

I Wanted To Say Something

Barry McKinnon

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Part 1
The Legacy



pictures in the photo album. children in the
fields and

arrived in October 1908 too late
to build the house. finally moved into a granary
and lived in it for a year

they thumb thru the history and give
us names to place on the distorted shapes (mothers, uncles and
those who've died: photos continue and we all laugh in the
innocence – that it's all past that nothing lasts once the
dream ends.

I trace the ignorance / blunt men
with plump wives
dragging themselves thru prairies
and dust storms
for 5 days from Dowagiac Michigan (1 cent a mile by train
cost us \$27.00 a
piece
until the map said
stop
(or the man had come earlier to take stories
back
about the lovely new land
where we now stand

the land: the farmer's blood erased (someone made business
men of them all. age consumes them and only speech/
chronicles remain to pass down.

the photos:

the train ended here right
by the house. you can see the
men – and there, the crane just past
the house



and here, is it my mother/or my aunt ?
hidden in the grass, the oats
brushing
her shoulders

(who gave this life to me ?

the legacy: pictures/and ignorance and love
to look back
upon:



the obsessions: grandfather, young and an orphan who
later in Chicago washed dishes, who earlier
travelled winter fields and lived in hay stacks
potatoes for food / or so the tale
is told, as he grows old
and remembers the dream

then:



we were sent to orphanages. had
to live with foreigners/ and she's a pretty
sad woman I can tell you/ the old man, my father
came home one night and I was just a boy
upstairs, sleeping, when I heard him drunk
and screaming at my mother/ told her if she
didn't let him in he'd burn the god damn
house down. I'll never forget
never

the dream: the dream lived in the genetic structure
someone promised land or gold (similar
obsessions that somewhere
you could be free thus the migration of F.C.
Dalton and wife Jessie arriving

to the edge, this
land



Jessie Phillips almost 5 years
old

she was to have
children and grow
old
in innocence. a child
by the gate. the river
behind. went with
Fred
and love at 1 cent a
mile got her shoes burnt
up when he tried to
please her
by keeping her
warm

the prairie: the landscape reconstructs itself in my eye. the prairies are not flat. river trenches, with river and trees up to the cliff's edge where the grass begins.

(prairie wool, resembling ancient hair of beasts fallen from their bodies to take root). all land is magic, that it grew in their eyes this way.

conceptions:



they conceived the land as enemy.
nature has no manners. the wind consumes you
then it snows before the difficult
house is built



Oct 3 snow
1914

lived in a granary. cold even
with the stove and me
20 years old and didn't want to lose
my new wife. in the morning would
warm her shoes in the
oven. good thing she had a
nother pair, burnt them one
morning (toes all curled
up



a woman, beloved Jessie in the buggy
with children

drives this surface, the grain (imagine it



bent beneath the wheels, the parallel
tracks converging in the distance
where her husband
works beneath the
sun

she comes to pick him up, the labour
finished

(a man's work from sun to
sun
her work is never done: the caring for men
and children, mother

of these shapes that bend and work in
the grass beyond

the chaos held within her arms

temperature. 30 below. hard wind / a shock against the skin/everything
appears

dead. imagine the family
moving about the yard in bewildered circles:

who leads us now thru the
drifts

and the promise of
everything:

(questions

religion: shouts thru the storm. baby Clair sick
dies from bad milk
and some years later, a daughter:

'the lord works in strange ways' - or raise your
prayer again to cover the anger and the bodies
of those you've loved

