

By no specific dart of gold,  
No single singing have I found  
This path. It travels, dark and cold,  
Through dead volcanoes underground.

Here flicker yet the sulphurous  
Charred ends of fires long since I knew.  
Long since, I think, and thinking thus,  
Ignite, daemonically; anew.

Yet, burning, burning, burning Lord,  
Know how this path must likewise come  
Through multitudinous discord  
The awful and the long way home.
SONNET

This ruin now, where moonlight walks alone
Uncovering the cobweb and the rose,
I have been here before; loved each dim stone;
If there were shadows I was one of those.

There listening, as in a shell, I heard
Through some invisible, unlettered whole
One true, if not at all eternal, word
Wrun from the weird mutations of the soul;

Palace or hovel, ruin will at last
Make peace of what is waste; take for a time
The hungry future and the bloody past
Into her night. Only the moon will climb
Up broken stairs to towerd might have been
And rest a little, like some poor, blind queen.

SPIDERWEB

The moment hangs from Heaven like a webbed
Bridge to that invisible wherein
Necessity's dimensions sometimes win
Harbors of air, from which the storm has ebbed.

But we are spiders. And with waiting eyes
We see sail by, beyond old reach and hope,
Doomed wings of distance, small as periscope,
While dining on a diet of dead flies;

The black and gold, the gross and gullible,
We are those spiders who of themselves have spun
Nets of sad time to sway against the sun--
Broken by secrets time can never tell.

FOR NORDAHL GRIEG SHIP'S FIREMAN

Two Norwegian firemen, friends in the same watch,
stand looking up at the ship,
And what do they see? They see an iron moloch
Securely waiting to swallow the lives of men....

But this ship also visits lands of strange beauty
Where broad leaves struggle against the sun.

The hawsers drop and groan,
While the ship backs out of harbour.
She swings round and steams for the open sea.

What are these lands of strange beauty?
They are there surely, they are seen, but are not part
of the two firemen,
Only the port with its cranes is part of them,
Beckoning with their bronze arms at night;
The girls laughing in linked quintets in the lamplight;
A swarm of spirochaetes,
Maggots hatching in the very pulse of love.

Often these two firemen remember Norway
As they gaze from the poop at the galloping clouds
above;
They think of the soundless black depths of fjords;
Spring plants staring at the sun in Trondhjem;
Bare arms among the storm-tossed washing in Tvede-
strand
As Iphigenia remembered Hellas, so do they remember
Norway.

When they remember this the ship is a moloch
An iron monster that crushes seamen and firemen
In its jaws; something obscenely neuter
With its sides fouled with filth, that swallows their
lives
Or maims them. There is no beauty about the ship.

Then one night the two firemen blackened with coal
And firescarred, up from the stokehole,
Pausing amidships in their shuddering flimsies to sup
the wind,
Happen to be standing by the ship's hen-coop
As the cold clean scourge of wind whips them.
"Look," one says, "why one of the hens has got
chickens!"

As they stand and watch the tiny yellow balls
Tumbling in the moonlight, so soft and pathetic
With their little cries, they wonder
How it is possible for them to be so alive
So tender and helpless,
How these could emerge from the cruel naked iron and
thrive,
And they forget the murdering strength of the ship,
How it slays like a lion.

Nor do they think of the life of the chicken,
How shortly the warm fluffy ball becomes hideously
naked
And perhaps dies,
Or is ugly, a continual harlot, a scraggy concubine;
They do not think of eggs beaten in Norwegian egg
cups.

Lo. All is innocence.
For the moment the ship is no longer a moloch
No longer neuter: the helpless warm chickens
Bring back to the firemen a white dream of a girl's face:
One remembers walking through grey fields,
That time they watched the steam rising at night
From the dark Norwegian earth;
And a certain street built on an incline,
Orange squares that were windows in the evening....
The ship staggers and wallows in the sea.

One thinks that the poor lonely ship is still in its birth-
agony,
It is as though the very ship itself has given birth.

1930

IN CAPE COD WITH CONRAD AIKEN

Two philosophers a thousand years from now met in a grotto secretly
Where bayonets of ice dripped about them and the one star shone
in a fountain....
And the first said, "Friend I have discovered a language, but so
complex and difficult
That it would take a thousand years to synthesise a single word."
The other smiled in reply. "I also have discovered a language," he said,
"But in my language one word is the equivalent of sixteen thousand
years."
They sat long thus in conversation, their hands palm-downward
on their knees,
While ice melted loudly about them;
And the hours folded their wings beneath the sky.

I tell you this young man
So that your outlook may perhaps be broadened.
I who have seen snoring volcanoes
And dismal islands shawled in snow....

T Aiken
7 ...a language," [omits end quotation mark]

1931

THOSE COKES TO NEWCASTLE BLUES

Professor J. L. Morison, Professor of Modern History at Armstrong
College, Newcastle, has resigned his membership of the Newcastle
Literary and Philosophical Society because the society has
arranged lectures dealing with certain modern authors whose works
he says may not unjustifiably be called "indecent." In an
interview the Professor said: "I object to the first three names
in the list of lectures. They are D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley,
and James Joyce. Those three are, to my mind, responsible for
some of the most indecent writing of the present day. James
Joyce's book "Ulysses" has been banned in Great Britain, where it
cannot be sold; Lawrence was a man whose works were hopelessly
oversexed. Aldous Huxley is what I call a writer of dirty-minded
matter, I cannot imagine a young man or woman reading Aldous
Huxley's books without being the worse for reading them.... As an ordinary Christian man, I will fight against indecency in every form, I have appealed to the Bishop. This is not a storm in a teacup, but the beginning of a fight for decency and purity, and I shall fight to the last ditch. I appeal to the Press, to the people of Newcastle, to see that the minds of these young people are not polluted by these authors." -- from a recent Sunday Times.

Let Paris read Joyce!
Let Florence read Lawrence!
As for me I regard them with proper abhorrence--
Let Frankfort read Flaherty!

But Newcastle's always the nice gentleman.
On the banks of the Tyne,
On the banks of the Tyne,
To the good is no evil

And no Gertrude Stein;
To the pure are no sexes,
Nor naughty complexes
Bewilder the minds
Of the people of Tyne,

I appeal to the Bishop,
The Navy, the Press,
To help me; Lord help me to clean up the mess,
For no matter how clever

Crome Yellow may be,
Crome Yellow, I point out
Means saffron to me.
On the banks of the Tyne,
On the banks of the Tyne,

To the good is no evil
And no Gertrude Stein;
To the pure are no sexes
No naughty complexes;
The puritan finds

No sub-consciousness vexes
The grey-faced boll-weevil
That lives by the Tyne,
The whey-faced boll-weevil
That lives in the minds

Of the people of Tyne,

An appeal to the clergy would certainly fish up
Some filth from the lecherous mind of a bishop;
And one to the Press, say the Daily Express,
Might result in a campaign to clean up the mess;
And a long peroration might follow to try us
From Douglas the dimpled, the pimpled, the pryous,
That tinfoil best tinseller, pride of the pious,
And pride of the nation, sir, pride of the nation...!
For whatever endeavour this Lawrence has made
To rip out the grey things the grey ones have said,
Whatever the courage or price he has paid,
Shall not sever the strings of the stays of the staid,
The Northumberland strings of the stays of the staid,
Nor can hardly be other than vicious, I'm sure,
To hearts that are upright and minds that are pure.

[with Conrad Aiken]
THE LIGHTHOUSE INVITES THE STORM: POEMS 1934-1939

The Lighthouse Invites the Storm is Lowry's first unpublished collection of poems. It is not clear when Lowry conceived a group of linked poems or a possible sonnet sequence, but he first mentioned the volume in a 1938 letter to Nordahl Grieg (SL 15-16). However, the recurring characters on whom the unified structure of the collection rests—Peter Gaunt and Vigil Forget—are first introduced on draft leaves datable between 1934 and 1936. Most of the poems were completed by 1938-39, and in that year Lowry appears to have had a professional typist in Los Angeles prepare a triplicate fair copy of the Lighthouse manuscript.¹ In 1939, many of the poems underwent a further round of revisions and were retyped at Carey's house in Vancouver on paper which Lowry also used for outgoing correspondence in that year.²

That some version of the Lighthouse text—perhaps the originals of the 1938-39 fair copy triplicate—was circulating through New York publishing houses in 1940-41 is clear from Lowry's correspondence: in 1941 he writes his agent Harold Matson to ask whether Matson is still holding "the hapless and ambulatory" Lighthouse.³ Although he toyed with it periodically during the last fifteen years of his life, Lowry appears to have left the Lighthouse largely intact after 1940. It seems clear that he intended this volume to be a discrete collection: after 1940, only ten of the eighty-three Lighthouse poems at U.B.C. bear traces of further revisions; of these ten, only three were included with Lowry's second poetry collection in 1947. These two
facts undermine the widely held view that all his life Lowry intended to work all his poetry into the *Lighthouse* structure. 4

No finally revised copy of the *Lighthouse* exists. Lowry's draft copy of the volume, which includes some duplicate poems, some heavy authorial revisions and comments, and indications of in-process editing and reordering, is preserved at U.B.C. (6-51). Unfortunately, this draft copy is reliable only for establishing copy-texts of individual poems, because its authorial structure has been reorganized and heavily annotated by previous editors. The draft copy contains seven types of paper ranging in dates from 1934 to 1940; the draft files for ten poems contain later papers which can be dated through their appearance on papers in the correspondence. 5 The latest traceable work Lowry did on *Lighthouse* is the final version of "Letter from Oaxaca to North Africa 1936," which appears on paper which dates from 1957, the year of Lowry's death. Most of the *Lighthouse* papers are typescripts; manuscripts survive at U.B.C. for only fourteen of the eighty-three poems. 6

Given the tempestuous and unsettled nature of the two years of Lowry's life between his flight from Mexico and the beginning of the relatively calm Dollarton period, it seems likely that the missing poetic manuscripts were included with, and suffered the same fate as, the missing Mexican first draft of the *Volcano*. That the sigla drop sharply between states after 1938 suggests that the draft of the *Lighthouse* is one in which the texts were established to Lowry's satisfaction, but in which the order had not been finally determined. For example, several of the poems
have Lowry's "out" scrawled across the heads of the typescripts. This data could indicate that a fair copy would have included fewer than the eighty-three poems originally designated for the Lighthouse. However, tracing Lowry's revisions reveals that he did not always revise or title the latest state of any given poem, using instead whichever state was handy to him at the time. He could easily have changed his mind about the "out" poems, thus explaining their inclusion in the draft copy. Alternatively, the "out" poems may have been replaced in the draft by other editors. Since it is impossible to determine whether these poems were authorially or editorially re-introduced into the draft copy, it seems prudent to include all the poems—and the titles—in the current edition.

Because some poems in Lowry's draft exist in only one state--others in as many as nine--the problem of copy-text is unusually complicated. The states for each poem were dated by their appearances on papers which also appear in Lowry's datable outgoing letters. The states were then chronologically arranged; in this edition the latest authorial state serves as copy-text. In three cases, earlier states provide copy-texts; for these poems, in which the later version is included with a further collection, the final states of the versions Lowry had approved by 1940 were used as copy-texts for the Lighthouse.7

Some poems, particularly in "The Comedian," exist only in the Grimes triplicate fair copy state. The dates of these poems have been bracketed in this edition, because it is fairly certain that this state does not represent the first version of any
Lighthouse poem. In a few cases the paper on which a poem appears does not match the geographical or biographical content of the poem. For example, "Delirium in Los Angeles" [46] first appears on Champion Bond paper, which dates from New York 1934-36. Lowry had not been to Los Angeles before 1936, so the poem was probably not written earlier than that year. The same New York paper makes another appearance in the Mexican poem "Most nauseous of all drinks, what is your spell?" [23]--a poem about tequila, a drink Lowry did not pursue until 1936. It seems reasonable to assume that Lowry took a stock of paper with him when he and Jan Gabrial left New York for Mexico via Los Angeles in 1936; in such cases any West Coast or Mexican poem which appears on New York paper is dated according to geographical content.

It is not clear whether the disorder in the Lighthouse draft is authorial or a result of the 1960-61 collaborative work of Margerie Lowry and Earle Birney. Lowry revised the order of the Lighthouse poems at least three times: three separate numbering systems appear on most of the typescripts. These roman numerals, which comprise separate series for each of the seven authorial sections, are for the most part handwritten at the top of the sheets, including the Grimes fair copies; the numerals are inscribed in pencil and/or black ink, Lowry’s characteristic method of making revisions to typescripts. The 1939 paper, however, has typed numerals which, along with certain revisions, indicates that the states which appear on this paper post-date the Grimes states. There is, however, a list in Margerie’s hand of one version of the Lighthouse order which, though nearly consistent with the foliation, does not always agree with any one
set of holograph numeration (6-52). Alterations in foliation do not, however, seriously affect the order of the collection, for the inconsistencies produce gaps which serve only to collapse the order, rather than change it. These gaps do raise the interesting question of the missing (or perhaps unwritten) poems, especially as no other poems in the U.B.C. collection are numbered in a similar fashion. For this edition, the order has been determined by the foliation; but the existence of three sets of foliation generates some unresolvable problems. Wherever there is a single numeral, it serves as order-determinant. In the case of multiple numerals, the order established by the single numeral pages provides a guide to selecting an appropriate choice of position from among the multiple numerals. The resulting order was then checked against Margerie’s list. Although obviously not definitive, this list likely represents the order in which Margerie found the draft copy of Lighthouse, since it is certainly not a list of the expanded Lighthouse format created by her and her co-editor, nor does it match the current disordered state of the draft copy. All unsolvable ordering problems were dealt with by reference to Margerie’s list, as its authorial proximity is at least reasonably reliable. Because Lowry himself had not before his death determined a final order for Lighthouse, and because it is impossible to know how he would have wanted the work completed, this edition aims to re-establish the latest order Lowry had established by the time of his death.

See "Appendix C: The Annotation of Lowry’s Poetry: A Prolegomenon" for the explanatory annotation to this section.
Lowry arrived in Los Angeles from Mexico in the summer of 1938. After he met Margerie Bonner in June 1939, only she typed his manuscripts. During the month they were apart, before Margerie arrived in Vancouver, Lowry handwrote his passionate letters to Los Angeles. Lowry's own Mexican typescripts are instantly recognizable by the errors, clumsy corrections, cigarette burns and alcohol stains on the paper. The triplicates are typed on "Grimes Business Bond" corrosible paper, which is of a much higher quality and durability than any papers which date from Mexico. Typographical errors are extremely rare on these sheets; it is therefore unlikely that they are from Mexico or that Lowry typed them. Unless Margerie typed the poems during the month they shared in Los Angeles, the Lighthouse had to be typed there by someone else--from their high quality, probably a professional typist--because its next round of revisions can be traced to Vancouver in late 1939.

A second paper, which contains "Eight Poems from The Lighthouse Invites the Storm" (6-55) also dates from Carey's house. This selection accompanied a May 1940 letter to James Stern asking him to place the poems. Stern was unsuccessful in this endeavour. The eight poems are: "In the Oaxaca Train" [101], "Delirium in Vera Cruz" [27], "Quartermaster at the Wheel" [79], "The Devil was a Gentleman" [40], "Doctor Usquebaugh" [28], "There is a Metallurgy" [80], "The Roar of the Sea and the Darkness" [97], "Lull" [72].

Malcolm Lowry, letter to Harold Matson, 4 March 1941 (1-80).

These poems are: "Letter from Oaxaca to North Africa 1936" [16], "At the Bar" [26], "Delirium in Vera Cruz" [27], "The Last Man in the Dôme" [29], "Lull" [72], "We likened one man to a ship adrift" [85], "Song about Madrid, Useful Anytime" [91], "A Poem of God's Mercy" [93], "On Reading R.L.S." [95], "The Roar of the Sea and the Darkness" [97].

These poems are: "I have known a city of dreadful night" [24], "Thirty Five Mescals in Cuautla" [25], "Delirium in Vera Cruz" [27], "The Last Man in the Dôme" [29], "Curse" [33], "As the poor end of each dead day drew near" [35], "The sun shines: where is the lyric?" [36], "The gentleness of rain is in the wind" [37], "He wrote for the dead, but the ubiquitous dead" [41], "Pigling, pigling, burning bland" [48], "- - For Christ's sake and for mine and last for a child's god gone" [73], "We likened one man to a ship adrift" [85], "The ship of war sails in the grey morning" [88], "Song about Madrid, Useful Anytime" [91].

The three poems are: "Delirium in Vera Cruz" [27], which appears as [131] in the 1947 selection, "On Reading R.L.S." [95], which becomes "Old Freighter in an Old Port" [114], and "The Roar of the Sea and the Darkness" [97], which becomes "The Western Ocean" [117].
THE LIGHTHOUSE INVITES THE STORM
--June, too soon: July, stand by: August, you must: September, remember: October, all over.

Mariner's proverb.
I

PETER GAUNT AND THE CANALS
De Lesseps, he said, was not the only one,
Peer Gynt, too, climbed a world of money-bags
-- they happened to be dunes in the desert --
Wearing rings and a watch or two and so forth,
And said it was hard, indeed it was certainly
Hard indeed, in this peculiar place,
Hard to see the Almighty's purpose
Where there was nothing life-giving, nothing
But a burnt-up waste profiting no growth,
An old corpse which never once said thank you
Since it was shaped. Why was it made at all?

The extravagance of nature took his mind;
Was that the sea, or mirage, in the east?
Whatever it was glittered like diamonds.
No. Sea was to the west where like a dam
Sandhills protected desert from its life.
A dam, thought Gynt, from Norway, hills are small;
A dam; why not a cutting, a canal
Through which the wise ocean, warping slowly
At first, would fill the plain itself with flood?
And all that desolate grave become a lake.

A lake, a sea itself, whose gentle crash
Of waves would show crystal against islands;
To the north, forever a new landfall;
To the south, snowy plumage of frigates;
While above, below, around, white harbingers,
-- Since gulls are incident in salty projects --
And this is first the dream of a canal
Whose green banks roar with towns as busy trade
Steams from the land of Habes to the Nile,
Where, piled against a Cape, Peeropolis
Staggers, the capital city of self.
IV

Peeropolis; another Petersburg!
But peopled with Norsemen, for nothing else
Than Norsemen satisfy Peer Gynt; Nordic
Men for the new born land whose founder signs
And doubtless sings into some khedive’s ear:
All we need is capital! Capital!
Capital! All we need is capital!
Ab esse ad possess! Capital
Is all we need! Nordic men! Capital!
All we need’s some capital, some capital,
Indeed ... And so on, to the “Hall of the Mountain King.”

V

The jig, like Noah’s donkey in the Ark
— What was that Ark if not a dream like Peer’s,
Its voyage back in heart from water to sand? —
Noah’s donkey in the Ark, in the Ark,
In the Ark, brays its message — asinine! —
To east, west, north, and south. Thus good Ibsen,
And later Grieg, and later still the six
Brown brothers, hot forerunners of the riffs.
Let this pun pass, remembering Peter Gink;
And so make way for Mr. Peter Gaunt.

VI

(What was that story of an older dream
But some vision of wilderness of water
And a settling of loud rodents in a dry world
Washed white? No doubt it was a Nordic world.)
But there goes Mr. Peter Gaunt, M. A.,
P. H. D., and so on — not P. H. D.? —
Or better still, plain Peter; or better still,
Plain Pete. Hell, are you Mr. Gaunt at all?
Whether or not you like it, whether or not
You think my reason for it is valid,
Your name is Peter Gaunt. It is solid.
Peter Gaunt, as Gynt then, climbs a dune,
Looks on a dead world that seems to him bad,
-- Though dune's but a stool in the "Automat,"
Spelling this backwards makes Tamotua,
Pacific island in titanic surf,
Glutting ten thousand taverns in the town;
It was the surf of traffic round his feet
Washed him to this escape, his oasis
In the desert of Chicago, London,
Rheims, and a blest island for lovers, too ---

And lights a cigarette, noting, far off,
The ostrich; the cigarette's a camel,
And ostrich but a reflection of himself
Wondering at the Almighty's purpose;
Gaunt, because he starves; Peter, because hard.
Peter is a starved rock that thinks and smokes,
Though both are discouraged here, wondering
How man should be both stone and bird at once:
And when he eats, should eat with sandfilled eyes;
How pauper lips may strangely cram with dessert
And paper cups brim over with sweet wine.

Sees he the new city, the really better land,
Or wills he the flood on all of us
But to destroy, not slake, not fructify,
Under the bleak north star of his self-mistrust
He has read or not read about in Myers?
Under the maniacal lamp of the cafeteria
Lurks there the strange, the bird-haunted vision
Of the canal that lives in mankind's dream,
Ploughed through past's sand, no bitter lakes beyond
From Casino-Palace to Bab-el-Mandeb,
Or Caribees to Tehuantepec,
Liverpool to Canaan via Manchester?
Liverpool to Manchester via Runcorn
Archangel to Kattegat and Sound!

100 A dream still living in the mind of man
Has many coloured meanings: if Gaunt sees
Sandhills obstructing desert from new life,
Thinks of dams, why now the hills are low,
Feels the wise ocean warping slowly
To fill the plain itself with salt sweet flow;
If, remembering Panama, he says Mersey,
Gynt, Gaunt, are they the same? If the White Sea
Was nearer Gaunt’s dream in both beautifully,
I think there is no predominance of white.

XI

110 After all, the vision was like but subtly sea-changed,
Whether grave became a lake sweet or sour
The canal changed direction every hour;
Whatever Gaunt saw, whatever sloping city
Was built by free men for the free to live in,
Created through men for mankind by mankind;
Say at very least Gaunt thought less of self
Than thought Gynt? But is it strictly true? Truth
Lies between old facts as swamps between seas,
Or if not facts they’re rationalizations.
120 The silted truth is also dredgeable,
It is this man’s empowered to reclaim
For man. It is a canal in mind. And it is for himself.

XII

Let us give him the benefit of some doubts;
That Gaunt was kinder to his Solveig and Aase;
125 Must have known the difference between the two,
Scarcely would have set his mother on roof;
Hoped, at least, love without love of mankind
Was its own sepulchre. Perhaps Peter Gaunt
Died for Madrid under machine-gun fire.
130 Perhaps not. But no matter where he died,
Or even where he lived, he was Peter Gaunt,
And he was you, who may have needed capital
To the same tune and Solveig thrice a night,
But at least did not fill his star with Norsemen,
And, if with abstractions, not with the four horsemen.
XIII

So when flesh feels slighted by the present,
And spirit by the future, think of Gaunt
Who loves his wife and has no heart to die,
Yet masked as Jones may run Bilbao's gauntlet,
Cutting his own canal through brackish death
And bringing life to life, too weak to stand;
When deathward the mind makes supercession,
Consider Gaunt, who built a loyalist column
That Gaunt, ourself, might live on sea and land,
Free to feel slighted, free for joy or peace;
Free to laugh, love, run, walk, see, or be blind,
From Lorbrulgrud to Leningrad via Nice;
From Ithaca, New York, to Ithaca, Greece;
In Georgia, in the deep south, and in the far east,
And in that deeper south below Cape Horn,
From Aldeberan to Aberdeen.
II

LETTER FROM OAXACA TO NORTH AFRICA
LETTER FROM OAXACA TO NORTH AFRICA 1936

-----Martin I cannot say to you, old friend,
Dearest of all my friends, that I can see
You softly borne over a wayward sea:
To this alcoholic or sardonic end,
Or that colic shore... I wish I could find
Your image studded somewhere in the void,
Or under some shining, ocean-stormed waterproof
Or shooting the greater horned whiffenpoof...
Selah. Is no "gnus good gnus?" Not at all!

(- All this I find upon an obscene wall,
Written by one, a spy, Vigil Forget,
And scrawled in blood and urine and his own sweat -
Some say his name was Peter Gynt or Gaunt,
He wrote these lines and then was promptly shot.)

Nyasadland with delirium tremens and stamp album giraffes?
Spain! But here I hold my obverse laughs,
Remembering other friends and sons of fiends,
And how much else which dark and goodness holds,
And hope which dies and yields, but never ends,
Or, when it does, its bleeding past defends...
- Well - what the hell - yes, what! the giraffe has a long neck,
And too much longitude, by all Tehuantepec,
And infinite therapeutic and a technique,
Demanding reciprocal exactitude in love's arithmetic.

Ah, you must be the Nubian three-horned
To deal with one so forarmed. Be forwarned...
Sincerely, I suggest she is not toothsome,
Too much being asked to satiate her loathsome,
Her thoughts jump like beans when you say Timbuctoo,
Her body's striped like boys at bleak Harrow,
Or visions of the Aldershot tatoo.
Or, simply like another giraffe, in another zoo...
-- Oaxaca? Si, Oaxaca, Oax., Mex!
Where is Oaxaca, Vigil, you ask, what annex,
Niche, pitch, is this? What age is it? What sex?
Mexico? Is it not the place of the lost?
Goal of all Americans who want to be divorced:
Of all Norsemen who want to be unnorsed:
Of all horsemen, already unhorsed:
Licences by Lawrence, by pouncing serpents endorsed.
- Chingarn chingarn chingarn chingarn chingarn,
In Oaxaca I strum my bawdy tune,
Which says, let there be happiness for you,
But delivery, my friend, from ancient heaven,
For God must know it is too badgerly,
And retrospect with harps and harpies too,
All botched and bungled with celestial grind...
Hush hush I hear the sound of last no-trumps -
(That strumpets bid before they go to bawd
Warmed by the bloodstream of Wasserman turnips?...)
Which are the military police.
- How long since I was last in hell, oh Lord?
Since the last heartbeat of a broken record?
The last memory of a lovely laughing face?
All lost in mistress time and virgin space.
Ah, ghouls are nursling to this bosom,
My heart a widowed spider trapping grief,
Its strings are wrung with agony of Ed Lang,
From floribundia to rose of gall and lung.
It knows the dungeon and must know the gun.
Ah, Martin, would I were in Birmingham,
With old complaints and duns upon my pen!
I love the sun yet I would trade the sun
For "In a Mist" by Beiderbecke’s ghost,
A break from "Singing the Blues", a phrase from Bach,
"Walking the Dog" in 1929; Liverpool;
Frankie Trumbauer’s "Imagination", and good Gogol;
For Birmingham-erratum-edgbaston...
Inverted we have been from Grantchester!
...Strange, I shall know death tomorrow, which siesta,
May turn out simply just one more fiesta...
And the nighted storm glistening on the wet fruit,
And Ralph and Bob and Margaret to greet,
Quietly again, in rainy Gillot Street...

T from 16.2
T 17.2: [In Lowry’s hand at top of sheet: "Dedication to Martin & Ralph" - two of the Case brothers.]
14 16.2: [adds next line:] ----Are you in Spain, hell fire, Liberia gruesome?
42 my] by 16.2
45 too] to 16.2
70 16.1: ...Strange, I shall greet death to-morrow, which siesta
III

THE CANTINAS
1934-36

How did all this begin, and why am I here
At this arc of Bar with its cracked brown paint?
Papegaai, Mezcal, Hennessey, Cerveza,
Two slimed spittoons, no company but fear:

5
Fear of light, of the Spring, of the complaint
Of birds, and buses flying to far places,
And the students going to the races,
Of girls skipping with the wind in their faces;
But no company, no company but fear:

10
Fear of the blowing fountain, and all flowers
That know the sun are my enemies,
These, dead, hours?

2 17.1: at this arc of bar with its cracked brown paint,
3 17.1: papegaai, mezcal, hennessey, cerveza,
5 17.1: fear of light, of the spring, of the complaint

1937

Above all, absent yourself from that affair.
Swedenborg had such half wisdom; thought ahead.
But Lawrence thought backward; while even Shakespeare
Shook in the dark abyss past time’s maidenhead.

5
Did you know Maidenhead? The Richmond
Girls fare better in Maida Vale; in Baker Street
Take Sherlock home, visit Madame Twosores, the wax dead.
From these I expect little, least of all, pleasure;
Three beers in Charlotte Street, a Star at six o’clock,

10
And sixpences two, one bright brown shoe, and doom;
And four bad books and the thought of Vermont,
The sea would be good to have, too, but a shock
To receive. Thank you; and simply to count
No money, inspect no hotel room.

7 18.1: take Sherlock home, visit Madame Twosores; & the wax dead.
MEMORY OF THE HOSPITALITY OF AMERICAN BARMEN

We reserve the right to refuse to anyone, pal.
Yeah, and that means you, four eyes, with the wheels, and hell!
Don't tell me you're a diamond and put
It on the slate, or that your heart is fat,
Or that your landlord can't wait to break it.
What's that? It's broken already? Well, that's that.
A spade'll pick your grave if grave you merit;
A spade's a spade, that's what they call it here.
We teach 'em bully the cabbage, never you fear;
In God we trust -- but only on the nickel.
Well, if you had a buck too bad you spent her,
-- But all who ask for trust distrust inherit,
And even God is fickle.

When you were starving, you waited -- how long?
Two hours? But Fernandez Passalique,
At the corner of Main, waited two years for a break.
Perhaps this is not a subject for a song,
But now he is starving again. It is a trick
To pass inhibitory time away? Well, the rack
Is still used in Trujillo. So be it. Ring
Out, you bleeding bells, over our time's demise;
Ring in this bad Kentucky straight Bourbon.

Mint Springs one pint and ninety proof of what!
Ring in, too, my corn king assassin, you distilleries,
And churches, and by Torture, Tortu, the Sorbonne,
And San Domingo, let us brew one alcoholic thought!
Shakespeare should have come to Acapulco;
Here he would have found a timeless hell,
He who leaves all, Dean Donne said, doth as well --
(There is no rhyme for foul Acapulco,
Nor reason, expletive, save -- Acapulco!)
-- As he who eats, devours. He would scarcely have left all
Fruits here in this "seascape in a bottle!"
-- (Or escape into a million!) -- quotes: Wells Fargo.
Paraiso de Caleta, seduce him to your bed!
Suppose it. He would have held no horses,
Written no plays. What creditor wants verses?
-- Globe? No Globe here, not a scenical sound.
All that could have been said is what Marston said:
Rich happiness that such a son is crowned.

But never fall from fealty to light,
You said, Melville? Now, by God, sir, why not?
The pall is comfortable enough; as soon rot
There as another place; once being well met
The beauty of the dark is there's no sight
Of that light you speak of! What lamps are lit
Save no falling from fealty to it
When once accepted wholly by the night.
It is a treachery to the powers of hell
To refrain as you suggest, is a treason
Against the inferno whose judgements well
Fit the crime; whose mercy is tempered
With fire -- light enough for those unhampered
By day. And true to unreason.
Most nauseous of all drinks, what is your spell?
You are cheap, you are the whore of potions;
You are impalatable, you are the way to hell;
You are insatiable of ravagement, you
Are the worst of libations!

Tequila of Jalisco, of maguey,—(image of man
Tortured, and tossing gangrened hands in the sun,
Half-buried in the crepitant desert sand!);—
How is it, precisely, we call you our friend,
When your salty jest is to calm our nerves
And then to storm what passes for our homes?
Chingarn! As jests go perhaps this is a good jest—
To make a God of man first, then a fiend,
So that he forgets even those he loves,
And whither he comes.

Under your acid spell, quite wanting only you,
Loving only you, we wait only our balm
For the heart’s next recession to its false calm.
-- But would you were only friend, not mistress too!

I have known a city of dreadful night,
Dreadfuller far than Kipling knew, or Thomson ...
This is the night when hope’s last seed is flown
From the evanescent mind of winter’s grandson.

In the dungeon shivers the alcoholic child,
Comforted by the murderer, since compassion is here too;
The noises of the night are cries for help
From the town and from the garden which evicts those who destroy.

The policeman’s shadow swings against the wall,
The lantern’s shadow is darkness against the wall;
And on the cathedral’s coast slowly sways the cross
Which are wires and the tall pole moving in the wind—-

And I crucified between two continents.

But no message whines through for me here, oh multitudinous,
To me here,—(where they cure syphilis with sloans lineament,
And clap, with another dose.)
THIRTY FIVE MESCALS IN CUAUTLA

This ticking is most terrible of all,
You hear the sound I mean on ships and trains,
You hear it everywhere for it is doom;
The tick of real death, not the tick of time,
The termite at the rotten wainscot timber of the world,
And it is death to you though well you know
The heart's silent tick failing against the clock,
Its beat ubiquitous and still more slow,
But still not the tick, the tick of real death,

Only the tick of time -- still only the heart's chime
When body's alarm wakes whirring to terror.
-- In the cantina throbs the refrigerator,
While against the street the gaunt station hums.

What can you say fairly of a broad lieutenant,
With bloody hand behind him, a cigarro in it,
But that he blocks a square of broken sunlight
Where scraps of freedom stream against the gale
And lightning scrapes blue shovels against coal?
The thunder batters the Gothic mountains;

But why must you hear, hear and not know this storm,
Seeing it only under the door,
Visible in synecdoches of wheels
And khaki water sousing down the gutter?
In ripples like claws tearing the water back?

The wheels smash a wake under the jalousie.
The lieutenant moves, but the door swings to ...
--- What of all this life outside, unseen by you,
Passed by, escaped from, or excluded
By a posture in a desolate bar? ...

No needs to speak, conserve a last mistake;
Perhaps real death's inside, don't let it loose.
The Lieutenant carried it into the back room?
The upturned spittoons may mean it, so may the glass.
The girl refills it, pours a glass of real death,

And if there's death in her there is in me.
On the pictured calendar, set to the future,
The two reindeer battle to death, while man,
The tick of real death, not the tick of time,
Hearing, thrusts his canoe into a moon,

Risen to bring us madness none too soon.

Note: Soma was mystically identified with the moon, who controls vegetation & whose cup is ever filling & emptying, as he waxes & wanes.
25.1: Prelude to another drink

Mescal
In an empty bar room
The end

The Calendar

25.3: Twenty nine Tequilas

1 25.1: This ticking is the most terrible of all
2 25.1: You hear this sound on ships, you hear it on trains
3-4 25.1: [missing]
5 25.1: It is the death-watch beetle at the rotten timber of the world
25.2: the death watch beetle at the timber of the world;
25.3: the death watch beetle at the world's timber,
25.4: the death watch beetle at the rotten timber of the world,
6 25.1: And it is death to you too; for well you know
25.2: and it is death to you for well you know
7 25.1: That the heart's tick is failing all the while
25.2: the hearts silent tick is failing against the clock
8 25.1: Always ubiquitous & still more slow.
25.2: always ubiquitous and still more slow
9-10 25.1: [missing]
10 25.2: not tick of time.
11 25.1,2: [missing]
13 25.1: And against the street the gaunt station hums.
14 25.1: What can you say fairly of a fat man
15 25.1: With a bent hand behind him & a cigarette in it?
25.2: with a broken hand behind him and a cigarro in it?
with a cruel hand behind him and a cigarro in it?
with a mechanic hand behind him and a cigarro in it?
16-18 25.1,2: [missing]
19-30 25.1: [missing]
19 25.2: or of the thunder in the Gothic mountains
[adds next line:] the Cuautla towers crashing against thunder
the Cuautla towers plunging against thunder
20-22 25.2: [missing]
23 25.2: of khaki water sousing down the gutter
24 25.2: ripples like claws tearing the water back,
25 25.2: cats smashing wake under the jalousie,
25.3: The wheels smash wake under the jalousie.
26 25.2: [missing]
31 25.1: Yet death is in the room, there is death everywhere:
25.2: real death's inside no need to let it loose
32 25.1: That man carries it though I cannot see his face;
25.2: the lieutenant carries it though I can't see his face
33 25.1: The upturned spittoons mean it, it is in the glass,
25.2: the upturned spittoons mean it so does the glass
34 25.1,2: the girl who refills it pours a glass of death
36-40 25.1: [contains only:]
On the calendar, set to the future, the two stags battle
To death: man paddles his coracle to the moon
Which, seen also in the light, is as divisible as death.
36 25.2: On the calendar, set to the future,
39 25.2: hearing, thrusts his canoe into the moon,

Note] [missing] {25.3}
--- Drunkards of salt water, thirsty for disaster,
Derelicts do not dream of being ships:
Never does calamity forsake them
For the hush of the swift and the look-out's all's well:

Neurotic in Atlantic of a death,
Bereaved but avid of another's breath,
Swimming with black genius under black waters,
And buried standing up like Ben Jonson,
Though eighteenpence is here a total loss;

And Tarquin certain of a ravishable prey;
While others grope the rails, rigid with gazing down.

Where has tenderness gone, he asked the mirror
Of the Biltmore Hotel, cuarto 216. Alas,
Can its reflection lean against the glass
Too, wondering where I have gone, into what horror?

Is that it, staring at me now with terror
Behind your frail tilted barrier? Tenderness
Was here, in this very retreat, in this
Place, its form seen, cries heard, by you. What error
Is here? Am I that forked rashed image?

Is this the ghost of love which you reflected?
Now with a background of tequila, stubs, dirty collars,
Sodium perborate, and a scrawled page
To the dead, telephone disconnected?

...He smashed all the glass in the room. (Bill: $50.)
XII  [28.3]

1936

DOCTOR USQUEBAUGH

The doom of each, said Doctor Usquebaugh,
Quite clearly bids our loutish bones to stare.
True, drink's unfruitful on a larger scale;
Its music is an equinoctial gale:
Still, unembarrassing: and, profounder,
Outwinds the range of Cupid's organ grinder.
If worms are sabbatical in a drunkard's dream
No fouler's this than love's nocturnal game,
Since dream of love it is, love of the pit
For its own sake, the virginity of the present,
Whose abyss is a womb shall not deny
A wintry plunge to nescient ecstasy,
Unsheathed entrance to the spirit's Tarquin,
But featherless and free from overt din,
Extending a plattered Lucrece with ferment,
Yet deeper than she, and rich with moist consent.
...So well might we inquire, content to rot,
What do you offer, love, which drink does not?

XIII  [29.7]

1937

THE LAST MAN IN THE DOME

Where is the finely drunk? Is the great drunkard?
This imponderable small mystery
Perplexes me at midnight constantly:
- Where is he gone and taking whence his tankard?
Where are they all gone, my friends, the great unanchored?
They moan no more at bars, none put to sea;
A shake of the will and they dream most easily,
Livers at last of lives for which they hankered -
Endless corridors of boots to lick,
Or at the end of them all the Pope's toe.
Where are your friends, you fool? you have but one,
And that a friend who also makes you sick -
If much less sick than they; and this I know,
Since I am the last drunkard: I drink alone.

[missing] (25.4: in Lowry's hand "The last drunkard should be
called The last man in the Dome.")

29.1: Prelude to another drink
29.2: The man who had not heard of the war
29.5,6: The Last Drunkard
1 29.1,2,3,5,6: Where is the finely drunk? Where is the great drunkard?
3 29.5,6: confounds an ex-gob worse than history.
5 29.3: Where are all gone, my friends, the great unanchored?
29.5,6: Where are all my friends, the great unanchored?
6 29.1: They drink no more: they go to bed at three
29.5,6: They moan no more at bars: though this story
7 29.1: In the afternoon yet dream more easily -
29.5,6: Fails to tell if they quit the Battery
8 29.5,6: To live that dream for which their souls hankered
9 29.1,2,3,4,5,6: Of endless corridors of boots to lick,
10 29.5,6: Or at the end of them all the Mate’s toe.
13 29.5,6: If much less sick than they. I raise my glass -
14 29.1: Since I am the last drunkard. And I drink alone.
29.5,6: I am the last drunkard. I drink alone.
IV

SONGS FOR SECOND CHILDHOOD
Lead were their feet, and lead their heart and bone,
Their dreamed-of port was lead but their ships were stone;
Their houses all with leaden shapes of doom,
Were haunted in the leaden Wesleyan gloom.

Their childhood's scribble penciled out their pain,
But served not obsolescence time nor gain;
Their ships were stone because their Church was rock.
Let Greek meet Greek, rock rock, now find the wreck!

Their lips were cracked and moulded half to pray
To genius foundered on the idiot way;
Were they lost too? None claimed them, were they drowned;
They were not lost, but neither were they found.

They were not found! No trace of them betrays
That through a sleeked and molten sea of lies
They sank, uncared prodigies of the dead,
Weighed down by an eternity of lead.

The tortures of hell are stern, their fires burn fiercely,
Yet vultures turn against the air more beautifully
Than seagulls float downwind in cool sunlight,
Or fans in asylums spin a loom of fate
For hope which never ventured up so high
As life's deception, astride the vulture's flight.

The dead man sat in the sun
And mourned what he had done;
The live man sat on the grave,
And thanked God he had been brave.

Live and dead men both
Exchange impartial dooms
In the dance of sunlight on earth,
In the dance of sunlight on tombs.

4 Wesleyan] Wesleyan
4 30.1,2,3: were haunted in the precise Wesleyan gloom.

4 32.1: and thanked god he had been brave.
CURSE

Tender meat were you to snouted boys
--Oh little Wesleyan paying the savage piper--
GASPING in the dark by the tennis court
Jeered at for your frailty or your sex,
5
By badged boy scouts with notched totems for sadism:
Idiot be prepared but not for this
Ambush of anguish revealed by the patrol sneer
Of tiger, wolf, lion, stoat, and the dove
Quite lost whether of peace or war.
10
The whirring of the chapel bell's amaze,
Stopped the heart as never mouth stopped with kiss.
Lifting your uncracked voice in broken praise,
Your self struggling in the frozen heart's fissure,--
--The ladders runged against it were woman's hands
15
That numbed in curious rings before they touched--
Or praying in icy silence for compassion,
Through burst blained fingers squinting in icy silence
At something half a face and half a bum,
You remembered the oath: against yours my worst
20
Pathfinder of moons in chapel or asylum!--
And snarled like Adams to no human beast.

The stone must be rolled away from self's pain,
Or you, my dear Jones, well though you have sung,
Will become, as it were, a sort of pelican,
Who, plunging her beak in her breast, yet feeds no young
5
And all this on some sea-margin she knows barren
Of food, though dives and wheels and wheels and dives again.
As the poor end of each dead day drew near,
He tried to count the things which he held dear;
No Rupert Brooke, and no great lover, he
Remembered little of simplicity.

His soul had never been empty of fear,
And he would sell it thrice now for a tankard of beer
He seemed to have known no love, to have valued dread
Above all human feelings. He liked the dead;
The grass was not green, not even grass to him;

Nor was sun, sun; rose, rose; smoke, smoke; limb, limb.

The sun shines; where is the lyric?
Moon, stars, etc. produce no panegyric.
Now we have the sun it's the last thing we want;
If Oswald, ("Ghosts"), had it, he would resent
It; would give it away to another ghost.
Somewhere, people marching... The world will content
Itself with itself again, thinking itself excellent.

The gentleness of rain is in the wind,
Shelley's elided fragment stars the mind;
Together with Kafka's by any other route,
He would have reached the Castle. As well as
Some disputed smithereens by Shakespeare
Ambiguous souvenirs of James or Jones,
Cast up by a bounded ocean of thought
On blank shores where the soul seems boundless,
Like man, the extravagance of creation.

Phrases rejected for a trochee's sake
Bobbing like corks on margins of volumes,
May mark depths where the caught iambic glitters;
Or one flying line among such fragments
Soar on forever like the Bird of Paradise.

It is my joy to core the world as such
A rounded phrase in God's black manuscript  
Remembered, but abandoned for a fairer,  
As such, mankind's alternative of God,  
Yet claimed by us, and thoughtfully conserved.

12 37.2: May mark depths where the iambic glitters;  
18 37.1: as such mankind's alternative of god,

1937 IX [38.2]

THE SAILORS

-- Thou promontory dreadfuller than Hatteras,  
Show us the track;  
Tell us, the sea-doomed to a stuffed mattress,  
Tell us the trick,  

    Tierra del Fuego.

-- Here is the curve when young,  
Beautiful and clear;  
This is too often sung.  
    The sailors.

-- This rather we would know before we're gone;  
Which is the cape and which the horn?  
    Tierra del Fuego.

-- The trick when life is done?  
Then cape and horn are one;  

15  
Is that what you mean?  
    The sailors.

-- No!  
    Tierra del Fuego.

-- No time! There is your cape full-bellied;  
Stride thou now for New York;  
The watches are rallied,  
And the crowd at work.  
    The sailors.

-- Tell us, before --  

25  
    The bosun.

-- Eight bells, where are we, men?  
    Tierra del Fuego.

-- Your ship makes her veronica and goes,  
In Fuego this chilly bull bows.  
    The sailors.

30  
Farewell till the next time!  
    The sailors.

-- But --  
    Tierra del Fuego.

-- Wait for no plaudits ringing!

35  
Stride on, though far be the landing  
For you, and the bunting waving  
Where at the bending of the bay  
Your love is standing;  
Where ends the curve,
Begins the new ship's wave.
   The bosun.
   -- Yes, and when the curve's squeezed out of shape,
   Where then's your horn, and which the cape?

