New Wave Canada

Edited by Raymond Souster

Contact Press

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THE NEW *Explosion* IN CANADIAN POETRY

Edited with an introduction and
working magazine bibliography by
RAYMOND SOUSTER

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New Wave Canada

To

W. W. E. ROSS

the first modern Canadian poet

Some of the poems in this anthology first appeared in the following publications:

Alphabet, Blew Ointment, Canadian Forum, Edge, El Corno Emplumado, Fiddlehead, Flour, Ganglia, Island, Kayak, Kiss, Lines, Mitre, Niagara Frontier Review, Once, Paris Review, Potlach, Prism International, Quarry, Sum, Tamarack Review, The Crier, The Open Letter, The Resuscitator, Tish, Tlaloc, Volume 63, Wild Dog and 'the magazine of further studies'.

From Erik Satie's Notes to the Music—Island Press, Toronto (1965).
Shoot Low Sheriff, They're Riding Shetland Ponies—Ottawa (1965).
Lardeau—Island Press, Toronto (1965).
White Lunch—Periwinkle Press, Vancouver (1964).
The Connexions—Oyez Press, Berkeley, California (1966).

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CONTENTS

FRED WAH (b. 1939)

o *THE FIRE*

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

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

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

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

        so soon
        it crowned the twenty-five yards
        & I'm running
            to catch a ride out
        with the pump truck but
            the hose is caught, round a stump

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

        Beautiful

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

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

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

∘ LARDEAU / SUMMER 1964

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

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

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

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

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

o *GOLD HILL*

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

o *THEY ARE BURNING*

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

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

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

o *THE COLD SNOW FEET*

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

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

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

No

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

o *MOUNTAIN*

Mountain that has come over me in my youth
Mountain green grey orange of colored dreams
darkest hours of no distance
Mountain full of creeks ravines of rock
and pasture meadow snow white ridges humps of granite
ice springs trails twigs stumps sticks leaves moss
shit of bear deer balls rabbit shit
shifts and cracks of glaciation mineral
O Mountain
that has hung over me in these years of fiery desire burns on your sides
your many crotches
rocked
and treed in silence from the winds
Mountain many voices nameless curves and pocked in shadows
not wild but smooth
your instant flats flat walls of rock
your troughs of shale and bits
soft summer glacier snow
the melting edge of rounded stone
and cutting of your height the clouds
a jagged blue
your nights your nights alone
your winds your winds your grass
your lying slopes your holes your traps
quick blurs with sweat of dreams and
Mountain poem of life [climbs
true and real
reeling Mountain burning mind

stand word
stand
letter
voice in whisper secret repeating cries
stand in rock stretch out
in all ways to thettimber line
spread over all valleys run cool the waters down
from luminous white snows
your cracks
O creek song flow always an utter pure of coolness
spring from the rocks
sing in the hot thirst my sticky tongue
my jaw catch below the bridge
Yes my jaw for your waters hangs
catch of water sooth the sweat
sweet cold on teeth in flow and eddy
in swirl my gut it fills and bloats with fluid Mountain

I stand the upright Mountain
at its base I stand in roads in valleys
in standing desire its quieting gravel ways
stand roots upturned at the roadside
turn in and twist deeper the head's nerves
and gentle sinking stump my body
warm
I look out at it to its tree branching
boughs birds' wings
flap in green in sun light light brown needles
ground is covered dried shit of deer bed
old
the old tree stand my axe is melting
in bite the grain of the trunk
burning the fire down to its roots black the bark hard
the upright tree the Mountain's burn

look out at it
stand in it turn cover the ground
take off the thought's eyes
go in
go in
go in the flaming base
sink in the skins of the Mountain's earth
along the road
far from the road
in gravel
stand through the twist in desire the gravelled road inward
to the base of the upright Mountain
its quiet burning
its evening still
its my eyes have gone my eyes my birds' wings
fluttering
O Mountain stand is set my roots the sun is in my legs