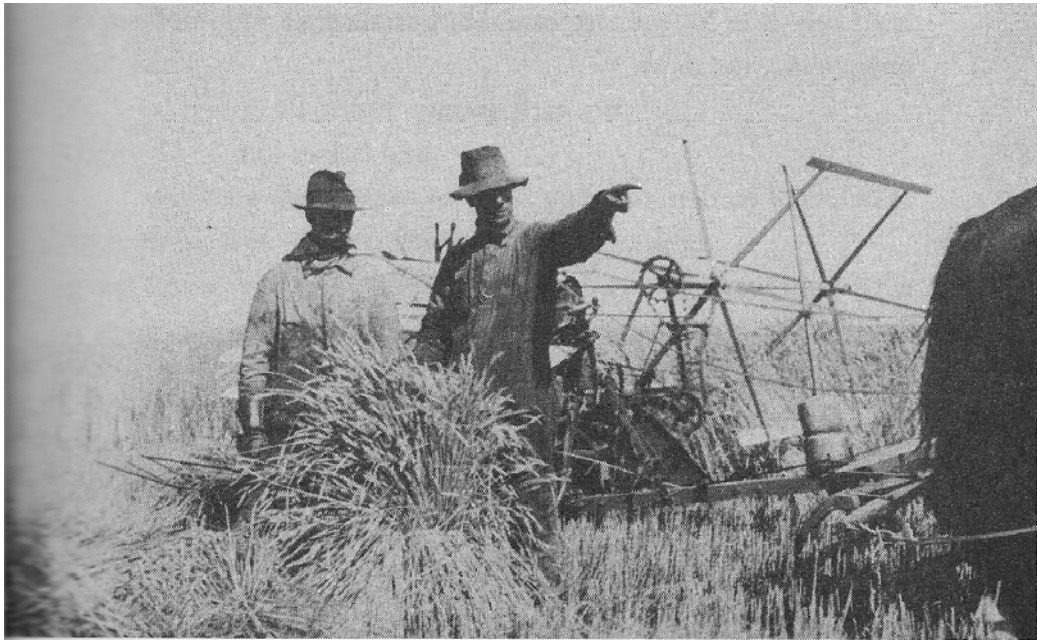


taken January 1917 Edward and Ione
Ione is dead, Ed is dead

they came to conceive the land as enemy and fought
back with god and muscle and stupidity until the first winters
are thru, then spring and the promise enters again, the natural
cycle of trees beginning to bud and green beneath
the slough in the
the hollow

(2 years later, 1910, he got his land/changed
beneath his
hand ...

then, the man's task: horses, ploughs, and hired strangers –
and the fields stretched
natural before him
(the thick soil. the enemy
lying flat
and Indians pushed further east
by the government:



it all begins in innocence: the old news reels,
the chronicles, shots of the plough, and
black earth cut deep
thru the grass
beneath the roots – earth
split in
furrows
a trench for the
seed.

it all begins in innocence: grand father, mother and brothers,
move along the dawn,

the early sweat
and horses too

as beasts of burden, scraping
at the earth

with a purpose
inside the geometry of how a man conceives
the land, all without art or grace
and all meditation lacking