He plays the piano with a razor,
The concertina with a pair of scissors;
A rigadoon for all his customers,
He is the Sweeney Todd of improvisers!

Though all men fear this poor relation,
His keener music gives a strange sensation;
Defying all anatomization,
Beckoning like ambiguous sounds,
Heard by those who dwelt with Cyclops and fiends,
And died on perfumed seas with stinking wounds...
Under the razor, under the broken light
Of this gibbering world we shall fall
Thus enticed, into the swinging chair to wait;
Read madness; watch self; accept nothing; accept all.

The devil was a gentleman,
He tried to raise his hat,
But it got caught upon one horn,
He hadn't thought of that.

The devil was a gentleman,
Though most anonymous,
Dantesquely loved a woman,
She proved as cold as ice.

Still, the devil was a gentleman,
So could not keep it on;
Grotesquely tugging, broke the crown —
And the lady had gone.
And now he was a devil
To make the whole world smile;
No more stalked subtle evil,
Under the infernal tile.
Bowing before a mirror,
To observe his gehennaed beard;
He started back with terror,
This was worse than the old fiend feared.

He knew that he had ruined
His hat, so bruised and torn,
But Oh my God, to have profaned
Not only hat, but horn!

So a hatless, one-horned demon
Limped sourly among men;
While the rumor slowly died quite down,
He had been a gentleman.

He wrote for the dead, but the ubiquitous dead
Liked their own wisdom, and preferred their bed;

He wrote for the blind, yet the polygonous blind
Had richer, thicker things just then in mind;

He wrote for the dumb, but the golden-voiced dumb
Were singing their own songs and could not come;

So he wrote for the unborn, since surely, it is said,
At least they’re neither dumb, nor blind, nor dead.

Oh, pyre of Bierce and springboard of Hart Crane!
I will not die here! He prayed for his ill life.
This is far from home, by Christ! to die so,
Too far from love, lane, sanity, wife.

He trembled. But his hurdling Olympic brain
Raced with the imponderable athlete doom,
To be of life once more the bridegroom,
And ran death down and ran him to defeat...
"But not defeat of such doleful wreathing,"
Grinned death, (a sardonic loser), "Of faces
And English stones, with smiles and flowers, as graces
My slow prize day at home for stopping breathing,
Such as all who have been buried under the forget-me-not,
Will tell you of jovially; and well they should know."
1934-36 XIV

Time entered the stuffed court, slowly swearing:
-- I have, he added, dripped my soft snow
Too long for those who find our life past bearing,
Treading down in the year's drift their black woe;
And long enough have turned the day to dollar
For soldier spendthrift rogue and battered scholar,
Been spelled, by the echoing bell, in the ship's pitch,
Tolled agony to far schoolmates in green vetch,
For all that I am a fake healer of cracked hearts,
Vampired and counterwhored by a false name
Most merdurinouss; and so the fates
Contrived, for a poor dream, a famous crime;
Though love's wrenched houghs my cataplasms have known,
Now that I love, my Lord, I must be slain.

1934-36 XV

Loathing is as beautiful as the scourge
Of wind on freighters at dawn, but more strange.
Decency's landlord inveighs against force,
While we detest most what we would embrace;
Seek, though eschewing in advance, advice...
Yet now pentametre shall scan our hate
For those whose sober and platonic lips,
Dryer than broken trumpets in pawnshops,
Confirm our ease among the strident worst;
Such lips were never made for love to bite
That offer ashes to immedicable thirst,
Uncalled for service both to life and death;
Better to be salvaged by the accursed
And succoured by the foulness of their breath.

11 44.1: [adds next line:] unwelcome service this to life and death,
Another than Wordsworth dropped his live work
To listen to the wind's shriek of uprooted trees,
And vessels' smashed backs under portentous seas
Scrabbling with sharks as Rydal hives with bees,

The Ohio smoking in Frisco on a sharp pen
Of rock, lightning a leash snarled by force
At the bounding neck of God's mad dog, the dark;
The universe snapping like hounds at some dread groom.

I believe that Wordsworth thought of the calm...

But to another blessing chaos, since it must horridly drown
In hurled gules of conflict's flesh, his own strike
Of the hour, his own grief, no peaceful lake
Lights by storm's flash. Such is the nature of his doom

That like some infant Aeolus Dowson in tempest's tavern,
He claps for better thunder, wilder typhoon.

"Informal" (dancing on the zebra floor)
Seemed first, -- it was an electric sign--"infernal":
Then, the next street to the bar, came "Vigil",
Which really was "Virgil" by Vermont.

St. Vitus of the City of Angles!
Wurlitzer turned "howitzer", from its bung,
Blasted a boisterous bomb at the bar.
At the blue clock with vermilion pendule
Hangs man's "public inquiry of the hour."

The goose blue cloak swings high against the door...
In the travel agent's window, "quest for beauty" -
Indistinct, one thinks how two sable steeds
Were lost in a circle unkown to Dante;
But delirium's on the march, we are wrong

Nevertheless these three dark words proved right.

Hung man's "public inquiry of the hour."
The goose blue coat swung high against the door...

On that travel agents window, indistinct, "Quest for beauty"?
And one thinks how two sable steeds were lost
through gaps in broken hearts unvoyaged through by Dante.
Where do you come from? The land of Epigram,
Or Connecticut? I am from Hinnom;
Educated, Nantucket and Bellevue;
At Cape Cod committed my first murder,
In a windmill. Of course, I murdered you!
What is it like to be dead? Have you a planchette?
A raspail in heaven or a bal musette?

If I am dead, young Judas, I’ve been deader
In your bedraggled, insectuous, country...
Further, I dwell on that declivity of life
Where weeping (Herford’s) willows rock and laugh,
And lazarene hyenas softly weep
Under them, even as you, on Hebephrene’s steep.

Pigling, pigling, burning bland,
On Arabia’s coral strand;
What immortal station pie,
Dare frame thy frightful piggery?
V

THE COMEDIAN
I

You were in hell fire? had been all your life?
And thought that nothing had been forged there?
I see a weapon moulded from that fire
Stronger than any sword: that deadlier knife
Of keen wisdom which flayed your soul strife
With flame in the pit could not wholly tire.
Take that soul and strip it down to the core
With new steel as others who burnt before
For their knowledge or ours, our gain, or loss...

There is a fellowship some pilgrims think
Between all in disastrous fight, yet few
Know their truest guardians in darkness.
Get out to your tavern, drink your nauseous drink,
And read these lines, then pray to those like you.

II

DELIRIUM IN URUAPAN

-- I met a man who suffered more than I
At a street corner. Then another. Yet one more.
After, I found a blackened street of poor
Fiends who had suffered an eternity.
I asked the first man for his company
But he refused; so wondering why
I thought to ask the second man, whose stare
Of perfect contempt held such frigidity
I climbed the blackened street in haste to tell
Those who suffered most, to ask what had been done
To deserve this. But there was a curse in their laugh.
Then I remembered that I was in hell.
Yes -- what had I done to earn even the damned's scorn?
... And turned back down the blacker street of self,
knowing well enough.
Love which comes too late is like that black storm
That breaks out of its season, when you stand
Huddled yet with upturned tentative hand
To the strange rain. Yet sadly no sane calm
5
Succeeds it as when all the surprised form
Of nature is restored to a surprised land,
Or the poor flowers thirst again and the sand
Sifts drily once more; and the abnormal norm
Of a parched world wholly returns. But say
10 It is like anything else: for let this love strike
You blind, dumb, mad, dead, your grotesque fate
Will not be altered by your simile.
It slakes no thirst to say what love is like
Which comes too late, my God, alas, too late.

But I shall live when you are dead and damned — —
Did you say Chatterton to Chesterfield? — —
Oh, Chatterton, Chatterton, wield
In your inferno or evening land
Some sword for me, steal something to defend
5 My poor spirit: and if no sword, a shield
Does as well. I wish that spirit healed
Which is yours, though mutilated, and
My love is dead too, gone to her death bed
All under the willow tree: Oh, Chatterton, I cry out
That you have pity on my self pity,
My lack of genius and what I write in doubt:
Let us meet in your dark metric city,
Before I am dumb; and damned; and dead.
A DRIED UP RIVER IS LIKE THE SOUL

A dried up river is like the soul
Of a poet who can't write, yet perceives
With imperfect clarity his theme and grieves
To parched death over the drought. But his goal

5 Once a wholesome sea of clearest chrystal
Recedes, grows grey in hartseye, like old love leaves,
Leaves the mind altogether. He conceives
Nothing to replace it: only at the pole
Of memory flickers some senseless compass.

10 So the river, by her grey pitying trees,
Is an agony of stones, horrors which sank
But are now declared, bleached. For it is these,
These stones and nothingnesses which possess
When river is a road and mind a blank.

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune.
So his brother loved to quote and importune
A crapulous sad dish whose ten

5 Feet or not by fourteen of unsold line
Was not quite even considered out of tune
With his time, and whose drunkard's rigadoon
Disgraced father, mother, sister, and then
Wife, child, home, country; and yet, and yet,

10 Costly though he proved, I have met worse men
Who took no tide, if any, at the flood....
There is a story of a great poet
Who told a bishop his line was blank verse.
They laughed; the poet laughs still, in tears of blood.

6 54.1,2: Was disastrously considered out of tune
7 whose] who's
10 54.1: Costly though he proved, I have met far worse men
54.2: Costly though he proved, I have met duller men
A poem about a poem that can’t be written
Is like true love the heart has foregone
But not lost: say both are smitten,
The real poem, and the right love, frozen.
Both must wander never quite forgotten
By their ghost over the iron, woebegone
Waste, grave of consciousness and heart where stone
Is foliation and builds no cross or shrine,
Where no groan’s heard from dream, love, or nightmare,
Where death’s a gift at Christmas or at Easter,
And birth a jest of vascular endeavor,
And moon and sun a maniacal glare.
Such ravagement have we known;
Such expedition, and such despair; --
Yet this is not us here,
Never could this be us, say it is not, say that this
is not us here.

Darkness has its compensations, both
Supersensual and extramundane:
But of these not to be counted is the pain
Forget felt then in the shadow of death.
Life was not dear to him, yet his last
Breath he feared, and his tumultuous brain
Fought with good light against the thought of doom
And conquered it, thus avoiding the wreath
Four relatives might have given, and the burial
In the town on the hill where all he loved
Was the rain, one tree, and a girl
Whose loss he had long since mourned
And shall mourn till he dies, knowing too well
He lives again but lives in darkness still.

Resurgent sorrow is a sea in the cave
Of the mind--just as in the poem
It gluts it--though no nymphs will quire a hymn;
Abandon it!... Take a trip to the upper shore. Lave
Yourself in sand; gather poppies; brave
The fringe of things, denying that inner chasm.
Why, the hush of the sea’s in the seashell; in the limb
Of the smashed ship, its tempest; and your grave
The sand itself if you’d have it so. Yet glare
Through a sky of love all day still must you receive
In the cave the special anguish of your life;
With the skull of the seagull and the wreck you may fare
Well enough but will not escape the other surf
Remorse, your host, who haunts that whirlpool where
The past’s not washed up dead and black and dry
But whirls in its gulf forever, to no relief.
You gave yourself to death but never to me.
Marvell might have laughed. I cannot weep.
Shakespeare might have quite calmly urged: Keep
All metaphysics from those who are mortally
Wounded. But envy the dead. A fig for that virgin Dante.
My third best bed was in the cemetery.

So you are dead who insulted my soul.
Being buried, who were not even my friend,
Buried without heather or wild rose
In the bleak weather as the great wind blows
Over the shining pavements, the wet magazines,
The fur scented girls, and the grass green with the new rains,
And left a tragedy here, if you can call
What hurries beyond tragedy, a tragedy,
For these should have a beginning and an end.

This is the end but since it is the end,
You are happy at least in this one certainty,
As you were in the eternity
Of childhood’s blue summer with seagull and yacht for friend;

When God was good; love, true; sea, sea; land, land.
Yet dare not to base immunity
From baseness on this triviality!
The murderer once gathered sea poppies with a hand
To be scarleter, to be pressed to the blacker
And less amorous heart of death... Oh, Christ,
Wash up some bone clear memory on this bitterest coast
Where is no wreck dead beak nor feather
Though none venture here without disaster. Give at the last
One half passionate tryst with the past;
Some sweet joy to gather there to my salt grey breast
Though children were betrayed, and money was kissed first.

Some sweet joy to gather to my salt grey breast
A wounded voice over the telephone:
"Call me later, I am just tired."
-- Then, the bell shrieking in the unseen room
Filling it with the ferocity of doom.
"But what shall I do, my own, my lost one,
Latched back into deeper night from the dark’s drone
They have called back the last, the slowest of all
to the asylum
Whose only thought is time, now there is none,
Now all is gone, all, all, save compassion,
And all is doubly gone with you gone, dear."
-- The bell still beats about that tragic room
Like a trapped bird, precursor of greater fear,
Where I imagine every book we shared,
Touched, yes, touched, smell, out of the pages of a book,
Out of Gogol; or your heart fluttering in my hand
But never held your heart back from denial,
Nor teeth, from my own heartsneck...
-- The stars like silver rifles in the void
Look down their sights to their special aim.
They do not range the categories of our pain.
No world will plunge for tears we never saw fall,
For sorrow that was never shared at all,
That I might comfort the dead, clasp stones in the stream.

Searching in a ravaged heart for anguish
You found only a dead grief? No sorrow
Could be as bad as that which quite goes by,
Ah, no, no sorrow... Still, to distinguish
It from other sorrows, extinguish
The heart first. Then call to-morrow,
Today: today, to-morrow; right, wrong; then languish
With these incorporate errors -- and the live dead
Is the omission here, ominously --
Until you live again what dies unread:
Then remember what the Strauss song said:
Just once a year the dead live for one day...
-- Oh, come to me again as once in May.

61.2 [Lowry’s typist mistakenly appends the last two lines of 60
to the beginning of this poem. They have been omitted here.]
VI

THE MOON IN SCANDINAVIA
1936

I

LUKE IN PAWNSHOP

A ukelele once in pawn I saw:
Hikopale, hikopale, hilowai, oh:
Oolaki, walawalaki, waikapona.
Oh, mokuaweoweo!

Hikapale, hikapale, hilowai, oh.

5

1937

II

God help those and others who
Have only thought of self,
To whom no simple truth was true,
No swift clear life was life:

And God help those who feel no pain
Yet live by it no less,
Since they invest it soundly in
Our stock of happiness.

8 63.1: our share of happiness.

1936

III

PRAYER

Give way, you fiends, and give that man some happiness
Who knelt in Wesleyan prayer to beget a fiend;
Builder of a gabled house with daffodils
Flattened by the webbed foot of false April

Father of four gaunt sons minus one,
Who, hearing the great guns, faltered not at all,
In church his rock, in home his Morro Castle,
In golf his chess, in poetry capital,
(And in the gulf his youngest abortive beauty,)
For him and for the woman of his choice
Replace the love which these most displaced bore me:
And from the wild choir over the freezing estuary
Bear him one humble phrase of love at last,
Some childhood supplication never to be lost
15 As I am lost whose lips had formed its shape...

5 64.2: Father of five steel gaunt sons minus one,
13 64.1: bear him again one humble phrase of love at long last
16-18 64.1: lest his fierce soul be abandoned to the gale
    and quick as the snake, the clock, [?] as death strikes,
    out of the nameless trees the nameless speak.

[1938-39]    IV    [65.2]

ON READING REDBURN

Children brave by day have strange fears at night
But when they wake in the morning light,
Their fears dissolve in sun between warm sheets,
Or, freezing in winter, become icy thoughts, --
5 The compulsory game in frost, -- the impossible boast,
The Geometry lesson, the primer stolen or lost ...
-- Ah how often, Redburn, must lovers wake in nightmare
Bedded with what seems hatred and despair,
Only to turn to ecstasy like de Maupassant,
10 To find yet one more morning is triumphant!
-- There is no constant here, such is our condition,
In dark to know conquest too, and in light no hope,
At dawn the girl, at midnight the horned owl.
-- But what of the waking of the brave race of man
15 After the unvintageable terrors of its sleep,
To find the mildew still upon its soul?

T 65.1: On reading Melville's Redburn
7 65.1,2: -- How often, Redburn, lovers wake in nightmare
14 65.1,2: -- But what of a waking of the brave race of man
1936-38  V  [66.2]

A fig for 6-par-T-pak ginger ale!...
For contest winners every Friday night
And N.B.C. network, too, coast to coast contest!...
Tipi-tipi-tin out of a dead coin and hell
Is yours even if in God you do trust
Or piddledee or life's rot from cost to cost...
Wrecker of gardens, no nickel or Yale yell
Will ring victory now, nor speech with Everest,
Ixtaccihuatl, Popocatapetl,
Quetzalcoatl, jail, Xicotancatl,
Nor whaleship's blubbery education,
Soothe your rashed breast. See, they have all gone,
The names too: Oaxaca; Xanadu; Belawan;
Saigon. And the sun. You would have liked Saigon.

1934-36  VI  [67.2]

BLEPHARIPAPPUS GLANDULOSUS OR WHITE TIDY-TIPS

I prayed to say a word as simple
As the daisy. I have sought so long
To speak this flower goodness created,
Or recreate the daisy in song ...

I] [missing] [67.1]

1936  VII  [68.3]

ON READING EDMUND WILSON'S REMARKS ABOUT RIMBAUD

---Formen of quarries in Cyprus,
The granaries of genius rolled down the river,
Stevedore of Marseilles, friend
To soap manufacturers in the whuling Cyclades,
No son to engineer a dreamed-of bridge,
Carlist, communist, dutch soldier, and
David to no Goliath in black forest,
Livid sleeper across real tracks at noonday,
Absinthe manque at the Yorkshire Grey

Seller of key-rings, shoe-laces, self, trunks,
Traveller with "Springboart & Tumplingakt",
Dreamer of railways to Addis Abbaba,
Ahab of the Abyssinian rain,
No Onan spilling false substance of the sun,
But false enough to betray the moonlight,
And fiend of the family of Verlaine,
With balls between your shoulders and elsewhere,
Cover up the leprosies of old walls,
Of the soul’s climb with Harrar’s later wisdom,
Of doleful trafficking with preposterous chiefs
And monstrous wives from Obanguï-Tchari-Tchad,
Sailed by camels who could climb St. Paul’s,
From Sokotra or the islands of the damned,
As you may; or build, not sense, canals,
Poetry snapped to the waist with a snake belt
Studded with polite lies precious as stones,
Still will life close with Isabelle in a dream,
Dying far from home at harvest time.

The exile is the luckiest of men,
Let million flint stones incommode his feet,
Be unstrung harps in his ears, it is sweet
To dwell in Hinnom and stride Hell again:
Or let it be Upper Slaughter, Aberdeen,
Xochimilco, Bodo, Chester-le-Street,
Worms, New Brighton, or Morocco,
You greet your spirit each tempestuous night to frighten
Remembered love into your loved one’s tears,
Where drowning’s incident now, you pewter Timon!
Ah, Leander, breath of winter, thronged arms of nightmares!
Lustre of sea the gleaming Arctic wears!
Better be hugged there, where grave Polar bears
Invite the soul with Borealian airs.

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Lustre of sea the gleaming Arctic wears!
Better be hugged there, where grave Polar bears
Invite the soul with Borealian airs.
Wolf, wolf, cried the boy in the fable,
Who plagued the shepherds and the sheep alike,
To return, laughing softly, to the stable,
And fold away the hours with reed or fiddle,
Bleating in music for deceived shepherd's sake.
There was no wolf then. But at night one struck,
Long famished in iron hills she saw her table
Spread whitely on the green plains of Tortu.
Wolf, cried the boy. But now no herdsman came.

Wolf, wolf, returned the wolf, her icy heart aflame...
So wolf and child were well met. But I say to you
That slept they once on never so proud an Alp, --
It is the poor wolf now who cries for help.

King Lear blinded Oedipus in a dream
And gave him Sophocles in braille to read
While robins and Cordelia drank his blood.
The fated monarch like a bird picked through
His scarlet story, crouching where feverfew
And agatha in an asylum garden grew.
Here no pale shepherds found him for a Priam
Eating furred peaches, counting every stone,
Each hour a tinker with the royal bone,

Stroking the careless waves to kingdom come
When sailor stood. Jocasta came to him
His pulped heart strewn on the rashed, embossed, scheme;
Four thousand yards of incandescent pain.
The gates grinned wide. Now smell your way to Dover!
Fly, fly there straight as any bobelin,
No more sing never, never never,
But slap spang as from the great bison's bung the bomb!
Cannot you hear the beach, snuff the sea-salt?
Your great blindness engulfs its own cobalt.

My awful son, imponderable with fate,
Who only scent the crest, shall see the womb.
Now we have considered these things, each to each,
The white house in the marsh, like home, the factories
With torn smoke evanescent as farewell,
The bright ship and solitary landward gull,
And with its special currents the bright river
(Which throws a sudden wash upon the beach)
Negotiable as a simple poem, the trees
Nameless, but friends, sentinels, and nowhere
Pandemonium of our enemies, the news
Of how this brother fought and that one fell
To conjure up such beauty with his blood
Shakes us with an appalling human (being theirs) laughter
Since all we know is that the wind is good
And at the end the sun is what it was.
12 72.1,2,5: Shakes us with an inward, fluctuant, laughter,
72.3: Shakes us with a secret, gigantic laughter,
72.4: since all we know is, that the wind is good
72.6,7: Shakes us with anguished, secret laughter,
13 72.4: And at the end the sun is what it was.

1938  

XII  [73.3]

- - For Christ's sake and for mine and last for a child's god gone
Stand on that declivity by University City,
Which is forever abandoned,
Stand there laughing down with
Sommerfield, John Cornford, Julian Bell.
Hashish in the library behind
But rifles and tobacco well in hand.
No Grecian urn will smother your bodies' leaves
Nor twelfth street hash your lives to rags of self pity:
Nor is there anguish importunes my lease
As this real death without its gilded hearse
Nodding down some dull plumed serpent of a street
That turns out at the last to be the sea.
Let I who take my sanest leave of you

Phone Michigan 1951 for help.

4 73.2: stand poised there laughing down with
8 your] you (73.2)

73.1 - - for christ's sake & mine & last for a child's god gone
stand on that declivity for ever by University City
for ever posed there unabandoned,
is a fixture that no Greek urn knew.
nor shall she smother your gallant bodies' leaves
For skulls in Spanish wars laugh long with long teeth
ground by tumult of bombs dropping over Madrid.
With hashish in the library behind
and John Sommerfield & John Cornford
tobacco & cracked rifles well in hand

1936  

XIII  [74.3]

ONLY GOD KNOWS HOW III

Oilers for rivers: cargo ships for stars
Neoshe, Wabash: Wormwood, Arcturus;
And ocean-going tugs for Indian tribes
Narkeeta, Barnegat and Massasoit.

5 Mine layers for words of menace, Terror.
Repair ships are mythological characters
Reappearing as Zeus etcetera...
Reinaugural nomenclature
Reclaims dividendless Homeric errors:
A rusted Helen rotting in Kow-Loon:
Menelaus riding at anchor: Agamemnon
Awash with stiff dismantled shrouds, Paris
Striding the Red Seas as stinking pilgrim
A miserable ship as ever sank Lord Jim
In port: And, terrible at night of Perim
Troilus and Cressida reeling, the iron
Pandarus: Vast, silent, malodorous.
— Loutish we scrubbed in chalk the dark's bulkhead;
Renamed a stone fleet for God's bereaved lap;
For animals, impalpables of the mind;
For children, categories of the blind;
Currencies and scavengers for women;
For man, new names for sleep.

The walls of remorse are steep, there is no belay
Safe in her conquest, and one remembers
Behind a gin-fog of lost Novembers
Climbing the Devil’s Kitchen, or better say
Not climbing it; No matter; betray
The vexed memory! Burn in some hotter embers,
Hotter than ever devil set for climbers -
That ravage the heart - and poor child, once stay
Warmest handholds here you can only freeze. Said
My friend in Wales when drunk with port and hope --
-- I'd climb that rock again in sandals for sport,
And then in spikes for the glory of God!
But life gave me one chance whatever it set
You. And as well end that fall too at the end of a rope.
VII

THE ROAR OF THE SEA AND THE DARKNESS
IRON THOUGHTS SAIL OUT AT EVENING

Iron thoughts sail out at evening on iron ships; They move hushed as far lights while twelve footers Dive at anchor as the ferry sputters And spins like a round top, in the tide rips, Its rooster voice half muted by choked pipes Plumed with steam. The ship passes. The cutters Fall away. Bells strike. The ferry utters A last white phrase; and human lips, A last black one, heavy with welcome To loss. Thoughts leave the pitiless city, Yet ships themselves are iron and have no pity; While men have hearts and sides that strain and rust. Iron thoughts sail from the iron cities in the dust, Yet soft as doves the thoughts that fly back home.

FROM HELSINKI TO LIVERPOOL WITH LUMBER

The old timber ship steams down the Mersey -- Dimitrios N. Bouliazides -- Though Lloyds refuse, a vast load of trees From anguished lands of frozen destinies, High piled on deck, "insure" her own demise. Can a ship turn over and yet not capsize? If so, she'll do it, but if not, she tries. A ship capsize yet not sink? It may be. She hurts the heart's eye, by beauty wounding all, This fabulous, overloaded, Greek ship, Starting thoughts for leaks in the world's old plates... No sweet wood there! Yet what dread load lies steep On her ancient sides as she overweights The estuary, lies broken against the last dock wall?

VIGIL FORGET

Vigil Forget went ten miles on a camion, Then a thousand or more on a freighter Trembling in every mast; no chameleon Changed color faster than Forget from apprehension
Of himself. His cargo of disaster grew lighter and lighter;
Once in a rickshaw he felt real condescension
Towards the present, loving it, and feeling greater
Than the ancient torturer, himself ... Ah, new selves!
Vigil Forget took a sampan to a far shore,
And an angry camel to Stalin's Samarkand,
And then a bleak freighter home with his poor lives
Grown self again, to board the ferry to his whore...
-- Columbus too thought Cuba on the mainland.

QUARTERMASTER AT THE WHEEL

The Harkness light! Another hour spelled out,
Struck by myself with unction but with doubt.
A man is killed but does not hear the shot
Which kills him; four bells kills me.
Lucky to hear it if I killed myself,
Whose age haunts calendars upon the screen;
The heroine born in nineteen eighteen,
Who yesterday was born in nineteen eight.
A pile of magazines assess dead love
On shore where one light burns no love will wait.
Tomorrow is the sea and then the sea,
To both least faithless when we most forsake,
The one unscaled, the other vomitless
Of Jonah to his gourd or Nineveh...
It is a straw to tickle blood shot eyes
Of quartermasters soldered to darkness
The stiff wheel and the remembrance of the crowned,
For sinking men to suck at or to claw
The thought that what we saw we often hear
Too late or not at all, or cannot bear
To know resounding eardrums register.
Our siren now! What ugliest ship has not
Borne heart from heart with that deep plangency,
Sadder than masthead's light, a soul
In mourning whose voice is grief gone by.
Roll on, you witless, dark brown ocean roll,
And light light years and grey ones let us live
Within that gracious nexus of reprieve,
Between the fated sight and fatal sound...
--Now leave the world to Harkness and to me.

79.1: Quartermaster at the Wheel
Quartermaster
79.2: Quartermaster: For John Sommerfield
15 Nineveh
29 79.1,2: Within that gracious minus of reprieve
THERE IS A METALLURGY

There is a metallurgy of the mind
Draws out the real of young love as fine wire
Is drawn from white-hot steel in the tail fire.
Life has no time to waste; but in the blind
5
Fastness of first love's presence, constrained
Permanence in parting, immediacy of desire,
What hint or shadow of a hint is there
Attesting to this doom so close behind,
For it is like a doom to feel love shrink,
10
Its metal cooled by friendship's failing breath?
Yet they are fools who say that true love dies,
Nor would it die as poets have us think.
Gazing at peonies is not to see death;
Nor is it death to drown in hazel eyes.

Christ, slashed with an axe, in the humped church —
How shall we pray to you all pied with blood,
Yet deader by far than the hacked wood?
But pray we must since prayer is all our search
5
Who come in anger only to beseech.
Here kneel two creatures who believe in good,
Here stood two lovers, they believed in God,
And in thee, too, though maimed at life's touch
As by the doleful art of these dull men.
10
-- Oh, ravaged by man but murdered in mankind,
Of peace a prater, yet of fire and shot
Vicarious exculpator to seventy times seven;
Image, we wish thee ill; yet alive in mind
That mind itself may live, and compassion forsake us not.

Black thunderclouds mass up against the wind,
High-piled beyond Popocatetl;
So with force, against whose swollen metal
The wind of reason has the heart pinned
5
Till overbulged by madness, splitting mind...
Or, drifting without reason, see mind's petal
Torn from a good tree, but where shall it settle
But in the last darkness and at the end?
Who take no arms as the good wind’s defender
You psalmists of despair, of man’s approved lease,
Reason remains although your mind forsakes
It; and white birds higher fly against the thunder
Than ever flew yours, where Tchechov said was peace,
When the heart changes and the thunder breaks.

2 Popocatepetl] Popacatapetl

[1938-39] VIII [83.1]

No road in existence strikes such terror
From its blind length, from eternity to eternity
To the soul, as the deadly quality
Of the coiled heart frozen in its error.

The road may lead to Archangel or Gomorrah,
Its tossing stones not less moved to pity
Than this stone encompassing no city.
And if our soul’s Australia knew its Canberra,
Some fixed capital to its masked archipelago,

Light in our darkness, in our lightness dark,
To which the only road was the sea or through the earth,
Or through this heart or through the body’s woe—,
That heart would deny no passage, leaving us the black
Ocean for comfort: and fire: and death.

7 83.1 Than this stone which encompasses no city.

[1938-39] IX [84.1]

So he would rather have written those lines,
Those Trumpington Street lines, than take the town --
Would he, the liar? So write his name down
"Wolfe". And the town too; Quebec. His name shines
In our history. Cortes’ shone in Spain’s.
Shines more or less for all I know or have known.
Somewhere there is some knowledge; under the stone
A message perhaps; or hidden by strange signs
In places only the stupid visit.

The path led to the grave? The elegiac way
Scaled Abram heights for our lupine avenger?
A worn path also for the wolf,— or is it?
-- Keep wolves from country churchyards, reading Gray,
Too good a name is wolf for scavenger.
We likened one man to a ship adrift
Broken from anchorage with skeleton crew
Of false precepts; or listing with iceberg’s impact;
It was melancholy to hear him try to shift
The blame on us for his sure guilt; but gift
Of clarity he lacked and in fact
No tactile appeal for help was made anew.
It was long before he was silent. I tried to sift
Later the mystery of man’s dissembling
When most he needs aid. He would have
Given him that. I have considered it since.
When the doomed are most eloquent in their sinking,
It seems that then we are least strong to save,
And pray that his proved no titanic case.

You cannot, must not, Orpheus, look back, my soul;
What guards you summon yet be afraid of.
The dead stagnate at corners from unbelief,
Waiting for the deed that seems almost will.
Consider sanely our wish to be whole,
For life must be in death as life in all.
A sense of finitude transcends the real of grief,
When lungs of darkness gasp in life’s used oil.
Life! Our longing for you was more than dreams
Of home on earth, though we traced the moors,
The clock on the grey sand, and the path of the sea,
Whose salt death never finally inters
Hatreds, oppressions, phantasms, crimes,
— With our breath, with our fate, we will help you,
Eurydice.

9 86.1,2: Oh life! Our longing for you was more than dreams

The lighthouse invites the storm and lights it.
Driven by tempest the tall freighter heels
Under the crag where the fiery seabird wheels,
And lightning of spume over rocks ignites it.
Oh, birds of the darkness of winter whose flights it
Importunes with frost, when ice congeals
On wings bonded for flight by zero’s seals
What good spirit undulates you still like kites that
Children are guardians of in cold blue? — 
And what indeed ourselves, Chang, in these pursuit 
Planes, strung to a nucleus within range 
Of our polygonous enemy, 
And what shall we, what shall we not, tolerate 
Today from chaos, what? -- by the unshot albatross and 
Icarus’ circus plunge?

10 87.1: and what indeed ourselves in this pursuit 
11 87.1: plane, strung to a nucleus within range 
12 87.1: of our enemy of the anti-aircraft crew? 
of our enemy the epicene Whangpoo 
87.2: of our enemy, the epicene Whangpoo 
14 87.1: from chaos, what --by the unshot albatross and Icarus’

1936  
XIII  
[88.2]  
The ship of war sails in the grey morning, 
Or Vigil says so, who followed the sea. 
-- The shape of this war is like that spared tree 
Over there. See how it is an awning 
Now, that was quite bare; a profound warning 
Of a spreading wisdom mere force can’t see -- 
But to go back to the ship: Vigil tells me 
The ship and war hold much the same meaning 
For him; same loyalty to fire and knife 
In both; anguish for home; comrades you love 
Borne to a common goal by an iron jade. 
-- Well, if the end is death the field is life 
Which we shall gain, shipmate... Time now to move 
Toward the one good port war ever made.

1934-36  
XIV  
[89.2]  
TASHTEGO BELIEVED RED 

A hand comforts held out to one who’s sinking; 
And what founders deeper than a world which sinks? 
Like a lost ship it never once says thanks, 
Since no single hand shall save its timber drinking 
The poisoned salt its sides awash are flanking, 
Thirsty for web of weeds or silt of sandbanks, 
Its last music gunshot, its gesture pose of tanks 
Over the wood where swathes of death are ranking... 
But witness, the hand is no hand but an arm 
Curving itself with the strong swimmer’s flex
— A thousand arms which thresh against the blast
Of a regressive ocean even whose calm
Is derelict with that impartiality which wrecks.
— Yet regard, regard, the red banner nailed to the mast!

T3 [missing] (89.1)
7 89.1: its music gunshot, its gesture poise of tanks

1937 XV

Lying awake beside a sleeping girl,
Thunder and gunfire plunging about the house,
Lightning like an inch worm going down the sky,
The sound of the storm seems a forlorn boast,
And sirens muted along the iron coast
Forlorn's a word to toll us back to self?
Rather it warns us forward to the sad world,
Or to those sadder worlds beneath the sea
Of sense, divorced by self. Uncared by it,
It by them. Forgetting the boast of gods
That they are gods, the thunderous boast
Of an enemy gun that thinks itself a god;
Consider the ship instead who needs a light for succour,
— The "Seven Seas' spray", (Captain "Potato", Jones).
With eyes like gimlets her lookouts probe the night:
The cliffs, where are the cliffs, where are the cliffs?
The course to Bilbao! The gauntlet must be run
Toward the smaller sound of the braver gun.
— Or, considering the agony of the treacherous rocks themselves
Which, once wrecked upon them, who would indeed consider?
And let this lead us to all stupidity and error,
The mariner's mistake, the wreck metaphysical,
The order to starboard taken as port,
Inconsistency of divine and human law, Kafka
In the allied blockade, (truth still asleep beside us),
And so be guided to the foul berth,
To the pretended vision, the great lie,
Told for the millionth time it became true,
A truth only when it was too late,
Or when one no longer believed it himself,
And new falsehood was needful as new chaos
To Saturn; though less difficult to find,
Since here it was, a denial of the false
Which was now true, a rationalization
Projected with such vaporous force
As launches planets, blesses battleships;
Most natural and fated birth of all,
Our world eased doubtless from such sophistry,
And all lying worlds that wait sunk in darkness.
world's  
the cliffs, where are the cliffs, where the beacon?
Since here it was, a denial of what had been false
and now was true, a rationalization
our world eased doubtless from this sophistry

SONG ABOUT MADRID, USEFUL ANY TIME

Shall life be the victor,
Where we go to die;
Or has death the malefactor,
The future in his eyes?

Life knowing such obstruction,
Death hopes to defy us?
Destruction's seed is barren,
Though it is more copious.

Nor shall death pass to that town,
Where life finally stands guard;
Though swollen death with death be grown,
And the dead ride hard.

Since life must be the winner,
Though even a recruit,
Though but a rank beginner,
In the musketry of thought.

Persistence of the memory of Madrid: To John Sommerfield & Julian Bell
The Live phantoms of University City
The dead ride hard
Slogan for Everyone
Not to be used by both sides

Where I go to die?
Where they go to die?
Where my comrades go to die?
Destruction's seed is barren,
Barren is destruction's seed
Life, cooled in such obstruction
Yet her fruits are overgrown
No cornucopias
Where her barren seed is strewn
Though his fruits are overgrown
See the madness of the harvest.
But what sad harvest may this yield
Yet his harvest may not yield
What harvest can destruction yield
8 91.1: Where the teeth of death are sown.
   91.3,4,5: Where the teeth of death were sown.
9-12 91.1: [missing]
9 91.2: But death shall not pass to the town
   But death cannot pass to the town
9 91.3: But death shall not pass to that town
9 91.4: But the dead shall not pass to the final town
9 91.5: But the dead shall not pass to the town
11 91.4,5: Though swollen death with death be blown
12 91.4: When the dead ride hard.
13 91.1: shall life then be the winner?
   91.2: life knows it is the winner;
   91.3: Life shall be the victor!
   91.4: Life then shall be the winner
   91.5: Life shall be the winner
14 91.1: Though a recruit.
   91.3: Yes, even though a recruit
   91.4: It must: though a recruit
   91.5: Fist clenched: though even a recruit

1937 XVII [92.2]

THE SHIP IS TURNING HOMeward

The ship is turning homeward now at last.
The bosun tries to read but dreams of home.
The old lamptrimmer sleeps, the engine thrums:
Home. Lamps are set to light us from the past
To a near future unmysterious as this mast,
Whose bulk we recognize and finite aim.
Patient iron! But, beyond the maintruck, dumb
Blankness, or the twitch of reeling stars cast
Adrift, in a white ocean of doubt.

Perhaps this tramp rolls towards a futurity
That broods on ocean less than on the gall
In seamen’s minds. Is that star wormwood out
Among love’s stars? This freighter eternity?
Where are we going? Life save us all.

3-6 92.1: The old lamptrimmer hears the engine thrum
   His lamps are set to light us from the past
   Into a future cold as this mast
   With iron and what iron loves of kingdom come.
5 92.1: to a future unmysterious as this mast,
14 92.1: How is the compass set? Life save us all.
A POEM OF GOD'S MERCY

Cain shall not slay Abel today on our good ground,
Nor Adam stagger on our shrouded moon,
Nor Ishmael lie stiff in 28th Street,
With a New Bedford harpoon in his brain,
His right lung in a Hoboken garboon.
For this is the long day when the lost are found,
And those, parted by tragedy, meet
With spring-sweet joy. And those who longest should have met
Are safe in each other's arms not too late.

Today the forsaken one of the fold is brought home,
And the great cold, in the street of the vulture, are warm,
The numbed albatross is sheltered from the storm,
The tortured shall no longer know alarm
For all in wilderness are free from harm:

Age dreaming on youth, youth dreaming on age shall not be found,
While good Loki chases dragons underground.
Life hears our prayer for the lonely trimmer on watch,
Or shuddering, at one bell, on the wet hatch,
At evening, for the floating sailor by the far coast,
The impaled soldier in the shell hole or the hail,
The crew of the doomed barque sweeping into the sunset
With black sails; for mothers in anguish and unrest,
And each of all the the oppressed, a compassionate ghost
Will recommemorate the Pentecost

Ah, poets of God's mercy, harbingers of the gale,
Now I say the lamb is brought home, and Gogol
Wraps a warm overcoat about him . . .
Our city of dreadful night will blossom into a sea-morning!
Only bear with us, bear with my song,
For at dawn is the reckoning and the last night is long.
And on the bridge the wheel turns silently,
We follow a coast of heather, how small she is says
the wandering lover,
I wonder how we have loved too as the ridge is lost
completely:
The tall fire was beating us but now the watch is over.

For other watches taking the twelve to four.
The reaper sadly harvests what the wet March spent.
Sleep shadows those left. Footsteps knock against it.
They are awake to dreariness once more!
But us, sea-weary, sleep overwent.

So in our lives how powerfully we move
Like this iron black ship back towards the Magellan of
our birth,
All suns unsighted on this earth save love's or not
--- "I have worn my jackknife in my cap to catch the
lightning at Cape Horn."

... The merchantmen hull-down creep near the shoal---
Danger they seek not though their range be dark---
Ah, fraught with sad freightage towards some sullen goal!
At Hatteras the wreckage drifts; and to Mount Ararat the ark.

3 94.1: the ship is a sleepwalker the ship is a silent ghost she is eternity
4 94.1: and other watches take the 12 to 4
11 94.2: While some, sea-weary, sleep overwent.
12 94.1: so in our lives with what dark certainty we move
13 94.1: swiftly towards the magellan of our birth
15 94.1: the bourne is dangerous the noon unsighted we have known on this

94.2: All noons unsighted on this earth save love's or not
16-17 94.1,2,3,4: [quotation marks missing; added in L's hand on 94.4]
16 94.2: I have worn the jackknife in my cap to catch the
21 94.2: At Hatteras the wreckage drifts; and on Mount Ararat the ark.
18-21 94.1: the moon hurls blindly through the storm like a silver discus
Saint Pierre we shall know when Montserrat seems darkest
dark with a flood of oleander and hibiscus
the Cedric lies at Cobh she is at rest and on mount ararat the ark
ON READING R.L.S.

It had no name and we docked at midnight.
Its darkness spoke indecision and menace:
Nor could girls, laughing in linked quintets in the lamplight,
Leaven our hearts, embittered with sea salt.

There was no beauty about this port.
But, waking early, seeing near at hand
The very lineaments of a new land
With wharf, clock, market, road and post office,
Whose every stone seemed to conceal a secret,

With our own flag flying and its promise
Of news from the only one in the world-
Emergence was of Christian from Despond
And Friday's print for Crusoe in the sand.

LINES WRITTEN ON READING DOSTOIEVSKI

The world of ghosts moves closer every hour,
Knowing we belong to no life's order;
To those who see no ghosts no spectres are,
Yet these preserve an appetite for murder,
For life on the short wave, aching for Caesar.
Men leaving Tokio return as trundled cedar,
Or for "sex fiend's tots feed alligator;"
Child bride flew through a forest to no castle,
The forest was the post, (she travelled in a parcel)...

The world of ghosts moves closer and closer,
Knowing we belong to no life's order...
Contemptuous of signs, sounds, furies,
Of those interwishing categories
Significant to us, (to be impartial),
But to the lilac sea who knows our purpose,
By carribean geometry of porpoise,
Coring to time the whirling arc's compass,
Knowing our cosmography not planetary,
Our sanctuary not sanctuary,

As with full swell to our ambiguous coasts
She bears to us the more ambiguous ghosts.
12 Caesar: to order contemptuous of signs, sounds, furies, no order contemptuous of signs, sounds, furies,
15 and to the lilac sea who knows our purpose,
19 [adds next line:] our misery not momentary
21 she bears to us the weary ghosts.

1936 XXII

THE ROAR OF THE SEA AND THE DARKNESS

He prayed to his ghost for a vision of the sea,
Which would harbour it strictly in the mind
For all time, that he might be resigned
To it and not haunted eternally;

The ghost nodded his head, and said gravely:
Gaunt Forget, thus you would lose your only grief and find
You had composed your tears, landlocked your heart;
You would pray for the roar of the sea wind
And darkness, then, call us wrong or right;

You must always claim its unrest and its monotony;
Its mist on your breast — His ship in harbour
Loaded sweet timber from the high-piled wharf.
He looked at her long, and then with a laugh,
Climbed on board and was seen no more.

The End.
UNCOLLECTED POEMS 1933-38

The sixteen poems in this section date from the Lighthouse period, but were not included in that text, although "In the Oaxaca Train" [101], appears in the 1940 "Eight Poems from The Lighthouse Invites the Storm." Lowry probably considered the poems in this section the cull of his Mexican poetic material: fourteen of the sixteen never reached typescript form.

The first states for nine of the sixteen poems appear in the "Pegaso" Mexican notebook, which also includes fragments from the lost novel In Ballast to the White Sea as well as Under the Volcano (12-14). The "Pegaso" paper--8 x 10" white, wide blue-lined and unmargined--can be assigned to 1938 through its appearance in Lowry's outgoing correspondence for that year (1-76). It is clear that the work in this notebook is immediate and rough; six of the nine "Pegaso" poems exist only in one holograph draft, and only one of the six was further reworked. Of the three multiple draft poems, only "In the Oaxaca Train" ever appears anywhere other than the "Pegaso" notebook. The unfinished nature of the "Pegaso" poems has not been editorially disturbed.