& Birds of the Mountain lift me
fill in my eyes the dark walled places of the sides
the moving airs on rock push up the faces
to the edge climb
and the birds on the way out
hang
the air which is their own
keep the shape of Mountain
and pull at my arms the edge of ice or rock
and pull out and out on the cool rise swinging
in blue secret glacier crystal
eyes
the distant eyes the dark down feathered holes
for eyes
fill out the spaces to the top of Mountain's
dry ridges the iced ridges
the black crevices green valleys

O shoulders beaks wings feet boots

push out

BENT BENT

the beat my self my heart's

Bear system Fur quivering at the tree's base

not even a growl the gut flowing in cloud

the vaporous red dream the horse's cock

by the field the river

erect going to mount the mare

beating

in the valleys the hot afternoon

and animals fucking

their mountains

Ya Fur Fur Fur

o *THE FIGURING*

in your mother's garden
last summer
the peas
& the feel of a pod in my hand
there were bells clanging
& the uncovering
separating
shells

we came down
the west side
of the continent
believing it was ocean
it was land
leaving our forests
(our forests
& turned left
on a desert
at moonlight
alone

the sound
in my throat
half stuck
ringing song-like
in the trees
(the proof is
was what
once was

& you naked
in the back seat
sleeping
the flat headlights
on either side
the cacti
became darknesses
rising
in the heat
the hot flatness
is us naked
here
(once
the trees hid us
from the moon & the lake
& I filled you

sweet granite boulders
which will suck this step
back quick
to the rock's warmth
& melt at the snow's
edge
which
is called
into the crevasse
by thinking back

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

miles
is what was
the roadsign says

(said) when looking back-
wards back up the road
where I'd come from
with nothing from the land with me
& I'm all there is here
& saying that is too hard
is like trying to
think mountain-like
add up, figure
out
the hazyness
our forests
our nakedness
& a way of looking at signposts
all myself
turning back into
standing
up
along the pea-vines
& peeling them
they rolled into the bowl
following one, one, one,
clanging bell-like
in my throat
on the desert.

SONG FOR SALLY

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

hands fumble the smock
on hips which are not yr own
& walk in silence smoothly
yr thin legs
through the dark you
dream of love lust
pulls
      you could have
cut into Mallorca
forgot about mother or
had some seacoast poet
play blues on spanish guitar
for you

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

o *EYES*

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

his many
many other
bignesses
his eyes
come into
his eyes, look
at you, you
look back
howling
at the moon
in the morning
the moon
his big sky-eye

& wooing
at the sun
dog
with three legs
behind you
when you run he looks

for the stick you've thrown
hit

all falls into his eyes

his paws
his other
or
eyes are

his many
many other

A WORKING MAGAZINE BIBLIOGRAPHY

ALPHABET	James Reaney	276 Huron Street, London, Ontario.
BLEW OINTMENT	Bill Bissett	Vancouver, B.C.
CANADIAN FORUM	Milton Wilson	30 Front Street West, Toronto.
CANADIAN LITERATURE	George Woodcock	University of B.C., Vancouver 8.
DELTA	Louis Dudek	3476 Vendome Avenue, Montreal.
EDGE	Henry Beissel	Box 4067, Edmonton, Alberta.
EVIDENCE	Alan Bevan	Toronto
FIDDLEHEAD	Fred Cogswell	Dept. of English, University of N.B.
FLOUR	Bohemian Embassy	7 St. Nicholas Street, Toronto.
GANGLIA	bp Nichol & David Aylward	477 Brunswick Avenue, Toronto.
IMAGO	George Bowering	English Dept., University of Alberta, Calgary.
ISLAND	Victor Coleman	109 Cowan Avenue, Toronto 3.
MOTION	Robert Hogg & David Cull	(defunct prose newsletter).
MOUNTAIN	David McFadden	(not seen recently)
OPEN LETTER	Frank Davey, &c	Conservcol, Royal Roads, Victoria.
PRISM INTERNATIONAL	Jacob Zilber	c/o Creative Writing Dept., U.B.C.
SUM	Fred Wah	c/o English Dept., SUNYAB, Buffalo, N.Y.
TAMARACK REVIEW	J.R. Colombo, &c	Box 159, Station K, Toronto.
TISH	Dan McLeod	2527 West 37th Avenue, Vancouver 13
VOLUME 63	Nelson Ball & S.G. Buri	Board of Publications, University of Waterloo.
WEED	Nelson Ball	22 Young Street, Kitchener, Ontario.
YES	Michael Gnarowski	English Dept., Lakehead College, Port Arthur.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