clarity



all meditation lacked clarity: the seasons
complex –

all suffering lacked

clarity

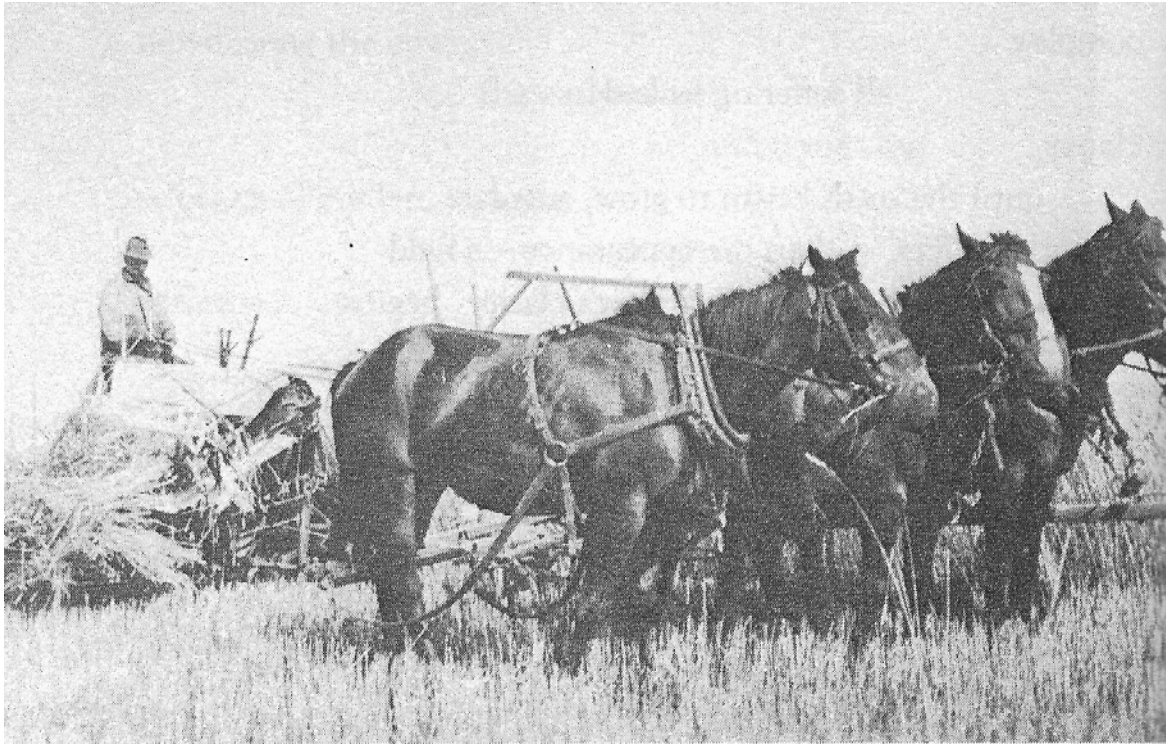
until the seeds began to grow, angular
beneath his feet. then the appearance – a field
grows beneath the sun – the farmer's clarity begins

(plant the seeds row
on row, sing a song
for wheat to grow.

my back is sore, my arms are
too

this is how these fields
grew

(sun and rain and
life is magic/tragic
in your
eye



the map: Dalmede, Alberta: F.C. Dalton's farm: the McKinnon
farm (further east, next to the Indian reserve: the sun sets
always in the west, behind the Rocky Mountains (appearing as
one naked jaw we are in the mouth, then, - sky for the skull
that disappeared. sky without rain takes us back:

1930: the stories of how we were born – the circumstances still
evident and collected in the psyche: starvation, drought, cuss
the god damn land. we are eating gophers and potatoes
dug from sand. and death in the trees. the seed
starved

I emerge to destroy my own dreams
and the tricks of
memory

the separation: angles, squares:
the Indians made
passive: no worship for the land –
no legends left. the land rots –
the unproductively, an
indolent war cry
muffled in the liquor nightmare. cars
rot
in this civilization. they spread
them as images along the roads
near elevators. cars stopped.
the Indian walks away knowing more
than you think in just having
learned to walk
away



photo album:

who were they trying to be – (amidst the chaos
the women, held beneath their clothes with
stiff machinery laced against the skin, forcing
the curves, (women, elegant amidst
the death – maintaining the appearance with
lace, velvet, ivory, the golden locket
containing pictures of mothers who
handed down the legacy

(amidst the chaos and fake
back drop showing rivers and trees and all natural
things – women appearing
strong – elegant and finally admired
in this almanac

as they look out at

you





does a man have to break down. (trace the forces against him

nature allowed the final say,
strikes back against this
order

(in geometric fields,

trees die. no images
grace the eye. the drought – and sky with a
single sun, the air gray. winds
stir with biblical violence and earth
turns to sand

they ate gophers when the going
got tough – or so the stories
go
and all animals took part, finally
in the survival:

the cows are holy
the chickens are holy
the pigs are holy the gophers are holy

as a man breaks down
finally on himself



I begin to speak only of the failure – and difficult
love.