The seven remaining poems appear on different kinds of paper, which further contributes to the fragmentary nature of this section. The only extant state of "For Under the Volcano" [100] is a holograph draft on 8 1/2 x 11" white, narrow blue-lined, three-ringed paper also used for some Lighthouse poems; the single holograph draft for "Outside was the roar of the sea and the darkness" appears on "Argonaut" letterhead, which is probably a hotel stationery. This manuscript contains a fragment
from "Memory of the Hospitality of American Barmen" [19], of which the first typed state appears on 1937 paper; therefore, the "Argonaut" manuscript is likely pre-1937. Two of the poems in this section come from a 1937 letter from Lowry to Aiken: "Prelude to another drink" [106] and "Prelude to Mammon" [107] are two of four poetry exercises which appeared in his letter. Another poem, "S.O.S. Sinking fast by both bow and stern" [109] comes from a 1937 letter to John Davenport, in which Lowry agonizes over his treatment by, and loss of, Jan Gabrial. The Mexican menu poem [108] mentioned in both Under the Volcano and Dark as the Grave is scrawled in two states on the 1938 menu for the "El Petate" restaurant (WTP 1-24). The earliest poem in this section actually appears on the brown newsprint paper characteristic of the Dollarton period, but on the manuscript Lowry dates the poem 1933. Given this date, the poem "Who made this suicide pact of love?" [113] probably refers to his relationship with Jan Gabrial.

The poems in this section are arranged alphabetically because it is impossible to determine their exact chronology: approximately half of the poems appear on the same type of paper, while the papers of the other half are so widely disparate that no clear dating pattern emerges. No authorial order is apparent, for the poems are mostly untitled and always unnumbered. Because the manuscripts in this section appear to be mostly aborted drafts, the sigla are selectively recorded to show only significant line variants. Line initials are not emended.
NOTES

1 The nine poems are: "And when you go - much as a meteor" [98], "The boatmen swing their lanterns on the Caribbean" [99], "In the Oaxaca Train" [101], "Midnight denies poursuivant of the dawn" [102], "A morning coat is walking" [103], "To Herr Toller, Who Hanged Himself" [104], "Thoughts While Drowning" [110], "What the Irish soldier said" [111], "When I am in the purgatory of the unread" [112].

2 The six single-holograph poems are: "And when you go - much as a meteor" [98], "The boatmen swing their lanterns on the Caribbean" [99], "A morning coat is walking" [103], "To Herr Toller, Who Hanged Himself" [104], "Thoughts While Drowning" [110], "What the Irish soldier said" [111]. Only "And when you go - much as a meteor," was further revised.

3 The two others were further reworked and eventually were included in the Lighthouse as "Thirty Five Mescals in Cuautla" [25], and "The Last Man in the Dôme" [29].
And, when you go - much as a meteor,
Or as this swaying, incandescent car
which, like lost love, leaves lightnings in its wake,
(And me, an aspen with its Christ in mind
Whose wood remembers once it made a cross
So trembles ever since in wind, or no wind,)
But most like Venus, with our black desire
Which blinds me now, your light a horned curve
First; then, circling, a whitely flaming disk,
Not distance, but your phase, removes the mask,
Until you are the brightest of all stars -
Pray then, in this most brilliant, lonely hour
That, reunited, we may learn, forever
To keep the sun between ourselves and love.

the boatmen swing their lanterns on the Caribbean;
the great circle of the nameless window stares
(the reeling circle of the unacknowledged stars)
lovely as widows in Nantucket waiting for Ahab;
the sharks crawl and dance into the darkness:
the evening darkens on the noble bottles
where others drink their suns down under the bars
 crawling sharks swarming over the heavy-lidded porthole:
these fears belong to well-deck of our childhood;
the foredeck churning with furies of water, the disjointed
derrick is to be dealt with...
jammed against the crosstrees like beauty in a cartoon
a giant at sea a fool against the first mate in port
crossed, against the tree like myth in a storm
Judas, swinging in masthead in mid-ocean in the typhoon...
ashore the pearl fishers circle the square
alchemist’s drogher’s in reverse the philosophers stone
the rock which penetrates our focsle

where cramped elders drink their suns down under the bars
jammed against the crosstrees like simplicity in a cartoon
FOR UNDER THE VOLCANO

A dead lemon like a cowled old woman crouching in the cold.
A white pylon of salt and the flies
taxying on the orange table, rain, rain, a scraping peon.
And a scraping pen writing bowed words.

War. And the broken necked street-cars outside
And a sudden broken thought of a girl's face in Hoboken
A tilted turtle dying slowly on the stoop,
of the sea-food restaurant, blood
lacing its mouth, and the white floor - ready for teredos to-morrow.

There will be no to-morrow. To-morrow is over.
clover and the smell of fircones, fricas and the deep grass,
and turkey mole sauce and England
suddenly, a thought of home, but then

the mariachis, discordant, for the beaked bird

of maguey is on the wing, the waiter bears

a flowing black dish of emotion,
the peon's face is a mass of corruption
we discard the horripilation of the weather

in this ghastly land of the half-buried man

where we live with Canute the sundial and the red snapper
the leper the creeper together in the green tower
play at sunset on the mundial flute and guitar
the song, the song of the eternal waiting of Canute
the wrong of my waiting, the song of my weeping

betrothed to the puking vacuum and the unfleshible root
and the sound of the train and the rain on the brain outside

only emptiness and in my soul sleeping
where once strutted tigers lemonade scruffy green lepers
liquors pears scrubbed peppers and stuffed Leopardis,

- Thus delirium. This pyre of Bierce and springboard of Hart Crane!
Death so far away from home and wife
He feared and prayed for his sick life -
So far from home and lane
He feared while his standing by

"A corpse should be transported by express," said the

[Consul mysteriously waking up suddenly.

6 girls] girls
When maguey gives way to pine
What we see from the train is kinder:
"This" is England; or, of the Rhine,
"That" is reminder.

But when pine gives way to cactus
What we see, someone says, is "brutal."
To smashed maguey’s patterns react us
From wooled thoughts of Bonn or of Bootle.

Then when it is dark, from the train
Nor forest nor field may we see,
So within from the dark flies the pain
Of the maguey, the strength of the fir tree,
To settle in toiler’s faces,
In the faces of those who recline,
In the faces of those who have laboured
In maguey, or up in the pine.

Yet what hope in this plunging compartment!
As they sleep it is set like a sign.
A hope that still flickers in England,
But vanished along the Rhine.
of the maguey and the pine tree

Reflected in toiler's faces

In the bark of those who recline:
   In the timber of those who have lingered

In maguey or away in the pine.

While at length a hope grows
   But there is hope in this plunging compartment!

Yet what hope for this plunging compartment!

As they sleep Life is set like a sign

A hope that rarely harboured in England;
   A hope much less harboured in England

And never along the Rhine,
   And never one side of the Rhine,
   But only beneath the Rhine.

Yet what hope for this plunging compartment!

As they sleep Life is set like a sign

1938

Midnight denies poursuivant of the dawn.
   And dawn denies finality of twelve
What shall we regenerate for time
to shake our fool equation alive?

how shall we balance unbalanced childhood
   with some fixed decency with an even tune,
to some certainty, to its holiest decembers?
when days that seem now full, upright as tulips
   raged in horrible circles like cyclones:

the hyacinths flattened in the wood
then we forgot that tempestuous spring
   which sinks the lost ship now in cold calm of order:
forget too we had seen the white whale
   which now appears scarred at the other pole

its passage under ice our adolescence,
that engineering taught us at first hand
trigonometry failed to teach us
the magnets of the rich were clogged with sand
that machinery of Zenith's obsolescence
questioned clear loyalty to the cotton cities
   eased on heart's trial hill the slipping gear
for those who dived for moons into the river.

doursuivant] poursuivant

what force shall we regenerate for numbers

to its certainty and its loved Decembers:
   to its certainty and its holiest Decembers
8-16 102.1: Sand clogs the magnets of the great:
eights [?breaking] up potholes with an obsolete beet
and laminated spring forks [?] pulley,
Chaos was fixed then without a gear:
that meccano and [?longer] tower's strange signatures
questioned clear loyalty to the cotton cities
gradually eased on heart's trial hill the gear safe
for those who dived for moons into the river.

17-22 102.1: [missing]
19 Zenith's] Zeniths

1938 [103.1]

A morning coat is walking
Along Broadway
But bright at Wall Street gleams the spat
Of affluent yesterday.

5 Ah, let the past, forsaking,
Drown in its special vat:
Richer are you in wisdom and heartbreaking
Sans coat, stick, stock, -yes,- sans hat!

And so, our friend, forbear, forbear
The past's felicity,
Lest we, through customs, have to wear
Our coats of mourning too.

3 103.1: And bright at Wall Street gleams the spat
5 103.1: But let the past, forsaking,

1938 TO HERR TOLLER, WHO HANGED HIMSELF [104.1]

No swallows build their nests here my dear Toller,
only the aspen has its Christ in mind
remembering its wood which made a cross before
trembled ever since in quest or in wind
I know what you loved, and know that your collar
It was a dressing gown cord
The hanged man was only hanged once and the last mile
is the last mile. And this week is beginning well
said the man going to be hung on Monday. Hell!
Terror smiled twice but thrice it could not smile
Horror smiled too: it will never smile again
As once it grinned upon your pen in prison
But though we are such a case too, in bad style
I see your death as no party treason
Your doom out of time, as good reason.
Hoppla, wir leben!
Outside was the roar of the sea and the darkness
Was it? Greatest of all poets of the storm,—
outside, outside,—are you sure her form,
hers shape implied there your special wilderness?
Your clanging Inchcape rock and your Harkness
Your doom? what start point started you to your multiform
knowing of the unconsciousness’s typhoon,
to the tenderness of cyclones to Atlantic’s meekness
and death’s leaping tarpon landscape, oh poet of god’s mercy, poet of storm
of the bloody harpoon and the sperm whale at bay
Each life has for a while its good hope and Cape Horn.
Yet when I think of you I see the freighter
sinking for Mazatlan and the heeling shadow of albatross
seeking forever the ancienter mariner
Formosa and the islands of the damned:
and those shawled islets dying of age and snow
as I too die of the headache of my sorrow:
(lost as the hurache in the dust in Tehuantepec)
the dhow which sank, the drunk with the broken neck:
I think of the plunging derrick on the foredeck;
the Indian Ocean yet with no sight of land:
nor wind, asphodel; violet; gentian; sand,
and in half-memory only the tenderness of a hand:
and guardians in moonlight could not understand
derelicts at midnight, and hail in Samarkand:
the hangover: the dead stevedore on a blazing lighter:
—Ah dead of dereliction, snow, fire, and age
myself, my haunter of myself, I ponder your page,
(which is great —), letting me know
all but why the bearded ocean is outside.
For this secret you have canvassed with your pride,
or to some rare but loutish phantasy;—
why forked-radish Neptune should be admired
by you, with consciousness; and the ox-eye daisy
to glow through me, —dead, feverish, and tired.

Is this an airplane racing in my room?
What is it then, an insect, god knows what:
God probably does know which is the point;
Or did know — leave it at that — some sort of hornet.
Airplane or aeroplane or just plain plane,—
Some hint of something more than this is here.
Insect, vision, or terrestrial visitor,—
Some hint of something more than this is here.
Some hint is here and what should it be but this?
To watch this guest, to see what it does.
It taxies like an Avno skidding through the flying field
Rises like a Sopwith, flits into a rage
Bangs against the light, settles on the printed page
Soars; then falls; then can't get up

15
When I try to help him his hands evade my help -
I myself seeing the only possible exit.
So God watches us with lids which move not.
But this is a repetition of an "idea"
Before the terrible delirium of God.

1937

PRELUDE TO MAMMON

Sir: drinking is a problem without doubt:
Whether or not we like it, whether or not
The goddamn thing will put you on the spot
With heebiejeebies hebephrene or gout:

5
Or lumbago will set you tapping out
On brass ferrule to stool, to rest, to rot.
Though rotting's a fine pastime for a sot
It seems when we excrete we should not shout;
While even when we rest it's more discreet
That we should unambiguously rest.
What others think is one torment of drink
But these have dung not dew upon their feet
Whose dry concern for us is manifest
In the ubiquity of the parched soul's stink.

1937

- Some years ago he started to escape;-
and has been escaping ever since -
Not knowing his pursuers gave up hope
Of seeing him dance at the end of a rope

5
Hounded by eyes and thronged terrors now the lens
of a glaring world shunned his defense
and attack, reading him in the preterite tense
spending no money thinking him not worth
the price a government pays for a cell.

10
There would have been a scandal at his death
Perhaps. But imagine it as soon over. Some tell
hellish tales of this poor foundered soul
Who once fled north.

3 108.1: But long ago in distant light years pursuers gave up hope
5 108.1: Now pursued by his fears now the lens
6 108.1: of the glaring world shunned even his defense
7 108.1: She read him strictly in the preterite tense
8-10 108.1: made no further effort, took no chance,
spent no money, to secure him, thought him not worth
even the price the government pays for a cell
13 108.1: who suffered the agony of his own birth.
1937

S.O.S. Sinking fast by both bow and stern.
S.O.S. Worse than both the Morro Castle
S.O.S. and the Titanic -
S.O.S. No ship can think of anything else to do when it is in danger
5 S.O.S. But to ask its closest friend for help.
CQD. Even if he cannot come.

1938

THOUGHTS WHILE DROWNING:

BUT TRY TO ELIMINATE THE ARGUMENT

let others quarrel alone about my grief
raven like wolves over a cache of meat
my grief is now the property of the state
long self-starved, it is on relief;
5 many of these with surfeit of happiness need it

the evening darkens with a sense of guilt
like a thunderstorm blackening the promontory
smearing remembered headland of a life
with a child’s scowl of chaos against the night
10 the tourists wait with fatuous smiles of triumph
with bereaved arms upon the gossiping shore
having known the corpse they are for a moment great.

child’s] childs

1938

WHAT THE IRISH SOLDIER SAID

Jesus here has got something to answer for
Tear him down from that cross
stand him over there boys by the barrier
Franco won’t notice the loss.
5

Nine hundred and thirty years
you’ve given the world the run around:
Time we gouged out in blood and tears
And Plato in bleeding ground.

Haven’t you got something to answer for
Aren’t you our myth ancestral land?
Jesus aren’t you hunted and tortured?
Where will you ever find a friend?

"I did not come on earth
With such a [?misery] as I have been given.
What I have been credited with here,
Is debated in heaven."

For Christ’s sake give us the strength then
To fight against yourself.
When I am in the purgatory of the unread
of the backward, of the wandering attention
What will survive must go back to Pier Head.
It will not be a spirit worthy of mention:
5 Not one to recommend or help the out-of-work sailor.
Nor will it be a ghost to help my gallant father
flying behind his bowler hat to work
As he chased his new school cap.
I shall not be looking for those I can help
10 For the salt gray prop looks after itself.
Even ghosts help with metaphors. I am in no poet’s hand.
Nor is my work upon the remotest shelf.
I have thought too much of wounds which never mend
of ships which sail in rain and never come back
15 I lived with sadness: then I shall be stern.
Such sadness I lived with.
I shall watch them sail;
to Saigon the Equator or Port said

3 112.1: What will survive will go back to Pier Head with the tide
5 112.1: Not one to recommend the down-and-out sailor:
  [adds next line:] Struggling in the gale with this poor new newspaper
8-9 112.1: As once before to race his new school cap.
  I shall not be looking for anyone to help,
11 112.1: Nor shall I be a metaphor in a poet’s hand
  I shall not stir a metaphor in a poet’s head
12 112.1: My work shall not be upon the dustiest shelf
  grown greyer than the dust on his bookshelf
13 112.1: I thought too much of wounds which never mend
  I spoke too much of wounds which never mend
  I remember too much of wounds which never mend
  I spoke too much of the dead for their good.
15 112.1: But I shall watch them sail still: But without heartbreak:
16 112.1: For I shall be lost before they are gone.
  For I shall know, before they are gone.
17 112.1: I lived with sadness: then I shall be stern
  with anguish once my joy: I must be stern
18 112.1: This is a letter I shall never send.
  As this dead letter I shall never send.

1933 [113.1]

Who made this suicide pact of love?
Nor you nor I, we were not moved to the act.
The Lord made it, and he is invisible.
The devil signed it, and he is incredible.
DOLLARTON 1940-54: SELECTED POEMS 1947

From 1940 to 1947 the Lowrys lived in a shack on the beach at Dollarton; in November 1947 they embarked on a European journey from which they did not return until 1949. The Lowrys continued to live in Dollarton until 1954, when they again left for Europe, this time not to return. During the two Dollarton periods between 1940 and 1954, Lowry composed half of his extant poetry, approximately two hundred and thirty of four hundred and sixty-five poems. Sometime in 1946 Lowry decided to assemble from his Dollarton poems a second volume of poetry. On 22 June 1946 he wrote Albert Erskine:

I've got masses of poems left...enough to make two volumes I'd thought of calling The Lighthouse Invites the Storm and Wild Bleeding Hearts.  (SL 114)

One year later, on 24 June 1947, Lowry again mentioned the poems to Erskine; by this point Margerie had "some fifty" typed out, but they required "more weeding" before Lowry could send him the poems. Wild Bleeding Hearts is probably the 1947 typescript preserved at U.B.C.; Lowry possessed the paper used for the poetry typescript by the time of his June 1947 comment to Erskine; it appears in correspondence from Dollarton through April and May of 1947. Lowry sent the fifty-four poems, one quarter of his Dollarton output, accompanied by a covering letter, to Erskine on 7 November 1947; the tentatively-titled Wild Bleeding Hearts must have been assembled sometime between July 1946 and November 1947.

Although Lowry included only three of the poems from The Lighthouse,¹ he arranged the 1947 selection to reflect his major
stages of literary composition up to that point, as the section headings indicate: "Poems of the Sea," "Poems from Mexico," and "Poems from Vancouver," the latter of which comprises the bulk of the volume. Except for the three revised *Lighthouse* poems, none of the material in this volume was written before 1939-1940, and most of it was composed after 1940. The selection remains unpublished.

There are manuscripts and multiple drafts for poems in the 1947 selection. The earliest manuscript states appear on 7 x 9 1/4" notebook paper. During the initial organization of the U.B.C. collection, Earle Birney disbound the notebooks in order to create individual files for the poems, but Lowry used at least four, possibly more, distinct notebooks during 1940: blank newsprint, blue-lined pink-margined newsprint, blue-lined unmarginined newsprint, and blue-line pink-margined white paper. At least two of the notebook papers are datable to 1940, and close holograph drafts for some individual poems, including "Stoker Tom's Ukulele" [115] and "Joseph Conrad" [118], appear on several of the papers, which indicates the close dating proximity of the notebooks. Lowry probably wrote the notebook poems during a very concentrated period of time: a tight network of drafts criss-crosses the notebook sheets. For example, the six holograph drafts of "Freighter 1940" [162] include drafts for "A Quarrel" [135], "I met a man who had got drunk with Christ" [226], and "My hate is as a wind that buffets me" [252]. Although this evidence strongly suggests that Lowry used the notebooks simultaneously, infrequent examples of notebook paper occur in 1945-46
correspondence. Therefore, to address all possibilities, the notebook paper poems are dated "1939-40;1945-46."

In 1941 the occurrence of the notebook paper drops sharply in favour of the the cheap 8 1/2 x 11" newsprint paper most characteristic of the first (1940-47) Dollarton period. Intermediate states for many poems are datable from their appearance on clearly watermarked white bond papers which also appear in Lowry's outgoing letters between 1942 and 1946. The 1947 hand-annotated original copy of the 1947 selection, which Lowry sent to Albert Erskine in November 1947 is preserved at U.B.C. (7-2). Erskine returned the typescript with his comments also pencilled on the sheets.

Most of the poems in this selection were further revised into the 1950s. Retypings for thirteen poems appear on "Victory Bond" 8 1/2 x 11" paper, datable to 1951. Between 1952 and 1954 Lowry revised forty-six of the fifty-four poems in this selection, as well as nineteen additional Dollarton poems. This retyping appears on 8 x 10" cream-coloured "Voucher Bond" paper inscribed with elite type. This set of sheets is particularly interesting because Lowry evaluated with a letter grade most of the poems included in this retyping. It is quite likely, perhaps even probable, that Lowry intended this final major retyping of his poems to be a revised edition of the 1947 selection. However, since further evidence of this hypothesis has not yet come to light, this edition is based on the discrete 1947 format, but uses as individual copy-text the latest-determinable authorial text of a poem.
Problems of copy-text are rare in this selection: paper dating is well-documented in the correspondence of this period, and the later typescripts are readily identifiable through revisions as well as paper dating. There is no numeration apparent in the selection: it lacks a table of contents; the poems are unnumbered and the pages unfoliated, so that no grid exists for determining the authorial order of the selection. However, the original typescript at U.B.C. appears pristine enough to provide the only justifiable basis for ordering the poems.

The poems are dated according to their first extant drafts. Poems which first appear on 1947 paper are dated 1947 but are square-bracketed since it is unlikely that the 1947 state is their first. Many poems in this selection are dated simply 1940-47. Without external or contextual evidence, it is impossible to be more precise about the dates of composition: the first drafts for these poems appear on the newsprint paper which Lowry used throughout the 1940-47 Dollarton period. Some of the poems whose multiple holograph drafts appear solely in the notebooks possess a stemma which is indeterminable through paper dating or revisions; many of these drafts, such as "The Canadian Turned Back at the Border" [167], which has several variants for almost every one of its eighty lines, are incomplete or fragmentary. For those notebook poems whose early states manifest an indeterminable order, line variants have been provided under a generalized sigla notation. For example, the notation "1 167.1-5:" indicates that the variants to be listed for line one of poem 167 all occur in the first five drafts, but that it is impossible
to determine the order of composition for the first line variants in those five drafts. 7

NOTES

1 See note 7 for "The Lighthouse Invites the Storm: Poems 1934-39."

2 The white blue-lined pink-margined paper appears in outgoing correspondence for 1940 (1-79); in a handwritten note Margerie dates the newsprint blank paper 1940 (21-8). One type of notebook paper also appears in correspondence for 1945 (2-2).

3 This paper also appears, for example, in the 1941 typescripts for Under the Volcano (28 through 31).

4 There must have been a duplicate typescript, because carbons of the 1947 retyping, on identical paper, exist for five of the fifty-four poems. These poems are: "Jokes in the Galley" [125], Outward Bound" [126], "Mr. Lowry's Good Friday Under a Real Cactus" [130], "Death of an Oaxaquenian" [132], "Nocturne" [134].

5 The thirteen poems are: "Old Freighter in an Old Port" [114], "Stoker Tom's Ukulele" [115], "Bosun's Song" [116], "The Western Ocean" [117], "Xocxitepec" [129], "Kraken, Eagles in British Columbia" [140], "About Ice" [141], "Deserter" [155], "The Dodder" [157], "Freighter 1940" [162], "Warning From False Cape Horn" [163], "Salmon Drowns Eagle" [166], "The Canadian Turned Back at the Border" [167].
For example, the copy-texts for two poems are included in two of Lowry's 1957 handwritten letters: "Sestina in a Cantina" [127], in a letter to David Markson (DM 1-9), and "Happiness" [148], in a second to Ralph Gustafson (3-13).

The six poems thus affected are: "Stoker Tom's Ukulele" [115.1-7], "Joseph Conrad" [118.1-5], "Deserter" [155.1-9], "The Dodder" [157.1-10], "Freighter 1940" [162.1-9], "The Canadian Turned Back at the Border" [167.1-5].
POEMS OF THE SEA
OLD FREIGHTER IN AN OLD PORT

It had no name and we docked at midnight.
Nor could girls, shadowed at the dead car halt,
Laughing in linked quintets in the lamplight,
Leaven our hearts embittered with sea salt.
5
There was no beauty then about that place.
But waking early, to see near at hand
The wharf, road, and market, friendly clock face,
- The very lineaments of a new land -
Our flag run up the post office in spring,
10
Whose each stone seemed to promise news from one
Loved, and from our rusted bow the soaring
Car lines burning straight-ruled into the sun -
Emergence was of Christian from Despond
And Friday's print for Crusoe in the sand.

STOKER TOM'S UKULELE

Tom left his seabag behind and this uke,
Beautiful as all I don't know about art.
Rosewood parable of the unsubtle heart!
From it he struck the fondest harmonic.
5
Many who claimed this was dingy music,
Who never saw beyond the second fret,
Said disowned chords spoke now at night, apart,
Which argued the nature of heartbreak.
Each snapping string a hawser to Tom's soul:
10
First the taut B broke, strangely held F sharp,
And last the frayed D twanged off like a gun...
I used to feel it waited then with all
Its sounds and echoes for his heavy step.
But now I think it waits for me to learn.
T 115.1-7: [missing]
Tom's Ukelele
115.8: Hawser Tom's Ukulele
3 115.1-7: This rosewood parable of the heart
It said much more than some might orchestrate
Sanguine pouring of the unsubtle heart
115.8-10: Sanguine pouring of the unsubtle heart
4 115.1-7: It reached something of the nature of heartbreak
For all that they accounted it a freak.
Yet he would strike the fondest harmonic
From it was once struck the fondest harmonic
From which he struck the fondest harmonic
5 115.1-7: There are those who say it was dingy music
But those who claimed it made dingy music
Many who claimed here was dingy music
But some who claimed this was dingy music,
But some who claimed here was dingy music,
6 115.1-7: To those who get beyond the second fret
7 115.1-7: [missing]
Admitted it spoke chords, now none played it
Said later there spoke chords, now none played it
Said ownerless chords spoke at night, apart
8 115.1-7: [missing]
That argued of the nature of heartbreak.
Which argued the nature of heartbreak
115.8-10: Which argued the nature of heartbreak
9 115.1-7: First the B string went/snapped, one night in Darien
First the B string went/snapped, one night in Berne
First the B string went/snapped, one night in Lucerne
First the B string went/snapped, one night in Rouen
First the frayed B string went off like a gun:
10 115.1-7: [missing]
After, the A broke, strangely held F sharp:
First the taut B broke, strangely held F sharp,
11 115.1-7: Each breaking string a passage of his soul
Each breaking string a chapter of his soul
Each snapping string a chapter of Tom's soul
Each snapping string a hawser to Tom's soul.
For next the frayed D twanged off like a gun...

[1947]  BOSUN'S SONG  [116.3]

Here on the poop each lousy night I stand
And watch the twirling log, the foam, the moon,

And what would I not give for a hand
In mine? Even a dog's! But they'd as soon

5  All of them, see dead, old Mr. Facing
Bloody Both Ways! Just hear that engine cry,
Hating me too: why not? Hear her racing?
Lonely; lonely; lonely; lonely; lonely;

Bloody thing. And through the fireman's skylight
- Queer thoughts men have with power over others -

A blackened Chink stands naked as daylight -

Sometimes I think all men could be brothers

Hating me, whose only friend is the foam
Here, and atop a tankard way back home.

1940

THE WESTERN OCEAN

He begged his ghost a vision of the sea
That would compose it stilled within the mind
Forever, so that he might be resigned
To it and not haunted eternally.

The ghost shook his head and said gravely,
"You would have lost your only grief, to find
You prayed then for the roar of the sea wind
And the darkness," they turned toward the quay,
"That you had landlocked your heart to compose your tears.
Its unrest will claim you as on this wharf
Its mist on your breast." His ship in harbor
Loaded sweet timber from the high-piled piers.
He looked at her long and then with a laugh
Climbed on board and was seen no more.

117.4: The Roar of the Sea and the Darkness
1 117.4: He prayed to his ghost for a vision of the sea,
2 117.4: Which would harbour it strictly in the mind
3 117.4: For all time, that he might be resigned
5 117.4: The ghost nodded his head, and said gravely;
117.5,6: The ghost shook his head and said, quietly,
6 117.4: "But then you would lose your only grief, and find
7 117.4: You had composed your tears, landlocked your heart;
8 117.4: You would pray for the roar of the sea wind
9 117.4: And darkness, then, and call me wrong or right,
117.5,6: "-Had landlocked your heart top compose your tears.
10 117.4: You must always claim its unrest and monotony;
12 117.4: Loaded sweet timber from the high-piled wharf
14 117.5,6: Climbed on board swiftly and was seen no more.
This wrestling, as of seamen with a storm
Which flies to leeward — while they, united
In that chaos, turn, each on his nighted
Bunk to dream of chaos again, or home —

5
The poet himself, struggling with the form
Of his coiled work, knows, having requited
Sea-weariness with purpose, invited
What derricks of the soul plunge in his room.
Yet some mariner’s ferment in his blood

10
— Though truant heart will hear the iron travail
And song of ships that ride their easting down —
Sustains him to subdue or be subdued.
In sleep all night he grapples with a sail!
Yet words beyond the life of ships dream on.

T 118.1-5,7: [missing]
2 118.1-5: Which flies to leeward, while they
3 118.1-5: United in that chaos, turn, sea-weary
4 118.1-5: Each on his bunk, to dream of fields at home
5 118.1-5: Or shake with visions Dante never knew,
The poet knows struggling with the form
6 118.1-5: of his quiet work knows too, having requited
of his labour. He too has requited
The poet himself knows, struggling with the form
The poet himself wills, struggling with the form
The poet himself feels, struggling with the form
7 118.1-5: Sea-weariness with purpose, indited
of his quiet work. What derricks of the soul
8 118.1-5: To himself, by strife, some reward. Not calm!
Plunge in that muted room, adrift, menacing?
9 mariner’s] mariners {118.8}
118.1-5: For now what awful derricks of the soul
When truant heart can hear the sailors sing
10 118.1-5: Plunge in that dark room, adrift, menacing?
He’d break his pen to sail an easting down.
11 118.1-5: What fireman in the blood crams all steam on?
And yet some mariner’s ferment in his blood
12 118.1-5: Or then all night grapples with a sail,
13 118.1-5: Or then all night hears some sailor sing
14 118.1-5: But words beyond the life of ships dream on.
That words beyond the life of ships dream on.
118.6-8: But words beyond the life of ships dream on.
I never picture an immedicable grief
Without some fifty bottles for relief,
And five and fifty taverns in my path
Of sorrow, on that day of wrath.
From which it seems I fear such grief per se
Less than that lack of means might make it grey.

It was blowing a storm in the red light district.
It was blowing so hard that not a sailor
Was blown off the sea but a pimp was blown
Off the street. It blew right through the windows.
And it rained through the roof.
But the gang chipped in and bought a pint.
And what is better,
When a bunch of soaks are together,
Even when the roof is leaking?

There is no pity at sea
And isn’t that a pity
The bosun’s mate said to me
I said yes I sure agree
(We lay at Jersey City)
There is no pity at sea.
Yet I think that that must be
Else we'd need a committee
The bosun's mate said to me

10 To say who needs it, we
Don't with this in the kitty
There is no pity at sea

Though. Eight bells there, time for tea
But you go find a titty.

15 There is no pity at sea
The bosun's mate said to me.

1940-47

JOKES ON THE POOP

[122.5]

No one waits for me
Beyond the white wake
Aft, beyond the sea.

I want no pity
But make no mistake
No one waits for me.

Is it that you flee
The past, as dawns break
Aft, beyond the sea?

10 No, myself lonely,
It is for my sake
No one waits for me.

Till my doom shall be
Like a lost snowflake
Aft, beyond the sea.

15 I think of one tree -
But no one, nobody,
No one, waits for me
Aft, beyond the sea.

10-12 122.1: No, eternity;
It is for its sake
No one waits for me

17 122.1: The thought is a fake.
The sea
Pouring
Harmlessly
Past the port
Is yet the
Menacing
Tyrant of old
That the
Drowned
Know.

A grey day of high tempestuous seas
As seaward rolls the Dmitrios N. Bogliazides
Each weary hand a sweat-ragged Ulysses.
This ocean out of wedlock was begot.
The fireman's fo'c'sle ships the bastard lot.
Small wonder that the ancients, I confess,
Made Venus rise from such a bloody mess.

There is no pity at sea
Unless you should die like me
Then they'll wash your clothes
With fearful oaths
With terrible oaths
They'll wash your clothes
But there is no pity at sea.

T 125.1,3: Rondelet
125.2: The Sea
125.4: Jaunty Song
3-6 125.1: There is no pity at sea
But over the hard-faced men
Comes a supple sympathy
Of some kind it may be.
5-6 125.2 Oh they wash your clothes
With terrible oaths
On the poop of a ship
I watched each night
The fluctuant hope
Of the moment before.

The wood drifting,
The torn smoke,
All the beauty,
The sadness of the sea.
These words are stronger
Than images:
The simple fact
Of bewilderment
Than what it meant to another.
The twilight cold

The sail gone
And home far
And abaft the beam
The Pillars of Hercules.

126.1-4: [missing]
2 126.2: I watched recede
4 126.1: of the moment.
   [adds then deletes next line:] I prayed for words
126.3: [adds then deletes next 2 lines:] Vanish from sight
   And be born once more

5 126.1: [missing]
126.2,3: The weed drifting
6-13 126.2: When bells strike
   You grind duty.
   My life was waste
   And the rape of the world
   Swept it away with blood.

7-18 126.1: The trimmer was lonely
   As the watch ends
   Bucket on arm
   Bells struck.
   I prayed for the words
   As clean as death
   White as bone
   To say all this
POEMS FROM MEXICO
SESTINA IN A CANTINA

Scene: A waterfront tavern in Vera Cruz at daybreak.

Legion

Watching this dawn's mnemonic of old dawning:
Jonquil-colored, delicate, some in prison,
Green dawns of drinking tenderer than sunset,
But clean and delicate like dawns of ocean
Flooding the heart with pale light in which horrors
Stampede like plump wolves in distorting mirrors.

Oh, we have seen ourselves in many mirrors;
Confusing all our sunsets with the dawning,
Investing every tongue and leaf with horrors,
And every stranger overtones for prison,
And seeing mainly in the nauseous ocean
The last shot of our life before sunset.

St. Luke (a ship's doctor)

How long since you have really seen a sunset?
The mind has many slanting lying mirrors,
The mind is like that sparkling greenhouse ocean
Glass-deceptive in the Bengal dawning;
The mind has ways of keeping us in prison,
The better there to supervise its horrors.

Sir Phillip Sidney

Why do you not, sir, organize your horrors
And shoot them one day, preferably at sunset,
That we may wake up next day not in prison,
No more deceived by lies or many mirrors,
And go down to the cold beach at dawning
To lave away the past in colder ocean?

St. Luke

No longer is there freedom on the ocean.
And even if there were, he likes his horrors,
And if he shot them would do so at dawning
That he might have acquired some more by sunset,
Breaking them in by that time before mirrors
To thoughts of spending many nights in prison.

Legion

The fungus-colored sky of dawns in prison,
The fate that broods on every pictured ocean,
The fatal conversations before mirrors,
The fiends and all the spindly breeds of horrors,
Have shattered by their beauty every sunset
And rendered quite intolerable old dawning.
The oxen standing by this door at dawning -
Outside our tavern now, outside our prison -
Read through the wagon-wheels, jalousies like sunset
Swinging now in a sky as calm as ocean
Where Venus hangs her obscene horn of horrors
For us now swaying in a hall or mirrors -

Such horrid beauty maddened all my mirrors,
Has burst in heart’s eye sanity of dawning,
No chamber in my house brimful of horrors
But does not whisper of some dreadful prison,
Worse than all ships dithering through the ocean
Tottering like drunkards, arms upraised at sunset.

Richard III (a barman)

Vain derelict all avid for the sunset!
Shine out fair sun till you have bought new mirrors
That you may see your shadow pass the ocean,
And sunken no more pass our way at dawning,
But like on the cold stone sea floor of some prison
A chunk of sodden driftwood gnawed by horrors.

Legion

At first I never looked on them as horrors;
But one day I was drinking hard near sunset,
And suddenly saw the world as a giant prison,
Ruled by tossing moose-heads, with hand mirrors,
And heard the voice of the idiot speak at dawning,
And since that time have dwelt beside the ocean.

El Universal (early edition)

Did no one speak of love beside the ocean,
Have you not felt, even among your horrors,
Granting them, there was such a thing as dawning,
A dawning for man whose star seems now at sunset,
Like million-sheeted scarlet dusty mirrors,
But one day must be led out of his prison?

Legion

I see myself as all mankind in prison,
With hands outstretched to lanterns by the ocean;
I see myself as all mankind in mirrors,
Babbling of love while at his back rise horrors
Ready to suck the blood out of the sunset
And amputate the godhead of the dawning.

The Swine

And now the dawning drives us from our prison
Into the dawn like sunset, into the ocean,
Bereaving him of horrors, but leaving him his mirrors.
ST 127.1: veterio vestigia flammare
127.2: Scene: a waterfront cantina in Vera Cruz.
127.4,5: [missing]
4 127.1: But clear and pure and delicate like dawns of ocean
12 127.1-4: The last shot of our life before the sunset.
14 127.1,4: the mind has many slanting staggering mirrors
16 127.1: Cool, prepared, in the Bengal dawning
21 127.1: As we may wake up next day not in prison
22 127.1,2,4: No more deceived by lies nor many mirrors,
23 127.1-4: and go down to the cold beach at dawning
35 127.1,4: Have ruined by their beauty every sunset
37 127.1,2: The oxen standing at this door at dawning
38 127.2,4: Outside our tavern, our insatiate prison,
40 127.1: Swinging in a sky as calm as ocean
52 127.1,2,4: Which sunken shall not pass our way at dawning
57 127.1: And suddenly saw the world as a great prison
65 127.1-4: Like a million-sheeted scarlet dusty mirrors,
66 127.2,4: No. I see myself as all mankind in prison,
75 of] or {127.1-4}

1940-47

SUNRISE

[128.6]

Sober I rode into the brand new dawn
With steady hand grasping the single rein
New shod new shrived and all but newly born
Over the smiling illogical plain.

5 Surcingleless as heaven ran my steed
And true to heaven rose my simple song
Ah, the years behind seemed lost and lost the deed,
As pommel and stirring unheeded I cantered along.

- But what cactuses are these on every hand
Wild dogs and spectres, all enveloping?
And came again into that evening land
- Galloping, galloping -

Bound to that unrelenting fatuous horse
Whose eyes are lidless and whose name, remorse.

T 128.1: [missing]
1 brand] bran {128.3}
4 128.1-5: Over the smiling graniloquent plain.
12 128.1,3-5: Galloping, galloping, galloping
Those animals that follow us in dream
Are swallowed by the dawn, but what of those
Which hunt us, snuff, stalk us out in life, close
In upon it, belly-down, haunt our schemes
Of building, with shapes of delirium,
Symbols of death, heraldic, and shadows,
Glowering... Just before we left Tlampam
Our cats lay quivering under the maguey;
A meaning had slunk, and now died, with them.

The boy slung them half stiff down the ravine,
Which now we entered, and whose name is hell.
But still our last night had its animal:
The puppy, in the cabaret, obscene,
Looping-the-loop and soiling the floor,
And fastening itself to that horror
Of our last night; while the very last day
As I sat bowed, frozen over mescal,
They dragged two shrieking fawns through the hotel
And slit their throats, behind the barroom door...
MR. LOWRY'S GOOD FRIDAY UNDER A REAL CACTUS

Because I am a fraud
Because I am afraid
Because I must evade
The dictum of the Lord,
And then, again, deride Him,
Yet be crucified beside Him
And then, once more, evade...
Because I must decide,
Because I should not do so,

But shipwrecked on a grief
That passes all belief.
I am dead, I am bored,
Because I am a fraud,

Because I am afraid...

DELIRIUM IN VERA CRUZ

Where has tenderness gone, he asked the mirror
Of the Biltmore Hotel, cuarto 216. Alas,
Can its reflection lean against the glass
Too, wondering where I have gone, into what horror?
Is that it staring at me now with terror
Behind your frail, tilted barrier? Tenderness
Was here, in this very retreat, in this
Place, its form seen, cries heard by you. What error
Is here? Am I that forked rashed image?
Is this the ghost of love which you reflected?
Now with a background of tequila, stubs, dirty collars,
Sodium perborate, and a scrawled page
To the dead, telephone disconnected?
... He smashed all the glass in the room. (Bill $50)
DEATH OF AN OAXAQUENIAN

So huge is God's despair
In the wild cactus plain
I heard him weeping there

That I might venture where
The peon had been slain
So huge is God's despair

On the polluted air
Twixt noonday and the rain
I heard Him weeping there

And felt His anguish tear
For refuge in my brain
So huge is God's despair

That it could find a lair
In one so small and vain
I heard him weeping there.

Oh vaster than our share
Than deserts of New Spain
So huge is God's despair
I heard Him weeping there.


SONG

Pity the blind and the halt but yet pity
The man at the bank in the pitiless city
The man at the bank who can't sign his name -
Though he call on his courage and posthumous fame -

This man with the terrible shakes far from home.
Ah, pity this man with his pitiful income
Arrived now from far, from far sources of shame,
For a man at the bank who can't sign his own hame,

Though he sweat till the ultimate Manager came,
- Pity the blind and pity the lame
But pity the man who can't sign his own name.

T 133.1: Self pity
Prayer for humanity, me.
133.3: [missing]
POEMS FROM VANCOUVER
1940-47

NOCTURNE

This evening Venus sings alone
And homeward feathers stir like silk
Like the dress of a multitudinous ghost
The pinions tear through a sky like milk.

Seagulls all soon to be turned to stone
That seeking I lose beyond the trail
In the woods that I and my ignorance own
Where together we walk on our hands and knees
Together go walking beneath the pale

Of a beautiful evening loved the most,
And yet this evening is my jail
And policemen glisten in the trees.

T 134.1: [missing]

1939-1940;1945-46

A QUARREL

The poignance of a quarrel in the post!
That threat, flung at myself into a pillar
Which could have been as a white bird loosed
Homing, with news of reprieve, to your heart —
Would that the tyrannous thing might be lost,
Or sorted into the dark, by some eerie scrivener...
The wind is high tonight in Canada,
A viaduct is drifting out to sea,
Ground lightning felled a tree across the street
And direst portent's here for all save me.
For still the wheels cry out against the iron
And frozen platforms race back into day.
Ah, that I could believe, when wires are down,
That venom such as mine could lose its way.

T 135.1-3,6: [missing]

2 135.1: This threat, thrown at myself into a pillar
3 135.1: that should have been as a white bird loosed
135.6: Which could have been a white bird loosed
6 135.1: To be sorted into the dark by eerie scrivener
135.2-4: Sorted into the dark, by eerie scrivener...
9 135.1: A tree crashed on a man and broke his head
10 135.1: For all save only I, is hideous portent!
   For all save only I, is direst portent!
14 135.1: That venom such as mine might lose its way
135.2-6: That venom such as mine would lose its way.
1940-47

THE GLAUCOUS WINGED GULL

The hook nosed angel with spring plumage
Hunter of edible stars, and sage
Catsbane and defiler of the porch,
Dead sailor, finial, and image

Of freedom in morning blue, and strange torch
At twilight, stranger world of love,
Old haunter of the Mauretania,
Snowblinded once, I saved. And hove
Out of the rainbarrel, back at heaven
A memory stronger than childhood even
Or freighters rolling to Roumania.

1941-46

NO TIME TO STOP AND THINK

The only hope is the next drink.
If you like, you take a walk.
No time to stop and think,
The only hope is the next drink.

Useless trembling on the brink,
Worse than useless all this talk.
The only hope is the next drink.
If you like, you take a walk.

T 136.1,2: The Herring Gull
I 136.1: The angel that walks like a sailor
[adds next line:] Pure scavenger of the empyrean

T 137.1: [missing]
137.2,3: Triolet
S 137.2,3: Hopeless trembling on the brink

137.1: No time to stop and think
What I stopped at or was taught
The only hope is the next drink

No time to say I cannot sink
Lower, -this is the drink I’ve bought
No time, no time to stop and think

What hopes stand trembling on the brink
Might launch way without a wreath
The only hope is the next drink

And then the next, another link
In the debased impersonal myth
No time to stop and think

No time to expand nor to shrink
Oh lonely man of Nazareth
The only hope is the next drink
But now I see myself a fool
I used to say with real dismay
For I was born in Liverpool

I used to mourn fat boy at school
That Mersey wasn't Tiger Bay
But now I see myself a fool

Or on Pier Head my heels I'd cool
Gazing at freighters far away
For I was born in Liverpool

Dreaming of Constantinople
Beyond the seas beyond Cathay
But now I see myself a fool

Which was not at that time Stamboul
In this our life which we call grey
For I was born in Liverpool

I always knew I was a ghoul
My friends were satisfied to stay
But now I see myself a fool
For I was born in Liverpool.

My only triumph is the challenge cup
My mother wears upon the mantelpiece,
My soul perhaps roves back to Skjellerup —
My mother's mother was a Viking's niece.

But though all this must make a doleful hymn
No Viking's heart have I, beneath the fat
That cushions every slight and palsied limb,
Remote from the maelstrom as the Kattegat.