DAPHNE BUCKLE (b. 1942)

Though born in Melbourne, Australia, considers herself essentially rooted in Vancouver where she attended U.B.C. and co-edited (1963-64) the poetry newsletter TISH. Has published a novella (Evidence 6), and is currently completing an intricate not so lengthy novel based on a fairy tale. Presently taking classes and working at Indiana University, where her husband is studying Psychology.

VICTOR COLEMAN (b. 1944)

"I was born, in Toronto, under Virgo. In '60-61 I dropped out of high school, & home; moved in with three madmen on an island in Toronto's bay; it was winter & we had to nightly siphon all our warmth from neighbouring oil drums. One day I picked up Journey to Love & The Desert Music at the public library and soon after began to siphon Dr Williams' warmth.

I live in Toronto with my wife & two children; work in the production department of Oxford University Press; edit the magazine ISLAND and publish Island Press books. I plan to continue."

DAVID CULL (b. 1942)

Born in Comox, B.C. Has lived mostly in Vancouver until 1964, since then in a variety of locations. At the moment, having recently left the English Dept. of the State U. of New York at Buffalo, he is learning how to fly in Ottawa.

"...my poems here are mainly fragments, my attempts to order (and at least by that much understand) what's happening."

SCOTT DAVIS (b. 1938)

Born in Toronto, where he attended public and high schools, and wasted four years in various clerical capacities. In 1962 he began writing (journals, poems, diatribes and love letters) and has published in FLOUR. He is currently an editor of ISLAND, living and working in Toronto with his wife and opinions.

DAVID DAWSON (b. 1942)

Born in Vancouver. B.A. and M.A. from U.B.C. A former editor of TISH.

"Presently writing, teaching, and loving."

GERRY GILBERT (b. 1936)

"I'm 29. I guess the first time I tried to get something (poem) spoken--was for Aunt Jean when she had Bruce, when I was 16 or 17. The 2nd time was for Mr. Oates & Miss Higginbottom, English teachers. The 3rd time was for Mel LaFollette, poet. I was 18 or 19. I listened to the stage series on Sunday nights and things like Shakespeare on Wednesdays. Uncle Bobby had turned me on to Henry Miller & WC Williams' Autobiography, and I read the 1/2 of S. Beckett around then. Camus got snowed under for a few years by R.H. Blyth's translations of haiku, and his commentaries (so I also got to read Wordsworth). 22 years old. Masters who have made life seem valuable and worth (more) work (than I've done) to be skillful with: Catherine Capstick, Bernard Leach, Robert Creeley, Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg, John Cage, Ralph Gilbert & Betty Gilbert. One way or another they all shook me up."

E. LAKSHMI GILL (b. 1943)

Born in Manila, Philippines. Now teaching at Notre Dame University, Nelson,B.C. "My father is from India, my mother from the Philippines. Up to my 15th years, studied in a private convent school; 1959, began studies at Notre Dame College in Belmont, California, later transferred to Western Washington State College in Bellingham, Washington. Took up M.A. at U.B.C. under Dr.Earle Birney as my advisor. Early poetry influenced by Rabindranath Tagore.

WILLIAM HAWKINS (b. 1940)

"What's to say in a biography? All my life I've worried about the propriety of our definitions. Because the times are as they are I've lived in fear, movies my only escape, economics keeping me from more drugs, booze & girlies than I was able (meagre, really) to steal. I have stolen every single idea I have heard, transposing them into my own terms. A wife & two children share my scene & seem happy. I write poems because I like to.
Living now in Ottawa.