the anger when they tell it. bought a J.I. Case
our first binder for \$87.00. the crop
failed, and no money and the collector
came just doing his job and wanted
the money and we didn't have it. it was around
Christmas time and he said merry
Christmas and gave us extra time
at 10%



a machine grows unlike a tree, or a horse or a family:
recession, depression:

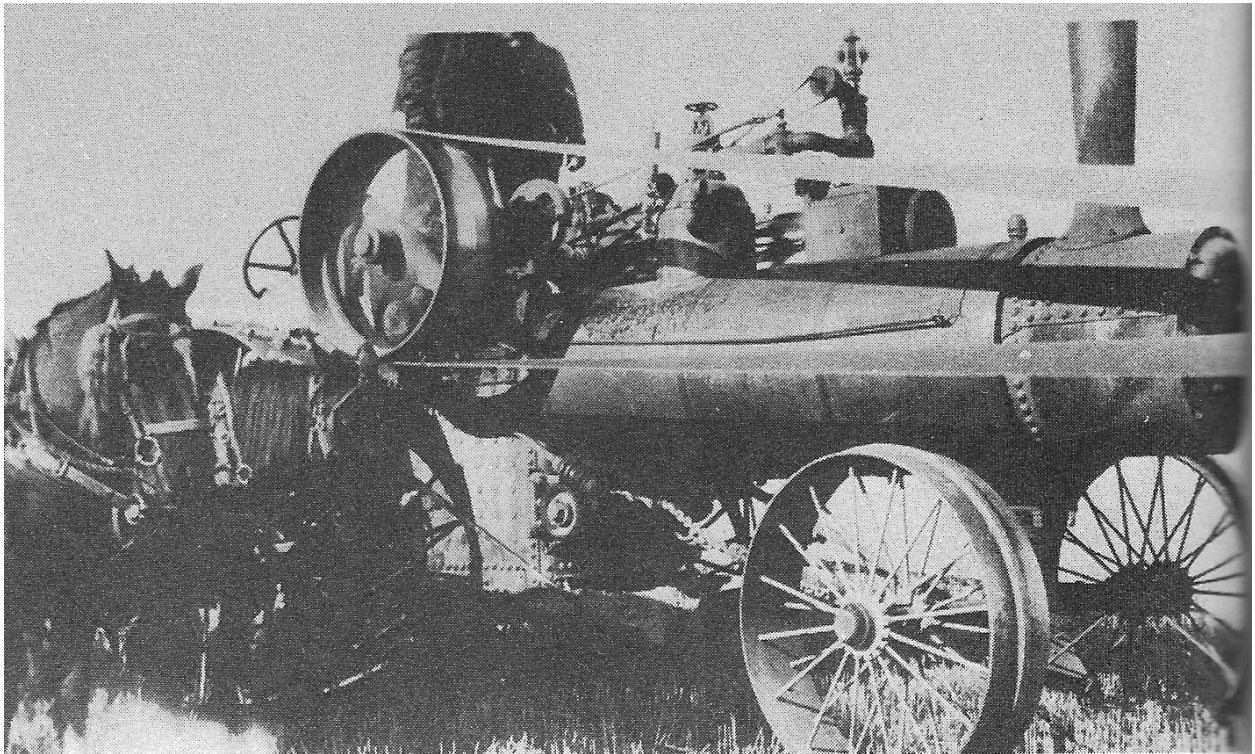
the children are older and watch the father
in the yard amidst the steel: machines appearing as prehistoric
beasts. (angles, bolts, tin, wood, slats with screws to bind
the geometry – to provide the function)

something for
a man's skill – to make it run. the magic – noise/smoke
(children and Indians seek shelter behind the trees, houses – as
animals startled in the haze of this sun, in this afternoon, leave
shattered in their fright – across the prairie, never to return.

the combine:

‘a machine for harvesting and threshing grain.
an association of persons, corporations etc. for
commercial or political purposes’