It is not true, I hear some Sigbjörn say,
Ridiculous and squalid though you are,
You yet are you! If nothing you can own,
You yet have strength to drink your strength away —
To stand up in a corner of some bar
And grapple with your bourgeois hell alone.
The eagles how they fly in great circles!
Nature is one of the most beautiful
Things I ever saw in my life. Why, the
5 Eagle went around to get his bearings
To look over the country. Two mile wide
His great circles. Pretty soon you’ll see crabs
Under these stones and then it will be spring,
Some crabs in spring no bigger than a fly.
Have you ever seen how an elephant
10 Was constructed? Where did the old Romans
Get them shields but from the rooster’s wings?

II
Take in the desert now - the Sahara -
Where camels stamp with hooves like great spitoons
15 Upside down. One day they built a railroad.
But insects heat up all the wooden ties.
So now they make the ties out of metal
Shaped like camel’s hooves. And soon the birds,
And pretty soon the crabs will bring the spring;
20 With their hantlers beautiful sticking up
Like branches on a floating tree, swimming,
Swimming across to the lighthouse in spring.

III
Then see dragon flies like flying machines
Back-pedalling! But crabs. I had a friend,
25 A diver - thief he was in private life,
Never come home without somethink even
If it was only a nail, ay, basement
Like a junkyard! - well, this time he goes down,
30 - Migrations of billions of crabs -
Climbing all around him, sir, migrating
In the spring, aclambering around Sam
Aswallering and stretching their muscles!

IV
And you might say the diver’s mate’s like God
Who pulls him up, if you see what I mean,
35 And like as not pulls up a pouncing fiend.
Praps they see somethink else down there - who knows?
You know. Because Sam was so crazy scairt
He wouldn’t speak to no one for two weeks.
40 But after that he sings like nightingales
And talks the head off any wooden duck!
...In great circles how they fly the eagles,
One of the most beautiful things ever
I saw in my life is nature. That’s true.
ABOUT ICE

(A story told by a Canadian fisherman.)

When you speak about ice, do you mean live ice Which is blue, or dead ice, white as chalk? The blue will hold the mountain in its vice, Crawl up it, swelling, sing down at a walk. But white is dead so cannot climb at all And lies in valleys where it sings no more. One island held that not unusual, Familiar with white along her shore, Thinking all ice lay thus, motionless, dead, The blue ice came and calmly ravished her Of all her beauty of trees and moss, bled Her lichen to the rock, leaving her bare As that door. Stone was that island's surplice, Who thought ice meant merely her kind of ice.

THE MAGIC WORLD

The magic factory chimneys stand in rows. Bored Prosperos decree a magic war. And every club contains a magic bore. The magic peasants delve with magic hoes, The magic factory chimneys stand in rows, The magic peasants delve in magic tilth, At night lie down to sleep in magic filth.

KINGFISHERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A mad kingfisher Rocketing about in the Red fog at sunrise Now sits On the alder Post that tethers the floats Angrily awaiting his mate. Here she
Comes, like a left wing
Threequarter cutting through toward
The goal in sun-lamped
Fog at Rosslyn Park at half
Past three in halcyon days.

T 143.1: Kingfishers in Columbia
10 143.1: Threequarter cutting dawnmists
11-12 143.1: [missing]

1946

FOUL, OR TWENTY-FIVE

Gloomy is this weary scrimmage
Of my thoughts to heel some image
Out to where the scrum-half dancing
Of my will to write entrancing

Poems waits to fling the fated
Thing, that will arrive deflated
On the tryline of abortion.
Poet, gloomy is thy portion.
Poet, cease to be a poet.

Poet, cease. Should I shout go it
After everything that’s happened
To this bird so sadly wappened?

Gloomy is this world and tawdry
{But shot through with shafts of bawdry}.

T 144.2: Incomprehensible Statement
144.3: Twenty-five!
Foul!
144.5: [missing]

1940-47

FISHERMAN’S RETURN

- In the city got a little exercise.
Been sitting humped up in the old boat.
I never saw a street flusher.
They just letting the old grime go.
The street cars are getting
So humpy and dumpy.
I ran into a couple of bottles of rye.
I thought a little walking would speed
The old ticker...
170

1940-47  

GHOSTS IN NEW HOUSES

There's something dreadful about ghosts in new houses:  
Ghosts in old houses are bad enough:  
But ghosts in new houses are terrible.  
The very newness of these new desolate houses  
Would be terrible enough without the ghosts.  
But the ghosts are new too.  
Blue girls in blue blouses  
And people at their Sunday roasts  
In broad daylight, within these new houses  
On streets where men are sweeping broken glass.

1946

SCRIBNER'S SONS

There is no mail  
There is no hope  
There is no sail  

Beyond the veil  
Our senses grope  
There is no mail  

Stupid to rail  
Senseless to mope  
There is no sail  

Futile to wail  
Stupid the rope  
There is no mail  

Yet I might fail  
Once more and tope  
There is no sail

A feeble tale:  
There is no soap  
There is no mail  
There is no sail.
Poem for the eternal writer waiting for the eternal
[rejection slip]

The eternal writer waiting for the eternal rejection slip

Poem for the eternal writer waiting for the eternal
[rejection slip]

Publishers!

Publishers!

Scribners and Sons

Useless to rail

Fruitless to mope

Senseless the rope

Futile the rope

1940-47

HAPPINESS

Blue mountains with snow and blue cold rough water -
A wild sky full of stars at rising
And Venus and the gibbous moon at sunrise.
Gulls following a motor boat against the wind,
Trees with branches rooted in air;
Sitting in the sun at noon
With the furiously smoking shadow of the shack chimney,
Eagles drive downwind in one,
Terns blow backward
A new kind of tobacco at eleven,
And my love returning on the four o'clock bus -
My God, why have you given this to us?

Ecstacy

And Venus and the golden moon at sunrise
Forty slow gulls following a motorboat against the wind

Sitting in the sun at noon with the furiously
Smoking shadow of the shack chimney

Eagles drive downwind in one, terns blow backward;
a new kind of tobacco at eleven
Blue mountains with snow and blue cold rough water
1940-47

Alas, there is no still path in my soul,
I being evil, none of memory;
No path, untenanted by fiend or ghoul,
Where those I have loved best touch wings and sigh,
And passing enter silently the place
Of dream, illumined by bright fruit, and light,
That circles from the always brightest face
Of love itself and dissipates the night.

There is no path, there is no path at all,
Unless perhaps where abstract things have gone
And precepts rise and metaphysics fall,
And principles abandoned stumble on.
No path, but as it were a river in spate
Where drowning forms, downswept, gesticulate.

1940-47

POEM TO BE PLACED AT THE CONCLUSION OF A LONG...

OBSCURE PASSIONATE AND ELOQUENT BOOK OF POEMS

I know no poet's use of words
My sufferings are unique
I see the emblematic birds
But have no wit to speak.

Yet that I see them thus at all
Sustains the gloomy hope
Which I peer at, beyond the pall,
As through a telescope,

That someday, somehow, something there
Will kindly not confuse
My delegation of despair
To the bedraggled muse.

1940-47

There is no poetry when you live there.
Those stones are yours, those noises are your mind,
The forging thunderous trams and streets that bind
You to the dreamed-of bar where sits despair.

Are trams and streets; poetry is otherwhere.
The cinema fronts and shops once left behind
And mourned, are mourned no more. Strangely unkind
Seem all new landmarks of the now and here.
But move you toward New Zealand or the Pole,
Those stones will blossom and the noises sing,
And trams will wheedle to the sleeping child
That never rests, whose ship will always roll,
That never can come home, but yet must bring
Strange trophies back to Ilium, and wild!

THE WILD CHERRY

We put a prop beneath the sagging bough
That yearned over the beach, setting four stones
Cairn-like against it, but we thought our groans
Were the wild cherry’s for it was as though
Utterly set with broken seams on doom
It listed wilfully down like a mast,
Stubborn as some smashed recalcitrant boom
That will neither be cut loose nor made fast.
Going – Going – it was yet no bidder
For life, whether for such sober healing
We left its dead branches to consider
Until its sunward pulse renewed, feeling
The passionate hatred of that tree
Whose longing was to wash away to sea.

HARPIES

Harpies pied with virgin faces
Squatting on the window sill
Harpies going through their paces
Harpies healthy, harpies ill.

Harpies, angry, on the ceiling,
Harpies, savage, late at night,
Harpies reading, harpies squealing,
Harpies sober, harpies tight.

Harpies gnashing on the table
Harpies who can hardly speak
But yet maintain a muted babel,
Harpies sending their last cable,
Harpies, who’ve been dead a week...
HUNGER

The spirit blows from the home cliff with gulls
Questioning the old shore and the steep face,
And now the horizon with its lone trace
Of bronze smoke, and wheels over sunken hulls
With them, or seems to, as they reel back - pulls
Off once more, to eat, perhaps, Lycidas;
They set a far too mouth-watering pace
Though for no better reason my soul mulls,
That all this time thinks past red pub curtains
To mountains of gravied beef, portentous,
Rare, blooming with sprouts, of making merry
With an endless procession of Burtons,
A slab of cheese like the side of a house,
All of which is quite imaginary.

T 154.1: [missing]
154.1: The heart blows from the cliff with gulls
Questioning the shore, and the steep face
And now the horizon, with its fine trace
Of smoke, and the one ship, wheels
And returns, like a child’s kite, sails
Hunger for the sea, for the unknown white
Calm of death, maybe.
And for no better reason my soul proves
That death is nothing less than beef
Had this not given me an appetite
Meantime the body will be fed on steak
And Yorkshire pudding, and potatoes with gravy -
And beer
Hypocrites, that would feed the soul on air
A plague upon such as they
The way to god is through the sunday joint.

DESERTER

In a refrigerator car at Empress,
Then, lying on bare boards in a small room,
Dead... "Should be in England?" "Home for Christmas?"
"There wasn’t even a sheet over him."
Guilty papers in his army greatcoat -
His father came from Coquitlam to see -
Brought his body down from Medicine Hat
That had been placed in Category B.
"Surely he didn’t have to bum his way - "
Thus pass from old to New Westminster!
He wrote he would be back for Christmas day.
...This is a tale that clangs an iron door
Shut on the heart, freezing sense, and pity,
For a tragedy, beyond tragedy.
155.1-9: Dead in a refrigerator car at Empress,-
    Dead in a refrigerator van at Empress,
    Dead in a refrigerator at Empress
3 155.1-9: His father came from Coquitlam to see -
    "There wasn't even a sheet over him."
5 155.1-9: Brought his body down from Medicine Hat
    Brought his lovely body down from Medicine Hat
    Red tape in his army greatcoat
    Military papers in his army greatcoat
6 155.1-9: That had been placed in category C.
7 155.1-9: Military papers in his army greatcoat
    Frozen to death in the refrigerator
8 155.1-9: "Should have been in England?" "Came home for Christmas?"
    He wore his greatcoat, carried military papers
9 155.1-9: -And did he have to bum his way back home?-  
    Who could have thought he'd bum or work his way
    But did he have to work his way back home?
    He wrote he would be back for Christmas day,-
    He wrote his mother that he would be back
10 155.1-9: Pass somehow, from old to New Westminster.
    Thus pass, from old Westminster to New!
    Thus passed a soldier from old Westminster to New.
11 155.1-9: How worry now he meant to bum his way?
    Here is a tale that clangs an iron door shut
12 155.1-9: Against the heart, freezing sense; for pity
    Shut on the heart, freezing sense, and pity
13 155.1-9: Cannot follow to the accusing root
    May not follow to the accusing root
    On pity, which may not pass to the root of the tree
14 155.1-9: Of this tragedy, beyond tragedy.

1940

WHAT THE GARDENER SAID TO MRS. TRAILL

- And now they turn poor poetry outdoors.
  But in the olden time it was not so,
  For it was once the language of man's woe,
  And, through the tongues of prophets, of God's laws,
  And, through the tongues of angels, of that cause
  For which great souls have burned, and dwarf oaks grow.
  I, who am friend to love-lies-bleeding, know
  A healing in that name, and for these shores.
  But now they use hard words for simple things,
  For the wild flowers, and the flowers of the lake.
  Gayfeather, blazing star, are words that move
  Few today, yet have more than a seed's wings,
  If ever sinful man like me can speak
  With God who humbly calls such names with love.
The early flowered everlasting,
The hooded violet, the branching white
Wood-violet, that, brooding in May night
Sends petals forth even in Spring's wasting,
- Sped by the monkish cellarage-tasting
Of cowled cuckoo-pint, jack in the pulpit! -
All of these, where there was but one poet,
In Katchewanook, lacked no contrasting.
If I seek that which, poor, leafless, rootless,
Twined with goldenrod in ill-repute lives,
It is, for exiled passion's sake, comfort
Here, on Stony Lake: nor is it fruitless
What faithful coils are goldener than leaves
To share, what blossoms parasites support.

3 157.1-10: Wood violet, that broods all summer night,
Wood-violet, the jack-in-the-pulpit,
Wood-violet, that brooding in summer night,
Wood-violet, that, brooding all May night,

4 157.1-10: Sends blossoms forth even in spring's wasting,
Or cuckoo-pint, that clocks and drinks the Spring,
Sends blossoms out even in spring's wasting

5 157.1-10: Sped by the cowled monkish cellar tasing
The sooner for jack-in-the-pulpit tasting,
Hastened by the monkish cowled cellar tasting
-Is it the other's hooded spathe shrouding
The sooner for the arum's drunken tasting

6 157.1-10: Monkish, of March's cellarage. But yet
The spadix, like a monkish cowl, twinkles bright
The spadix, like a monk's cowl, winks bright
The spadix, like a monkish cowl, wears bright
Of cuckoo pint, jack in the pulpit. -yet

7 157.1-10: On March soil, names it? -these, were one poet
These when there was but one poet
On March soil? these, when there was but one poet
In March soil, would, were there but one poet
And all these when there was but one poet
All of these where there was but one poet,
Would never like poets, were there but one poet

8 157.1-10: In Katchewanook, never lack praising
In Katchewanook. But if I go seeking
In Katchewanook, would not lack praising
In Katchewanook, would not lack singing

9 157.1-10: If I seek now what leafless, rootless
If I seek the dodder, who, leafless, rootless
If I go seeking the leafless, rootless
For the lonely, the leafless and the rootless
If I go seeking rather the leafless, rootless

10 157.1-10: The poor Dodder, twining round narrow leaved
The poor Dodder
Who twined with goldenrod like goldthread lives
11 157.1-10: Twining the narrow leaved solidago on Stony Lake
Solidago, that lives on rocky shores
Solidago, that lives on molten shores
Entwined with solidago, it is not for comfort

12 157.1-10: There, on Stony Lake: nor is it fruitless
Of Stony Lake, it is not to comfort his fruitless

13 157.1-10: And golden coils, fidelity, and aversion to death

14 157.1-10: Given meaning to a poet in like case ... a rootless life.
To note what blossoms parasites support.

1940-47

MEN WITH COATS THRASHING

Our lives we do not weep
Are like wild cigarettes
That on a stormy day
Men light against the wind
With cupped and practised hand
Then burn themselves as deep
As debts we cannot pay
And smoke themselves so fast
Once scarce gives time to light

A second life that might
Flake smoother than the first
And have no taste at last
And most are thrown away.

T 158.3: [missing]

7 158.1,3: [adds next line:] Nor, reckoned, are our debts

1940-47

POEM INFLUENCED BY JOHN DAVENPORT AND CERVANTES

A child, I thought summer would solve all things,
But this illusion passed with unseen springs.
The flowers that bloomed at home were dead at school,
And youth was born to die in Liverpool,
Or in Sierra Leone, with the shakes.
The yearning reappeared as spring in books,
The poem read in drugstore magazines,
Half understood - the glass holds what it means -
Then vanished with girls who never turned round,

Fled palette faces sucked into the ground.
The sea came then, cobalt or whiskey brown,
The disused longing settled on a town
Always far, and by a different name,
Archangel, Surabaya, or Tlampam,

Or merged in emblems of freedom never
Redeemed by the will, nor have they ever,
And then I saw that death was all my search,
But reigned up on the threshold of the church,
Angry with hope that one secular dawn

Might bring with it at last enlightened scorn.
Yet for all this I am still at suckle:
The tavern is the centre of my circle.
Reading Don Quixote

159.1-3: Would bring with it at least enlightened scorn.

You think you are a man shaking the hands of that dog
Like that, but I hate you.
Nor do I like the manly way in which you poke that log.
Nor will I imitate you.

The truth is you wouldn't have shaken that dog's paws like that
If you hadn't seen Bruce do it.
Nor would you dress as you do or bang doors like that
- Well, a truce to it.

Nevertheless I shall go on - because Bruce wouldn't do things
like he does either

If it hadn't been for that O.C. of his during the war.
Neither would that O.C. of his have behaved as he did, neither
Would whoever it was he saw

Do something in a way that impressed him when he was young.
It seems to me no one behaves quite as he might

If he had sprung up naked in this world among
Stones, with no fool in sight.

A pilgrim passes through the town by night
An ignorant, an insignificant man.
He was a pilgrim when the world began
To read strange huntsmen in the infinite.

The cliffs are on the left, while to the right
The sea is like the sea whose rumour ran
Once in his childhood through the thundery plain.
The sea was hope then, and the rumour bright.
The cliffs are high, the sea is far too deep,
The town is just a lie, twitching with lies,
- Would that I had the courage not to sleep,
I may not follow, when may I arise?
Teach me to navigate the fjords of chance
Winding through my abyssal ignorance.
A freighter builds in Birkenhead where rain 
Falls in labourers' eyes at sunset. Then 
She's launched! Her iron sides strain as merchants gaze; 
A cheer swoops down into titanic ways. 
5 A hope of something odd is in each throat. 
The ferry, quite as Charon's boat, knows death. 
A gangway, medieval, spans the moat. 
Pier Head, and the bells prance out. We are careful 
Looking up. Gulls, bombs, manna, all may fall. 
10 Below the sea, in the tunnel, men breathe. 
The ship sails on a biting Saturday; 
Grey ship, grey day, but the heart is not grey. 
God may not bless thee dear, but may sustain; 
Farewell!... Now she is a long way away.

I turned my eyes - from the drifting, body, 
The cross that floats downstream in stinging dawns, 
The deer embrangled in one another's horns, 
Lest these impose an attitude on me. 
5 A writhing fixed, appallingly, bloody, 
By these dread postures upon the will, spawns: 
Some infernal portent of such actions 
There as might beget unique tragedy. 
Yet, friends in publike places, if you would 
Hackle the blatant beast and call him tame, 
Sound Melville deep to grapple your white whale,
First you must live with corpses three months old.
No Kraken shall depart till bade by name.
No peace but that must pay full toll to hell.

T 163.1-3: [missing]
163.4: To Three in London
To a Friend in London
To the ghost of William Blake somewhere in London
To a friend in London beyond pity
163.5: To Three in London
Advice from the Delirious
The voice in Maximilian’s palace
1 163.1: I have turned my eyes from the drifting corpse
2 163.1: The cross that floats downstream from the sawmill
   The cross that floats downstream in dreadul dawns
3 163.1-7: The cross that floats downstream in awful dawns
   The cross that floats downstream in jaundiced dawns
4 163.3: The cross that floats downstream in frightful dawns,
5 163.1-7: The deer embrangled in another’s horns
6-9 163.1: [missing]
6 163.2: By these postures, upon the will, spawns
7 163.2: In the heart some portent of such actions
   163.3: Some infernal portent of those actions
8 163.2: Which like a curse begets such tragedy
9 163.2: Yet do I know what rank hell is - if you would
10-12 163.1: If you would hackle the blatant beast and call him tame
   Sound Melville deep to tackle the white whale of Kraken
   Pardon if I think your beast is no more real
13 163.1: Than you endure and violate
14 163.1: Nor will Kraken go lest called by name
   163.2: Nor live in peace till rent’s been paid to hell.

1940-47

INDIAN ARM

Mill-wheel reflections of sun on water
And the spokes of light wheeling on the shacks,
Such freshness of wind in a spring quarter

Such radiance for November! While oil tracks
   Make agate patterns, a tanker passes
   - sudden sleeked lead boils on the beach, attacks
   Boats under houses, the bowed band grasses,
   Reflections are shivered, wild spokes unreel
   The day booms a song of foaming basses.

10 ...Softly renew the round of the mill-wheel
   Sun reflections winding longer shadows
   Turn the pine bough into green chenille.

After the moonlight walks over windrows
   Mill-wheel reflections of moonlight later
15 On water embroider waving windows...
164.1: Mill wheel reflections of sun on water
The spokes of light wheeling on the shacks
The oil with dust and sawdust an agate pattern in the fjord
pansies and timber and bottle, a drowning leaf,
- an oil tanker passes, trumpeting
like a Leviathan
turn the pine tree to green chenille
soft cords of green strike down to the water
from the boat moored under the shack
make the day and the freshness moving
with the motion of the millwheel
with the motion of moonlight
with the motion of eternity.
The dogwood in autumn is hung with copper pennies
with chrome and scarlet coins, with beauty and radiance
A gull soars upside down in a brown toned pigment
A broken cup is stuck in the sand where a
huge crab crawls
Another crab is drowning on the opaque surface
Sunlight sunlight.

1940-42

PORT MOODY

Over the mauve there is smoke like a swan
Pouring from the chimney of the sawmill.
In our yellow and red boat we drift on
While broken bottles of pine guard the hill,
Sitting still as two round unspeaking forts.
Red hammers beat on xylophone keys,
Under the sunset, of the tiered retorts -
The loviest of oil refineries.
Power lines rule the west; three kinds of smoke:
Brown smudge, pure white from buildings, gentian
From the stiff incinerator, evoke
The music of our inattention.
Oil preens the water with peacock feathers.
So we have sat drifting in all weathers.

6 165.1,2: Red hammers beat on the xylophone deys
13 165.1,2: Oil preens the waters with peacock feathers.
SAWMON DROWNS EAGLE

The golden eagle swooped out of the sky
And flew back with a salmon in her claws,
Well-caught herself, till she could light near by
On her own rock. Meantime she heard loud caws.

So freighted, she could not fly fast nor far;
Nor, by God, could she let that salmon go.
Hoarse scavengers approached over the bar,
The one thing that fierce eagle hated: crow.

Now there was her rock, to stamp her prey loose
And crows grabbing chunks of wild fish away.
There is no argument with crows, or truce,
The eagle said, heading across the bay.

The sea is wide, black and tempestuous,
But let me disintegrate to a hook
Before I share with the incestuous
Daughters of some ineligible rock!

Oh, she'd have made the land easy enough,
But the fish was heavy and pulled her down.
When she lit on the bay to rest, that tough
Salmon turned and threshed in a way not shown
In the books. Twisting over and over,
Pulling the eagle under the water,
Till she would fly off, angry; moreover,
She was tired out. The salmon fought her:

And next time she lit pulled her down and:
She never came up again... It appears
In the mundial popular thunder
Any moral to this dins in drowned ears.

11 166.1,2: There is no argument with crows, nor truce,

THE CANADIAN TURNED BACK AT THE BORDER

A singing smell of tar, of the highway,
Fills the grey Vancouver Bus Terminal,
Crowned by dreaming names, Portland, New Orleans,
Spokane, Chicago, and Los Angeles!

City of the angels and my luck,
Where artists labor to insult mankind
With genius coeval to the age,
And city of my love, come next Sunday.
Out of a flag-hung shop a sleeked puppet

Hands me a ticket and my destiny.

II

The blue exhaust speeds parting's litany.
Then, with pneumatic bounds we herd the street.
The lights, symbolic, nictitate in day.
Cautious, but with mechanic persiflage,
- Rolando's horn could no more strangely wind -
Past Chinatown and names like Kwong Lee Duck,
Our bus treads asphalt with the noise of bees,
By taverns mumbling of skidroad scenes,
Then double-declutched my heart through neutral
And sang it into high for U.S.A.

III

White gulls blow from the Rockies like Norway.
High tension wires are marching in my blood.
The bus sang o-ka-lee, sang cong-a-reee -
That loved cry of the northwestern redwing
Who carries her own badge, her own fieldmark
Of bright identity on her shoulders!
She is her own customs official
And crosses the wild border without let,
To weave that lowland meadow nest, whose branch
No slenderer to tempest is than ours.

IV

A pathos broods, a desolation glowers
On an outpost of turnstiles and anguish,
A rebuke of Labrador in the slate
Cold grey, and striking up the mortal chill
Of no man's land to the soul: the Border's
Men - badged, pistoled, polite, pitiless, - lurk
Aware it is well named, Blaine, an itching
On the outstretched bare hand of our country.
A legend bird there has three eyes: indeed
For no tears one does not need so many.

V

Inspectors here crunched bags on injured locks,
Deduced a public charge from odd cowled socks,
"A visa's not enough," one said, and I:
"Must man go to war, yet not say goodbye?"
"I didn't," he said, without marked kinship,
"Last time," - Some subtle indoor Marxmanship
Suspecting then, automatically
Perhaps, he smiled democratically...
Without me, with a trampling noise of bees
The bus plunged headlong toward Los Angeles.

VI

Well, the redwing's a public charge! Over
The border flies she: and in her choices
Of landing rests the heart that wields the sword
For itself too!.. Yet, how should I praise you
Along the fjords by wild cat-tails going
Or keeping watch from your mast in marshlight?
God speed, my darling, wherever you blow,  
Each wave and tuft of your direction. 
Nature far more generously supports  
You, than we the out-of-work whistlepunk.

VII

The packed bus that brought me back glared and stunk  
Of beer, chiefly mine, in vaporous quarts.  
But chaos caught me in the suction  
Of a roaring parallel darkness, now  
Stabbed with landmarks in the wet night, none quite  
Verified, all of a heartbreak flowing  
Past lovers united on billboards, through  
The crash - sigh - of juggernauts borderward,  
And the grinding of hypocrites’ voices,  
And the mind jammed in reverse forever...

VIII

The helpless submarine is left aglow,  
A smoking cigar on the Sargasso.  
So burns the soul in this fluxion! Well,  
No peace but that must pay full toll to hell.  
But, little friendly bird, rather would I  
A thousand human deaths inhuman die  
That have no wings, than this which gives a song  
Wherewith, to the snarled applause of the strong  
Sea, in a Vancouver ashen with war,  
Brief, to praise Oregon and Mount Tabor.

T 167.1-5: A Canadian turned back at the border  
And Englishman turned back at the border  
A Canuck turned back at the border  
A Limey turned back at the border  
167.7: The Border

1 167.1-5: A singing smell of tar and open road
2 167.1-5: The Vancouver Bus Terminal  
Fills the Vancouver Bus Terminal
3 167.1-5: Is crowded by dreaming names, New Orleans  
Crowded by dreaming names, New Orleans  
Crowned by dreaming names, New Orleans
6-8 167.1: [missing]
6 167.2-5: Great tinsel city, insult of mankind  
Mad gilt city, insult of mankind  
Mart of the gilded insult of mankind
8 167.2-5: And city of my love...  
And city of my love, -ah, my harbour!  
And city of my love I’ll see Sunday
11 167.1-5: The blue exhaust seems part of the blue day  
The blue exhaust seems part of the litany
12 167.1-5: With a pneumatic bounce she springs the street  
of departure pneumatic bounce the street  
With a pneumatic bounce she fills the street
13-15  167.1: [missing]
13  167.2-5: Like the street of my love,
   So like any street in the city of my love
14  167.2-5: Slowly, she treads with mechanic persiflage
15  167.2-5: Rolando's horn could no more abyssal winds,
17  167.1-5: Slowly she treads with a noise like angry bees
   She teads asphalt with a noise like bees
18  167.1-5: The sweating asphalt: these are the scenes
   The lights symbolic nictitate in day: the scenes
19  167.1-5: Slowly she went, then double declutched my heart,
   She went slow, then double declutched my heart
21  167.1-5: High tension wires are marching in my blood
   The Rockies wheel away like Norway
   The Rockies wheel away like lost Norway
22  167.1-5: Great symbols and spans of bridges the bus crosses
24  167.1-5: This is the song of the northwestern redwing
25  167.6: Like that song of the northwestern redwing.
25  167.1-5: Who carries its own badge, its own fieldmark
26  167.6: Who carries his own badge, his own fieldmark
26  167.1-5: Of bright identity on its shoulders
26  167.6: Of bright identity on his shoulders
27  customs] custom's
27  167.1-6: He is his own custom's official
29  167.1-5: from lowland meadows, ponds of Columbia
   Little northwestern bird whose lowland nest
   From slough to marsh, building that nest whose branch
31  167.1-5: Gigantic democrats barred my passage
   Gigantic democrats with faces glum as tombs
   And the customs, for excuse, was unimpressed by Mars
32  167.1-5: Barred my way and read the letters
   Kindly, firmly, - albeit horribly -
   Adding: that what I'd thought was such a cinch
33  167.1-5: To my love, and opened suitcases and said
   Barred my way, most finally deterred
   wasn't: hadn't deceived him one damn bit.
34  167.1-5: and typed and said, and said again
   it. Typed and said again, what I'd guessed is
   "So far as I'm concerned, go straight to hell"
35  167.6: grey, evil, striking up the mortal chill
35  167.1-5: That I might be a sort of public charge
   Right. You will be a sort of public charge and that would
   But not via the U.S." There were folders
36  167.1-5: In that city of the angels and my luck
   Let on it. In that city of the angel
   On the table, of L.A. The sealed shock
36  167.6: Officials, -badged, pistoled, pitiless, -lurk,
37  167.1-5: That tinsel city, insult of mankind
   And your luck, that tinsel city of the folders,
   Of this did not unwax itself till spring
38  167.1-5: With genius co-eval to the age
   That tinsel city, insult of mankind
   But still he smiled most dramatically...
39  167.1-6: There is a bird here has three eyes: indeed
41  167.1-5: He crunched my suitcase on its injured lock -
   He snapped my suitcase on its injured lock.
167.6: He crunched my suitcase on its injured lock

42 167.1-5: [missing]
Likely to be a public charge. "Visas

43 167.6: [missing]

44 167.1-5: I'm sorry, we can't let you pass." But I
Are not enough." "But I

45 167.1-5: Don't want to go to war without saying
Can't go to war without saying goodbye

167.6: It was a plain duty to say goodbye

46 167.1-5: Goodbye." He said, "I did" last time, and so

47 167.1-5: Like some strange eternal proctor, Kafka

48 167.6: Like one of those mystic proctors, Kafka

49 167.1-6: Or, on the Russian border, Afghan,

50 167.1-6: Who fears some subtle indoor Marxmanship,

51 167.1-6: Uprose, between two motions of a doom

52 167.1-6: The bus plunged over the border, toward death.

53-80 167.6: [missing]

53-60 167.1-5: Well, the redwing's a public charge too, -truth
Is that nature far more generously
Than we the meanest scheme
Of indigenous purpose, with a sportsmanship
That we who scorn all hopeless nidification
Such as would meet nature's edification
Completely lack, granted she gives wide powers to
The murderer, and yet we wrong
Old age and the returning soldier and leave to die
The out-of-work whistlepunk.

61-70 167.1-5: The bus that brought me back then said damn all
Save that there would be heartbreak near glendale
Which was, anyhow, unavoidable.
For the beaked freighter lay at San Pedro
The LYKAION from Aragon or Biscay
To take me back to Avonmouth and death
That would have struck again had I been first saved.
Yet would I have died ten thousand deaths such as these
Than this which returned me to new birth
Back to the very cradle of my soul.

71-80 167.1-5: Poor comfort, such reprieve, when in that fluxion
Our brothers bowels are skeined in each subway.
Yet would I a thousand deaths, die them all,
Than that one which returned me to old day,
Back to the very cradle of my soul.
But, little red-winged bird, our suffering
Which cannot give man wings, may give one song,
Wherewith, to the applause of the ocean,
Here, in a Vancouver grown grey with war,
To praise Oregon and Mount Tabor.
In 1947 Lowry assembled and sent to Albert Erskine a collection of fifty-four poems; the remaining one hundred and fifty-four Dollarton poems are included in this section. The Lowrys traveled for two years in 1947-49, and as a result their Dollarton years break into two clear periods: 1940-47 and 1949-54. The periods in which Lowry laboured through his major post-1940 works may be demarcated almost as clearly. During the first Dollarton period Lowry was concerned almost exclusively with _Under the Volcano_, although after 1945 he worked also on _Dark As the Grave Wherein My Friend Is Laid_; from 1949-54 Lowry established his short story canon, posthumously published as _Hear us O Lord from heaven Thy dwelling place_, and wrestled with the voluminous _October Ferry to Gabriola_. Although Lowry did have a short, prolific spurt of poetry composition in the early 1950s, only nineteen of the one hundred fifty-four poems can be definitely assigned to the 1949-54 period, and three of these poems—"Beneath the Malebolge lies Hastings street" [178], "Save that the optimistic ones are worse" [285], and "Thoughts to be Erased from My Destiny" [307]—are dated "1946;1950" because the blue 3 1/8 x 4 3/4" paper on which they are written appears in Lowry’s outgoing correspondence for both those years. The majority of poems in this section, then, date from the first Dollarton period. It is safe to estimate that Lowry composed approximately one hundred and ninety poems during the 1940-47 period, and out of these collected a volume of fifty-four poems in 1947. Including the nineteen poems assigned to 1949-54, and the Dollarton love poems, Lowry wrote a total of
approximately two hundred and thirty poems while living on the beach at Dollarton.

The manuscripts for the Dollarton uncollected poems are similar to those for the poems in the 1947 collection. For example, newsprint 8 1/2 x 11" paper predominates, and five types of 7 x 9 1/4" notebook paper frequently appear. During the 1950-54 period, the Lowrys' outgoing correspondence shows an increasing use of a variety of fine white 8 x 10" letter papers, sometimes ripped from a pad perfected with red adhesive. This paper appears more frequently in the manuscripts of the uncollected poems, probably for the simple reason that the uncollected poems include the period 1950-54, while the manuscripts for the 1947 collection contain the 8 x 10" papers only when a collected poem continued to be revised into the 1950s.

The overriding feature of the uncollected poems manuscripts is that of incompleteness; of the one hundred fifty-four poems, only seventy-three exist in typescript versions, and even in these cases extensive holograph corrections on the typed sheets indicate further rounds of revisions. Half of the eighty-two manuscript poems exist only in one draft, and these single-draft poems exhibit a disregard for line initial capitals, the extensive use of which Lowry adopted during the Dollarton period, when he revised some of his Lighthouse poems to reflect this concern. The fact that drafts for some of the poems in this section first appear in both the preserved manuscripts and discarded, recycled sheets of Lowry's Dollarton prose further heightens the incomplete or "work in progress" tone of this section.
The poems in this section are arranged alphabetically, because no dating pattern sufficiently precise emerges by which the poems can be chronologically arranged. For example, because of Lowry's heavy use of cheap brown 8 1/2 x 11" newsprint throughout the Dollarton period, sixty-three of the one hundred fifty-five poems can be dated only as 1940-54, as their manuscripts do not contain identifiable and, therefore, datable papers. However, since Lowry used the newsprint only during his Canadian residency, these sixty-three poems can at least be dated within the 1940-54 period. The poems in this section require a variety of dating techniques. Some poems are datable through their content; most of Lowry's war poems, such as "Dream of the Departing Soldier" [204], scribbled on newsprint or notebook paper, were composed between 1940 and 1945. "A Lament - June 1944" [240], a poem about the Lowrys' burned shack, is also datable by content. The state of sheets which sustained some damage during the 1944 fire also provide dating clues. The first draft of "Oh gentle Jesus of the hymnal once" [263] appears on a sheet of charred newsprint, indicating a composition date of 1940-44. Sometimes a poem appearing in Lowry's outgoing correspondence can be precisely dated. In 1946, for example, Lowry sent to Albert Erskine weekly batches of corrected Volcano manuscript; in a batch dated 15 July 1946, Lowry included the poem "Correcting Manuscript" [1946]. The previous batch had been sent 8 July 1946, so that the poem was probably composed during the week between the two letters. Three of the Dollarton uncollected poems appear in published versions of Lowry's prose,
and can be dated with the prose manuscripts. These poems are "Lament in the Pacific Northwest" [241] (October Ferry 189), "A Prayer" [280] and "The Young Man from Oaxaca," as "A Limerick" [322] ("Through the Panama" in Hear us O Lord 45). Some poems can be dated when their drafts share the same sheets with drafts of other poems; Lowry's poem "My hate is as a wind that buffets me" [252] dates "I met the spirit of tragedy in the wood" [227], because the latter's single draft shares a sheet with a draft of the former.

All textual notation in this section accords with the "Dollarton 1940-54: Selected Poems 1947" format. In this case only two poems have drafts so mixed that it is impossible chronologically to order them: "Born ailing on a hemisphere apart" [180.1-3], and "My hate is as a wind that buffets me" [252.1-10]. When a poem exists in one draft with uncapitalized line initials, I have silently emended to capitals, given the fact that Lowry usually capitalized. Although Lowry did not always use line capitals, some consistent editorial policy has to be set regarding the treatment of drafts, and, in order to reflect accurately Lowry's poetic characteristics, it seems prudent to emend toward his habitual usage.

NOTES

1 From the manuscripts of Under the Volcano: "Old Blake was warm, he got down to the hub" [266], "See Dictionary. Poem on Gold" [277], "The Schoolboy's Complaint" [286], "Smell of Burning" [292]. From the manuscripts of October Ferry to
Gabriola: "Lament in the Pacific Northwest" [241], "Oh, poor Mary Ann" [265]. From the manuscripts of "The Present Estate of Pompeii": "And yet his suffering got involved with all this" [173], "Pines write a Chinese poem upon the white-gold sun" [271]. From the manuscripts of "Through the Panama": "I tried to think of something good" [230], "Lines on the Poet Being Informed that his Epic about the Philistines, etc. Needed Cutting" [243], "A Prayer" [280], "The Young Man from Oaxaca" [322]. From the manuscripts for "Elephant and Colosseum": "The sun was almost shining" [300].
Only 3 years ago it was 4 years ago
But now it’s 7 years ago.

And 4 years ago it was only 3 years ago
But now it’s 7 years ago.

And just over a little over 4 years ago it was not even 3 years ago
But now it’s 7 years ago.

And only 3 1/4 years ago it was only 3 3/4 years ago
But now it’s 7 years ago.

Only 2 3/4 years ago it was only 4 1/4 years ago.
But now it’s 7 years ago.

Only 1 1/12 years ago it was only 5 11/12 years ago.
But now it’s 7—seven—years ago.

Like white giraffes the fishing craft
With masts and gear braced high
Come stately round the point, while aft
Two launches, gallantly

Approach, and passing, reach the bay
-- Ah, empty for all their steam! --
Silent, that only yesterday
Had ferried song upstream...
Rather than that, I'd go down to the bar
And gulph down sixty whiskies every hour
I'd drink all that day and the next; the next
Return; and then, unmanned, if not unsexed
I'd watch the horrors fill the mantelshelf
And shake in impotent terror at myself.

And now I brood on what I think I know,
But never watch intently -- our stage!
Two old lamps burning with a steady flame
A dear face reading disaster, whereof
She reads will perish -- "love does not die"
Brightness of scissors at midnight
Objects which are not images,
Of no poetic stature.
The trudge of sea and the tramp of rain
The thud of the threatened unbudged boat
Snow on the mountains, and there will be snow
Here tomorrow, deep on the path to the store
And we must wheel the wood as once with care
I wheeled my life away into the dark
The pinprick quiet when sea and rain have ceased
Out of what is good because of no moment
With wood and the night outside, steals the knowledge of peace.

And now the seagulls feed on the front porch
Waxwings circling the roof, precisely drop.
Even the kingfisher rests from debauch,
And contemplates me from a salt grey prop
That can look after itself, with kinship's eye
Thus I have humbled myself for birds,
And birds only, hating
A veritable St. Francis - was it? - I
But lick the sores of my own leprosy
A certain stingy adulation steams
From all this noble cloying behaviour
Nor would I put past my ego’s schemes
To identify myself as some white saviour...
And now the seagulls peck on the front porch:
And now the seagulls pack on the front porch:
The bloating kingfisher rests from debauch,
Contemplating me from a salt grey prop
That can look after itself with an eye
Of kinship, multitudinously.

Were it not that all this strange battery
Of love, this forcing of stalemate in retreat,
Is but the rearguard action of my hate.

To identify myself Christ the saviour

And yet his suffering got involved with all this,
Had become involved with the stringers and the posts, was nailed
Up with the cross-braces, floated in the fog and with the gulls
Leaned up against the woodshed with the shingle bolts,
Was hung on the wall, walked in the wood at sundown,
Swam, and sat down, and wrote: this was his ordeal,
His penance, and light enough considering.

To order that suffering as the pines were ordered in the
frame of the sun,
The three pines, that, with superb economy, were more than
the forest,
But were the forest; light enough, you would say.
It was only because he had so much that he despaired.
Had so much, that coast nothing; had everything, that cost only this,
To live as God had intended man to live;

Suffered because he might lose it - why should he, when we
Shuddered to lose what we had bought and did not want
Bought and still paid for and still did not want, and still

Suffered because we had not got that which even if we had
we wouldn't know how to use

Suffered because his house had burned down
And an evil man had built on his site
-- Yet they had rebuilt! --
They who were Adam and Eve in a sort of overstated way
Who in their very lives might have been put there to redeem
The fall of man - God knows, Wilderness should not complain.
Yet, suffered, for getting that nobility and the kindness
of the other
Fishermen without whom they could not have rebuilt
While the whole world burned down and we suffered to be evicted
From what we didn’t want and besides had ruined!
And yet I am of England too; odi et amo -
I have known her terrible towns in peace.
Was it yet your left eye or your right was blinded
Idiot England bidding the world to anchor.

My faith in you as home ended
In Balapry [?] and Dalamanca.
And the muted voice of England long asleep
Was heard then.
We may not speak of islands.

England is like a ship in the sea
Who’s moored fore and aft. The crew changes
And the terrible boatswains yell
The derricks down her deck. Cluster lamps
At night light the hold. What’s in it?

A few old tragedies and tales, histories
Of famous men. The deceitful picture of her past.
With bowsprits stuck into the wharf of God.
England is the ultimate blockade.
It is not a matter of war or prophecy

What I say.
May she disown the hypocrites who sailed her
Since this time, she’s not wounded.

5 174.1: My faith in you as home has ended

1942

ANOTHER IMMORALITY

On hearing that Ezra Pound was singing on Mussolini’s radio

Sing you for love and idleness -
Or was it an abstention

From these since that the times are high
And fraught with inattention?

Yet we would rather that you died
We pardonably mention

Than do low deeds in Italy
That pass man’s comprehension.

ST 175.1: On reading in Vancouver that Ezra Pound was singing
On the Rome radio
From Decision to Ezra Pound on hearing him on the radio
On Hearing that Ezra Pound was singing on Mussolini’s Air Waves
1940-54

-- Arise, arrogant arsemongers
Come! clashing clowns
Dare! dashing Dagwoods
Flee frightened faring
5 Thanes to tired towns.
Arise!
Come!
Where we weasels walk warily...

1940

An autopsy on this childhood then reveals:
That he was flayed at seven, crucified at eleven.
And he was blind as well and jeered at
For his blindness. Small wonder that the man
5 Is embittered and full of hate, but wait.
All this time, and always lost, he struggled
In pain he prayed that none other
In world should suffer so. Christ's
Life, compared with his, was full of tumult,
10 Praise, excitement, final triumph.
For him were no hosannas. He writes them now.
No one wrote hymns for him. He writes them now.
Matriculated into life by this,
Remembering how
15 This laggard self was last in the school marathon
But turned, to discover Clare in the poor snail
And weave a fearful vision of its own.
Or that he was last, last in everything,
Devoid of all save wandering attention
20 Wandering is the word which defines our man.

3 177.1: And he was as good blinded as well as jeered at
4 177.1: For his blindess. And worse than that. Small wonder that the man
8 Christ's] Christs
13 177.1: Matriculated into genius by this,

1946;1950

Beneath the Malebolge lies Hastings street
The province of the pimp upon his beat
Where each in his little world of drugs or crime
Drifts hopelessly, or hopeful, begs a dime
5 Wherewith to purchase half-a-pint of piss
Although he will be cheated, even in this.
I hope, although I doubt it, that God knows
This place where chancre blossoms like the rose
For in each face is such a hard despair
That nothing like a grief finds entrance there.
And on this scene from all excuse exempt
The mountains gaze in absolute contempt.
Yet this, yet this is Canada, my friend
Yours to absolve of ruin, or make an end.

197.1,2: Moves hopelessly, or hopeful, begs a dime
10 197.1: That nothing like a grief could enter there

1940-54

BESIDE ONESELF

Why should I care about drooling age
In the years of my drivelling youth and rage
When a whisky-and-water at eighty five
Will bring back these half dead hours alive?