ROBERT HOGG (b. 1942)

Born in Edmonton. At the age of nine moved to a ranch in the Cariboo where his family spent the next 21/2 years. In the Fall of 1953 they moved to the Fraser Valley; and in 1960 Robert moved to Vancouver, where he attended the University of British Columbia until he graduated with a B.A. in the Spring of 1964. He is now working towards his doctorate at the State University of New York at Buffalo. His first books of poems, "The Connexions", was published by Oyez Press in Berkely, California (Winter '65-66).

GEORGE JONAS (b. 1935)

Born in Budapest, Hungary. Studied drama, and worked in broadcasting and theatre there. Since 1957 has been living in Toronto where he works as an editor for the C.B.C. Besides poetry, he has written some radio and TV plays, magazine articles and short stories, and the libretto for a one-act opera. He has also contributed to the annual Toronto stage revue Spring Thaw, and writes lyrics for singers and pop entertainers.

BARRY LORD (b. 1939)

"Born in Hamilton, began writing poetry in 1957. Poems ca. 1960-63 vernacular and/or rhetorical due to coffee-house readings and influences of Whitman and Ginsberg. Developed present style in Vancouver, 1963-64, from reading contemporary Americans, conversation with Roy Kiyooka, the curious example of Bill Bissett and my own need to clarify. Victor Coleman's recent encouragement helpful. Live and work as art historian, critic and curator in Saint John,N.B."

ROY MacSKIMMING (b. 1944)

"After enjoyable childhood in Ottawa began writing poems. Went to University of Toronto to study history and anthropology, but left after two years for Europe, living in London, Paris and on the Spanish island of Formentera. Published Shoot Low Sheriff, They're Riding Shetland Ponies, WITH Wm. Hawkins in 1964. Currently working in a Toronto publishing house."

DAVID McFADDEN (b. 1940)

"I was born in Hamilton, Ontario, at 4:03 p.m., Friday, October 11th, 1940, and haven't known a moment's peace since. Presently am living about three miles east of the hospital in which I was born. My wife and daughter were also born in the same hospital; wife, in 1940, and daughter in 1964. My wife was born the same day I was but a few hours earlier. I also have a brother, born in 1945, and friend, 1938."

He also works for the Hamilton Spectator and was the editor of Mountain.

bp NICHOL (b. 1944)

Born in Vancouver. Attended U.B.C. for a year, and taught school in Coquitlam for part of a year. Moved to Toronto in 1963. At present employed at the University of Toronto library. Co-editor of a new magazine of verse, Ganglia.

"I consider myself a product of the Vancouver poetry movement having incubated there."

MICHAEL ONDAATJE (b. 1943)

Born in Ceylon where he lived until he was 11, when he went to England. He came to Canada in 1962 attending Bishop's University at Lennoxville, Quebec, and graduating from the University of Toronto in 1965. He is at present doing graduate work at Queen's University, Kingston. At Bishop's he won the Ralph Gustafson poetry prize, and at Toronto the Epstein competition for poetry and the E.J. PRATT Gold Medal for poetry. He is married and children keep arriving.

JAMES REID (b. 1941)

"Born in Timmins, Ontario. Early years of life spent among west coast, Banff & Edmonton. Vancouver since 1953, exc. for 10 mo. stay in Cranbrook ('64 & '65). B.A. completed U.B.C. this summer. Will continue in grad school there. Married, no children. Find myself increasingly dissassociated from & disgusted with those who at one time might have been called my peers. Williams no doubt my greatest influence. Equally Olson, & recently Le Roi Jones."

FRED WAH (b. 1939)

Born in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. Has been an associate editor of TISH, and is now editor of Sum and 'The Magazine of Further Studies'. Formerly an editor of The Niagara Frontier Review. Has published a book of poems, Lardeau (Island Press, Toronto, 1965).