Webster



(Indians: children: animals)



you didn't have to oil horses / or now the burden is reduced. a man
enters dust and smoke blood mingled
as final sacrament. the prairie
enters the modern age (a brief history in the

span of one man's life – who arrived
with angles and magnificence in his head
and nature stretched before him. (the train grew past
his home and disappeared, as black steel into the
immutable horizon further west:

horse/plough steam/tractor : (photos of

men surviving initial conquests – proud beside
the beast, a tractor, a model A car – and trains loaded with magic
grain: these are the first steps for making bread. worship the
sun and taste its simple eloquence. the clarity of a vitamin made
from rain

that nobody starves - might have redeemed it



starvation takes its forms: was there poetry in it. who was crushed
beneath the laughter – who lived
simple and without tears.

dream: steam: age: they
built the city
from
MUD





and what survives in these eyes: the photos as tangible/frozen
memory –

then the fluid memory – the calendar years
flipped before their eyes, accompanied
with the images: finally there is your aunt hidden
in the oats

(the dream in retrospect: one level whispers
the secret failure

and continued stories as scattered history: sons, daughters
marriage, birth:

the conception and propagation (circles in
their heads,

things as I I

born within a season

counter the mechanical

accuracy: (a boy/Indian/ poet walks

thru this field – the land scape imprinting
on his skin – indelible wind against the
walls where he slept,

seeping into his dream. who

knows why he

cried in the night, (or, to show his
strength as proof he hunted
animals for sport among the willow trees:

in the game he wore a red bandanna, and covered a beer
bottle, for water, with leather, and covered his skin with thin
brown leather

and crawled thru coulees in a dream (kept

all the silence within him, gnawing

as poetry

Part 2

The Moving Photograph

the land

bore me. the cultivated
womb became my
skin. images pushed
inside the eye. the legacy of
elevators and angles and
grass to get lost
in

hear the wind against his
skin

the decay begins as he hears the mystery,
a whisper thru the trees, and voices
in the rooms
below

the way his body moved toward
poetry/
speech to make its measure
and secure the
movement

now
the forms change moving
back thru that country
as first born
growing with dust
in his lungs

and

sadness: where does he want the poem
to go
(thru angular history,
and names, the dates running as
a line
thru our lives

the journey is not
simple

I wanted to say something
is wrong and provide an
alternative – to reclaim the spirit
from the dust, and the sun
to appear clearly on the horizon: to say
the animals are always holy – to rearrange
the fields in natural

ecstasy

the decay: in the corner of the field – a fascination (cars,
threshers, bolts, tin and shattered glass). the
graveyard he
played in

(can't get sentimental over these bones. he shot the
windows out with a 22

and stood near the carcasses, also dragged there,
and watched maggots feed, the birds feed
on them

you

are in this chain then and shoot the windows
out
and eat the literal earth (to make it seem more
real

to make this language
pure

the carcass circles in
the blood

what grew in his eyes was
his life – the way his body moved
and grew within the seasons. all

awkward, as he lived
in this house with this family
in a city, west of where
they all began

eyes to see, ears to
hear, in his mind it all seemed

clear

the way his body moved toward
poetry /
speech to make its measure
and secure the
movement,

the poems begin in his basement room:
innocence / magic / the mystery

speech to discover:

my father – born of the decay, who moved to the city:
another promise/ a dream of gold, that that would secure
you inside the bankruptcy. the stories come
down:

Benjamin, a farm boy, stood amidst
intricate machinery, a city with angular streets and buildings
built of stone. he had his hands and what he'd

learnt

and

all purity

disinherited

as a man searched for
honest work and had to lie to get
it

he was to be

a carpenter and carried his tools in a gunny
sack, and said, I'm a carpenter (and a man, Olaf, a Swede
taught him this trade,

the skill

and the forms
took shape

this house, the room
I slept in, this life I speak of
to discover

the given

it is that movement in and out
of the wilderness, the mystery, and the bringing back of
images, the movement of your life, thru its
specifics:

the house, the father, the basement filled with
water. the bed
you slept in, watching grandma remove her
clothes