1939-40;1945-46

Born ailing on a hemisphere apart
Now tremulous to acquire a heart
This soul yet has its awkward music
And will not be stayed by such contempt
As might have muted finer viols than I.
No legend roots in my obscurity:
Tradition rests not on it; nor do words
Like electric flame ripple in its wake.
Spawn of the doomed freighter and the ruined street
Spewed from the maw of the Great Hypocrite
Into a whelm of nameless trees and birds,
And conjurings of triumph and defeat
Not till this year had I observed a spring.
And yet this stone must sing.

2 180.1-3: Tremulous to acquire a heart
180.5: But tremulous to acquire a heart
3 180.1-3: No Pocahontas blesses my obscurity:
   Eve and Magdalene mean nothing to me.
4 180.1-3: St. Pancras - ruined now perhaps - admired
   St. Pancras, the only building I have seen.
5 180.1-3: By Ruskin
   By Ruskin ended.
180.4: It well knows the fame it chose was sick
180.5: As might have broken finer viols than I.
   As might have unkeyed finer viols than I.
   As might have unstrung finer viols than I.
180.6: As might have muted richer strings than I.
6 180.1-3: I took the last train from St. Pancras out
   Speak time ghosts away me the genius
180.4,5: No Pocahontas blesses my obscurity
190.1-3: Tradition rests not on it neither words
180.1-3: That like the wake of ships ripple in flame
Which like the wake of ships rippling in flame
180.4: Which like the wake of the electric
Ripple in its wake the wake of the electric
180.5: Like flame ripple in its wake.
9 180.1-3: Will light it for friendly condemnation
180.4: Rippling in flame, tractable...
10 180.1-4: Accidental, conjured out of penance
11 180.1-3: And ignorance and lies and nameless trees
Of ignorance and lies and nameless trees
180.4: And ignorance and lies and nameless trees,
180.5: Into a spate of nameless trees and birds --
Into a hell of nameless trees and birds --
180.6: Into a spate of nameless trees and birds,
12 180.1-4: Spawn of the jenny and the empty will
[mss add next lines:] Spewed from the maw of the great hypocrite
And cruelty ages of it without end
I crawled out of the subway of the past.

1940-44  

BRIGHT AS THE PLEIADES UPON THE SOUL

Wrestling with iambics in the stormy wood
I lost the joy that wind itself may bring:
And yet the wood must struggle with the form of the gale
As poets should with words from what quarter
5 Of the plains of sense
Bent by its fury
The gale is
The wood composed in peace once more the poem.

2 181.1: I missed what wind itself may bring:
8 181.1: [adds then deletes next line:] The poem, like the wood,
[w]as there already.

[1953]  

The burnt pier: the last passenger: the farewells
And the gangway running up: the tall hotels
Wheeling slowly into the mist of Vancouver.
"And there," you said once, "That must be our street
Whose nights intoxicate and torment
Because we still exist!" The bone-white deck
Lifts to a leeward swell. "That old freighter
Is still there, smashed, on that rock where we swam."
Now we have made fast in the remembered port,
10 Unshipped our freight of iron, and iron despair,
And forced the injured window of the past
That gives on haggard streets where falls not a flake,
Though there is snow, piled high against the clock,
Where broken heart meets broken tryst in time.

12 182.1: That gives on haggard streets where falls no flake,
13 182.1: Though the snow is piled high against the tower of the clock,

1939-40; 1945-46 BYZANTIUM: OR WHERE THE GREAT LIFE BEGINS [183.2]
(or Getting a bit knocked oop now.)

- Don't come any of that Byzantium stuff
On me, me swell young toff! Just plain Stamboul
Is good enough fer me and Lamps and Bill.
Constantibloodynople's right enough -
5 Used to be, eh? Eh? Don't give me that guff
Like that wot you said about the ideal -
In a blind eye socket! But a girl's a girl
And bobhead tigers here will treat you rough
And give you, "ideal!" Farewell, smoke is real -
10 And ukelele mourn a uiulu:
And engine stampedes: more fool you fool you:
And aerial says: oh whither where away:
And sea: each one-eared dog will have its day:
And stars wink: Venus first, then Mercury.

2 183.1: On me, me fine young toff! Just plain Stamboul
12 183.1: And aerial breathes: oh whither where away:
13 183.1: And sea: says: every dog must have its day:

1940-54 [184.1]

Canny Castor, Punching Pollux
Disapproved of Theseus' Bobdux
Helen, thou never shall abduct!
(Which did not stop her being dukt) -

1 184.1: Casual Castor, Prancing Pollux
4 184.1: (This did not stop her being dukt) -
A child may find no words for its sorrow
But may hear at night strange presage of comfort
That injured stones know listening to the earth
Or he may learn that stones themselves may speak
Flintly, their language of heartbreak
In the cloakroom is the roar of the sea
And a rebuke but even that is comfort
In that it means one less rebuke

Had I known then what I know now
Would I have lived?

Between himself and death
The sole recovery, perhaps -
Whereas tomorrow's unsolved problem
Will always be one mystery the more
And on the hearthrug gazing into hell
There is the future - the stokehold perhaps -
Who knows. - There are are flames, and there
I see ablaze my doomed country
What shall happen, they will never know.

This was unreal time.

Only now do I see its tragedy...

2 185.2: But may hear at night strange presage of release
He may hear strange words of comfort
3 185.2: That injured stones know listening to the earth
5 185.2: Their language of heartbreak
7 185.2: And a rebuke but even that is good
11 185.2: Lies between oneself and death
13 tomorrow's] tomorrows
185.2: Just as tomorrow's unsolved problem
18 185.2: I see my father's doomed country.
19 185.2: All what happen, they will never know.

185.1: A child may find no words for its sorrow,
Nor loneliness.
But with my ear close
He may hear strange words of comfort
From those he may not live to read,
Or if he read, he could not understand.
The dog, after the fifteenth hole retrieved
The old lost golfball in the rough.
The roar of the sea
The one afloat, these
Old lifeless things may give him comfort
As madmen find in marbles or in string
Even a rebuke is comfort, in that it
Is expected, means one rebuke
Less between himself and death,
The sole recovery
The numbed abyss between tea and dinner
And on the hearthrug gazing straight into hell
There is the future, - the stokehold perhaps,
Who knows. There are the flames, and death
Again, the only possible recovery.
    This was unreal time.
Only know I see it is a tragedy...

[1952-54]  

CHILLIWACK

[186.1]

This is a town of rumours. For eleven days
Underneath the mountains
People have been hearing planes, intercepting
Messages, and seeing signals, flares and smoke.
But nothing definite is known of the fate
The fate of the eleven flyers lost
In the snow-choked mountains.
One sees footprints in the mountains
Another, a tent pitched high in Elk Mountain.
This was a glacier, the other his own
Footsteps perhaps.
Nothing definite is known.
A red flare turns green, and then white.
Residents pick up smatterings of messages
From planes, ground parties and headquarters.
Smoke signals electrify the town.
But no hope comes down.

1940-54

[187.2]

My Christ I am tired of fruit in poetry
To hell with the semicolon technique!
I think that poetry should have bowels
In every page you hear a parrot shriek
In borrowed plumes its consonants and vowels.

Poetry such as this ought to have bowels.
Christ I am tired of fruit in poetry!
To hell with the semicolon technique!

1 187.2: Christ I am tired of fruit in poetry
3 187.2: I think that poetry must have bowels
[ms adds next line:] Why are there so many parrots in modern verse

187.1:  Christ I am tired of fruit in poetry
To hell with the semi-colon technique
I remember in an old day, Coventry
And it was frozen in a shriek.
It knew what was going to happen
And so did London. And so did.
The cathedrals stood around the great clock tower
What is going to happen to you.
I don’t want to make your flesh creep
No need to do that, your great notion
Already keeps, in aftermath,
An horripilation.

1940-47

THE CLOSED PUB

The Fox and Geese is shut; the Fox and Geese
Has been shut before, and that before hours
With me inside and the foxy hand that pours,
Shall pour no more nor dispense bread and cheese
But now it is boarded up
And what we did there that day for some wheeze
Or what another did, or left a tool of ours
The abhorrent memory that finally sours
These things are of no great matter. Time please
Has been called for the landlord and the Fox
And Geese is shut where I played Hare and Hounds
And with it all those wounds.
Yea, is shut and with it, how much of remorse
That now no more shall wander from its source!

2 188.1: Has been shut before, sometimes before hours
4 188.1: Shall pour no more nor scrabble bread and cheese
11: 188.1: The Fox and Geese is shut where I played Hare
Geese is shut where I played Hare
12 188.1: And Hound. And with it all those wounds.
And Hounds. And shut are all those wounds
The Fox and Geese
13 188.1: Is shut, and with it how much of remorse

1940-54

COMFORT

You are not the first man to have the shakes
The wheels, the horrors, to wear the scarlet
Snowshoe, nor yet the invincible harlot
Dagged by eyes like fishnets. Leaning, aches
The iron face with agate eyes, and wakes
The guardian angel, sees the past,
A parthenon of possibilities.
You are not the first to be caught lying
Nor yet to be told that you are dying

6 189.1: Your guardian angel broods, sees the past
Consider what you have lost by lack of faith
And simplicity, the ideas
Picked up cheap in the forest like punk.
Consider the lives like night-scented stock
The laughter like porterhouse steak
And children's laughter, like lost waterfalls,
Or butterflies flying out to sea
Soldered lives in rebellion only against that
Which injures their love. And let this pathos
Tear you to pieces.

Consolation

Mamma's got rings
Mamma's got things
Mamma just sings,
For joy and pride
But I've got Pisces on the fifth house cusp
And Venus, well dignified...

3 191.1: Mamma just sings, for joy and pride
5 191.1: But I've got Venus and the fifth house cusp

Contemplation of Dead Reckoning

Snow-freaked rocks the eagle alone questions,
The wild geese dare them but to clang away.
It is as though the pines marched down to the water
From that perennial headache of snow
As we tramp down to the valley below,
They cannot fight off the fog's hangover
Blest when it gathers some lost souls together
As now when exile calls exile brother
Saying: The only way a ship can find
Her course through that fjord down there in the fog
Is by the echo. It is as if you went
Ten steps in the wood now and then stopped
So you advance so many revolutions
Sometimes a period of time. The sound
Your whistle and listen for the echo.
And if it comes back quicker from one side
You know you're closer to which rock which quarter
And have to steer away. If an equal echo
Doubly strikes you’re in midstream and safe.
But in a snowstorm there is no echo.
Then know — as you must! — the dread of steering
By dead reckoning. How lunacy it is;
You can’t stop going. If you stop you’re lost.
Nor when you travel by dead reckoning
May you wait for the faithful tide
That burgeons through precipices to the sea
Where Pacificward at high, clear nightfall,
You see the word of workers sailing wide.
Better be a young man going home through snow
Now! For all the hemlock’s freezing stillness
In the fog! Better your peaked house, your light
A wink of passion in the wilderness,
Since now the snow is driving on the night
And such a storm as shall yield no echo.

2 192.1: Or the spirit, on wandering freighter!
192.3: The wild geese dare them but to disappear away.
5 192.1: They could not fight off the fog’s hangover,
They cannot fight off the fog’s hangover,
192.2: They cannot fight off the hangover of the fog
7 192.1: Blest when it gathers some lost together
192.3: Blest when it gathers the lost to his brother
11 192.1: Is by the echo. And if it comes back at you
12-15 192.1: [missing]
16 192.1: Quicker from one side than from t’other
17 192.1: You know you’re closer to the rocks that side
192.2: That’s the side you’re closer to the rocks
18 192.1,2: And have to steer away. But if an equal echo
19 192.2 Doubly strikes, you’re in midstream — you’re safe.
20 192.1: But in a snowstorm there comes no echo.
21 192.1: Then you will know the horror of dead reckoning
192.2: Then know — as you must! — the horror
22 192.1: Horror, because you can’t stop going
192.2: Of steering by dead reckoning
   By dead reckoning. And why is it horror?
23 you’re [192.2]
192.1: And if you stop you’re lost
26 precipices [192.2]
27-34 192.1: [missing]
27 192.2: [missing]
192.3: Where seaward at high, clear nightfall,
28 192.2: Bearing the word of worker sailing wide
29 192.2,3: Better be a man going home through snow
CONVERSATIONS WITH GOETHE

I have two selves and one lives free in hell
The other down a well in Paradise.
Evil has made the first in evil wise,
The second, baffled, stifled in that well,
Battened on top, may scarce be wise at all -
Unless the knowledge he is where he is
Can be a sort of wisdom in disguise -
Since outside, he hears angel footsteps fall.

Help me, Oh God, God, God, trap that other,
Consume him utterly and set me free.
This well is black and dismal as the pole...
When shall some angel stoop and calling brother,
And peering downward like a star at me
Draw up the living waters of my soul?

CORRECTING MANUSCRIPT

How are we off for awares?
And how are we off for despairs?
How, oh Lord, for wives?
And how, oh God, for lives?

How are we off for not?
And how many deaths have we got?

Courage is not standing on the crosstrees
Checking the topping-lift, when this demand
Though in a gale, upon the steady hand,
Is native to our practicalities.

Nor is it slanting to the Hebrides
Some fabulous leaky plank that might be sound,
Nor yet to salt some sacrificial wound.
A cause already grovelling on its knees
Would never thank you given strength to rise
Save with a falsehood honour should disown.
Such courage wakes with cowardice but to weep
And looks not courage to our simple eyes,
Which is to be a strong sheep, in our town,
Whose whiteness keeps it pure for war's Bo-peep.
1 195.2-4: Courage is not to stand on the crosstrees
2 195.1: To check the topping lift when this demand
3 195.1: Though in a hurricane upon the steady hand
4 195.1,2: Is native to one's practicalities.
5 195.1: Nor is it sailing to the Hebrides
Nor is it slanting down the Hebrides
7 195.1: Nor sprinkling into some useless wound
Nor sprinkling into some silly witless wound
195.2: To shovel salt into some witless wound
195.3: Nor yet to shovel salt into some sacrificial wound
8 195.1,2: Would never thank you for strength to rise
10 195.1: Save with some lie clear honour should disown
11 195.1: Nor is it what is published in our town.
12 195.1: Nor is it what it was when I first thought this
195.2,3: And is not courage to our simple eyes
13 195.1: No, courage is to be a sheep chaste and demure
No, courage is to be a sheep chaste and wise
195.2: Which is to be a wise sheep in our town
195.2,3: Which is to be a giant sheep in our town

1939-40;1945-46  THE DAYS LIKE SMITTEN CYMBALS OF BRASS

When I was young, the mildew on my soul,
Like Antiphilus, it chanced to me
Or Melville's Redburn, to take that soul to sea
And have it scoured
Ahi! The days like rust smitten from iron decks

They were beaten into one deafening roar
Of sunlight and monotony.
I had expected the roar of the sea,
And of tempest
Not this sullen unremitting calm
This road of blue concrete to the Antipodes.
Where thunder was gunfire behind the hill.

T  Cymbals] Cymbols
4 197.1: [ms adds then deletes next line:] The days like smitten cymbals

[196.1]

10 197.1: But not this sullen unremitting calm
12 197.1: Where war was thunder behind the hill
Dead men tell cryptic tales and this is one.
-- Free will bends fate, to that's affixed
A signature of stars. But you have axed
The wood, slashed clean! Such is your simple task
Keep God inside, infinity without
That engulfed you, whose talent could not flout
The rising sea. Who set on both his seal
Is wiser even than the slavish sun
Rolling on freedom many-winking eyes.

Questions there are the dead no longer ask.
But in the shed with beauty's packed the wood
The word of God, which you burn piecemeal.
For God's the only warmth against a world
That freezes spring out of the years with lies.

4 197.2: Keep God inside, and infinity out.
5 197.2: This engulfed you, whose genius could not stem
7 197.2: The rising sea. He whom you got it from
8-10 197.2: [missing]
14 197.2: [adds last line:] And this is not a tale, after all

197.1: Dead men tell cryptic tales and this is one.
Free will bends fate, to that's affixed
A signature of stars. The cycle.
You believe you love on earth's no loop.
The same for the age, too. Study ellipses,
Less false are they than circles. Though many's
The story, could tell of wheels.
Consider the journey of a humble trampship,
Lone on the ocean, steering by the Great Circle,
Sure that's a sort of circle, but the journey!
Which doubles back upon itself, what of that,
Before returning, perhaps not to its home port?
The captain's less important than his crew,
And of that crew, let us consider only you.
The line your journey traces upon heaven
May be more nearly perfect.
In London stands the Goat and Compass,
Where friends roar backward over the swimming bar,
Your entry there is

Your dream of homecoming.
God encompasseth us is the true name
Whose geometry is highly personal.
You see - of course you don't! - but it's no matter.
The devil is a gentleman
He comes to tea at four
He treats the children like a man
And rarely is a bore

But this I know for certain,
Yes, this, and how much more,
That Bahomet lives at sixty three
And Saturn lives next door.

Down at the bottom of a well
I lie and know I am in hell
It stinks so badly I can tell
This is the end of Malcolm L.

But far above he saw a star
Without much curiosity thus far
Until at dawn the star began to go
Then did our friend feel singularly low.

The star bent down next night with angel face
And hoisted up our slimy friend apace
Forgave him all his filth and self deceit
And give him raiment and wild plums to eat.

And now their little chimney smokes nearby
The star and our friend dwell most happily
When they want water to the well they go
Into which pure mountain waters flow.

Then was the world as when it first begun
And all the stars and crickets sang one... one...

I fear it much as I fear death
Not over much, but still a pang.
The seats we hold, the straps that hang
The driver's back: these are our faith.

The station then was like our birth.
The shapes that beck, sigh past, or clang
Like hopes and years. That bell that rang
Pulled in our fate, a cross, a wraith.
It was stupid to be afraid
Since now we go to love and tea
All merry as a marriage bell.
And yet it might be one was dead.
It might, that halt was purgatory.
It might be now, heaven or hell.

It might, that view was not the sea.

T 200.1: The Bus Stop
200.2: [missing]
1 200.1: I fear the stop as I fear death
200.2: I fear the Bus stop like I fear my death
I fear the stop as I fear my doom
2 200.1: Perhaps not much but still a pang
Perhaps not overmuch but still a pang
200.2: Not very much, for still a pang, a pang
Perhaps not much, but still a pang, a pang
200.3: Not much, but still a clutch, a pang.
3 200.2: The seats we lurch on and the straps the hang
4 200.2: The driver’s narrow face are these like faith
Our parcels and our place, all which
5 200.1: The station was like our birth
200.2: We cling too, lose, exchange, give up, -- our birth
6 200.1: The shapes that sigh past with a clang
200.2: Itself, all are as years that each succeeding bang
7 200.1: Are years. I think I heard the bell that rang
200.2: Brings closer was that the bell rang
8 200.1: Our place doom floats like a wraith
200.2: For here our stopping place floats like a wraith
For here our stopping place floats nearer like a wraith.
9-15 200.1: [missing]
10 200.2: Since now we go to happiness and tea
11 200.2: And home, all merry as a marriage bell
13 200.2: It might have been our halt was purgatory
200.3: It might, our halt was purgatory
14 200.2: It might be now in heaven or in hell.
15 200.2: [missing]

1940-54

DONNE HE’S REGULAR
[201.1]

For whom the log rolls
Once more thou art the rage oh good John Donne
Once more oh Donne hast thou set sail for Spain
Once more thy fame as art the Cheshire Cheese
But now a greater cheese hast sung thy fame.

2 201.1 [adds then deletes next line:] But little thoughtest though thou
DON'T, HAVE ONE FOR THE ROAD

Moons I have lost and suns unwept and gone
And stars that stalled along the eastern sky —
But drunk in the rumble seat I passed them by
Into another alcoholic dawn —
Clash in one thunder bidding me atone!

DRAFT BOARD

Back broad and straight from crop to hocks:
Legs short and straight and squarely placed.
The chest wide and deep and also round:
Poll well defined and jaws clean.
Tail fine, coming neatly out of the body
On a line with the back and hanging at
Right angles to it.
Add 25 counts for progeny.
See you in Le Havre.

DREAM OF THE DEPARTING SOLDIER

The midtown pyromaniac, sunset,
Has set flame to all the aerieled roofs,
And you and I, talking, wait the onset
Of the last night, meek as eight standing hooves.
Or penned plump beeves loved not beyond slaughter.
Here is a thought - read when the journey palls -
Nor turn from corridor trees or laughter:
The horror is, the curtain never falls
On the dull interminable murder,
Nor will eyes rest in death's democracy;
Delirium's there, and there the girder
Is set, the house raised to hypocrisy.
Good bye, old comrade, of your death I pray
It prove sweet marjoram nor turn caraway.

T 204.1: [missing]
2-4 204.1: Has set his torch to the steep rooves
And you and I in hand await the onset
Of the night, meek as doomed beeves.
4 204.2: Of the last night, meek in doom's oiled grooves.
The noise of death is in this desolate bar
Where tranquility sits bowed over its prayer
And music shells the dream of the lover
But when no nickel buys this harsh despair
Into this loneliest of homes
And of all dooms the loneliest yet
Where no electric music breaks the beat
Of hearts to be doubly broken but now set
By the surgeon of peace in the splint of woe
Pierces more deeply than trumpets do
The motion of the mind into that web
Where disorders are as simple as the tomb
And the spider of life sits, sleep.

Eels seem to spawn in the deep dark water:
Nobody has seen them apparently;
On one has seen their eggs, only later
The larva rise, knife-like, transparently.
Open sea young eels turn into glass eels
Moving only by day to the far shores.
But nobody knows it, nobody reels
Them in as they breast even Niagaras.
But by night they swim back to their great grave
In the abysses of the Hebrides —
Their shape is like their life and like the wave
That breaks over them is the death of these.
The will of the eel is its destiny.
No eel ever comes back from the dark sea.
6 206.1: Moving towards the distant rivers and shores
9 206.1: Then they travel back by night to their great grave
Then they swim back by night to their great grave
[adds then deletes next line:] Eels seem to spawn in the deep [dark water

10 206.1: Their shape is their life as with the curved wave.
11 206.1: In the abysses of the Hebrides.
12 206.1: [missing]
13 206.1: The will of the eel finds its destiny

1940-54

EPITAPH

Dear Scipio Sprague
sans plague sans blague
(if I seem vague)
I’m extremely beholden
for your words golden
as bourbon olden
in which prosit to you
as you sail toward the blue
on some Pequot gaily
or Behemoth sprightly
from Malcolm Lowry
late of the Bowery
whose prose was flowery
if somewhat glowery

15 who worked nightly
and sometimes daily
and died, playing the ukulele...

I3 [missing] {207.1}
15-17 207.1: He lived, nightly, and, (sometimes), daily:
And died playing the ukulele

1940

EPITAPH ON OUR GARDENER, DEAD NEAR LIVERPOOL

Here lies George Edward Cook, a man
Who to the world’s wickedness added naught.
Can you say the same? May God guide my pen
To do him justice, Who in earth has sown
5 Him where he laboured...Good folk of Wirral,
Empty the sky one instant of evil
And then look far to sea - you did not know
Lycidas died out there, beyond Hilbre
But so it was - whose harsh salt smell resists
10 The tears. His eyes had often thus followed
Those hills, which darkening gave presage of storm
Not such as blasts you now, not for what you sought.
But in Flintshire still great furnaces glow
And now the world one garden is, of iron,
15 Remember him to whom it was not so.
For there are ambiguous angers in our blood
Nor do we know at what we shake our fists
Although we give it name. Here lies our friend.
He's dead but ancient lawns remember him.

And though these words have a hard sound of doom,
Let hatred pause a moment. Rest your gun
Against this stone in heart, or fact, and say:
- Or say it not, if it be without courage -
Here lies more than a man - here lies an age.

**EXILE’S RETURN**

The Prodigal speaks:

I have no forgiveness in my soul
And I want to get out of this hell hole.

**THE EX-POET**

Timber floats in the water. The trees
Arch over, it is green there, the shadow.
A child is walking on the meadow,
There is a sawmill, through the window.

I knew a poet once who came to this:
Love has not gone, only the words of love,
He said. The words have gone
Which would have painted that ship
Colours red lead never took upon

In sunsets livid at the Cape.
I said it was a good thing too.
He smiled and said: Someday
I shall have left this place as words left me.

**EYE-OPENER**

How like a man, is Man, who rises late
And gazes on his unwashed dinner plate
And gazes on the bottles, empty too,
All gulped in last night’s loud long how-do-you-do,
- Although one glass yet holds a gruesome bait -
How like to Man is this man and his fate -
Still drunk and stumbling through the rusty trees
To breakfast on stale rum sardines and peas.
211.1: [missing]

211.2: A Passing Phase

211.3: No, No
  Like Me, Too

1 211.1: How like a man is this man rising late
How like a man is Man, that rises late

211.2: How like to man is man that rises late
211.3: How like a man, is Man, that rises late

2 211.2: To gaze upon his unwashed dinner plate

3 211.1: And wonder at the bottles, empty too

4 211.1: All gulped down in last night’s loud long how-do-you-do.
   All emptied in last night’s loud long how-do-you-do.

5 211.1: Although one glass still holds a gruesome bait

7 211.1: Half drunk and stumbling through the rusty trees.

1939-40; 1945-46

Faking was three times married to Faking
First and second the child: and third the child.
In short dedicated self to self, to hold
And have in glee or in heartbreaking.

5 Said as he died, Faking mischievously
In all in all we have not had a wild
Time, I was not a good fellow, not hailed
As a genius. Not me not painstaking.
We learned nothing ordinary souls learn.

10 Nor did we burn what others ought not burn.
Our virtue was: we had no good ideas,
We had no hope but neither had we fears.
Long in life we Fakings have abided
And in death we are not divided.

5 212.1: Said as he died one evening, Faking mischievously

1940-46

I

Fear ringed by doubt is my eternal moon
Risen to bring us madness none to soon.
My moon, thy moon, is fear all ringed by doubt
Though every day (they say) the sun comes out.

II

5 Terror will pay your way through strange bazaars
Through strange bazaars, terror will pay your way
Through strange bazaars it will pay your way today
But to-morrow you must be sober and count the hours.

T 213.1: [possibilities listed:] Him Gwine Wax
Gastown Gruesomes
In a Mist
Plenty off Center
FIESTA

The gulls are baaing in the creek
And night is whetting up its beak
Church bells are chiming on the rail
And wheels the stormy killer whale...

T 214.1: Nocturne in Burrard Inlet

214.1: Church bells are chiming on the rail
And wheels the frightened killer whale
The gulls are baaing in the creek
And night is whetting up its beak...
With a moon in a blue sky at evening
And Venus alone burning hard in daylight...

FRENCH PRONUNCIATION SIMPLIFIED

FOR JULIAN TREVELYAN

dine egg sister better weeps little flower
lamp so much to dance without drum large field
money child thought customer entering slowly
to climb end inclusive impossible stamp came wine.

FROM THIS ACCEPTANCE, SIR, WE MIGHT PROCEED

I feel an unvintageable contempt
For those who make the cause of right seem plain
And who catastrophically preempt
Our souls for their own faces' sake, our pain
For their feeble names'. Pious precentors
Freckled foul jowled blowers of last no trumps
And wicked psalmody, hollow mentors
I would not snub your noses in our stumps.
Tossing moose-heads, voice of the idiot son
Praising your brother's drunkard's rigadoon
As if your sober-bloody pleas had won
Him already to the two-faced cartoon
Its blatant truth of one day's seeming scorn.
Condemned are we all, nor should have been born.

T 216.2: War Politicians
8 216.2: I would not snub your noses with our stumps
Give me a poem
To wring the hearts of men
Sheer as blades
As the stroke of a clock
Over the fen.
Tell me the meaning, ghost,
And tell me the hour
At which I am lost,
And in what room found again.

Give my hand power
That my words may be sane
And strong as flight.
Guide my pen,
Help me to write,

Show me the gates
Where the orders are;
And the cage
My soul stares at,
Where my courage

Roars through the grates.

GOLDENEYE AND GOLDFISH

The goldeneye swam on the goldfish pond,
The goldfishes swam in the pond as well.
(The wild duck thought: "They're kind of blond")
- While the goldfishpond's owner came shouting like hell
("Gold sort of things, might taste good, come to that.")
- While the fishpond's owner waved his midday hat
The goldeneye duck on his goldfishpond at...
"Shoo!" cried he. - "Quack." The wild duck hove
To. - "Shoo!" clapped he. The goldeneye clapped,
Clapped her wings, then sagely dove
As "Alas for my goldfish," the owner cried -
While against the stones the water lapped
And beneath the stones glided goldfish serene
And ourselves watched the wonderful, ludicrous scene -
"Alack my poor goldfish! - that had not died
As we pointed out - while the goldeneyed
Sweet clanging marauder soared afar
To her mate in the slew near the wild harbour bar.
- For though that pond was artificial
Those goldfishes' instinct was initial...
The Wild Duck and the Goldfish
The Goldeneye and the Resourceful Goldfish

1. The wild duck swam on the goldfishes pond.
2. The gold fish swam in the pond as well.
3. While the gold-fish pond’s owner coming running pell mell.
4. ("Gold sort of things, might taste good, at that.")
5. To. - “Shoo!” clapped he. The wild duck clapped,
6. [adds then deletes next line:] "For that, vile duck, I should [get my gat
7. And beneath the stones slid those goldfish serene
8. [adds then deletes next line:] "For that, vile duck, I shall [get my gat.
9. "Alack my poor goldfish! - which did but hide,
10. Which we pointed out as the goldeneyed
11. Wild clanging marauder soared afar
12. Sweet whistling marauder whistled afar
13. Sweet clanging marauder whistled afar
14. [goldfishes'] goldfishes (218.3)
15. That old goldfish instinct, was initial

1940-54

READING RILKE, SCHNITZLER OR SOMEONE

The worst has happened: nothing ever was worse
You have been betrayed but not before
Betraying much that you loved well. The hearse
Draws up before the bereaved door
To take away your happiness with a curse.
Horns sound no triumph in the yard of your heart.
The driver wears no towering hat, the horse
Nods no plumes, no bridles burn in the sun
(The horse will die too, before the day is done.)

The grip of sorrow holds you at the lead window
Looking with lidless eyes into the past
The coachman shakes compassion of memory...
The hearse sighs down iron avenues of remorse
To dissolution’s wedding, life’s divorce.

4. Draws up before the black door
9. (The horse is old and, his day too is done.)
13. The hearse sighs down the avenues of remorse
HEAT WAVE

The day was not, the morning died of heat
And black clouds threatened rain at half past two
Rain fell, we fell, between the sheets
Then there was nothing more to do.

Tea was a round survived a moment only
Knocked out the house lay flat till half past ten
Only at midnight do we rouse and manly
Pursue our work like men.

HOSPITALITY

Fiend fallen are the rich from dives
And dulcet are the poor.
Though never a man among you lives.
Good bye. And shut the door.

HOSTAGE

A day of sunlight and swallows...
And saw the fireman by the fidley wave
And laughed. And went on digging my own grave.

I sing the joy of poverty, not such
As war insults with ruin of its own
Evil. But such as the soul enjoys when much
Of its domain is lost. Here is a town
Of which one's sudden mayoralty
Prize of long kinship with disaster,
Qualifies, to readjust the dead.
Ideas stampede here, and here's encamped
The hypocrites, and undertakers, and yet, lo
They are pitiable and in different guise
With hanging heads, melancholy.
And shall I tell them every one
Of the good of the soul scrubbed to the bone.
The walls bare of learning, as the trees
Of leaves, good too, and the sea, less bounded
The freer for being innocent of ships
Ah, to see, to touch, smell out the pages of a book
Whose lying words cannot so parry the sense
Is end of poetry. And learning too.
Who knows what I'll not say by that last rush
But none will heed my song nor have ever.
3 223.2: Evil. But such as the soul enjoys when much
5 ones (223.1)
6 223.2: Won by long kinship with disaster
14 223.1: Of leaves; and the sea, - beyond - less bounded
17-21 What voices have they now, what shapes of hopes?
   Will gather there, no nearer to the truth,
   And what is the reckoning for having cheated death
   The Cross knows what I'll not say by that last never
   But no one shall heed my song, nor have they ever
18 223.2: Whose empty words cannot so parry the sense
   Whose ancient words cannot so parry the sense

1940-54

HYPOCRITE! OXFORD GROUPER! YAHOO!

Six demons came and cut down three tall trees
Next to our shack, one windy Saturday
With neither damn your eyes nor if you please.
I asked them if our float was in the way.

They laughed without replying, cleared the brush,
Tore our path into a chaos of skewed planks
And in the midst of all this strange onrush
Inconsistent, borrowed our boat with thanks.
--Well, that was disarming about the boat

As it was maddening about the path.
When they had gone I stood upon our float
Beyond the ruined steps, forcing my wrath
To hate less these rough neighbours, casting my pride
With pines face downward in the flooding tide.

T 224.1: [missing]
224.2: Hypocrite!

People Building a House Next Door
1 224.1: Six ravagers came and cut down five tall trees
2 224.1: Next to our house, one fine Saturday
3 224.1: With neither by your leave nor if your please.
5 224.1: They giggled, hated me, cleared out the brush,
   [adds then deletes next line:] With no respect for our stake,
   [and smashed our steps

6 224.1: They smashed our steps into unidentifiable plank,
   224.2: Smashing our steps into chaos and senseless planks.
7 224.1: With no respect for our stake, -- and in their onrush,
8 224.1: Quite regardless, they borrowed our boat without thanks
9-10 Their swim over, they set the foundations
   With the stumps, wined and dined
   And went
   The young builder
   Standing on my float beyond the ruined steps
   And pines face downward in the rising tide
   For two full hours, I hated them passionately
   Now the land was government owned, we had no case
   Save to hate
12 224.1: Beyond our ruined steps, and made up my mind
13 224.1,2: To love these rough neighbours
I do not wish to live
I do not wish to die
I do not wish to strive
To extirpate this I

I do not wish to work
I do not wish to play
I do not wish to shrink
I do not wish to say

I do not wish to live
I do not wish to strive
I do not wish to fish
I do not wish to wish

I met a man who had got drunk with Christ.
And this is what he told me Christ said.
"Trust no man who is not always drunk.
And always ready to be drunk.
There is no excuse for sobriety.
But one. That is war"

And I who say that, envy
The knocking knees of the years,
Get off my cross, return to my hotel."

That was in Oberammergau, before the war; -
Before the fires came spirit cleft again.

... to my hate." [omits end quotation marks]
I met the spirit of tragedy in the wood
Where he lives. "And I don't like
You," he said. "I've done my weeping best
Slaughtered your parents east and west,
And scattered your home." A flake
Of snow fell, like a tear. "Yes, and I sent winter
Of terror to freeze and fire you." "And still you laugh.
I would like to know what is so damned funny
About all I've done to you." "Why don't you really
Try", I said "to be funny. Then I might weep."

I set this down as humble prayer
Please let my hand write something
That may be used by the humble
And the mad and the abused
When long words and excuses fail.
Too much deliberate simplicity
Will call down such savagery
As: "Why do you not draw cartoons?"

I would but make the obvious beautiful.

I think that I shall never see
A tree that's half so good as me

- Trees are made by poets in pod -
But only man can make up God.

I tried to think of something good
That I had thought or done or said
But in my life seemed only food
For such thoughts as awake the dead
To send them howling down a gulf
Of their own selfishness and dread
Each hunted soul its Beowulf:
For the grave is but a drumming bed
Of nightmares I had understood
From spirits who had been misled.
In life by self, for such as they
That threw in life their death away.
And thus I thought had I too sunk
Although I was not dead, but drunk.
But at this point I heard a voice
Which said "My boy you have a choice:
Tomorrow there is left and right
To-morrow there is day and night
To-morrow there is right and wrong
And death-filled silence, life-filled song.
So get down on your drunken knees
And thank God for the choice of these
And after that, get up, I think
Your father needs another drink.
- Miraculous such nights as these
Should be survived, how no one knows
Much less, how one reached finer air
That never breathed on such despair.

1 230.1: I'd try to think of something good
5 230.1,2: And send them howling down a gulf
6 230.1: Of their own selfishness instead
7 230.2: Each soul its hunter, Beowulf.
8 230.1-3: For the grave was but a drumming bed
12 230.1,2: Who threw in life their death away.
13 230.2: And thus I think have I too sunk
14 230.2: Although I am not dead, but drunk.
16 230.2: That said "My boy you have a choice:
20 230.2: And likewise silence, life-filled song.
And deathly silence, life-filled song.
[adds then deletes next line:] And you may chose
[the right of these
22 230.2: [adds then deletes next line:] That is your imagination
23 230.2: [adds then deletes next line:] And mix one up another drink
25-28 230.2: [missing]
15-24 230.1: Indeed I hear a voice which says
Doubt. I hear a voice that I should say I was delirious.
Or drunk enough to hear a voice
Which says my son you have a choice
But days come and one's still alive
1946-54

I wrote: In the dark cavern of our birth,
The printer had it tavern, which seems better:
But herein lies the subject of our mirth
Since on the next page death appears as dearth
So it may be that God's word was distraction
Which to our strange type appears destruction:
Which is better...

7 231.1: Which is bitter...

THE ILLEGAL HEART

When the man in the plane is a man I could shoot him on sight -
Though alas for the thought and alas for these treacherous qualms:
When the man in the plane is a man I could kill him outright;
But not when the man is a man with a girl in his arms.

1940-54

Imprisoned in a Liverpool of self
I haunt the gutted arcades of the past.
Where it lies on some high forgotten shelf
I find what I was looking for at last.

5 But now the shelf has turned into a mast
And now the mast into an upturned tree
Where one sways crucified twixt two of me.

6 232.2: And now the mast has turned into a tree
7 232.1,2: Where one hangs crucified twixt two of me
232.2: Where one is crucified twixt two of me.

1940

Translation of a letter written somewhere in the North Atlantic and sent to the Government of Canada by Inspector Ovide Hubert of Cap-aux-meules, Magdalen Islands. The letter was written in Norwegian and had been found in a bottle by the sea near l'Etang du Nord by Hubert Duclos, a fisherman, on November 25, 1940. The letter was addressed to Lovise Stigen, Dalandeenet (?).

Fana.

IN MEMORIUM: INGVALD BJORNDAL AND HIS COMRADE
For Nordahl Grieg

While we sail and laugh, joke and fight, comes death
And it is the end. A man toils on board;
His life blows away like a puff of breath:
Who will know his dreams now when the sea roared:
I loved you, my dear, but now I am dead,
So take somebody else and forget me.
My brothers, I was foolish, as you said;
So are most who place their fate in the sea.
Many tears have you shed for me, in vain.

Take my pay. Mother, Father, I have come
A long way to die in the blood and rain.
Buy me some earth in the graveyard at home.
Goodbye. Please remember me with these words
To the green meadows and the blue fjords.

Goodheart I beat years of Sundays ago at golf
In a hundred stormy sunset battles at Deal,
Both of us actors, in Rosmersholm, Little Eyolf,
Kaiser and Strindberg; and one whole summer, O'Neill.

And drink his bestriding demon of club or cue
- One down on the boards and dormie on the tee -
And, late of Aldwych, the Old Vic - or the New -
In Liverpool, the Playboy, and Riders to the Dee...

Yet one good shot James lofted over the abyss
One green has gained while my fooling mashies went wide
One part has learned whose lines are more surely his
While I still stand in the wings: my old friend died.
And scarcely unique though this achievement is
Its tragic dignity is not to be denied.
IPHIGENIA IN AULIS. AGAMEMNON SPEAKS; [236.2]

Sacrificed - and still no sound from the sea,
Sacrificed, and the birds are still silent,
And the sails still, and the wind
Hushed over Euripus.

T Agamemnon [236.1]

2 236.1: [adds then deletes next line:] And the wind dead hushed in the
[Gulf of [?Attica]

4 236.1: Dead over Euripus

1939-40;1945-46 [237.4]

Is there no song that I can sing
Who never understand
Just what the various bells that ring
Suggest, mean or command?

5 For you who run and you who stroll,--
With wisdom on your heads
To duties that same ugsome toll,
That hoisted you from beds

Where all night long you dreamed dry dreams
Of bourgeois usefulness,
Now calls you to discharge in reams
Of high resourcefulness --

May never hear nor read such songs
All written in detention.

15 As mine that right the private wrongs
Of wandering attention.

And you will answer other calls
And bells and trumpets doubtless
Whilst I limp sour by prison walls

20 Rheumatic if not goutless.

And scrawl thereon as you march by --
With morale undefilable
With strapped and chinless chins held high --
Something quite indescribable.

4 237.3: Suggest or else command?
7-8 237.3: To duties, which that same toll
Which hoisted from your beds

11 237.3: Which you discharge in reams
237.3,4: Calls you to discharge in reams

12 237.3,4: Your high resourcefulness

13 237.3: Will never sing or read my songs
Will never sing nor read my songs
237.4: Can never hear nor read such songs
And other trumpets doubtless
While I limp sour by prison walls
And thereon as you march by --
And write thereon as you march by --
With morale indescribable
With morale unimbribable
Something quite unimbribable.

Is there no song that I can sing
Oh, not to thee, assured ones
I would not touch your hearts for anything
But to the bored ones?

There is no song that I can sing today
Oh striped one with pockets bulging
Go happy and loathsome on your way
And undivulging.

But you who pass with bowed disgusting look
I might tell you
You will not find your suffering in a book:
I might fell you.

And you who lurch on spiritual all fours
Erect but tragic
I have a word like rain that swiftly cures
The thirst like magic.

I would some grotesque thing that I had said
Might move the bloated and incurious dead.

ISLE OF MAN WILDFLOWERS

Eringo root in the north,
Samphire at St Annes Head,
Pennyroyal in the marlpots at Ballang,
Lenbane near Derbyhaven,
And seakale near Peel.

THE LADDER

Like a rotten old ladder
cast adrift from a dismantled sawmill
to float, shoulders awash, the rest
waterlogged, taken by teredos
barnacle encrusted shellfish
clinging in blue gravelottes
stinking, heavy with weeds and the strange life
of death, and low tide, vermiculated,
helminthiatic
227

10 seems my conscience
hauled out now to dry in the sun:
leaning against nothing
leading nowhere
but to the past to use perhaps,
15 salvageable, to be graved,
up and down which
each night my
mind meaninglessly
climbs.

T 239.1: The Poem Shaped Like a Ladder
8 239.1: and life, seems my conscience
of death and low tide, vermiculated, helminthiatic
9-1 239.1: [missing]

1944

LAMENT - JUNE 1944 [240.6]

Our house is dead
It burned to the ground
On a morning in June
With a wind from the Sound
5 The fire that fed
On our marriage bed
Left a bottle of gin.
Black under the moon
Our house is dead.
10 We shall build it again.
But our poor house is gone
And the world still burns on.

T 240.3: Lament for a Little Cabin on a Beach in British Columbia - [June 1944
240.4: [missing]
240.5: Lament for a Little Shack on a Beach in British Columbia - [June 1944
1 240.1,2: Our poor house is dead
3 240.5: One morning in June
4 240.1: [adds next line:] With a wind out of tune, -
240.1,2: [adds next line:] A dread sight for the moon
5 240.1,2: Of a fire that has fed
240.5: In a fire that fed
6 240.1,2: On our poor marriage bed
7-10 240.1,2: But Thy will be done
10 240.3: Dare we build it again?
11 240.1-3: Our poor house is gone,
240.4,5: But our house is gone
240.5: But our home is gone
They are taking down the beautiful houses once built with loving hands
But still the old bandstand stands where no band stands
With clawbars they have gone to work on the poor lovely houses above the sands
At their callous work of eviction that no human law countermands
Callously at their work of heartbreak that no civic heart understands
In this pompous and joyless city of police moral perfection and one man stands
Where you are brutally thrown out of beer parlors for standing where no man stands
Where the pigeons roam free and the police listen to each pigeon’s demands
And they are taking down the beautiful homes once with loving hands
But still the old bandstand stands where no band stands.

1 241.1: They are taking down the beautiful houses cared for with living hands
9 241.1: And they are taking down the beautiful homes once cared for with loving hands

Like the black iron steps leading from some aerial footway
flung over road and lines down at the dockside crowded with holiday makers
is the past
and evermore my mind climbs down that stair
to find, below, the selfsame wharf, despair.
But one day a new ship is waiting there.

David
(Rave-id)
Goliath
Defieth
Sling – Bing!
And Goliath Dieth.
A ship long laid up is a filthy thing,
Cabled with rust, debris of the shore gang,
Filters gangrened, only a homesick tang
Reminds us of our longed-for suffering

The sea! The watches pass; the hours take wing
Like seagulls stuffed with bread. Tin-tin; pang-pang.
And this monotony is our sturm und drang
Of which few sailors have the heart to sing.

I like to think we’re scaling the old world
Down for a dose of red lead, as hammers snap
And ever grindstones wait to whet their lust.
Splendid to think so, yet in dreaming whirled
To abstract hulls, one falls into the trap
Set by that two-faced man who sees mere rust.

Love and wisdom have no home
Over the world they wander
Love and wisdom have no end.

Love is tired and wisdom lame.
They are driven like gander.
Love and wisdom have no home.

But were there any saw them come?
Was none then their defender?
Love and wisdom have no end.

Wisdom has a simple arm
It lies in love’s heart tender.
Love and wisdom have no home.

Though angels lament our shame
And god’s wrath we engender
Love and wisdom have no end

Though driven of the false storm
Into the false world’s threats
Love and wisdom have no end –
Love and wisdom have no home.
Love is sick and wisdom lame
Save where angels weep our shame
And god's rage we engender

LOVE OF A SEAGULL

Beautiful, tame, and wild
Sad, pathetic, eating starfish on the windrow.
The map of Russia, floating in the storm.
I'd dreamed they shot the seagull...

WIND BLOWING THROUGH THE SHACK

One two three four five, six and one, seven
And one is dawn, better late than never
Door bangs; wood snaps; be awake forever
Old corpse flower that should be in heaven
Full of wool and honey, wake...
The bacon smells go singing down the gale
Wind blows ragged coffee smoke ----
One two three four five six seven eight nine ten
Set out into the day's sting and roar
To seek that Calthian violet where it dwells,
Its rich royal deep sea blue open bells!

a marathon of gulls,
a chiming of chickadees,
an ecstasy of swallows
a tintabulation of titmice

a scapaflow of grebes
a caucus of crows
an unavoidability of vultures
a Phalacrocorax of capitalists
a proletariat of Peacock (sing)
a gobbledegookery of critics
a leprosy of letter writers
a minority of man

and a close of this correspondence.

When she was born the wind was north
And the various planets were where they were
And her mother was buried after her birth
And the sea was her mother's bier.

Oh, she could endure the sea at first,
Her infant blood was not aged for its thirst
And the bosun's whistle was the worst
And would she had died with her mother then
And been buried within the humming sea

In the humming sea with its simple shells
With its simple shells and belching whales
And aye remaining lamps and when
The storm did not whirr her away from her friends
As on this voyage which never ends.

T 249.2: Marina -- A Refugee
13 249.1,2: The storm did not whirr her from her friends

1939-40;1945-46  
A MINSTREL IN LABRADOR  [250.1]

The seasons have plunged past my destiny
With only the terror of the passing lorry.
The palpitant relief, that still, miraculously,
One has summer. And is it spring or autumn

Spurs these words? It is a strange Labrador
My life My ?
That I have haunted for many a year.
It has always been winter.
In the tall mirror I see a strange
Innocent of minstrelsy, who suggests

It was not for nothing that your life was writ
In a perpetual springtime of spirit
Now of summers as others see them,
Though none shall heed your cry nor have ever.

7 250.1: [adds then deletes next line:] I have known nobody,
[even vaguely ?]

8 250.1: In my steep mirror I see the voice
13 250.1: Though none will heed your cry nor have ever
[at foot of sheet:] it is a pilgrimage of innocent minstrelsy
[?a lone quest]

1940-41  
MORE IMPATIENCE  [251.1]

Albeit you're a set book these days oh Keats,
I shall not read you till I'm thirty one:
And so my essay is but half begun
And so I shall not reason out your beats

Nor follow through your mountaineering feats
Nor ponder the Miltonic inversion
In the first version of Hyperion
Though others cleave at lectures to their seats.
Such immersion is for others not for you

I tell myself, hubris or not, and odd
Let it sound in one from favours far.
But share you with these pimply oafs from Crewe
And Marlborough, that I will not, by God,
Whose only meaning is another war.

10 hubris] hupris

1939-40;1945-46 [252.10]

My hate is as a wind that buffets me
All blind to need, deaf to supplication
Scattering my words, inchoately,
The only orders which will save the ship,—

Lost! From all this I found sanctuary
Where wine congratulates compassion
Chuckling: that shilling you once gave a tramp
Bought you both but the skies you coveted.
So might Saturn have given gold for chaos!

That weeping child whose misery you hated,
And subtly gave false hope, but saved you for another song
Of fretful tenderness, in a life of wrong.
What knots of self in all abnegation
— No other solution save the cross! —

1 252.1-10: My hate is like a wind which buffets me
2 252.1-10: Blinding me to pleas, dumb to supplication
3 252.1-10: And dumb, save for my inchoate words, pleas
   Scattering my prayers inchoately
4 252.1-10: Like orders shouted in a gale of wind
   The only orders that will save the ship
5 252.1-10: The only orders which will save the ship
   Drifting away, lost in the storm. From this I took
   Lost! From all this I took refuge in a house
   Lost. From this I took refuge in your inn,
   Lost. From this I took refuge in your arms
6 252.1-10: Refuge in your arms, recalled five good things I had done.
   Where wine first congratulates compassion
   Where wine congratulates compassion,
   And recalled only three good things I had done.
   In wine revived two instances of compassion
   In wine recalled with tears two good things I’d done
7 252.1-10: Two shillings I once gave a tramp.
   Then wheedling: "That Saturnian shilling
   Warning: That last shilling you once gave the tramp
   The last two centavos I once gave a tramp
   My last two shillings I once gave a tramp
   Wheezing: "That shilling you once gave a tramp
   Gloatting: that last coin you gave the tramp
8 252.1-10: And insect I once rescued, a scorpion,
   You gave that tramp, but bought him your chaos
   Bought him but skies you coveted
   Bought him but the skies yourself had coveted
   Rescuing an injured scorpion
   Bought the tramp but the skies you coveted
   Bought him but chaos you coveted
9 252.1-10: So might Saturn have traded gold for chaos
Yet, am like the grim vinegaroon and of
You coveted." "Or that weeping child whose misery
That weeping child whose misery was yours
A weeping child whose misery was mine
Succouring an injured scorpion
A screeching child whose misery was mine

10 252.1-10: And so staunched, but rescued one more song
To whom I gave cautious, false hope
You gave false hope to, knowing there was none
I gave hope to, knowing there was none.
Knowing there was none, I gave false hope
More than you loved, to whom you gave false hope
More than you loved, to whom you gave false hope
To whom you subtly gave false hope, remarked
You bought for a false hope
These five against a lifetime of wrong

11 252.1-10: How I congratulated my compassion.
Yet was I too that grim vinegaroon
And thereby saved you for another song
Yet was I too, that grim vinegaroon
And did but save myself for another song
But saved yourself, for another song
But rescued you, for another song
And yet what I hate is hypocrisy, and yet hypocrites are
Famine, rescued you for another song.

12 252.1-10: These few against a lifetime of wrong
That stings itself to death beneath the stone,
Where no message is, on the mescal plain.
Both wind and blaze to my loathing.

13 252.1-10: What evil in all self-abnegation
So did but save myself, for another song
These three against a lifetime of wrong
Would that I had left it under the stone

14 252.1-10: Where no messages are, on Oaxacan plain.
Where no messages are, on Cortes plain.

1940-46

The names of Mexican rivers I forget
--Or on memory's smudged map may not mark
Xochimilo, - Xochitepec -
These are not rivers either; and yet
All I conjure of names from oblivion.
But Styx, Acheron, Cocytus, Phlegeton,
Will do, for Guardalquiver~, and such
But better than these too classical drinks
Do I remember Lethe, surnamed tequila

10 All I know is, Mexico is death, which shares with love
The only passion mankind can respect
Whereof who drinks forgets not only
Joy and grief, pleasure and pain
But else but that which is symbolic:

15 United you see your life float down on that stream
Swifter than Hebrus, to no Lesbian doom
You have not known what a real thing sadness is -
Or understood of what symbolic gloom.

3 Xochimilo] Xolchimilo

1939-40;1945-46 [254.1]

Need it be so niggardly of meaning too?
The world at best is bloody: its cadaver,
Is bestrode by men whose words are heard
Which reek with falseness but at least reek.
From the blank face of this rock of the world's doom
Strike out a stream of water that man at least may drink
And though there still are those who reek and think.

And yet this conspiracy of poets and critics to
The tyranny of the printed page admits only where treason
Of those who do not love poetry, the poetasters
Who think the artist really thinks
Picasso's nose is purple?

1940 [255.2]

Never in a comedian's life have I laughed till then!
...Wherefore the legend grew that there were ghosts
Somewhere between Dead Tree and Merry Island,
And from our love revived an Indian slaughter.
Oh you who something something something land
May you too be blessed by such enormous laughter
As even God and whales might not approve.

1940-54 THE NEW GUINEA GARDENER BIRD [256.3]

There is a bird who builds his mate a bower
With slender rafters, and delicate twigs between,
And woven mosses, a kind of Orchid-tower
With a porte cochere, through a graceful carpet, green,
Of soft moss, all free from stones or grass or weeds
And objects not in harmony with its design
Transported thither and kept smooth and clean,
Then on the ground he scatters fruit and flowers
Shining fruit pods and toadstools and silvery leaves
Everything that withers is removed
And everything unsound, replaced by fresh, so he weaves
In this elegant garden house to worship his beloved.
So dear could not my bower for thee be made
Yet so by thee it was with love entwined
That love itself within that forest shack enshrined
Never undreamed our dream it was built by God.

T 256.1: The New Guinea Gardener
256.2: [missing]
There is a bird who builds its mate a town
With slender rafters, and delicate mosses' green
An interwoven mosses, an orchid-tower
An interwoven orchidaceous tower
Interwoven mosses, an Orchid Tower
And interwoven mosses, an Orchid-tower
With a graceful carpet, sort of porte-cochere between
Of soft moss, set free from stones or grass or weeds
And objects not in harmony with his design
In honour of the adored one, should she pass
In honour of the adored feet, should she pass
For the feet of the adored, should she pass
And moved, replaced by fresh: and so he weaves
In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
While everything that withers is removed
And moved, replaced by fresh: and so he weaves
An elegant house, to worship his beloved
[adds next line:] Something like Yeats, though written by
[adds next line:] In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
Never once dreamt it was not prepared by God.
Never once dreamt it was not built by God.
Never once dreamt it was not built by God.
While everything that withers is removed
And moved, replaced by fresh: and so he weaves
An elegant house, to worship his beloved
[adds next line:] Something like Yeats, though written by
[adds next line:] In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
While everything that withers is removed
And moved, replaced by fresh: and so he weaves
An elegant house, to worship his beloved
[adds next line:] Something like Yeats, though written by
[adds next line:] In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
In honour of the adored, should she pass
Never once dreamt it was not prepared by God.
Never once dreamt it was not built by God.
Never once dreamt it was not built by God.

1939-40;1945-46 NO KRAKEN SHALL BE FOUND TILL SOUGHT BY NAME [257.1]

Here is the ship then, with decks all holy white
Pure as the stone that scrubbed them to the bone.
Scuppers cleansed: and red lead shining where it
Would be, the blood all carefully swept from the deck
The poop an arc makes on the Indian sky
Cabined and perfect, with flag flying
And bosun reading the bible, while with t'other hand
He grogs for Ahab's solution. And at the wheel
Another Ahab, whose rhetoric's however not his own.
Ah, who shall say that this is not the noblest of all ships
Whose cargo's underwritten by heaven.
The dirt's all neatly stowed beneath the hatch,
The stokers are dropped overboard at night
And sure her virtues do not lack acclaim
As, certain of salvage, she steers toward the rocks
...Never so proud as in her hour of doom.

Ship
1940-54

NOBLE CITY FULL OF PIGEONS OR
EVERYONE A HYPOCRITE INCLUDING ME

Vancouver is a place of fears
Her taverns have no place for beers
Vancouver is a place of weirs
(Were all as good as Harold; cheers!)

Though he had trouble with his gears
Alas, not so, for so one hears
Her conscience is in sad arrears
Repression rules with ugly leers
(The censors really are the queers)

Authoritarianism sneers
Hypocrisy is that which steers
As the rock of gaunt Neurosis nears
And Judas rules and all his peers
From all of which it much appears

My damned ferocious little leers
The fates are waiting with their shears
She soon will be a place of biers
She soon will be a place of tears
Or, once again, a place of bears.

(More happily, a place of bears.)

2 258.1: Her tables have no place for beers
7 258.1: Her maturity is in sad arrears
12 258.1: As the gaunt rock of neurosis nears
17 258.1: She soon could be a place of bears
18 258.1: She soon could be a place of tears

1940-45

Not all of us were heroes said my brother wit
Corporal Animus, by a damned sight
He went on which one of us has not
Had a girl, give me to her, my mother.

A headline far more welcome than the score
Which one of us has not cried give me the war, my mother
Which lead us to believe Gloister beat Kent,
Or England and Australia collapse
When Warsaw burns to Joe Venuti’s swing

Or with Kipling take the ways of the morning
And Japan ruins the world until we’re dead
Or rot upon a rusty wire instead
Or vexing bathroom Armada having
The bins on the distaff side,

At Plymouth Hoe or at the Hare and Hounds in Devon.
Played woods too long
On dark unshaven greens.

Cried the war, give me the war my mother,
Let sunlight flood my wounds
And melt my conscience like a pan of ice.
1940-54

NOTE

Poems should be made out of cedar, axe
bowsaw, clawbar, shakes
and between the wheelbarrow and the watering can
the whimpering whale’s revolving fin
the iron stove repaired by tea-time
with tin, tin snips
woodashes, salt, asbestos and salt-water.

T 260.1: [missing]
3 260.1: [adds next line:] cross of the gull, the plane
4 260.1: the passing whale’s one revolving fin
5 260.1: the stove repaired by tea-time

1940-54

NOTE FOR A POEM

Study the irregular verb
Mourir, to die.

1940-54

OCTOBER SUNSET

The sun that never rose has now gone down.
The lamps are shining on the road to town
And wind along the coast the slow grey hulls
Beneath a straggling marathon of gulls...

T 262.1: [missing]
2 262.1-3: And lamps are shining on the road to town

1940-44

Oh gentle Jesus of the hymnal once
Jesus of evening prayers, the mariners hymn
Fierce raged the tempest o’er the deep; and grim
The storm that swept me from the church door hence
How often have I in hate blasphemed Thy name
Not knowing that I cried out to Thee in shame!

6 263.1: Not knowing I cried out to Thee in shame
1939-40;1945-46

Oh my dear good lost schoolmates, no comrades
Of mine, thank god. What you have not
Some fairies may have claimed for you in verse —
But I don't see it.

Triumphant choirboy in the ruined church
Shaking your fist at — whom?
Heroic sheep of unimpeachable wool
Oh most indescribable morale —

1950-54

Oh, poor Mary Ann
When she got to the top
Her heart went flipperty-flop
As the wheel began to stop

The man in the moon began to laugh
Oh, Mary began to squeal
She lost her situation
Through the great — big — wheel —

1941-42

Old Blake was warm, he got down to the hub
When he said we should worship in the pub
Save only in Canada, where I'm told
The tavern and the churches both are cold.

1940-54

On board the Matsue Maru.
Two bells
From the focsle
Head... Two o'clock. And the
Afternoon stretches endlessly
Ahead.

There is no pity
There is no pity at sea.
The sea is the sea.

Seven bells
Is twenty past three
That is a long way away
But the flying fish abaft the beam
Know no time.
1940-54  A PASSING IMPATIENCE WITH A NOBLE COUNTRY  [268.2]

Undone, it seems are we, if to old, woes fresh ones we add ere we have drained the former to the dregs.

The nurse in Medea
Had the right idea?

5 I ordered a beer.
But four Finns
In the corner
Have fourteen.
Alone among men

I detest the Finns
Who boil themselves
Instead of swim
Who win the mile
Without a smile

10 And pay their debts
On time for their sins.
And choke on their second war
Before their first is drained.
And mine the fish

20 Out of the inlet
And never spratling leave for their sons.

T 268.1: [epigraph precedes title]
A Fisherman's Lament

1 268.1: Was it the nurse in Medea
11-16 268.1: With their useless way
    Who pay their debts
    And mine the fish
    Out of the inlet
    And never spratling leave for their sons.

1949-52  A PICTURE  [269.2]

A grey ship with yellow red lights
like a little grey town, lying at the
oil wharf, three miles away, oblique...

5 grey green hills, and silver grey oil-refinery.
and the smoke from a train going Eastward
to meet the smoke of a shingle mill
and the grey smoke of the shingle mill
hanging in the air mingled

10 with the smoke of the train, and reflected
in the black-green water...

-- then the wash of a ship like a great wheel
the vast spokes of the wheel
whirling across the bay!
T 269.1: Study in Green
3 269.1: oil wharf, and grey green hills three miles away
[adds then deletes next line:] silver grey oil refinery
[three miles away,
6 269.1: and the smoke of the train going Eastward
7 269.1: to meet the smoke of the shingle mill

1940-54

PIGS - FOR T.H. [270.3]

Pig is a young sow or boar,
A mass of molten metal
To bring forth pigs to live like
Pigs.

5 Pigging is pigged pigiron
Is iron in pigs on rough bars
Pigtail is hair in the form
Of a tail hanging down the
Back: a queue of twisted
10 Tobacco...
And more, than this in Oceania.

T 270.1: [missing]
2 270.1: A mass of twisted metal
4 270.1: To live like pigs
6 270.1: Pig iron is iron in pigs or rough bars
[adds next line:] Or rough bars.
10 270.1: Twisted tobacco...
11 270.1: [missing]

1950 [271.1]

Pines write a Chinese poem upon the white-gold sun
Rising over the mountains,
Gigantic, the pines against the Chinese sun
Illumined and embodied by light, the pines are real
5 That were broken bottles guarding the hill.
The three pines slip out of the sun’s grasps
Out of the grasp of the form of the sun;
The golden reflected Chinese lantern of the sun
Reflected in the calm slate ebb.
10 And into this, for it is deep, one dives, troubling
All, to emerge reborn. The smells
Of bacon and coffee sing through
The window, where love waits.
Grey gulls, reversed, go to towns beneath the sea.
15 The two suns burst through the fog and sea in double brilliance.
Sun in the sky, haze of mountains, a wrinkled golden
[scroll of wave, and reflected sun, perpendicular.
The mountains and sea bisect the suns — look and it is the form of a cross!
The hunchbacked fisherman, wrestling with his Evinrude, floats out to work.
A kindly silent figure who came at Christmas with rum.
Through the window, a crab stake and its reflection
Hangs like a ghostly arrowless bow in mid-air
In the mid-air of sky and sea
Or love, upon a wall, of fog and sea:
Forks into the fog: the Evinrude hums, growls, grows fainter, falls. Has gone.

Schoolbells toll from the invisible coastwise railway
[across the bay;
And other sounds, diatonic, of fog; a muffled cosmopolitan hum.
Other bells and explosions strike on the rail:
Gone too: circles of water spread: spider’s web, like frosted Symbols of tenuous order, the same order as the circles of water:
The fog comes rolling in before the sun that will drive it away again.
And behind, the huge green trees, guard the little house with friendly arms of benediction.
And in this paradise, one loves, swims, eats and works
And pays, nothing, save in tribute to God, ordering past suffering.
—Is this the marvellous death writers are supposed to die?

While I toiled in the smoking city once known as Gastown
Cramming algebra into ungrateful youth
Cramming the history that was their ruin down their ungrateful gullets.
How could one live a day, a moment, and not give thanks?

THE PLAGIARIST

The fake poet sat down in his gilt
Took borrowed plume and wrote this humble verse.
"Oh Great Articulate, everywhere abroad,
To whom the soaring bridge and symbol road
Are attestation, and to whom the ship is
As a poem man wrote to the sea
Dedicated to man’s trade and foundering,
As a poem and -- multitudinously inscribed--
To the ubiquitous foundering of man
And if my heart refused to freeze in a rhyme,
At least my suffering was not more fake than iron.
Some oblique and unique greatness yield
To him who plagiarised a book on stealing."
Who exhausted not its usefulness at once
In that it serves us as a symbol of life and death.

See the wound the upturned stone has left
In the earth! How doubly tragic is the shape
Swarming with anguish the eye can’t see nor hear.
It is a miracle that I may use such words
As shape. But the analogy has escaped.
Crawling on hands and sinews to the grave
I found certain pamphlets on the way.
Said they were mine. For they explained a pilgrimage
That otherwise was meaningless as day.

2 272.1: Took borrowed plume and wrote unborrowed words,
4 272.1: You whose talents ten are
To whom the soaring symbol of bridge and road
6 272.1: Is like a poem God’s written on the sea
10 272.1: And if my heart won’t freeze in my own rhyme,
11 272.1: At least my suffering’s no more fake than iron.
17 272.1: In the earth. How doubly awful is the hollowed shape
21 272.1: Crawling on my hands and elbows to the grave
24 272.1: That otherwise was not much more meaningless as day.

1940-54

Plingen plangen auf gefangen
Swingen swangen at my side
Pootie swootle off to Bootle
Nemesis: a pleasant ride.

1946-54

POEM

Wet streets in Liverpool
Wet streets in Hartlepool
And frightful viaducts at night
Whence are seen strange pillows of life
Weep for me...

1946-54

POEM

When drunk he crawled home on his knees
His wife, they sent to fetch her
But now he’s sober, if you please,
He drives home on a stretcher.

1940-54

POEM INSPIRED BY AUDEN AND CLARE'S SNAIL

The best were last in the school marathon
Turning with stitch and misery, outrun
To weave a lonely vision of their own
To weave a winning vision all alone,
And were bad at maths: nor was it the sun
Rising on the smart ruler back had won
Them away; lonely, often despairing,
These lives that once may have seemed past bearing

Demonstrate now a strange will to be whole
A sort of schoolboy prowess of the soul.

SEE DICTIONARY. POEM ON GOLD

Gold - ah, that most beautiful of words
Most malleable and ductile of metals, most
Lovely of colours, - bright epithet -
The golden grain, age, eye, glow, goose, fleece, mean:

The goldeneye, for instance, Glaucionetta
Clangula, and gild in all its goldenness
Gold beats to brick goldbeaters skin
Goldfinch and goldsmith goldenrod goldthread
And gold of pleasure - ah malleable -

Ah that all golden days that never grow old
Should dedicated be to blood and gold.

I pray that I may form a prayer, oh Lord,
Who lie here wakeful, silent, without word,
With tumult in my heart and round my head
The spectres of the unforgiving dead.

Our Father, thus it was we learned to pray
But first forgot the word and then the way
And then in useless striving lies, and gall,
Forgot the need to pray to thee at all.

Then pray for those who lie in dungeons deep
Who keep no faith with your world by yet keep
The truth alive you did your best to maim
And if you know none such, pray just the same.

And pray for those imprisoned by their lies,
The famous boastful men that men call wise
The hypocrites for whom death holds no cure
But merely confirmation they are pure.
Oh thou who art not above. 
Oh thou who art not below. 
Teach me how to love.

Since heart last saw the dove, 
5 Since heart leapt with the doe 
Oh thou who art not above

Is measured by the groove 
Worn in the soul by "No"; 
Teach me how to love,

10 My selfish thoughts unglove 
From their rotten fur of woe 
Oh thou who art not above

Let not those arsons rove 
From my conscience, its hard pillow 
Ah, teach me how to love.

15 And do thou to me prove, 
Inedible, my sorrow. 
Teach me how to love 
Oh thou who art not above.
1952

A PRAYER

God give those drunkards drink who wake at dawn
Gibbering on Beelzebub's bosom, all outworn
As once more through the windows they espy
Looming, the dreadful Pontefract of day.

1941

PRAYER FROM THE WICKET GATE FOR FORTY ONE DOORS

FOR FORTY TWO

A Prayer for this New Year

A trillion moons the thimbleberries: coral
The thickets of diamonded frost flowers blazing:
Banked mephitic sawmill glow, and razing
The Rockies, Mars: a spun glass tinsel ball,
High on the dead year's Christmas tree, the real
The multiflected, moon rides high, dazing
Orion, and the steel cat who, grazing
The bound of the path, becomes stiff laurel.

Reaching the cliff we kiss and look to sea,
The tide is coming in, and so is fear,
- Not so, old clockwork year! - You light without heat,
Oh abstract cold, but yet light, but yet me,
Prick hearts ablaze with warmth this nighted year
Be kind to two simple people, one cat.

Promises made drunk should be kept drunk.
Or sober, all save this, a promise
To keep sober, all save this -
- Herr Ober!

1940-54
QUEER POEM

I knew a man without a heart,
Boys tore it out, they said,
And gave it to a hungry wolf
Who picked it up and fled.

And fled the boys, their master too,
All distant fled the brute,
And after it, in quaint pursuit,
The heartless man reeled on.

I met this man the other day,
Walking in grotesque pride.
His heart restored, his mien gay,
The meek wolf by his side.

R. USHER

Roderick Usher rose at six
And found his house in a hell of a fix.
He made the coffee and locked the door,
And then said, what have I done that for?

But had poured himself a hell of a snort
Before he could find any kind of retort,
And poured himself a jigger of rum
Before he heard the familiar hum
Of his matutinal delirium

Whose voices, imperious as a rule,
Were sharper today, as if at school:
Today, young Usher, you’re going to vote.
Said Roderick, that’s a hell of a note.

So he packed his bag full of vintage rare,
His house fell down but he didn’t care,
And took the nine-thirty to Baltimore
And was murdered, promptly, at half past four.

Save that the optimistic ones are worse
Who’d have no trees at all in their ideal wood
But who with model factories enhearse
God’s green and man and nature’s neighbourhood
I'd set some mournful poets of our pride
I mean the great ones, princes of anthologies
The one who had ten but buried nine beside
Of ten they buried nine with useless sighs

On this strange unleaven

What passion do they on this hopelessness
What power, what energy expend
To cut down all our hopes that lead to heaven
Like loutish loggers, who to the fire and wind
Leave nothing but this vicious slash behind.

1 285.1: But that the optimistic ones are worse
8 285.1: [deleted]

THE SCHOOLBOY'S COMPLAINT

Milton, we like thee not, forgive us, please
Perhaps Il Penseroso bores us most,
(And we could do without, sir, Paradise Lost.)
We do not quite see what the critic sees
Even in Lycidas, though on our knees
Honestly we've grappled with the host,
- Nor do we say this as an idle boast -
We mean the works, including Samson Agonistes.
Yet Wordsworth said your soul was like a star,
And God knows Dryden thought that you were hot,
While as for Blake, the dear old boy outflanks
Them both in praise - still, damn it, here we are.
Though all this impresses us a lot,
Milton, we like thee not, forgive us. Thanks.

4 286.1: We do not see quite what the critic sees
11 286.1: While as for Blake, he probably outflanks

THE SEARCH

In Dante, no, in Shakespeare, no,
Nor yet in any library you go.
And in His book nor scarcely may you dare
To hope you'll find your agony there.

Shakespeare's house is safe and sound
And curses on his tomb are found
And if Rip Van Winkle rose to stare
At least some kind of a house was there
Though gravestones sink yet time does keep
Some faith with people while they sleep.
And Stonehenge stands and even war
May leave a roof, a wall, a door.
Yea, Shakespeare's house is safe and sound.
Our house burned to the ground.

3 288.1,2: And if Van Winkle rose to stare
4 288.1,2: At least some kind of house was there.
5 288.2: Though graveyards sink yet time does keep
11 288.1: But ours burned to the ground

1940-47

SHIP

[289.4]

The ship lies black against the wharf,
And now a speck, far out to sea,
While all along the coast a scarf
Of smoke floats languorously.

5 Hull down she goes: as with despair
We see her fade or faint discern:
The ship is bound for God knows where
And God knows when she will return.

4 289.1: Of smoke floats leisurely
5 289.1: Hull down she goes, without despair

1940-47

[290.1]

A ship stands drawn like a jewelled dagger
From the dark scabbard of the town, lost now
On the seaboard of the night, whereon she
Moves silently,
5 She gives one last wild hungry cry
The portholes quiet, she is a moving town
Herself, that dagger! No, though she has
Stabbed many a man to the heart with her
Drab beauty.
10 I remember Jules who loathed the sea --
Dreaming of the metro
Porte Maillot Direction Porte de Clepencer!
Direction!
Jammed on the crosstrees by the (?) storm

15 Crucified, beneath the wild Southern cross.

15 290.1: Crucified there, beneath the Southern cross.
1940-54

The ship will sail again, the watches sing
The seamen pace the poop again, and bells
Ring out, and shovels, hammers ring and sting
The coast of Sekondi (?) stormy between spells
And quartermasters ever at his beck
The mate will stride and whistle, will pass.
And morning and blue water drench the deck.

Yea, though the heart itself be docked and broken
Bilged forever in some dread Hoboken...

Ah, the felling of morning, of morning
On a ship...--

1944-54

SMELL OF BURNING

There's something burning, you said, when we were hammering
Up the ceiling, nailing the trough with three ply wood
But down the ladder, we started stammering.
To let it burn and this was understood.

Nor was what we said at once understood.
And not till the little house we oversearched
The damp closets full of written frustration
Into the damp woodshed we lurched
For possible spontaneous combustion

The woodbox sacked for sparks, the chimney and roof
Bed and the roofrack contemplated.
Thus we quenched our mutual fire discerning
That no longer was there smell of burning.

3 292.1: Bang down the ladder, you started stammering.
5 292.1: Nor was your meaning at once understood.
7 292.1: The cold closets full of written frustration
8 292.1: And the damp woodshed we lurched

1940-54

SONG FOR MY WIFE

I know of one without compare
Passionate, lovely, brave and fair
And fair as herself is she -
Oh poets may talk of beauty rare
Yet never their loves they see
But I go singing home aloud
Through our woods that are far from the town and the crowd
To our home by the western sea,
Singing passionate, lovely, brave and proud
And fair as herself is she.

9 293.2: Oh passionate, lovely, brave and proud
(On November 13th I was brought down here from London. From two o’clock till half past two on that day I had to stand on the centre platform of Clapham Junction in convict dress, handcuffed, for the world to look at. Of all possible objects I was the most grotesque. When people saw me they laughed. Each train as it came up swelled the audience. Nothing could exceed their amusement. That was, of course, before they had been informed who I was. As soon as they had been informed they laughed still more. For half an hour I stood there in the grey November rain...

Naked you saw the soul endure those blows
That life inflicts as with a rubber hose
Toughening its fibre for the spiritual crows.
While the executioner admired your demise
Not naked. Clad it prison garb it goes
Nor goes, but handcuffed, waits, nor waits, but dies,
Shivering, in an extremity of compunction,
With Wilde, on platform 3, at Clapham Junction...

1500 crimes have you committed
And not been brought to book for one;
And if for one why not another one
And if another one why not for one
Or others unadmitted?
To buck remorse,
You need a conscience strong as a horse.
It might be worse, it might be worse
But that the poet means himself of course...

To buck remorse, to buck remorse
1940-54

The stars have simple paradigms
But cabbalistic are their signs
The sea is rough and blue and pure
The ships that sail it are obscure
Yet we shall endure.

2 296.1: Yet cabbalistic are their signs.
3 296.1: The seas are rough and blue and pure
4 296.1: The ships that sail them are obscure.

1940-47

THE STOWAWAY

The captain paces the bridge in lofty scorn
The mates and bosuns all have hooked their door
Some other bloody deckboy swabs the floor
Wishing to Christ he never had been born
Yet ignorant that this is called a deck
For which the mate will wring his neck.

1 297.1: Memory of the Sea
2 297.1: The mates and bosuns all have locked their door
3 297.1: The mates and bosuns all have shut their door
6 297.1: And that at then the mate will wring his neck.
[foot of page: But all this nothing]
But worst of all it is the rhymless self
Wishes the bloody little man were dead.

1945-46 [1947]

Success is like some horrible disastar
Worse than your house burning, the sounds of ruination
As the roof tree falls succeeding each other faster
While you stand, the helpless witness of your damnation.

5
Fame like a drunkard consumes the house of the soul
Exposing that you have worked for only this -
Ah, that I had never known such a treacherous kiss
And had been left in darkness forever to work and fail.

1 298.1: Fame is like some horrible disaster
3 298.1: As the roof tree falls following each other faster
7 298.1: Ah, that I had never suffered this treacherous kiss
8 298.1: And had been left in solitude forever to flounder and fail.
1944-47  SUN, AEROPLANE, LOVERS  [299.1]

When the sun goes in a shadow flies over.
When the sun goes in, a shadow flies over.
When the sun goes in a shadow, flies over.

When it comes out again it is fiery.
When it comes out again, it is fiery.
When it comes out, again it is fiery.

1950  [300.2]

The sun was almost shining
The sky was almost blue
There was a silver lining, almost,
In that cloud of leaden hue -

The birds were almost singing
The bells were almost ringing
When upon the mattress springing
I fell half in bed with you.

3 300.1: And almost, there was a silver lining
4 300.1: In those clouds of leaden hue --
7 300.1: When, on that mattress springing

1939-40;1945-46  [301.1]

There is a sort of conspiracy about the great,
Johnson said none die sans affectation.
What I mean is that their fate,
I read of unknown warriors, and feel

5 Of heroes, of indescribable morale.
Too publicised are you, oh unknown wool,
What heroism can this be
Which hypocrites and vultures so commend,
Self-immolation for an eternity of publicity.

10 No saint is there, but
Was haunted by himself, imprisoned in the dull window
What renunciation of the world is this
Turned to scarlet fire.
Martyrs who will burn at unknown pyres

15 Their triumph is to be unremembered
In glass or monument
Their cause, to live in no legend.
Save in the unimaginable library of the dead.

6 301.1: Too publicised are you, oh great unknown wool,
14 301.1: Martyrs who will burn at scorned pyres
           Martyrs who will burn at unseen pyres
They will be ashamed after they are dead
Not of what was casually said before death
To make a vexed heart glad
With the false sustaining pride of the hour

But of the mouths which, watering, voice your lies
Oh ghouls of the microphone and pulpit,
Poltergeists of the ether — disinterrer,
Oh fine and bowler-hatted at the bar
No word for you save the contempt of love

We need enlightened scorn to wither up
The seed of your infamy.

Yet, well do I know,
Were these my last words, how they would be used.

This business of evil
Like brokers the weevil
I find hard to solve,
The more, as a factor

In one who’s an actor
In our good resolve;
But I think for the present
It highly unpleasant
Such thoughts to revolve

So they go on the shelf,
That our kind benefactor
Is the devil himself.

I think of the present
Those were the days,
And never again
Will those days come back.
Though the wind and the rain
Are the wind and the rain
They have always been,
Those were the days,
Shall be no more seen,
Though the sun turn black
And the moon turn green.
Though the wish is conceit
And the cry itself vain,
Those were the days,
And never again.

Those who die young will look forever young
Whatever that means. Chatterton, Brooke
Will never wear a god-forsaken look.
For better or worse, those who sung
And got it all over in some early book
And died, those fellows will not age
While Doughty, Melville, crabbed, glower from the page.

Who holds the flag while I hole out in three?
Who hunts my silver king along the shore,
And who, when it is proven in the sea,
Remarks that that was better than before?
Ah, who upon that last and final green,
Though I have taken ninety-five or more,
A round of divots, futile and obscene,
Accepts my ten and three score?
— Though I have more.
1946;1950

THOUGHTS TO BE ERASED FROM MY DESTINY [307.1]

He reads and reads, this poet to be,
Perhaps in this very anthology
Revised that is, ten years from now
Which gives our poet ample time to grow

5
He reads and reads, but does not understand
"Set at a tangent" even in his own land
Reads more as if writing between their lines
In which scant sense or fury he divines

To their aggregate daemon
His forces stand as firemen to seamen

He reads but does not understand.

Save where, in some fragment of biography
Is written "Perished by his own hand."

T 307.1: The Poet To Be

1940-54 [308.1]

The two streams came from a different source
To come down to the water together....

Your fight no whit more noble
Then I, victorious and humble, knew.

5
That has long been a positive in my dreams
Under his burning wheels.

And, out of that cold thought
May not compare juniper, with dog violet,
The thought, the drumming things at night.
The mutterings and lamentations
The chaos, the noise! Imaginary orchestras

Telegraph woes, the purple hills.

1940-47 [309.2]

Very dark and clear with an onshore wind
And the sound of surf you couldn't see
The summer stars in spring were overhead
Presage of summer, and the stars bright.
5
Very clear and dark
A beautiful strong clean wind
And the moon, waning, rising...

Very dark and clear with an onshore wind
A wild sky full of summer stars and bright
The summer stars in spring were overhead

5-7 309.1: Clear and dark, and the moon had not risen.
A beautiful shiny clean onshore wind
And the moon, waning, but rising, rose.

1940-54
VILLANELLE, AN INTERVIEW ON MORALE

-- Grey day, but the heart is not grey?
-- Grey ship, grey, grey, and greyer yet
The ship is a long way away.

It was just such a Saturday
We had her bastard keel first set.
-- Grey day, but the heart is not grey?
-- I don't think it our job to say
Too much what we think about it
The ship is a long way away.

5
-- Grey day, but the heart is not grey?

10
We do our work, we get our pay
And you, you get yours too: I bet.
-- Grey day, but the heart is not grey?
-- Well, she's standing out in the bay
She looks as if she were all set.

15
The ship is a long way away.
Disaster chaos and decay
And drains to you.
I'm glad we met.
-- Grey day, but the heart is not, eh?

20
The ship is a long way away.

1940-54
VIRGO

Since you are in your element of fire
Or soon will be, such being my desire
I do not think that you should seem to me
As frightened as a kitten at the sea.

T 311.1: Leo
The bosun is a pimp as white as snow. 
Pox came with those grey hairs and worse than pox 
Drop on them. When this ship ran on the rocks 
Of course he was sleeping like a stick below. 
And him with his "where are we men?" at eight bells. 
I never knew him utter a kind word. 
He would have broke every man's heart aboard. 
Then they've stories the chief steward tells 
I wouldn't want to go into them now. 
But the carpenter said he'd like to know 
If there's a dirty trick he hasn't mastered. 
Nothing remains to add about the man, 
Seeing as how you're ladies; only swine 
Bugger, thief, and at the last, a bastard.

312.1: He would have broke each man's heart aboard

The volcano is dark and suddenly thunder 
Engulfs the haciendas 
In this darkness, I think of men in the act of conception 
Winged, stooping, kneeling, sitting down, standing up, sprawling 
Millions of trillions of billions of men moaning 
And the hand of the eternal woman flung aside 
I see their organ frozen into a gigantic rock 
Shattered now... 
And the cries which might be the groans of the dying 
Or the groans of love --

haciendas] haciender
3 313.1: In this darkness, I think of men in the act of procreating

The diving board trembles 
Beneath a weight of snow; and snow 
Crusted on shacks, white sycamores behind; 
Snow on the mountains, snowlight on the Sound.

And silver timber burnished on the beach. 
- The road out of the mountains bent away 
To wild strawberries in the snow, laurel,
And different kinds of moss: some frozen,  
Some not touched: and blackberry bushes,  
Strange deodars that sweep out in the spring  
Their lower branches skirting the ground  
Silvery-grey-green, with fine tufted needles.  
And spruce, fir, juniper, arbor vitae.  
("We'll hack ourselves a Christmas tree," you said.)  
And pine and hemlock. Maples and birch were bare.  
Sweet fern (whose seed makes us invisible)  
You who are my eyes and seeing heart  
Showed me! And leaves on which the fallen snow  
Had melted, but not before another frost  
Nipped snow and leaf together in such conjunction  
As only those poets know whose hearts  
Have broken twice before supporting song.  
And orange lichen, not of the sea,  
And frost like rock candy makes fine crunching  
Under the feet...  
See how the frost makes ferns of the moss  
And traces out each filament!

Always under the bracken goes the corduroy road.

Ways built by man must have some purpose —  
A ruined sawmill, with frozen sawdust  
And cylinders of wood, frosted: where are the timber wolves  
That pay no bounty any more? But the rabbit trails  
And deer trails go over the bridge.

A bridge that, built by man, yet leads us nowhere!  
The day was drawing in, we lost our way.  
Two trees had fallen; their fall broken  
By a blasted stump, and as they fell had clasped  
Another nameless tree. So perhaps the  
Dead help the living. We called then to the dead.  
"For these roads you have built all lead to death."  
Not quite as Wolfe remembered Gray.  
No footsteps answered of the melting frost  
For frost was hard upon us and black frost  
Hard over the world in a grip of lies —  
What joy it was to find the way at last  
That led us back to light and good kindling!

1 314.1: A weight of snow trembles on the diving board,  
2 314.1: Snow on the diving board and mountains, snow  
3 314.1: Crusted on shacks, and sycamores behind. Snow  
4 314.1: The silver timber burnished on the beach.  
5 314.1: The snowlight on the Sound is maniacal  
[adds then deletes next line:] That day in war I struggled [blind to school.  
8 314.1: And different kinds of moss, some of it frozen,  
9 314.1,2: Some not hit: and blackberry bushes  
10 314.1: Where were those that sweep out in the spring  
[adds next line:] The deodars symmetrically shaped
18 314.1: Showed me! And leaves on which the snow had fallen
19 314.1: Then melted, but before it had done, came another heavy frost
20 314.1: Freezing snow and nipped leaf together, in such conjunction
21 314.1: In such conjunction only those poets know whose hearts
22 314.1: Whose hearts have been broken twice before their prime
27 314.1: [adds next line:] This beauty which you see I feel in words
31-33 314.1: The cylinders of wood, frosted: where are the timber
   Wolves who pay no bounty any more?
   Rabbit trails and deer go over the bridge.
   [adds next line:] The Indian Trail! Oh blood, battles
   [fought here...]
34 314.1: This bridge was built by man but leads nowhere.
   [adds next lines:] And elsewhere, vitaller bridges are down.
   The bridge by which man crossed the sea to God
36 314.1: Two trees had fallen; their fall was broken
44 314.1: [adds next lines:] And hard upon this unobserved country
   Whose heart is England and whose soul
   [is Labrador,]
   Whose men roam free, or hunt in packs
   [like wolves:

1940-54 WE SIT UNHACKLED DRUNK AND MAD TO EDIT [315.1]

Notions of freedom are tied up with drink
Our ideal life contains a tavern
Where man may sit and talk of or just think
All without fear of the nighted wyvern,
5 Or yet another tavern where it appears.
There are no no trusts signs no no credit
And apart from the unlimited beers
We sit unhackled drunk and mad to edit
Tracts of a really better land where man
10 May drink a finer, ah, an undistilled wine,
That subtley intoxicates without pain,
Weaving the vision df the unassimilable inn
Where we may drink forever,
With the door open, and the wind blowing.

2 315.1: [adds then deletes next line:] Where, without thought of the
   [nighted wyvern
4 315.1: And without fear of the nighted wyvern,
8 315.1: Free men sit unafraid to edit
   I may sit unhampered there
13 315.1: Where we shall drink forever, sans cash, sans owing
When I was young I broke all drinking records,
But not a quart of this do I regret.
The sober of all things I hate —
Since drinkless now, intoxicated yet.

A different kind of drunkenness rolls me yet
Into and out of beds, across, and under the world.
Perhaps some ghost of older wine heaves my heart,
With one foot upon the rail of God's snug bar
Distrust the sober, the columnist, the Oxford Grouper.

Drunk on credit the livelong day
Shun the face that closeted sees God
And shoots it off outside.

2 316.1: And not a quart of this do I regret.
3 316.1: [adds then deletes next lines:] Their miserable white worms'
   [souls across the world.
   Oh foul and bowler-hatted
   [at the bar —
   Cruel
   When I start, breaking records
   [once again
   And to the strongest curse yet
   [uttered, add mine.

8 316.1: I have one foot on the rail of God's snug bar
12 316.1: But shoots it off outside.

WHERE DID THAT ONE GO TO, 'ERBERT?  ..  [317.1]

(A.P.H., author of the lampoon, "Where is Lance?" reprinted from
London's Punch in a recent Daily Province, is A. P. Herbert, also
author of "The Water Gipsies," "Holy Deadlock," etc., and a
member of Parliament, which institution has itself been shaken by
his emancipatory opinions.)

So what, if Lance the Leftist, did shout
once for "Arms for Spain"?
For other valid reasons, so did J.B.S.
Haldane.

And so did Mann and Hemingway, good
democrats and true,
And many others I could mention: even,
perhaps, you.
Come, come, weren't you a "rebel"
A. P. H., despite your looks,
And all the beer and skittles of your
admirable books?
You've had radical moments, sir: admit
it, they weren't warm,

Those agitations were red-hot, for marital
reform!
And if Russia seemed to Steve a mystical solution
He's not the only one two-timed by
"Comes the Revolution."
Weren't you yourself quite startled, since this latest war began,
To discover that the vaunted Bear can't even walk like man?