I speak to discover, to trace
the lineage,
amidst the photo album, to say I love them as I
inherit this earth from their journey thru it -

the earth: the total city

father of my mother now, old

F.C. Dalton moved to the city – grade 3
education as the final
embarrassment and the dream
receding. he became a real -
estate salesman and would get my mother to write things
for him

but the house: I remember the 3 stories – a castle with
attics to hide in

(the mute history surrounding me – pictures
here/ and remnants of their lives fragments of
the dream I imagine going bad. one window
gave filtered light. the trunks are locked. they
are calling me down

the stairs

it is all shaded here. the darkness on this quiet street with
huge trees I also hid

in

the rain trough. the trimmed grass where the garage
now stands. the rhubarb patch. the bitter in
your mouth. the black hose we drank from. the
dark beneath the porch. the bathroom up stairs.
the tin we pissed in, the sound reaching the rim

we lived in the back. a door opened to the garden. 2 rooms a
mother, a father, 2 sons, a daughter, a dream,
growing within it

we eat popsicles on the veranda. my brother in the hammock,
swaying gently, sometimes falling
there.

the education: was there poetry in it? he picked buffalo beans
by the schoolyard and forgot the alphabet
abcdefghijklmnop...lm...o
and didn't think you had to go
in the afternoon and remembers the woman/ the teacher who
hit him on the back, that mark left
forever

/or

who knows why he cried at night. the confusion of mathematics
in his head:

the preparations, the bluebird sticker on
his card,
the education was
of buffalo beans. and he learns to sing

before he disappears

he is singing in a tree

the birds will not imitate him. so he

imitates them, and looks down thru
leaves, what's left, his life
past before him in images, the dissolving shapes, without
words or chronology. but with love
to encompass it

innocence to surround it as a container/this life
to seek its own level
of starvation

nothing is understood
they loved me as they could and they consume the pain
of all consequences

while he sings in a tree
the birds imitate him
naturally. songs in the wilderness/only
sound/ of tears, the
laughter thru the sickness and the

love

when he fell from the tree they said
it was the resemblance of
his poetry

to sing for the land
to return with its gifts
of simplicity, sing for its strength, that
it grew inside him as the fluidity, that
he grew inside it and bowed to its
supremacy:

the elements, air

fire, water, earth, skin:

water he bathed in
earth he stood in. fire to weld
his body and give breath to
the heart

he will sing before he disappears.
the history, people sustain him. the voice taught
by birds, the meadow lark

cutting the air
with a sound/

he imitates
in his vision requiring the elements
to balance and cohere

sings again
here

where we reach
the edge
of the moving photo

graph

Spring 1970

ENDNOTES

for

I Wanted to Say Something:

Part One: *The Legacy*

Part Two: *The Moving Photo Graph*

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THE WRITING WEST EDITION 1990

Red Deer College Press

Cover Visuals, Blurbs, Acknowledgements, Forward by Andy Suknaski,
Note about the Author

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A Note on the Web Version

barrymckinnon.com

with additional notes

on the printing and editing process

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Attachments/Addendums

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A note to Dr. J. Weingarton

A note to poet Rob McLennan

Fred Dalton Story as told to Harold Phillips, 1978

Early Advertising posters

Ref. to *The Dominion Lands Act*

**WRITING
WEST**



**= I WANTED TO =
SAY SOMETHING**

**BARRY
MCKINNON**

= I WANTED TO = SAY SOMETHING

Published originally in a limited circulation letterpress edition, *I Wanted To Say Something* has become a contemporary classic in its influence on Western Canadian poetry. It is at once a history and a memory of the closing of an era on the last frontier – the rural Prairie West with its vast geometry of land and sky. With its promise of freedom that lured a generation of pioneers who broke the land and were broken by it and who lived to see the next generation moving out.

Beginning with the lives of the poet's maternal grandparents, this poem cycle follows three generations of the family, culminating in the life of the writer himself, whose search among the fragments of memory leads him to what Robert Kroetsch would later term "the imagined real place." To the remembered place arrived at only through language. To the origins of a poetry that ripples with the sensuousness of prairie grasses. To the something Barry McKinnon wanted to say.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks those little magazines and anthologies in which parts of this poem first appeared: *Elfin Plot*, *Vigilante*, *Is*, *White Pelican*, *The Caledonian*, *Horizon (Writing of the Canadian Prairie)*, *Draft (An Anthology of Prairie Poetry)* and *From Seedbed To Harvest: The American Farmer*.

Media readings: *Between Ourselves* (CBC radio), *This Country in the Morning* (CBC radio) and Calgary Co-op Television.

Special thanks to Brad Robinson for his encouragement and advice.

The photos from Fred and Jessie Dalton's photo album were for the most part taken by Fred Dalton with a turn-of-the-century Kodak box camera.

I Wanted To Say Something was first published in 1975 in a limited edition as part of the Caledonia Writing Series, Prince George, British Columbia.

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FOREWORD

McKinnon's Dream of Prairie West

Barry McKinnon first wrote this long poem in the spring of 1970. The next year, I read a Xerox copy containing that early draught and photographs that candled Barry's imagination with a dream of Prairie West. The shared dream of the Dalton and McKinnon families in Alberta. Like others starting to write poetry in the sixties, I had read Williams' *Paterson*, Olson's *Maximus Poems* and Eliot's *Wasteland*. These were the powerful and moving poems of other places beyond mine. So when I first read Barry's long poem I was deeply moved with the recognition that this was something of my own place and dream. Something of a place transformed by innocence and loss to speak for all of us who were born and live here in the Prairie West.

There is so much I could try to say about *I Wanted To Say Something*. But I can't articulate it. All I can say is this seminal poem was there before me. And wherever I went with *Wood Mountain Poems*, Barry's poem was a beacon for me. And I am sure something of Barry's vision of the early West – with all its hopes, dreams and losses – flared in Sid Marty's imagination when he wrote his poems about the Marty family in Southern Alberta. Sid's *Tumbleweed Harvest* takes a heart's compass bearing beyond McKinnon's vision.

There is little I know anymore in this highly complicated idea of West now informing our lives. But I do know one thing. In this long McKinnon poem a certain vision expanded to rise like *The Seventh Wave* washing over the boymariner in so many of us. Something of this long poem brought Sad Phoenician Kroetsch back home to give us *The Seed Catalogue*. It also brought Eli Mandel home to a place he hadn't quite imagined possible before in a long prairie poem (until *Out of Place* mapped out a dream of prairie west for him).

The simple truth is...prairie poetry would have been far different and poor without McKinnon's *I Wanted To Say Something*. A lot of us would have been a while longer in getting back home inside that place called the long poem.

ANDREW SUKNASKI
Wood Mountain
July 10, 1989

= I WANTED TO = SAY SOMETHING

BARRY MCKINNON

The simple truth is...prairie poetry would have been far different and poor without McKinnon's *I Wanted To Say Something*. A lot of us would have been a while longer in getting inside that place called the long poem.

Andrew Suknaski, from the *Foreword*

I Wanted to Say Something is a major poem, a discovery of the possibility of regaining the pioneers' innocent strength, to sing for the land to return with its gifts of simplicity.

Calgary Herald

In lyric poetry, we seek confrontation with a unique, perceptive, and attractive person; it is in facilitating this confrontation that poetry has effect on the world. It is this kind of intensely and purely personal confrontation that we experience in McKinnon's poems.