Modern Mervyn may be mawkish, and Ermytrude a tramp,
But since we do not put them in a concentration camp,
And since the fight's for freedom, and since, after the war,
With brains blown out they may behave exactly as before,
Why not tell our Know-all Nesta now, our poor old Percy Pink,
The fact that this fight's for the right to say just what they think?
Else when Stalin dines on daschunds, and Molotov on Hess,
And Goebbels gobbles rush funds intended for the mess,
When vokda is verboten, when sauerkraut's but a dream,
And the last iron cross is eaten and there's shrapnel in the cream,
All the parlor Bolsheviki will be pinking once again.
(Still, where would be the Empire if we'd no one to complain?)
But apart from that it's boring, they ought to have the tip
There's really no objection to their indoor Marxmanship.
And now each man's a Left and Right within him, as it were.
And age may swing the coalition just as well as war,
When all of us must emulate, each fellow in his way.
The celebrated Vicar lately domiciled at Bray.
Now Left is Right and Right is Left and ever the twain shall meet.
And your lampoon which raps the Left might be a right defeat—
A worthier target for your wit! The more especially,
Since Lance has upped and ruddy joined the bleeding infantry.
1940-47  WINDOWS FROM A MACHINE SHOP  [318.3]

Nine-light windows that never saw the sun
Now face the dawn in a house that’s scarce begun.
Ah who can tell though this were all foreseen
That once lent grudging joy to a machine
What joys and agonies they will light within?

1939-40;1945-46  WORDS ON A GRAVE  [319.2]

Do not presume to bury me with them
I did not die for what they died for.
I shall insist on this — this poem
Is the measure of my insistence. Or
Else you will be haunted by a fiend
Oh foul and bowler-hatted at the bar —
Who for one hour pretends to be a friend.
It was for no freedom other than from
This corrupt world and you! Can damn
It and you with impunity now. And yet
Oh you my solitary reader who reads this,
I wish you well,
And ponder it, less long than the wildflowers and wilder wind
When bells toll out where Lycidas was drowned
I wish you well, would guard you, if you ask, from harm
If you must mourn for me let it be drunk,
I loved the sea,
Out where it goes, beyond the bermudas
Taking the surges now a long way. I loved the sea
And as I say the dead are haunted too
By shadows of the world like birds.

1939-40;1945-46  THE WOUNDED BAT  [320.1]

On a summer’s afternoon, hot
And in the dusty path a bat,
With injured membrane and little hands
A contact that would have knocked young Aeschylus flat
She looked to the twig...
Its red mouth, helpless, like a mouse or a cat
A buzzing, like a buzzer, electric
Pathetic crepitation in the path
She hooked to the twig, I laid her in the shade
With compassion, yet with blind terror
Praying that not too soon
Death might care to do for me as much.

9 320.1: It hooked to the twig, I laid it in the shade
12 320.1: Death might have to do for me as much
Death would even do for me as much
Death might some day do for me as much
Death might one day do for me as much

1952

A YOUNG FELLOW NAMED CRANE

There was a young fellow named Crane
Who stood on a bridge in the rain
It wasn’t at midnight
He wasn’t a bit tight
Nor was he awaiting a Jane.

T 321.1,2: [missing]
1 321.1: There was a young poet named Crane
5 321.1: But tight in a manner insane
Just then: still, the guy went insane.

1952

THE YOUNG MAN FROM OAXACA

There was a young man from Oaxaca
Who dreamed that he went to Mintaka
And lived in Orion
(And not in the Lion
The pub where he drank, which was darker.)

3 322.1: And dwelt in Orion
In 1954 the Lowrys left Dollarton forever, eventually settling in Ripe, Sussex, via Los Angeles, New York, Italy, and Atkinson Morley's Hospital in London, where Lowry underwent psychiatric treatment. In February of 1956 the Lowrys took possession of "The White Cottage" in Ripe, and, except for Margerie's three-month hospital stay in late 1956 and their June 1957 tour of the Lake District, they lived quietly in Ripe until Lowry's death on 27 June 1957.

The ninety-seven poems in this section date from 1949-57, and all except one, "Lusty Advice of a Fortune Teller" [354], appear in correspondence and notes left around the Dollarton shack or the White Cottage in Ripe. Although "Lusty Advice" may have been included in a letter, it now exists on a single sheet of 8 1/2 x 11" white "Plantagenet Bond" paper, datable to 1957 from its appearance in Lowry's outgoing correspondence for that year. Three poems (plus one version of another) are included with correspondence on various smaller sizes of unmarked white paper; the contents of the letters indicate they were sent from Ripe to London during the period September-November 1956 when Margerie was hospitalized for exhaustion.1 The remaining ninety-three poems appear with correspondence and notes on pink, blue, green, yellow and white sheets of 3 1/4 x 4 3/4" note paper. These papers are also present in the October Ferry to Gabriola manuscripts, on which Lowry worked during second Dollarton and Ripe periods. Except for "From The Gleanings of a Gadwall" [344],
all of the poems in this section exist in only one holgraph version; there are no typescripts. As a result, there are few sigla for these hastily-composed notes.

These ninety-three "multicolour" poems have recently been deposited to the Lowry Collection at U.B.C. by Margerie's sister Mrs. Priscilla Woolfan, who maintains that all the "love letter" material dates from England. Although her dating hypothesis is verified by the content of some of the love letters, and although the unified nature of the love letters argues strongly for a single-period composition, it is irrefutable that at least one-third of this new material belongs to the 1949-54 Dollarton period. Evidence for the Dollarton dating includes some content, most noticeably in the poems "Welcome Home, Oh Sweetest Harteebeeste" [405] and "With Sweetest Morning Love to their Beloved Harteebeeste" [420], as well as the fact that isolated sheets of the small, variously-coloured note papers occasionally appear during the Dollarton period, for example in the manuscripts for "Beneath the Malebolge lies Hastings street" [170] and in Lowry's outgoing correspondence for 1950 (2-14). In addition, two of the small papers—the blue and the yellow—bear the "Chenaux Bond" watermark and are imprinted "Made in Canada." Of course, the Lowrys could have taken a stock of this paper with them to England; in any case the dating for these note papers bears further investigation, because content is usually not by itself adequate evidence for dating a poem. To accommodate this dating problem, and because of their unified, coherent tone, the poems of this section are categorized by genre rather than by chronological period.
Unlike other Lowry poems, the love poems cannot be regarded as either finished or unfinished since they were, properly speaking, not intended to be published. These poems reveal the private world and language of the Lowrys, a world populated by articulate animals such as Lowry's persona The Pronghorn, Mr. and Mrs. Duck, the Gadwall, the Loving Larks, the Mink, the Seal, and Margerie's *alter ego*, The Hartebeeste. Despite the sensitive nature of these poems, they have been included in this edition for several reasons. First, the inclusion of this material in Lowry's poetic canon extends the range of possible critical analyses into the English period. Critics will be able to establish links with typically Lowryan imagery, especially the nature imagery which developed during the Dollarton period. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, critics will also discover new techniques in Lowry's poetic attempts, most noticeably his increased experimentation with concrete or spatial poetry. Second, because they were composed during the same period, these poems might be of great interest to those critics and scholars working on *October Ferry to Gabriola*. Third, biographical critics require access to this material in order to help piece together the events of the final two years of Lowry's life. In addition, these poems evoke a strange atmosphere of contentment and yearning: contentment in Lowry's obvious great love and concern for Margerie, and yearning, expressed through the imagery, for the idyllic life on the beach at Dollarton.

Because the correspondence in which these poems appear almost always lacks specific dates, the poems in this section are
arranged alphabetically. Except where specific dating does occur or can be determined, the poems are dated 1949-57. Although they could have been composed at any time during this period, because the Lowrys travelled from 1954 to 1956, 1949-54 and 1956-57 are the most likely periods of composition; the tone and content of these poems reflect the fact that, during their composition, Lowry was stationary at "The Lovecot." Because the poems themselves often form the content of the entire note, the closing salutations present an editorial problem. In this edition, the salutations are generally omitted unless they form part of the rhyme, syntax, or content of the poem, in which cases they are preserved. As usual, Lowry's tendency toward initial line capitalization in the later versions of his multiple-version poems provides the justification for emending to capitals in this section. Left unemended is the spelling for Margerie's animal persona, "The Hartebeeste," which Lowry frequently spells "Harteebeeste." It is possible that Lowry has simply mis-spelled the word, but equally possible is the theory that he changed the spelling to suit the rigours of scansion, emphasis and tone. Therefore this edition retains his various spellings of the word.

NOTES

1 The three poems are: "Half of the harm that is done in this world" [346], "How overjoyed I am to get your letter" [348], "Though we are all a little disappointed..." [392]; plus one version of "From The Gleanings of a Gadwall" [344].
1949-57

A CONCLUSION -- POEM

And though it is possible there are many
Other fine antlered animals in
Existence such as the Texas Longhorn
May I ask you humbly where one is to
Be found, oh my most best belovedest
Harteebeeste, always excepting her, at once
So musical,
So amusing,
With so many accomplishments.

1949-57

A lapis dawn is gleaming
Over Port Moody steaming,
And a silver dawn is crashing
Where hangs the ghostly washing
The morning bird is whistling
Within the raspberries bristling.

1949-57

A LITTLE DITTY FOR THIS DAY

TO THE BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE

Dear golden eyes
Are bold and wise
El Leon is unmatcheable
And the Pronghorn gay is a way away
But the Seal, she is uncatcheable
Her home is strange, on the watery range
And they say, it is unthatcheable,
But the Seal, she is uncatcheable.

1949-57

A MYSTERIOUS HINT

The seal and all the fishes green
The panther puss with shining eyen
The little flowers with golden sheen
And he of cats the lordly dean
Who lately up a tree was seen
But nonetheless maintains his mien
The loving larks with trills so keen
The pronghorn with his knowing beam
And other beasts upon the green
Will call, if asked, on Hallowe'en.
269

1949-57  A SIMPLE SEABIRD'S TRIBUTE TO HER HARTEEBEESTE [327.1]

Cold-cold-are the sabre wings of the Jaeger
Warm-warm-is the little heart of the Jaeger.
Chill-chill-are the long ways of the Jaeger,
As he cleaves the ocean, but when he so cleaves the
Ocean, thinking ever of his beloved Harteebeeste:
Warm-warm-are the sabre wings of the Jaeger
And warmest of all,

Is the little heart,
Of the Jaeger.

1949-57  [328.1]

A sweet night
And sleep thin
Because of the cat
Who will sleep fat.
And great luck
From Harlequin -
(Mr and Mrs) - Duck -

1949-57  A TRIBUTE TO THE RENOWNED HARTEEBEESTE [329.1]

By rocky shores
We have heard of thy fame
By wintry shores
We have heard thy name
So bringing you all
Kinds of love and luck,
We paid you a call -
The Harlequin Duck.

5-6 329.1: So bringing you all kinds
Of love and luck,

1949-57  AFTERNOON NOCTURNE [330.1]

The evening day is churning
The room, it is a muddle,
The fire at last is burning
But the porch is but a puddle
The arrowy rain is slanting
The arrowy wind is blowing
For chow we cats are panting
But at least it is not snowing.

4 330.1: But the porch is just a puddle
1949-57

AND WHO IS IT THAT WITH SNOW-FREAKED

ANTLERS VICARIOUSLY MUSHETH

And who is it that with snow-freaked antlers
   Vicariously musheth through the frozen tundra
Beside his heroic Harteebeeste at the chamois
   Gait of one who ascendeth the sombre Matter
   Horn? But yours more respectfully, more
Worshipfully, more dutifully, more admiringly
And yet more waggishly than ever,
   Your,
   The Pronghorn

1949-57

And who is it through the forest after the
New Year tottereth with antlers
Feeling approximately about the weight of the Matterhorn
Through the early afternoon resembling nothing so
   Much as a leaden dawn
To greet his beloved Harteebeeste in tones amorous and lovelorn
   But yours more beamingly than ever
   Your The Pronghorn.

1949-57

AS FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

The morning fog is bracing
The morning dog is pacing
The morning gull is pacing
   The cat is not us gracing
The bird doth far away sing
But not the cat is pacing
The day is very silent
The fog makes us an island
   Off, say, the coast of Thailand.

1949-57

As to report,
Within his court
El Leon holds sway
   Tail dipped in quink
5
With scholarly paw
And tender roar
Has eschewed all drink
And prepared to think
And lay down the law
10
Re the problem which
Greater lesser and least
Have already been solved
While his great tail revolved
By the Harteebeeste

15
We won't tell him so
But all of us know
Or at least suspect
That he thinks that the Night
Being tender in effect

20
Is something to bite
And for lions a treat.
--So off in our sleigh
Through the wind woods away
With snow white hocks

25
And immaculate brush
And sound of pock-pocks
Away in a rush
Goes the Artic fox
Bearing words of love

30
From below and above
In her snow-white socks
Whisks the
Arctic Fox.

1949-57

BILLETIN

The morning bird is singing
El Leon he is training
The greenfinch she is winging
Her way neath a moon awaning

5
The morning bird is singing
And the morning rain is raining.

1949-57

BILLETS DOUX FOR THE BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE

We feel my dear
The seal was here
And not on even keel, my dear

1949-57

!BULLETIN!

El Leon is swimming
The shearwaters skimming
The larks are a' larking
The linnets are sparking

5
The butterfly stampeth
The Jaeger he campeth
On the roof the rain dampeth
The windbell is chiming
The pronghorn's song rhyming
And none of them shrinketh
For all of them worketh...

1949-57

But we little animaux have gone
With our darling Harteebeeste every
Step of the way and from the bottom
Of our loyal and tender hearts wish you all
The love in the world from
2 wise (wise because El Leon is
Slightly, or was, in "roar," feeling bad,
Take no notice of him) little raccoons.

1949-57

COMMUNAL MESSAGE

Dry thy tears
My pretty dears
Nor death nor slaughter
Fear...

The Shearwater

But upward move
And think on love
With love

The Dove

5 339.1: But think upward

1949-57

DUCKTURNE

The evening bird is singing
The evening bell is ringing
The evening rain is soughing
And the evening grebe is coughing.

4 340.1: And the evening duck is coughing.
1949-57

**EL LEON SENDS HIS GREETINGS**

All night in dreams I wrestled with an Uck  
Reflecting upon how much better twas to be a duck  
Eftsoons I held his life in pawn  
While he had time to reflect upon how much  
Better it would have been all round  
For him had he instead been born

---

1949-57

**FOR OUR SWEETHARTEEIBEESTE ON HARTEEIBEESTE DAY**

The morning tea is boiling  
The morning boards need oiling  
The morning breakfast threatens  
To replace its patterns  
As the Morning Bed rewettens  
The morning bacon greasy  
Is gulphed by stomachs queasy  
And eek a second plateful  
For which most are ungrateful  
As though they found it hateful  
Ourselves, we find all splendid  
Our troubles all but ended  
As on this day auspicious  
We banish naggings vicious  
And o'er our marmite yeasty  
SALUTE OUR HARTEEIBEESTE.

---

11 342.1: Myself, I find all splendid

---

1949-57

**FRAGMENTS FROM THE DUCK ANTHOLOGY**

**TO GREET OUR BELOVED HARTEEIBEESTE IN THE MORNING WATCH**

The morning bird is singing  
El Leon is in training  
The greefinch she is winging  
Her little beak outcraning  
The morning bird is singing  
The morning gull complaining  
But the morning rain, refraining.
Saint Leon of Ripe  
And Prince of Tripe  
The Baron of Gripe,  
And Lord of Snipe  
(Lord Protector of Snipe)  
Rose up in his drawers with a loud "Hup Hipe."  
And said "By God I'm a peculiar type" -  
As he lit his breakfast and cooked his pipe  
And gave his arse a hell of a wipe -  
"To be at once Lord Protector of Snipe  
And Lord of Snipe  
The Baron of Gripe  
The Prince of Tripe  
And Saint Leon of Ripe!"

344.2:  
Saint Leon of Ripe,  
The Prince of Tripe  
The Baron of Gripe  
The Lord of Snipe  
(Lord Protector of Snipe)  
And Count of Gripe  
Rose up in his drawers and cried "Hup Hipe.  
By God, I am a peculiar type."  
(As he lit his breakfast and cooked his pipe  
And gave to his arse a wipe  
The baronial backside a princely swipe  
The saintly seat a hell of a wipe)  
"To be at once the Count of Gripe  
(Lord Protector of Snipe)  
The Lord of Snipe  
The Baron of Gripe  
The Prince of Tripe  
And Saint Leon of Ripe!"

344.3:  
Saint Leon of Ripe  
The Prince of Tripe  
And Baron of Gripe  
And Protector of Snipe  
And who rose in his drawers with a lound "Hup, Hipe!"  
And he gave his arse a princely wipe  
As he lit his breakfast and cooked his pipe  
And said "By god, a peculiar type  
Am I to be Protector of Snipe  
And Baron of Gripe  
And Prince of Tripe.  
And not to mention Saint Leon of Ripe!"  
(So said (so they say) good Saint Leon of Ripe!)
GOOD MORNING TO OUR SWEETEST HARTEESEESTE!  [345.1]

A little note we were going to write you last night
For the morning to greet you instead we do write
To greet you with loving words in duck-like song
Wishing you all luck, et avec les dents
Especialement, avec les dents!
With devotion, sweetest concern, nimble and
Delighted brooding and love from all the little animals.

Half of the harm that is done in this world
Is due to people who want to feel important.
They don’t mean to do harm—but the harm does not interest them.
Or they do not see it, or they justify it
Because they are absorbed in the endless struggle
To think well of themselves.

HAPPIEST OF HARTEESEESTE  [347.1]

DAYS AND DEVOTED LOVE ETERNE

De tous les petites animaux sans exception to our Sweetharteebeeste

The morning bird is warbling
The kettle it is dawdling
The morning rain is dripping
The sea’s bereft of shipping

--Still, all of this is ripping
The weather shall no ’fash a man
We’re bound away for Rashiman.

How overjoyed I am to get your letter
To hear that you are very nearly better
The days are long and they are getting longer
But within a song, like you, is getting stronger
So perhaps the days are short and getting shorter
Although one must admit they didn’t oughta
But long or short, of him know as the THE CARPER
The claws are sharp, and they are getting sharper.
I am speeding through the northern lights
On my snow-white skis, in my snow-white tights,
With my snow-white sleigh behind so keen
Bearing glasses for foxtails of rosy sheen
And Harteebeeste presents for Hallowe’en.

i am very small
i write very little
but you have said
kind things about me
and my friends speak
with love about you
no speak English very well
but the loving larks are
delivering this special
message of love from me
the dear ducks send love
too

I bet you don’t know who I am
Though I am your oldest friend –
The trouble being, have lately been in Siam
Thither my ways during the late cold weather
It having been necessary for me to wend.
Now my ways in the other sense as concerns
Letter writing I am just about to mend.
O bountiful Harteebeeste!
Please forgive your oldest friend!
O beautiful Harteebeeste! Very soon
I shall come back gracefully, with thee
In the forest to bend!
Meantime, all love to those in the lovecot
To all those who therein livest of a dimension
Me high above cot
Very soon through the forest again of spring
With love to you will resound my song-horn
And meantime my belovedest Harteebeeste
Allow myself to sign myself thine with
The very greatest of devotion thy oldest friend
The Pronghorn
1949-57

JUST A MERRY LITTLE DITTY OF WELCOME FOR THE
MOST BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE ON EASTER SATURDAY

El Leon's mane is a mythical mane
And though real, it is unpatcheable,
And the door to these things is a mythic door
And though real, it is unlatcheable,
And this note so sweet is a mythic note
Dispatched, and yet undispatcheable;
And the Gadwall's egg is a mythic egg
And though real, is yet unhatcheable;
But the seal is a seal is a seal is a seal
And though seal, she is uncatcheable.

Just some love and kisses
From a very sleepy seal
One who never misses
The Harteebeeste's appeal
However large the fish is
Or tempting, the sea-abysses
He's one who never misses
The Harteebeeste's appeal
With earnest love: The Seal.

1957

LUSTY ADVICE OF A FORTUNE-TELLER

The Titanic called at Cherbourg at dusk.
And so, the morning before the fire
We swept the floors of our funeral pyre
In the house of our hopes that by night was their husk.

This miserable thought I excise from my work.
The voyage of triumph has Cherbourg on schedule.
The day before love finds you fate finds it, death
You're more likely to find in a week.

The doomed man for breakfast had brandy and kippers and tea,
Next hour was reprieved, and the month after that, found not
[guilty, moreover was free.

The house was rebuilt and it stands again, happy, if lonely.
But loved. So I charge you, sweet reader, to think of this only.

T 354.1: Lusty Advice of a Tea-cup Reader
7 354.1: The day before love finds you fate reads its dead
The day before love finds you fate reads as dead
8 354.1: You'll more certainly find in a week.
LYRICAL MORNING POEM

The morning bird is eating
The snow it is a'melting
And everywhere retreating
That yesterday was pelting
The gulls have finished pelting
And have new grey cloaks, with white fronts,
And white belting.

MORNING ADDRESS OF LOVE TO THE BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE

May well befall the common weal
May good attend thy every meal
In health increasingly to feel
And on a fairly even keel
May you maintain yourself, The Seal.

MORNING SONG FOR THE HARTEEBEESTE

The morning bird is shrilling
The morning sea looks chilling
As a poem by L. Trilling
The morning sky is leaking
The seagull babe is skreeking
The fire—well, words are lacking
We ducks we keep on quacking.

MORNING SONG OF EL LEON

The morning finch is chirping
(But El Leon he is burping)
The day it is a question
(But the night was indigestion)
The morning sea is oily
And the kettle will not boil—Hee!
How sweet and dear it was of
You to let me take you, my beloved
Harteebeeste, to the cinematograph.
How sweet and dear you looked
With hooves and horns all honed
And eating peanuts and raisins so sweetly
Even if the film was not quite as good
As Living with Lions. How sweet to
Eat enchiladas a la Leon with you. We
Wish to say that we have fallen mane over
Paws in love with you all over again.

Never seek to tell thy stove
Love which never told can be
For the metal fiend doth move
Silently, invisibly
I told thy stove, I told thy stove
I told her all, all my heart
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears
Ah, she doth depart.
Soon as she was quite gone out
I stood with wordless cry,
Silently, invisibly,
She blew up with a sigh...

Oh and
Who is it unforlorn
Beaming, and just round the
corn –
Er, hath slipped this note
For his belovedest Harteebeeste
With love for a sweet sleep till morn –
Ing but your merrily and
devotedly and truly
The Pronghorn
Oh love
Oh Shame, we are late
With our message of love,
But the gadwall was buried
In a snow slide, we had
To make a feathered chain
To find her, and you know
The rest - she had
Laid, but a double
Yoked egg this
Time -

Oh Storms
Oh The Seal!
Oh Love!
Oh Boats!
Oh Logs!

Oh the Harteebeeste is dear to us
Oh the Harteebeeste is cheer to us
And ever far more near to us
Beloved Harteebeeste!
Oh the Harteebeeste is near to us,
Oh Harteebeeste, appear to us
Though elsewhere this won't be queer to us,
At least O Harteebeeste...

Oh the Harteebeeste is here again
Nor more our hearts have fear again
Nor in yellow leaf fall sere again
But like yeast, oh Harteebeeste!
Oh wise beast! O Harteebeeste!

Oh welcome Home
To thy cot by the foam
Please excuse this pome
Tis of love increased
A thousandfold for our Harteebeeste
Platinum sun rising.
Platinum frost on porch.
Slight grue on water.
Imperceptible grue of perhaps
Vanishing [?meridian]

Many tired by very loyal little
Animals all waking simultaneously.
Moonsail...

Poor Butterfly that stamped,
My boots are all cold and cramped,
And the little flowers whereon I have camped,
Are fast asleep...

Poor butterfly that stamped,
How should she stamp again,
In her poor boots so cold and cramped,
In the murk and rain...

The minutes pass into hours
And the hours into days --

REPORT ON CONDITIONS

The morning day is hazy
Though to rain there is no clue,
(In fact, a glorious view)
So the weather man is crazy,
Or so thinks the little blue.

REVEILLE

The morning bird is singing --
El Leon feels religious
His mane about him flying
With gestures strange and hideous
(Yet with kindly mien fastidious)
The morning rain is refraining
The moon is slightly waning
And the kettle, hugely trying.
Singing.
The morning bird.
(Humphum!)
-- sing --
    ing
    (0, his,)
-- Bips --
    in the cool dawn
FISH.

SPARK POETRY-
The morning bird is honing
Some sort of dawn is breaking
El Leon is agroaning
His matted mane is shaking
But still manages to convey you
Love from all the
Little animals to
Their Harteebeeste

still speeding to your heart
oh beloved harteebeeste great
love to all at the love cot
a little dove on the mast has
taken this message from me
while I rested

SWEET GOOD NIGHT POEM TO OUR BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE

FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

Noses to grindstone!
Beaks to the Northstar!

Though we may find no Kaiser-i-Hind stone
Yet shall we fare forth far!
The Arctic fox
With snow white hocks
And glistening locks
Despite the rocks
And other shocks
With immaculate brush
Comes in a rush
In her gleaming sleigh
To sing hey hey
Upon this day
And to report
Within his court
El Leon holds sway
Tail dipped in quink
And leonine wink
With scholarly paw
And tender roar
Has 'eschewed all drink
And prepared to think!
And lay down the law
Re the problems which
Greater, lesser, and least
Have already been solved
By the Hartebeeste,
(While his tail revolved.)
We won't tell him so
But all of us know
Or at least suspect
That he thinks that the Night
Being tender i' effect
Is something to bite,
In short, to eat,
And for lions a treat.
So off in our sleighth
Through the wild woods away
With snow-white hocks
And immaculate brush
And sounds of pock-pocks
Away in a rush
Leaving words of love
From below and above
For the Hartebeeste dear
Without any peer.

The deal was here
Oh love alas
The floor unswept
The wood uncut
The lamps unfilled
The cat unfed
The fire unlaid
And ourselves half dead
The Harteebeeste is very good
And of times ears a merry snood
Such soft times she is very gay
And charms all beasties' troubles away.

But when El Leon gives a growl
She then assumes a monkish cowl
With monkish cowl and spookish hood
Though charming still she may not seem good.

But with monkish cowl or merry snood
She really is so very good
In mien grave or mien gay
In this resembling God's own Day.

The Harteebeeste with flying hoof
Hath kicked El Leon on the hoof
With mien low and mane all shrunk
Beneath the bushes he has slunk.

So with purring tactful cat-like voice
Sing to this creature of your choice
And then once more both clip and kiss
And then there will be naught amiss.

The morning bird is bathing
The morning sky is grue
The morning gull is scathing
The morning sea is pew

But the morning wind mas puro
Blows swift and soft and true
This lovenote from the bureau
Of the little mink to you.

The morning bird is singing
The morning cat, unhinging
The morning grebe is fluting
The morning gull, commuting.

Five goldeneyes, in motion
Slide sweetly toward the ocean,
Though the evening cat displeases
With an appetite for cheeses
All things they wait to greet thee!

With love they wait to meet thee!
Though El Leon he is roaring
And the morning rain, is pouring.
The morning bird sits mutely
The weather absolutely —
The day is full of wishes
The sink is full of dishes
The morning floor is dusty
The morning throat is rusty
The morning stance is tilty
The conscience slightly guilty
And battered as the oven
But the morning heart is loving.

1 381.1: The morning bird sings mutely

The morning rain is rained
The morning gull complained
No morning craft are seined
(The morning leg, half pained)
The morning moon is waned
The morning coffee drained
Say not O Lord in vained
Insaned, insaned.

The morning rain is raining
A morning pain is paining
The morning gull is cruising
While this duck tries to sing
Unlike the morning kettle
Which is in chilly fettle
Just like Popocatapetl.

The morning rain is raining
The morning leg is paining
The morning grebe is swimming
The morning gull unhymning
The morning lion is working
The morning coffee, perking...
The morning rain is sleeting
The morning hail is now
Yet through all this our greeting
-- Our sweetest warmest greeting --
To the sweet Harteebeeste doth go.

-- The morning rain is weeping --
The morning brain is blue
The morning dew is keeping
A consistency of glue
(While the morning sea is pew)
But despite this dolorous scene
To the lovecot warm and neat
Comes this message wishing greener
days to the Harteebeeste so sweet.

The morning sleet is sleeting
The morning quay is miring
The picture is defeating,
At least, is not inspiring —
But though the slush and uckery
With compassed beaks and true
We bear this note of duckery
Of dearest sweetest duckery
To sweetest, dearest you.

The morning sneat is snewing
The morning feet are blueing
The morning seat is glueing
But the kettle is not stewing.

The morning stove is wheezing
The morning gull is dovey
(This note is for my lovey —)
At least it's not so freezing.
The morning tanker gleameth
El Leon he a'schemeth
(Life being as he deemeth
Much stranger than it seemeth)
The day, meanwhile, a'beameth
And the kettle, it a'steameth.
But the seal, she is uncatcheable.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Duck
No hungry generations tread thee down:
The quack I heard this passing night, with luck
Was also heard by Emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same quack that found a path,
Through the great heart of El Leon, when sick for you
He roamed with roars about the Cariboo...

-Though we are all a little bit disappointed this year
  [there won't be any fireworks
We know that is but because we are all willy-nilly engaged
  [in higherworks
And though it cannot but be with a little sadness that we
  [shall not see this year fly off our beloved
[Harteebeeste's Roman Candle
That is no reason why we should to put it succinctly
  [fly off the handle
For as El Leon sagely observes what this year we shall miss
  [as to wild celebration
We shall in all senses make up for by what might be called
  [mild cerebration
And though this year shall bring us no splendid burgeoning
  [of rockets
To come down to brass tacks all that means is that we shall
  [burn the midnight oil down to its sockets
So let us not regard these things, oh sweetest and most
  [beloved Harteebeeste with haggard and
[sallow e'yne
But look upon them as tokens of an even finer and by no means
  [laggard Hallowe'en
And all this with oh so much love is as from the hearts of all
  [your faithful little animals torn
Who join in sending more love than ever in entire concert by their
  [ancient and waggish ambassador your
Affectionate
The Pronghorn

burn] burning
Though we are but sea birds
Not much grammar having
We send unto thee words
Full of sincere loving

3 Happy little ducks
Swimming in the rain
Thinking not of bad lucks
And feeling no pain.

Two frozen claws
In two frozen mittens
Send warmest love
That was ever written
-- To our beloved Harteebeeste

Waking wassails of wistful welcome
Upon this woebegone Wednesday wan!
We wise waterbirds wish waking well-being
Wading wearily wobbling waterwards
Whether we - oh, the uck with it.

WELCOME HOME OH GLADSDOME SPRINGHORNED
BELOVED AND FAMED HARTEEBESTE

With sweetest protective dotings
Of affection, and comradely featherly solidarity
Nearly all the little animals have gone
In with you this day to have their plumage shined.
Welcome Home oh Harteebeeste beloved who doth with thy
Delicate and unparalled prescence all the verdant scene adorn
And who with it holdeth likewise our hearts in fee
  If not literally in pawn
5 And without whom none of us are worth one might say
    Figuratively speaking even a prawn.

Welcome Home oh Harteebeeste mio
Welcome home, oh Harteebeeste - klio!-
So full of love are we
We await thee by every tree!
5 As thou steppest through the forest so neatly!
Oh, illiterately, we greet thee!
But with undying love we meet thee!
With this expression of our hearts unfeatly!
But sweetly!

Welcome Home - Oh Most Beloved Harteebeeste
The smooth mink, the swift seal
Do their bit for the common weal
The smooth seal, and the swift mink
Do more for their Harteebeeste, than you think.

Welcome Home oh Most Loved and Famed Harteebeeste
--big wood, small wood, little wood, bark;
big lamp, small lamp, little lamp; hark
to the sound of the Harteebeeste’s distant hooves!
then who is it that, through the wildwood, moves?

Welcome Home oh Our Beloved Harteebeeste
This illuminated address
To that noble animal we all love the best
Wishing her all devotion and luck
Was designed by Mr and Mrs
Affectionately yours Harlequin Duck
1949-57 WELCOME HOME OH OUR MOST BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE [403.1]

And my socks, they are immatcheable
And my shoes, they are unpatcheable
And my house, it is unthatcheable
And your dear Seal she is uncatcheable...

1949-57 WELCOME HOME OH OUR SWEETEST HARTEEBEESTE BELOVED [404.1]

For though our disapproval
Shakes every wing and finlet
We plan on no removal
From our stations on the inlet

5 Chorus: So never mind the weather
But hiss in every feather etc

1949-57 WELCOME HOME OH SWEETEST HARTEEBEESTE [405.1]

from our shoved up bank,
with our faces to the air,
ringing our bells,
or hiding snugly in the shack,
we greet you with love
from the bottom of our hearts.

1949-57 WELCOME HOME OH SWEETEST HARTEEBEESTE [406.1]

WITH QUADRUPLE DEVOTION FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

Oh we are running!
The dear ducks are running!
We hear thy hoofs
On the grassy-er-poufs
And gimpsing from roofs
See thy horns so splendid
With the foliage blended
Oh we are running
The dear ducks are running

5

10 So t'is time we ended.

1949-57 WELCOME HOME OUR OWN [407.1]

Welcome Home, Harteebeeste, from far off Vancouver
We watched o'er thee each moment (tho' not like Edgar Hoover)
Close beside thee we went when thou wentst to stove,
Sitting hard by the ram, and oh dear it was raw,
And then through the forest we followedst thy spoors
Little animals 3 - carry one - that makes 4.

1949-57

WELCOME HOME OH HARTEEBEESTE

Welcome oh Harteebeeste, back from town
With your twinkling feet and your eyes so brown
With ponderous tomes and Tolstoy grim
And geranium pots and a bottle of gin.

1949-57

WITH A GREAT GOODMORNING KISS AND LUCK AND LOVE

TO OUR BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

-- and moreover,
   A gorgeous widgeon
   Who got religion!
   He send Hosannas to you!
   Hot duck!
   He send Hosannas to you!

1949-57

WITH DEAREST LOVE ENFOLDED AND ENCLOSED

FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

And who is it that through the watery woods
Wanderest unwanly and wonderfully
With his stiff upper horns wisely clenched
At the north star, and warbling winsomely
Of his belovedest Harteebeest in tones so
New as to be almost unborn
But yours more adroitly and faithfully and
Waggishly than ever - your
   Affectionate Pronghorn -

1949-57

WITH DEAREST MORNING LOVE AND KISSES

The morning is maturing
The frosty sun - t'is a pure ring -
The poor gulls are a vulturing
(That is, they are shivering)
But at least it is not pouring.
And El Leon, he is roaring...
WITH DEVOTION ENTIRE FROM ALL YOUR LITTLE ANIMALS WE THOUGHT FIT TO REVIVE THE FOLLOWING DITTY

Ducks of oak, ducks of distinction
Ducks of the red white and blue
Ducks who'll never know extinction
Ducks of get-up-and-go. Ducks of oak etc.

Ducks of progress, ducks of daring
Ducks of labour, ducks of fun
Ducks of land and of sea-faring
Oh the Ducks of Dollarton - Ducks of oak etc.

Ducks of Leo, Ducks of Taurus

Ducks from all the Zodiac
All join now in one loud chorus
In one great triumphal quack. Ducks of oak etc.

...Ducks of oak etc.] [missing end punctuation]

WITH GREAT LOVE OH BELOVED HARTEEDEESTE FROM EL LEON

Quarrels make up, quarrels end
But LionCola always is your friend,
Friendships dwindle, friendships wane
But Lionlittle liver pills is always

In the morning of excesses
Of the night before, the bane.

WITH MIDSUMMER DEVOTION FROM

ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS TO THEIR BELOVED HARTEEDEESTE

The engine tells the knell of parting day
El Leon homeward prowls with mane forlorn
But who is it upon the forest way
Dancing this midsummer an even fancier

Step as he prances under the moon in honour of
His beloved Harteebeeste but yours

Fayly
The Pronghorn

WITH SWEET DEVOTION AND TRUE

FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

But who is it who the forest leapeth
Blessings and gratitude upon his Harteebeeste beloved heapeth
To array himself in that which replaceth so
Gaily his accoutrements outworn

But yours more devoted than ever
Before and waggishly your

The Pronghorn
WITH SWEET SWEET LOVE FROM
ALL YOUR AMUSED LITTLE ANIMALS

But who is it that through the salmonberry wobbleth
That through the huckleberry hacketh and hacketh
That through thimbleberry thraseth and smacketh
In such a manner that had he been any one else
He would have presented a mien as of the ram newly shorn
But yours more craggishly
More staggishly
And more wagqishly than ever
Your devoted, your dear The Pronghorn

WITH SWEETEST LOVE AND WELCOME
FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

The stove it is—well—patcheable
And the dear Gadwall’s egg is—well—hatcheable
The door it is—just—latcheable
But the Seal—she is uncatcheable

WITH SWEETEST LOVE FROM ALL
THE LITTLE ANIMALS AS FROM 2 OLD FRIENDS

When the Harteebeeste is on the horse
Then woe to the sluggard on his course —
El Leon pads then to tactful lair,
(The Lion "tis said has gone to prayer)
The defection, though, to say the least,
Is not confined to this noble beast;
Yet with merry cries, and madrigals,
Come flying all the animals —
To do her bidding with dispatch,
To paint the door and to shine the latch —
And of all those who with cries, songs, barks
Her call to action gladly harks
None gayer are than the loving Larks.

WITH SWEETEST LOVE FROM ALL THE
LITTLE ANIMALS TO THEIR BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE

With infinite feather-poultices
And hot shearwaterbottles of love
And brooding attention and care
For your poor toothache in the hope
That a great magic may be worked by
Morning and all your pain may be vanished
With a mutual ducklaration of concerns
Sweet affection from all the little animals

1949-57

WITH SWEETEST MORNING LOVE

TO THEIR BELOVEDEST HARTEEBEESTE

The morning bird is singing
The morning wind is new
The morning rag is clinging
The morning oil is "grue"

The morning gull bedecked is
In all his breakfast finery
And the morning train unwrecked is
Beneath the oil-refinery.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: SONG LYRICS

The fifteen items in this appendix span the whole of Lowry’s literary career. Music, about which Lowry was genuinely knowledgeable, was an important element in his life, that contributed significantly to his personal mythology. Accounts of his early life in Bowker, Bradbrook, and Day always include a depiction of Lowry with his battered ukulele or “taropatch.”

Of the fifteen songs included in this section, six are juvenilia. "I’ve Said Good-bye to Shanghai" [427] and "Three Little Dog-gone Mice" [433] were printed as sheet music by a vanity publisher in London in 1927. The date of "Ballad" [422] cannot be bibliographically ascertained because no manuscript has surfaced; however, in 1960 Margerie Lowry sang and transcribed the song for Philip Thomas, explaining that Lowry had written it as a joke on his professor’s while at Cambridge.¹ In 1932 Chatto & Windus published Charlotte Haldane’s I Bring Not Peace, in which Lowry appears as the drunken, ukulele-playing James Dowd; Haldane dedicated the volume to Lowry as well as crediting him with the authorship of Dowd’s three songs.² However, one of the Dowd songs, "And When I Die," properly titled "That’s What I Mean" [431], is a fragment of a song Lowry contributed to the Cambridge Footlights Dramatic Club’s 1932 production of Laughing at Love. The production’s programme (33-18) credits Lowry as the lyricist for "Tinker Tailor," but no such song exists in the British Library’s copy of the libretto. The last two songs dating from the apprenticeship period, "Give Me the Money" [425], and "Rich Man, poor Man" [429], appear in Haldane.
The three songs datable from the Dollarton period come from eclectic sources. "Song for a Marimba" [430] is a typical Dollarton poem in terms of its manuscript development—the holograph and typescript drafts appear on brown newsprint—but it is included in Lowry's 1952 manuscript of "Through the Panama" (25-7). "Happy Birthday" [426] exists only in Lowry's outgoing correspondence and was composed for James Stern's birthday in 1950, while "Nagging at Myself Something Awful" [428] appears in a 1952 letter to Albert Erskine (2-14, 3-2 respectively). The six remaining songs appear in the 1949-57 "Love Poems." These six ditties have been separated from the poems in this collection on the basis of Lowry's conception of them as musical entities; in the accompanying correspondence, Lowry either explicitly refers to them as "ditties" or "songs," or surrounds them with drawings of musical notes and symbols, thereby underscoring their musical nature.

The bracketed dates indicate that a published version has been used as copy-text; in these cases the lack of manuscripts renders it impossible to determine the precise dates of composition, which for some songs span almost a decade. Given this wide margin for dating, the songs in this appendix are arranged alphabetically.

NOTES

1 Philip Thomas, personal interview, 18 September 1987.
1949-57

Au clair de la lune
Harteebeeste Mio
Pretez-moi ta plume
Klio! Klio! Klio!

Though we are but sea birds
Little grammar having
We inscribe to thee words
Full of sincere loving...

[1929-32] BALLAD

Twas in the springtime of the year
On such a May morning
Me and my wife did make good cheer
And men love women

Aye, Aye, the wind doth blow
Nor shall I see my love no mo
On such a May morning

I sought her in the town and mead
I sought her in the sky
And sorree did my heartee bleed
Nor would my love come neigh

Aye, Aye, the wind doth blow
Nor shall I see my love no mo
On such a May morning

I sought her east
I sought her west
I sought in a far countree
And I prayed Jesus to give me rest
For sweet charity

Aye, Aye, the wind doth blow
Nor shall I see my love no mo
On such a May morning

And with Tennybreath now my head
And I'm a wax and woe

Aye, Aye, the wind doth blow
Nor shall I see my love no mo
On such a May morning

But now I've found my love evis
A child upon her knee
The mother of God my leman is
The blessed virgin she
No more the wind doth blow  
I'll see my love for ever more  
On each a May morning.

[Margerie Lowry's recollection]

1 422.1,2: [chorus begins song]
17 422.1,2: I sought her in the sky
18 422.1,2: And I prayed Jesus did give me rest
19 422.1,2: Nor would my love come neigh
34 422.1,2: Aye Aye no more the wind doth blow
35 422.1,2: I'll hear my love for ever more
36 422.1,2: On each May morning

1949-57 DUCK TRAIN - VOCAL ARCTIC FOX-TROT [423.1]

(Leon and Pronghorn)

Duck train!  
Duck train!  
Quackitty quack  
Quackitty quack

5 On a floating piece of slag,  
Quackitty quack quacking along!  
Singing a song--  
(On our way to town  
Blow the man down!)

10 Duck train!  
Duck train!

[1932] Give me the money, [424.1]

Give me the money,  
Give me the money and I'll go-oh,  
Give me the money,  
5 Give me the money,  
Give me the money and I'll go.

And when I die it'll be just the same  
I'll have to borrow somebody's name,  
So give me the money,  
10 Give me the money  
To buy the undertaker a hoe  
To get me the garden, the hearse and the parson,  
Give the the money and I'll go.
1949-57

GOOD LUCK

- With sweet devotion from all the little animals -

Oh Happy Days are here again
In Happy ways we'll cheer again
Our Hearts shall dance to "rire" again

No valse Triste
On Harteebeeste
-- Like yeast
Oh Harteebeeste!

1950

Happy birthday to you
Happy birthday to you
Though it's deferred it's
sincere it's

A message worth two.

And if it is but our fate
To celebrate it late
Please look forward
-- hard to starboard! --
To that royal date!

[1927] I'VE SAID GOODBYE TO SHANGHAI

Vocal Fox-Trot

Moonlit river way out there in old Shanghai,
Makes me shiver, and I'll tell you why.
Took my girl home ev'ry night just to hand her in,
Till I found that she'd been foolin' with a mandarin.

I've said good-bye to Shanghai
P'raps that's why I'm pinin',
Shady trees, buzzin' bees,
Yes I've said so long to ev'rything Chinese,
I left my girl in Shanghai,

Said she'd marry me. My!
But as I knew the things she'd do,
It's bye-bye to old Shanghai.

I adored her underneath the Chinese moon,
How I bored her when I settled down to spoon.
She would stamp her tiny foot and give me a frown,
Now I realise she never meant to settle down.

I've said good-bye to Shanghai,
P'raps that's why I'm pinin',
Shady trees, buzzin' bees,
20 Yes I've said so long to ev'rything Chinese,  
    I left my girl in Shanghai,  
    Said she'd marry me. My!  
    But as I knew the things she'd do,  
    It's bye-bye to old Shanghai.

1951
    Nagging at myself something awful
    Nagging at myself something fearful
    All because we ain't used to cheerful news

5
    Nagging at myself blues
    Those old Judas blues...

    Nagging at myself something gruesome
    You're nagging too so it's a twosome
    And all because we ain't used to good news

10
    Nagging at myself blues
    Those old Judas blues...

[1932] Rich man, poor man, beggarman, thief,  
    All agree in this belief:  
    What makes the world go round is Love.

1940-52 SONG FOR A MARIMBA

      Oa-xa-ca! Oa-xa-ca!  
      Oa-xa-ca! Oa-xa-ca!  
      It is a name like  
      A bro-ken

5 A broken heart at night.  
    Wooden wooden wooden are those faces at night.  
    Wooden wooden wooden are those faces at night.  
    Broken hearts are wooden at night.  
    Wooden, are wooden, at night.

T 430.1-3: In the Wooden Brothel the Band Plays Out of Tune
6 430.1-3: Wooden wooden wooden are the faces at night
THAT'S WHAT I MEAN

Our destiny takes us, and binds us and breaks us,
Leaving life confused and hating the sun.
Our responses are musty, our Shakespeares are dusty,
The need we brought to seek for beauty has gone.

5
I sit and murmur word for stupid word,
Hoping I may not be overheard.

For this is the music that's within my soul,
I know I can't express it as a whole:
It's just simple music that my soul has seen,
That's what I mean.

10
I was always dreaming when the day was done,
My childhood broke through chords of music and of sun,
Dreaming of the might-have-been and used-to-be;
That's what I mean.

15
If I could tell, I'd tell you just what then befell:
But night and day I hide—it's courage and pride.
Now if you solve this beauty you would see the man
Behind all that I try to say and never can,
And share the simple music that my soul has seen:
That's what I mean.

1949-57
THE HARTEEBEESTE IS HERE AGAIN

(Pronghorn and Leon)

The Hartebeeste is here again
Oh the Harteeste is here again
And our hearts they rise, my dear again
Like the yeast, oh our Hartebeeste!

4 Hartebeeste! hartebeeste!

[1927]
THREE LITTLE DOG-GONE MICE

Just the Latest Charleston Fox-Trot Ever

We gotta story, we gotta story,
It will inter'est you,
An' there's not faddin' about Aladdin,
Or the woman who lived in a shoe;

5
It's just a fable, a little fable,
We didn't get on the farm,
Old Mother Hubbard's dead in the cupboard,
An' we don't give a darn;

For Three little dog-gone mice,
See how the little devils run,
They bought a little motor car,
Wouldn’t do its advertised miles per hour,
They turned it into a cocktail bar,
Did the three little dog-gone mice.

Now old Marconi, ate macaroni,
And made the wireless set,
Why did he do it, if you only knew it,
To broadcast this you bet!
What did Asquith, what did Asquith,
Say in eighteen eighty three,
Was it politics, or was it folly?
No just wait and see;

Oh! Three little dog-gone mice,
See how the little devils run,
Wifey’s first night she was wed,
She gave a little scream and quickly said,
Jack dear, help, for we’re in bed
With three little dog-gone mice.

We’re gonna finish, we’re gonna finish
Off this little song,
We’re awful sorry, to tell the story,
Of the three little mice who went wrong;
It’s simply tragic, and only magic
Could make them reform,

Whate’er the weather they cling together,
And keep their tootsies warm;

Oh! Three little dog-gone mice,
See how the little devils run,
Afraid that we must say goodnight,
Some fool will soon put out the light,
We’re not possessed with second sight,
Said the three little dog-gone mice.

OPTIONAL TRIPLETs [chorus: lines 3-5 inclusive]

They opened up a sausage store,
Folks rolled in and wanted more,
Into a great big hole in the floor ran the, etc.

They tickled the whiskers of a priest,
On the day of a ceremonial feast,
They should apologise at least—should the, etc.

They watched the movements of a cow,
When it slipped on an orange peel, dunno how,
They all can do the Black Bottom now, can they, etc.

Just one step and then a pounce,
Cat thought "Gee, I’ll catch a mouse,
So Let’s all go to Mary’s House, said the, etc.
Invited some friends for a drink or two,
They said "We've got a case of flu,"
"Alright we'll drink it up for you," said the, etc.

They went to the room of a movie star,
Lordie only knows that they went too far,
And made her spill her I-cil-ma did the, etc.

1949-57

WITH SWEETEST DEVOTION FROM ALL
[434.1]

THE LITTLE ANIMALS TO THEIR MOST BELOVED HARTEEBEESTE

!Hammer and tongs! !The ducks are creating!
!Clamour and songs! !In short, cerebrating!
  Ah miraculous stuff!
  Oh, supernalest wuff!
  And t'is never enough...
5  For we're never so happy as when with brains sappy
  Our thoughts they go mounting in measures past counting
  From depths of absurdity unknown to birdity
  To heights of profundity--marvellous fecundity--
10  Singing !Hammer and Tongs!
    !Clamour and Songs!

1949-57

WITH SWEETEST LOVE AND SUNDAY ANTHEMS
[435.1]

OR SWEETEST GOODNIGHT FROM ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

Wonderful love
Beautiful love
Love to the Harteebeeste,—like yeast,—
Are all our hearts
5  Burgeoning heart.
  Burgeoning hearts, like yeast,
    like yeast,
    like yeast,
  Oh, love to our Harteebeeste!
APPENDIX B: FRAGMENTS

The items in this section are classified as fragments for various reasons. One group comprises poetic insertions in Lowry's correspondence. For example, "Ten fifty eight may arrive" [450] is a nonsense poem from a dated 1954 letter to Albert Erskine; the numbers refer to Erskine's error in addressing his last letter to Lowry. In "The thing to know is how to write a verse" [457], Lowry dispenses some poetic advice to Margerie's mother in a 1942 letter. "Yvonne stood there silently" [461] appears on the verso of a 1945 draft letter; Lowry may have been revising the corresponding section of Under the Volcano at that time. Other fragments appear as insertions in Lowry's prose manuscripts: the first page of a 1950 brown paper draft of "Present Estate of Pompeii" bears the address "Ye Pow'rs who make mankind your care" [460].

Some of Lowry's poetic fragments are not truly poems, even though the content is couched in the form of verse. His 1944 telegram "Betty and Gerald Noxon" [444], and the advertisement "Personal" [448] are good examples. Another interesting fragment, "-- My two hands broke in two, and they" [464], appears in Lowry's own copy of John Sommerfield's 1937 novel Volunteer in Spain, now owned by Hilda and Philip Thomas of Vancouver. Although the inscription was obviously composed between 1937 and 1957, it is unfortunately impossible to date it more precisely. Of the last three poems in this section, all undated, the original manuscript for "No prayer for the people" [463] is missing.¹
Two of the items are classified as fragments because they are "hearsay" poems, preserved only in contemporary reminiscences. Both of these fragments--"Hindu Babe" [436] and "Marching down the road to China" [437]--are songs attributed to Lowry's sea-going and jazz-composing apprenticeship period. Related to the "hearsay" poems is the dubious poem entitled "The Voyage of Kevin O'Riordine" [456], inscribed in Lowry's hand on a 1950 letter from Albert Erskine, but by Lowry attributed to "H.D. Barton," who may be apocryphal.

Equally dubious because of their marginal poetic value are the items included in five 1939 letters to Margerie: the 1939 items "And Samson said if yo' shave ma hair" [443], "The only thing that Jack had" [453] "The Slough of Despond" [455], "to account for this, but it cannot be" [459], and, from 1956, "Cold Roast Hamlet Blues, Blubberhouses Blues, Ugley Blues" [462].

Almost half of the thirty items in this section are drafts so rough that they can only be classed as fragments. "Pacific is a feeble symbol of death" [440] (popularized by Earle Birney as "Be Patient for the Wolf") probably contains more than one draft, but the chaotic state of the manuscript--extending over five pages of 8 x 10" "Pegaso" notebook paper--makes it impossible to reconstruct the final poem as Lowry envisioned it. As a consequence, the entire draft is reproduced. Similarly, "The wild-duck swam in the gold-fish pond" [458] is clearly a first draft of "Goldeneye and Goldfish" [218]; because the variants and length differ so radically from the final version, collation serves no purpose, and the draft is printed here as a parallel fragment.
This section is divided into the chronological periods of the main text; the poems included within each period are arranged alphabetically. This section aims merely to collect the fragments; no emendations have been made nor sigla recorded.

NOTES

1 Prof. F. Asals of the University of Toronto kindly shared with me his transcription of the elusive manuscript. His transcription provides the copy text for this edition. "Poets are Godlike in that they" [465] appears on a paper with an undefinable watermark, and thus cannot be dated at this time.

2 Bowker, 23 and 33 respectively.
APPRENTICESHIP

[1927]

Hindu Babe [fart]
I love you [fart]
I love you [fart]

Marching down the road to China,
You will hear me singing this song,
Soon we'll be aboard an Ocean Liner sailing for Hong Kong,
And when we've put these Yellow Faces in their proper places,
We'll be home once more,
And I'll take my Alice to the Crystal Palace at the end of the [China War.

MEXICO

[1938]

A CURSE

how shall we apostrophise the vileness of women
who dissemble their idleness though death
is a kinsman and the abortion of
a household god. No pen
will ever prick your baseness
to its inner womb and no ten
thousand lines of prose or verse
no stanza, no paragraph, may anatomise
what is evil in its purest form
because all your children will be born dead.

1937-38

[?Elsenore] was the battlements of Oaxaca:
Hotel Francia: Oax, mec: the silver miner
typed his mind out in the next estate
dinner was at six and death at eight:
Juarez disguised as the statue of liberty
and in the Ochas Farolito night
shook a frosty torch at Monte Alban
For Crane where is your bridge and Tennyson your bar
For Arlarcon a Taxco in Guadalajara
for time and Timon meek and was both
for lies a liar and for truth a troth
alas poor Herrick and poor Conrad’s youth
And Aase on the roof
Alas poor Yorick not in the first three.

Pacific is a feeble symbol of death:
The final smile of California skies
is a smile pried open of the frightened actress.
Image of her hard faked
at the beginning of the inferno, in the middle of our life
of the wood, the image teeters between mother and sea.
though more survive its petulant note...

This is a world of worthless mysteries:
fire cannon and blast up who sunk with lead
whose tones are overdressed even in death.
Even in dust.

Be patient for the wolf is ever with you
Listen my little one to the sound of your desire
God will come out of such ignorance as this
not like a jack-in-the-box but like a tree
turned weeping father in delirium
he will say that such and such will happen.
Be patient because the wolf is patient.
The squeaks and woes of night all have their place.
And you’ll find your blood warm cave and rest at last
and oil for your dispersed and aching limbs
whose small shadow has stopped here.
Be patient because of the wolf. Be patient
His soft steps are now your own, and you are free, being bereft.
He will say that such and such will happen;
the woes of night all have their tragic place
half the face of god seeks its face:
the meadow waits for rainbow to say god:
the shadows wait, for you to say the word:
the two pillows, wait for love to save the world:
the charter waits: the ship freezes in the fjord.
The angel waits his heart an aching hand
to win you from the wolf to the evening land
where no one ravens but where things are made:
The redbreast waits for redress from the dark
The swallows waits for autumn to say now:
and Echo, for Hero not to reply, no.
Only the bell that follows does not wait
galloping motherfaced across the shadowy fields
across the shadowy fields at nightfall
to abrase you to the bone with rough chime:
the bell not to the aged sea
but to the dear kind wolf pay allegiance
Be patient for the wolf is with you.

Listen little idiot for the sound of your desire.
Do not be deceived as it is not the sea.
The wolf is madness but the moon is light.
God will come out of such ignorance as this.
not like a jack-in-the-box but like a tree
turned weeping father in delirium.
He will say that such and such will happen.
The woes of night all have their tragic place,
and he will find your genius in the dark
and give it back without bondsman.

Forget the shrieking of the drunkard’s wife,

the contemptuous sea curling its lip all day
strident as factories of shattering glass
Pass by the sleek unvintageable sea
for those who drink her deepest are the drowned.

Be patient for much much much is patient.
The meadow waits for rainbow to say god:
the shadows, for you to say the word.
The pillows, think that love will save the world
The moonlit collier reels at a foul anchor.

The charter waits: the ship freezes in the fjord.
The angel waits his heart an aching hand
to win you from us to the evening land
where no one ravens but where things are made
but where is no wolf is nor no moon nor thought of blood

Be patient child for the wolf is ever with you
Listen my little one to the sound of your desire.
God will come out of such ignorance as this:
not like a jack-in-the-box but like a tree
turned weeping father in delirium.

He will say that such and such will happen.
The woes of night all have their tragic place,
and you half the face of god seeks half its face.
your blood-warm clot of rest at last.
God will find your genius for you in the dark:
and give it you back again without a bondsman.
The shadows wait for you to say the word.
Think: you will never have to read another book.
You will have oil for your dispersed, aching limbs
whose small shadow has stopped here...

Be patient, because of the wolf, be patient;
His soft step is your own now, you are free, being bereft.
The sea is foolish, curling its lip all day.
Listen to my little one, to his soft, cunning, step.
to the aged sea,

The foolish sea curling its lip all day.
No attention to the unvintageable sea.
for those who drink it deepest are the drowned.
The contemptuous sea curling its lip all day
noisy as factories of shattering glass.

Reel not towards the unvintageable sea
for those who drink it deepest are the drowned.
The redbreast waits too for redress from the dark:
The swallows press for autumn to say now:
and Echo, for hero, to say, no.
only the bell that follows does not wait
Galloping across the fields at nightfall
Vast, mother-faced, across the shadowed fields
to abrase yet the bone with soft toll
Try your teeth on iron nipples how you will
But your small shadow has stopped here.
Listen to your own strange cunning step.
The shadows jump: they know
you are going with them.
The wolf’s step is your own, now being bereft.
to forget the shrieking drunkard’s wife sea
the contemptuous sea curling its lip all day.
strident as factories of shattering glass.
Pass the rough unvintageable sea.
For those who drink it deepest are the drowned.

1937-38

The crane over seas and forests seeks her home
No bird so wild only has its quiet nest
When it no more would roam
The sleepless billows on the ram’s breast
5 Break like a bursting heart and die in foam.

DOLLARTON

1940-54

A cap and gown instead of a sweatrag,
And a chainbreaker singlet and worse food
Instead of bad. I’ll have these buggars blood
One day, though. Or will I. The soul of a fag
5 Is a bad thing to carry around a University.
Perhaps I have the soul of a deck boy.
I have been a cod trimmer though. Shitty
Is this place and that face is too that passeth. Oy
It said. Oy. Fake proletariat.
10 And to the id of--
... The coast of Sokola stormy between spells
And long and dark the wharves at Singapore.
And Samson said if yo' shave ma hair
Jus' as clean as ma had
Ma strength-a will become-a like a natcher man
For Gawd's-a g'wine t'move all de troubles away
For Gawd's-a g'wine t'move all de troubles away.

BETTY AND GERALD NOXON

Delighted excited journeying youward
tourist arriving Oakville eight-thirty a.m. Monday
Margie unhurt myself fit
though back fried no
stiff upper lips or Nordic
glooms saved Branches Detectives Volcano Purgatario
Noxon photos also Betty's pictures thousand
pages Paradiso what I lost will reimburse
gently you are saints please
do not dread

Malcolm

The dead tree that, frozen, utters at the top
Meadowsweet to heaven this winter day...

Got a date with a bottle of
  gin
When its over I've
  another date playing alone
  too -
For when I'm
  through with
  that bottle of
  gin
I haven't got a
date with
  you -

But I'd far rather
sit and just play the
blues -
you may think this
gloomy but it
just ain’t so

Got a date with a
bottle of

scotch,
And then a blind date,
for two.

1940-54

No wonder it feared peace, the knees of years
knocking together, trembling hands of treaties,
The coronation of the rat, and the hyena,
And the great tossing moosehead of America’s idiot son

To make the world
bullfrog, croaking of honour,

Bullfrogs croaking in clean pools of honour

For all I care succeed, in your gruesome joke
To give the world one bullfrog and one croak.

1940-54

Bill, Kath and family gone.
Am very sick, all alone.
Please come and see me.
--Skinny.

1939-40

Playing alone

Drunk and bored --
Sometimes a chord

Touches your heart

-- piercingly --
Ten fifty eight may arrive on the date
But fifteen o’ eight will always be late
Land on nobody’s plate
Save its senders who wait
- Oh indirectorate
With a hand on’t like fate!
- Or some Bartleby fate
For po’ fifteen o’ eight!

THE BIRD IN THE TREE

Meantime a bird in a tree
Sings something unlike a song as could be
Or something that is very unlike a song to me.

THE COMMUNIST

You may praise this bloody awful world
Or divide it into
To me the whole thing stinks:

The only thing that Jack had lacked in life
- besides an understanding wife -
was tact.

The port has a sweeter name than Saigon
And Cathays flags do command it wholly
Whitman loved it well but so did Shelley Keats and the sardonic Chatterton
The soul of Adonai dwelt in that town
I hate the dogs, the cats, the road, the weather, the shadows, to be conspiring to keep me from you.

I know what you must be feeling, my precious, but since love is the only thing that can mount in this cockeyed world, we will win out and we will be together soon,

I know, somehow.

I am still waiting for further news from England.
The only thing that keeps me alive are your letters.
Oh my dearest sweet tender darling, I know this waiting is hell for you.

But with a fair wind, you won't have to wait much longer: I will find a way, in any event, and take any risk.
For the present still try and be patient. Do things you've put off doing, and all that sort of bunkum.
Please be true and to the thought of me. It is still the reasonable thing to do to wait; I shall be bound to hear before the week is out, and if there is an unfavourable reply, I'm just going to figure out the means of getting to you anyhow, as I said. I am deliberately curbing myself in our future interest from rash, independent, action, so far. I'm trying to work desperately at stories so that I can make enough to be with you independent of this bloody control: the war has knocked most everything else on the head in the Labor Depart. The trouble is, I'm so anxious to be with you, our personal problems keep intruding, my work won't sit down and be objective.

The chronometer fell in the bilge and was useless
We ran out of water and broke out in boils
O'Riordine cursed himself, being abuseless
We lashed ourselves forward and lashed ourself aft
And the last of the seven gales stove in the craft.
The ranges shrivelled, and the eggs they were loud
Wars splintered the top of the cabin
In a thirty foot sloop, single-masted and perhaps apocryphal
They sailed out of Falmouth and docked in New York
The thing to know is how to write a verse
Whether or not you like it, whether or not
The goddamn thing will put you on the spot
And Petrarch will not save you from the curse.

You may be circumambient or terse

for better, or worse
A thousand lines without a single blot.
Christ the great psalmist cannot save us here
He lisped in Numbers but no numbers came

Eliot and Pound were posing all the time
And Whitman (Walt), alas, did much the same.

The wild-duck swam in the gold-fish pond.
The gold-fishes' owner came waving his hat,
of those gold fish both being equally fond
Though in different ways. "Might taste good at that

Though they're gold sort of things," the duck seemed to say
While the man cried "Shoo, you duck. Beat it. Scat."
And much more beside again in vain inveigh.
While the gold-fish swam and the wild duck sat
Sage eyed serene in the midday sun.

Now that goldfish pond was artificial
But that old goldfish instinct, was initial.

to account for this, but it cannot be
lipstick, unless it is teleportedly yours:
perhaps you were putting on a face, as
I wrote. Please wait for me so that

you will be all mine. I haven't
thought of anybody else since leaving
you. The sheer pain of wanting you, of
desire for your loveliness, for the smoothness of
your body and your breasts, is unbearable:

if you must suffer, please suffer with this
pain as I do, which we can soon
assuage. Oh god, my darling, want me
as I want you, want me to take you.
Ye Pow'rs who make mankind your care
And dish them out their bill o' fare
Auld Scotland wants no skinking ware
That jaups in luggies
5
But, if ye wish her grateful prayer
Gie her a haggis!
Still ere

Yvonne stood there silently,
the roar of the plane still in her ears,
the buffeting of wind and rain in her face as they left the
[sea behind; in her mind's eye the roads before were still climbing and dropping,
5
the little towns shakily passed with their humped churches,
the cloudless sky glowed toward the east and there was the sudden
onslaught of sunlight
while the earth turned, yet in shadow,
then mountains filed on mountain,
10
a river flashed and was gone,
a gorge wound darkly beneath,
the volcanoes wheeled into view from nowhere
And Quahuanhuac with all its cobalt swimming pools
rose stupidly to melt them, Quahuanhuac, her town of
cold mountain water swiftly running.

ENGLAND

Cold Roast Hamlet Blues, Blubberhouses Blues, Ugley Blues,
Hard to come by Blues, Make-em Rich Blues,
Tadley God Help Us Blues, Little in sight blues,
Wide-Open Blues, King Edward Horsenail Blues,
5
Shippobottom Blues, Wig-wig Blues. Leaping Wild
Blues. [?!Penny]-come-quick Blues.
No prayer for the people,
And no curses either;
The soaring steeple
should be a shaft rather.

It's damp in the well:
and its bold on the steeple
and its cold on the wire
where the bullets must ripple.

Crammed in heaven or hell
it is wiser to tipple
Much wiser to tipple than topple, sir, better,
to tipple than topple.

-- My two hands broke in two: and they
broke me!
Our hands were broken anyway, but
the thumbs

Said this: at least we are here with
our two
Cool moons, unclench those tyrant fathers
as you will

... We waited long for you to do something good
But though we had no songs we still are spokesmen
And what we wish to speak neither is little nor rough
Perhaps it is in southeastern port,
Davenport, Samarkand

-- and, if you are lost, well, Billy-be-damned,
You are at a loss anyway,—with wine?—
but yet thumbs were once
fingers...

-- and we were the great

Poets are Godlike in that they
May write their agonies away

But most are mute; and in their hearts
Expression moves by fits and starts.

Or not at all: yet greater these,
And greater still their agonies,

Who no assuagement have, nor light
Save that which moves our Lord himself to write.
APPENDIX C:
THE ANNOTATION OF LOWRY'S POETRY: A PROLEGOMENON

To date, only one volume of explanatory annotations of Lowry's work has been published: Ackerley and Clipper's A Companion to Under the Volcano (U.B.C. Press, 1984). In their preface to this volume, although they refer only to Under the Volcano, the authors accurately identify the difficulties of annotating Lowry's work:

Perhaps the greatest problem in writing these notes was knowing where to stop, for with a writer as introspective and discursive as Lowry there is no end to what may be brought out of the bottomless bag of allusions. (x)

Lowry is widely recognized as an allusive writer: his works are encyclopaedic, autobiographical, and, by his own admission, heavily indebted to other writers. The extent of annotation necessary simply to comprehend the text, previous to any attempt to analyze it critically, is daunting to prospective editors and readers alike. The complexity of what may be called Lowry's imaginative universe—that set of beliefs, theories, reading, conditioning, fears, knowledge, snobberies, insecurities, and inconsistencies that informed his life and art—is equally evident in the poetry as in the fiction. In fact, what is noteworthy about so many of the explanatory notes to the Volcano is their direct relevance to the poetry, a transfer that also operates in the opposite direction.

A detailed set of annotations for each poem was originally planned to accompany this edition at the dissertational stage. However, the additional editorial burden of collating,
transcribing, dating, and analyzing the dramatically increased number of located poems has necessitated the postponement of full-scale annotation until the published edition. The accurate presentation of a complete scholarly text of the poems seemed a more immediate priority at this stage than an annotated commentary.

Lowry's poems, however, no less than his prose, call for elucidation, as any informed reader will instantly recognize; and this Appendix is intended to be a sampler of the kind and extensiveness of the annotation envisioned in the published edition. Taxonomically, the annotations, which are here limited to the poems in The Lighthouse Invites the Storm, fall into four basic categories of allusion or direct references:

1. **Biographical**: references to specific events, persons, relationships, and locations associated with Lowry.

2. **Literary and Artistic**: allusions to or direct quotations, even borrowings, from other classical or modern literary works, including reflexive references to his own poetry or prose works.

3. **Informative**: historical, intellectual, and philosophical, including topographical and geographical references not directly relating to Lowry's movements.

4. **Linguistic**: coinages, portmanteau words, unusual diction, including slang and archaisms, and foreign words and phrases.

These sample annotations, which assume a scholarly audience, are intentionally selective. Less intentional are thirteen lacunae included among the one hundred and forty annotations.
Because they indicate the range and something of the difficulties of annotating Lowry's poems, the unidentified allusions are included in the running list. Citations are continuous by poem and line number; the format is self-explanatory.

ANNOTATIONS FOR

THE LIGHTHOUSE INVITES THE STORM

Epigraph. Unidentified.


15:2: Peer Gynt. Title character, verse play (1867) by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). Lowry borrows heavily from the play throughout the Lighthouse.

15:30: Habes. Or "Habesch," the Arabic word for Abyssinia.


15:40: Ab esse ad possess. Latin, "from being to possibility." In Peer Gynt, the quote reads "ab esse ad posse et cetera" (IV.v.), perhaps referring to the logical principle "ab esse ad posse valet, ab posse ad esse non valet consequentia"--it is permissible to argue from fact to possibility, but not the reverse. Lowry's pun enhances the theme of commercialism in the poem.

15:43: Hall..King. In Peer Gynt, the home of the troll king of the mountains, whose daughter Peer seduces and abandons.

15:44: Noah's...Ark. Probably alludes to an old riddle. Q. What ass brayed so loudly that everyone in the world could hear it? A. The ass on Noah's ark.


15:95: Casino-Palace. Town in southeastern Australia, just south of Brisbane.

15:95: Bab-el-Mandeb. Strait at the southern tip of the Red Sea; separates Africa and Asia.
15:96: **Tehuantepec.** Mexican town in the southern state of Tehuantepec.

15:97: **Canaan.** Low-lying portion of the Israelites' promised land along the Jordon River. Also, river in New Brunswick, Canada.

15:124: **Solveig, Aase.** Solveig: Peer Gynt's faithful lover. Aase: his mother, whom he set on a roof in order to prevent her from intruding in his mischief.


15:147: **Lorbrulgrud.** Unidentified.

15:150: **Cape Horn.** Southern point of Horn Island, off Tierra del Fuego, the southern extremity of South America. The cliffs at Cape Horn reach 600 ft.

15:151: **Aldeberan.** A star in the constellation Taurus. One of the twenty brightest stars in the sky.

16:title: **Oaxaca.** Oaxaca de Juarez, capital of the Mexican state Oaxaca de Juarez.

16:1: **Martin. Case, Dr. Martin (1905-1978).** Lowry’s Cambridge friend, along with his two brothers Dr. Robert Alfred Martin Case (1915-), and Dr. Ralph Martin Case (1908-).

16:9: **Selah.** Hebrew. A pause in music or a liturgy.


16:15: **Nyasaland.** Protectorate in East Central Africa, now part of Mozambique.

16:40: **Lawrence.** David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930). English novelist. The reference is to his *The Plumed Serpent* (1926).

16:41: **Chingarn.** Spanish. To rape, to fuck. An obscenity.

16:50: **Wasserman.** The Bordet-Wasserman test examines blood serum and spinal fluid for active syphilis.

16:59: floribundia. Several varieties of rose bushes.

16:73: Margaret. Probably Martin Case's first wife, who died in Kenya years after she and Dr. Case were divorced.

17:3: Papegaai. Unidentified. Perhaps a Hawaiian liquor?

17:3: Mezcal, Hennessey, Cerveza. Mezcal: a colourless Mexican liquor distilled from the leaves of the maguey plant after they have been roasted and fermented. Hennessey: a cognac manufactured by Schieffelin & Co. Cerveza: Spanish for beer.


20:7: Trujillo. Cities in Colombia, Honduras, Peru, Spain, and Venezuela; the 1937 date, and the Lighthouse's Spanish Civil War theme, make Spain the likely reference.

20:12: Tortu. Tartu University, Tartu, Estonia. See the Consul's similar passage UV, 61.

21:3: He who...well. Unidentified.


24:8: From the town...destroy. Cp. UV, 132.


25:title: Cuautla. Second largest city in the Mexican state of Morelos, 20 km southeast of Cuernavaca.

25:1: This ticking. See UV, 231-232.


36:4: Oswald. Character in Ibsen’s Ghosts (1881). Oswald Alving, reduced to imbecility by inherited syphilis, cries out to his mother for the sun at the end of the play.

37:1-2: The gentleness...fragment. From Percy Bysshe Shelley’s (1792-1822) "Rain" (1821):

    when
    The gentleness of rain is in the wind,
    But all the earth and all the leaves are dry.


38:5: Tierra del Fuego. Southern tip of South American peninsula.


39:9: Cyclops. Greek mythology. A giant creature with one eye in the middle of its forehead, who, whether working as smiths or shepherds, devoured humans.


45:4: Rydal. Mount Rydal, near Wordsworth’s home in Cumberland.

45:5: The Ohio. On the manuscript, beside this line, in Lowry’s hand, appears "Dark as." On pages 6-7 of Dark as the Grave, Wilderness recounts having left San Francisco aboard the Pennsylvania in September 1936. The Pennsylvania is also mentioned in UV, 48. Ackerley and Clipper, 77, identify this ship as sailing between west coast ports in the 1930s.
45:14: **Aeolus Dowson.** Roman mythology. Aeolus, King of the Aeolian Islands, was appointed by Jupiter to be the keeper of the winds. Ernest Christopher Dowson (1867-1900), English Decadent poet of the 1890s. Line 15 alludes to his "Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae Sub Regno Cynarae," line 19.


47:3: **Bellevue.** New York City hospital for indigents. Lowry's alcoholism caused Jan Gabrial to commit him there in 1935.

47:6: **Planchette.** Small heart-shaped board supported by two castors and a vertical pencil, believed to produce automatic writing when moved lightly across a surface.

47:7: **Raspail.** Unidentified.

47:7: **Bal musette.** Ball at which one dances to the accordion.

47:14: **Hebephrene.** A type of schizophrenia which results in inappropriate emotional responses, bizarre behaviour, and delusions.

50:title: **Uruapan.** Uruapan del Progreso, a city in Michoacan state, Mexico.

52:2: **Chatterton, Chesterfield.** Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), English Gothic revival poet. Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773), intimate of Swift and Pope, patron to Samuel Johnson. Chesterfield, English city in Derbyshire, about 30 km northwest of Nottingham.

54:7: **Drunkard's rigadoon.** In *Dark as the Grave*, Wilderness has written a novel called *The Valley of the Shadow of Death*, which stands for Lowry's own *UV*. Drunkard's Rigadoon is the novel in *Dark as the Grave* which represents Charles Jackson's *The Lost Weekend* (1944), a novel about a drunk, which Lowry regarded scathingly, but also which he felt stole some of *UV*’s thunder.

61:12-13: **Just once...May.** Refrain which appears in *UV*, 45, as "The Strauss Song" Yvonne and the Consul once sang. It is "Allerseelen" (1882), the eighth and final song of *Opus 10* by Richard Strauss (1864-1949). Sets to music the words of Austrian poet Herman von Gilm (1812-1864). The poem makes reference to the belief that on 2 November—All Souls Day—the dead communicate with the living.


65:9: **de Maupassant.** Guy de Henry-Rene-Albert de Maupassant (1850-1893). French short story writer, whose syphilis—probably brought on by his fascination with brothels—caused him to become insane during the last year of his life.
66:9: Ixtaccihuatl, Popocatepetl. Neighbouring volcanoes about 50 km east of Cuernavaca. Figure prominently in UV.


66:13: Belawan. Small coastal city in Indonesia, about 600 km north of Saigon along the Strait of Malacca.


68:6: Carlist. Carlism: Spanish political counter-revolutionary movement which supported the royal claims of Don Carlos to succeed his brother King Ferdinand VII in 1833.

68:11: Springboart & Tumplingakt. Unidentified.


68:21: Obanguiri-Tchari-Tchad. Presumably Ethiopian villages or posts Rimbaud visited on his voyage into Ogaden.


69:10: Timon. Title character of Shakespeare’s The Life of Timon of Athens (1607-1608). Filled with bitterness, Timon refuses to come to the aid of Athens as she teeters on the brink of destruction.

69:11: Leander. Greek mythology. Youth who falls in love with Hero, priestess of Aphrodite at Sestos. Leander, who lives on the opposite shore of the Hellespont, tries to swim across to be with Hero, but he drowns in the attempt.
70:1: **Fable.** Fable of the shepherd boy who raises the alarm "wolf" to tease his neighbours. When a real wolf appears, no one heeds his cry.

71:1: **King Lear, Oedipus.** Title character, Shakespearean tragedy (1605). Title character, Sophocles’ (496-405 B.C.) *Oedipus Rex.* Oedipus fulfills the Pytho oracle’s prediction that he will unwittingly kill his father and marry his mother, Queen Jocasta.

71:3: **Cordelia.** Lear’s repudiated loyal daughter.

71:7: **Priam.** Beneficient King of Troy during the Trojan War. Father of Hector.

71:14: **Now...Dover.** *King Lear,* III,vii,93-94: Regan: Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell His way to Dover.

73:2: **University City.** In November 1936, the Ciudad Universitaria, situated on a hilltop in north-west Madrid, was the scene of fierce fighting between the attacking Nationalist forces and the entrenched Republicans. With the help of the International Brigades, the Republican forces held the University.


73:15: **Michigan 1951.** Unidentified.


74:4: **Narkeeta, Barnegat.** Unidentified.

74:4: **Massasoit.** Powerful American Indian, leader of the Wampanoag, who lived in the environs of present-day New Haven, Connecticut.

74:7: **Zeus.** Greek mythology. Supreme deity.

74:10: **Helen.** Greek mythology. Helen of Troy, daughter of Zeus and perhaps Leda, wife of Menelaus of Sparta. The Trojan Paris, son of King Priam, fell in love with her. They eloped to Troy, thus causing the Trojan war.

74:10: **Kow-Loon.** Peninsula and city on the Chinese mainland, opposite Hong Kong Island. Part of the British Colony.
74:11: **Agamemnon.** Commander of the Greek forces in the Trojan war, King of Mycenae.

74:14: **Lord Jim.** Title character, novel (1900) by Joseph Conrad (Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski) (1857-1924).

74:15: **Perim.** Rocky barren volcanic island in the Straits of Babed-Mandeb at the southern entrance to the Red Sea.

74:16-17: **Troilus, Cressida, Pandarus.** Troilus, a Trojan, was the tragic lover of Cressida, who eventually fell in love with the Greek, Diomedes. Pandarus, uncle to Cressida, operated as a go-between for Troilus and Cressida.

75:4: **Devil's Kitchen.** Lake in Illinois, U.S.A. The elevation there rises from 600 to 1500 ft.

75:10: **My friend in Wales.** Perhaps Dylan Thomas, whom Lowry had met in 1933 at London's Fitzroy Tavern.

75:14: **And as well...rope.** Perhaps a reference to a Cambridge friend's suicide on 15 November 1929. The hanging death of Paul Leonard (or Launcelot) Charles Fitte haunted Lowry all his life. See especially the "Peter Cordwainer" sections of OF.

77:3: **Lloyds.** Lloyds of London, bank and international insurance market. Also Lloyds Register of Shipping, the world's first and largest ship classification society, originated in 1760, and concerned with construction and maintenance standards.

78:9: **Sampan.** Chinese and Javanese flat-bottomed river boat with sails and oars. Sometimes roofed and used as a houseboat.

78:10: **Samarkand.** City in central Uzbek Republic, Soviet Russia.

79:1: **The Harkness light.** Unidentified.

79:15: **Jonah, Nineveh.** Biblical. From the Book of Jonah, fifth Book of the Minor Prophets. Jonah, commanded by Yaweh to preach to the Ninevites, who lived at Nineveh, an ancient Assyrian city on the Tigris River, refuses and boards a vessel sailing far from Nineveh. A great storm engulfs his ship. The sailors feel a sinner must be on board, and draw lots to find out whose sin has caused the storm. Jonah is found out and tossed into the sea, where he is swallowed by a whale, which spews him out at the exact place where he had begun his disobedient voyage. Jonah then sets out for Nineveh, where he preaches to and converts the Ninevites. He becomes exceedingly angry when Yaweh forgives the repentent Ninevites. Jonah leaves the city, and goes to sit under a gourd-plant in which Yaweh has placed a worm. Jonah feels sorry for the gourd-plant; his pity allows Yaweh to draw an analogy between his pity for the plant and the pity he should feel toward the Ninevites. (Bromiley, G.W., gen. ed. The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, vol. II. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982: 1112-16.)

82:13: Where Tchechov said was peace. An allusion perhaps to The Seagull (1896), by Anton Pavlovich Checkov (1860-1904). The four final lines of the poem are also reminiscent of Sonia's final speech in Uncle Vanya (1899): "We shall rejoice and look back on our present misfortunes with a feeling of tenderness, with a smile--and we shall rest."

83:5: Archangel. Russian city on the right bank of the Northern Dvina River, near its mouth, about 600 km north east of Leningrad.

83:5: Gomorrah. Biblical. One of the five cities on the Plain of Jordan, four of which were destroyed by fire for their sins.


84:2: Trumpington Street. Cambridge street which runs past The Leys School and several of the Colleges, including St. Catharine's.

84:4: Wolfe. James Wolfe (1727-1759), Commander, British Army, who captured Quebec from the Marquis de Montcalm in 1759. The battle took place on the Plains of Abraham, where both commanders died.


86:1: Orpheus. Greek mythology. Orpheus, poet and musician, husband of Eurydice. Eurydice dies of a viper bite, and Orpheus descends into the underworld to find her. Hades agrees to let her follow Orpheus back if he refrains from looking at her until she is in the sunlight. Orpheus glances back beforehand, and returns to the surface of the earth alone.

87:1: The lighthouse...lights it. Cp. UV, 203.

87:15: Icarus. Greek legend. Icarus, son of Daedalus, is imprisoned. His father constructs waxen wings for the escape, but warns his son not to fly too close to the sun or the wings will melt. Icarus does not heed his father's warning, plunges into the sea, and drowns.

89:title: Tashtego. Character in Melville's novel Moby Dick (1851). Tashtego is an American Indian and harpooner for Stubb, the second mate. As the Pequod sinks, Tashtego nails the flag higher on the mast.


90:33: Saturn. Perhaps a reference to the Roman religion's week-long feast of Saturnalia?
93:1-2: Cain, Abel, Adam. Biblical. Adam, first man on earth. Cain is Adam’s first son, Abel is second. Cain slays Abel, the righteous son.

93:3: Ishmael. Narrator of Melville’s *Moby Dick*.

93:4: New Bedford. In New Bedford, where Ishmael goes after he has decided to ship out, he is forced to share a bed with a harpooner, Queequeg, who offers him an embalmed head, and later accompanies Ishmael on the Pequod.

93:5: Hoboken. City in New Jersey, just north of Jersey City at the mouth of the Hudson River.


94:21: Mount Ararat. Mountain and extinct volcano in eastern Turkey, believed to be the landing place of Noah’s Ark.


95:12: Christian, Despond. John Bunyan’s (1628-1688) *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678). Christian is the protagonist who must succeed in various allegorical quests before reaching the Celestial City. One of his tasks is to get through the Slough of Despond.

95:2: Crusoe. Title character of Daniel Defoe’s (1661-1731) novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Friday, a native whom Crusoe discovers on his deserted island, becomes his right-hand man.

APPENDIX D: CORRESPONDENCE PAPER CHART

This paper chart is intended as an aid in dating Lowry's poetic manuscripts and typescripts. Restricted to papers preserved in U.B.C.'s collection of Lowry's outgoing correspondence, it cannot be regarded as definitive. However, because such a high proportion of Lowry's outgoing correspondence is undated, paper evidence often provides the only clue for accurately placing the manuscripts in a chronological sequence. The chart is included as a convenience to Lowry scholars working on his manuscripts, who do not have ready access to the U.B.C. collection, and who may wish to compare for purposes of dating their manuscript papers with those in the outgoing letters.

The chart is organized by year. If no paper colour is listed, the paper is white. Type is black unless otherwise stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAPER</th>
<th>INSCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unmarked 8 1/2 x 11&quot;</td>
<td>pica type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue-lined, pink-margined (on one side) 8 1/2 x 11&quot;</td>
<td>pencil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[?Xochixitco] Bond 8 1/2 x 11&quot;</td>
<td>black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercantile Bond 8 1/2 x 11&quot; (Hotel Francia, Oaxaca letterhead)</td>
<td>black ink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blue-lined notebook paper 5 1/2 x 7&quot;</td>
<td>analine pencil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1938

blue-lined notebook paper 8 x 10"  
pencil
blue-lined notebook paper 5 1/2 x 7"  
analine pencil

1939

unmarked thin 8 1/2 x 11"  
green ink; elite type
blue letter paper 8 x 10"  
black ink; pencil
unmarked thick 8 1/2 x 11"  
black ink; pencil
newsprint blue-lined notebook paper 7 x 9 1/4"  
black ink; pencil

1940

NOTE: 8 1/2 x 11" unmarked newsprint bearing various types of inscription regularly appears in Lowry’s outgoing correspondence and manuscripts for the 1940-54 Dollarton period. Because of its frequent appearance, this paper has not been included in the chart.

Colonial Bond 8 1/2 x 11"  
pencil; pica type
Wilson Stationary 8 1/2 x 11"  
blue pica type
blue-lined pink-margin notebook paper 7 x 9 1/4"  
pencil
unmarked thick 8 1/2 x 11"  
pica type

1942

Great West Bond 8 1/2 x 11"  
pica type

1944

Cheneaux Bond 8 1/2 x 11"  
analine pencil
1945
blue-lined pink-margined notebook paper 7 x 9 1/4"
pencil
blank newsprint notebook paper 7 x 9 1/4"
pica type

1946
blue-lined pink-margined notebook paper 7 x 9 1/4"
black ink; pencil
illegible watermark in flowing script extremely thin 8 1/2 x 11"
pencil
unmarked 8 1/2 x 11" two ring black ink; pica type
unmarked 8 1/2 x 11"
black ink; pica type
blank blue notebook paper 3 1/8 x 4 3/4"
pencil
blank notebook paper 3 x 5"
pencil

1947
blue-lined notebook paper 3 1/4 x 5 1/2"
pencil
illegible watermark 8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
Victory Bond (large watermark) 8 1/2 x 11"
pencil; pica type
Great West Bond 8 1/2 x 14"
pencil
unmarked 8 1/2 x 11"
pica

1948
blue-lined notebook paper 3 1/4 x 5 1/2"
pencil
1949
Cheneaux Bond 8 1/2 x 11"
unmarked thick 8 1/2 x 11"
blue ink; pica type
pencil

1950
Rockland Bond 8 1/2 x 11"
blank blue notebook paper
3 1/4 x 4 3/4"
pica type
pencil
unmarked thick 8 1/2 x 11"
pencil
unmarked 8 x 10" torn from pad
pencil

1951
unmarked thick 8 1/2 x 11"
pencil
Rockland Bond 8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
Genoa Bond 8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
unmarked 8 1/2 x 11"
pica
thick unmarked 8 x 10" torn from pad
blue ink
Victory Bond (large watermark)
8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
thin 5 3/4 x 8 1/2" torn from pad
blue ink

1952
Victory Bond (small watermark)
8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
Cheneaux Bond 8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
thick 8 x 10" torn from pad
pica type
unmarked 8 1/2 x 11"
pica type
thick 8 x 10 torn from pad
blue ink
1953

unmarked 8 1/2 x 11"
blank yellow notebook paper
3 1/8 x 4 3/4"
thick 8 x 10" torn from pad
5 1/2 x 7 1/4" torn from pad
Bell-Fast Bond 8 1/2 x 11"
unmarked 8 x 10"

1954

unmarked 8 x 10" torn from pad
thick 8 x 10" torn from pad
Extra Strong Bond 8 3/4 x 11 1/4"

1955

Extra Strong Bond 8 3/4 x 11 1/4"
blue-lined notebook paper
3 1/4 x 5 3/4"
thick unmarked 6 x 8 1/4"
illegible watermark 9 1/4 x 11 1/2"

1956

blank notebook 3 3/4 x 5"
blank notebook 5 1/4 x 7"
Waterton Bond 8 x 10"
Plantagenet Bond 8 1/2 x 11''
unmarked 8 1/2 x 11''
unmarked 8 x 10''
black ink; elite type
pencil
pica type
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B SECONDARY MATERIAL

1 Bibliography


2 Biography


3 Criticism


INDICES

There are three alphabetical indices: for poems identified by first line, for poems identified by title, and for poems retitled by Birney. In the first two indices, Birney's titles appear in square brackets. The entries are keyed by poem number.

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"Need it be so niggardly of meaning too"
"Never in a comedian's life have I laughed till then"
"Never seek to tell thy stove"
"No prayer for the people"
"No road in existence strikes such terror"

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"No wonder it feared peace, the knees of the years"
"Not all of us were heroes said my brother wit"
"Oh and"
"Oh gentle Jesus of the hymnal once"
"Oh love"
"Oh my dear good lost schoolmates, no comrades"
"Oh poor Mary Ann"
"Oh, pyre of Bierce and springboard of Hart Crane"
"Oh Storms"
"Oh the Harteebeeste is dear to us"
"Oh welcome Home"
"Old Blake was warm, he got down to the hub"
"On board the Matsue Maru"
"Outside was the roar of the sea and the darkness"
"Pacific is a feeble symbol of death"
"Pigling, pigling, burning bland"
"Pines write a Chinese poem upon the white-gold sun"
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