John Harris, *Barry McKinnon*





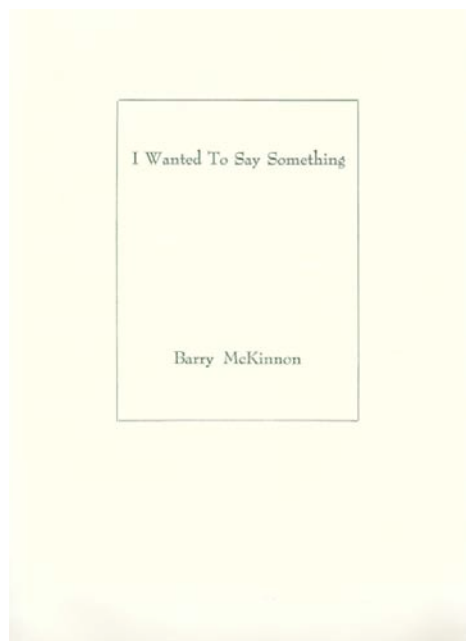
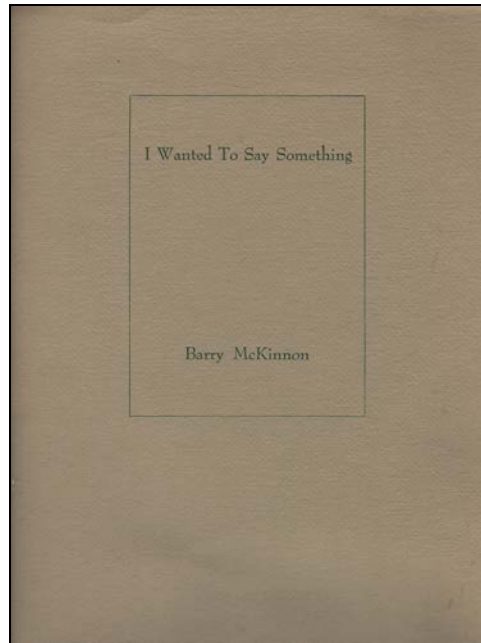
BARRY MCKINNON

Barry McKinnon was born and raised in Calgary, Alberta, where two generations of his family had farmed since the turn of the century. He completed his undergraduate degree at Sir George Williams University and a graduate degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. From 1969 to the present he has lived in Prince George, British Columbia, where he teaches at the College of New Caledonia. There he combined a short apprenticeship in publishing with the inauguration of a poetry reading series to create the Caledonia Writing Series – an impressive collection of personally produced books, chapbooks and broadsides that accompanied or immediately followed readings by major Canadian writers. Throughout the seventies the Caledonia Writing Series was a cultural antennae of contemporary Canadian literature and an encouragement to other small presses. Barry McKinnon's poetry has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies and in more than a dozen books and chapbooks. His *The the.* was nominated for a 1982 Governor General's Award. He continues to publish limited edition broadsides and books through his Gorse Street Press.

A Note on the Web Version
I Wanted to Say Something

This web version of *I Wanted to Say Something* is very close to the original text I composed and printed in 1971.

The original cover and page size (8 and $\frac{3}{4}$ x 14 and $\frac{1}{4}$) was designed to give large space for both the text and the size of the original photographs. The cover, a light green heavy cover stock to compliment the cream-laid text pages, is a simple rectangular letterpressed design that wraps around and folds into the title page.



The Printing Process

The printing process is another story. The typesetting and photo negative work was done by a local print shop in Prince George. I then burned and developed the plates in the print shop at the college – my first experience with aluminum offset plates. I wasn't happy with the end results but couldn't afford the time or money to start over again. Add to this, I printed the book on an old tabletop A.B. Dick offset press that often spun beyond my control. The system of balancing the ink and water mix that allows image transfer to paper is simple alchemically, but unwieldy on an old A.B. Dick. Add to this the frustration of frequent paper jams. Despite the many washed-out pages, I finished the run and bound about 100 copies. Intended or not, the printing projected a sense of decay and age that reflected and merged with the content and intent of the poem. As an old printer once said: never apologize: I still treasure the 4 copies I have left.

The Red Deer version is another matter. The editors, designers and printers confined by standard book sizes and budget restrictions and tricky kerning to fit lines to the page, did their best given said restraints. In this web version, I've followed as best I can, original spacings, line breaks and photo placements.

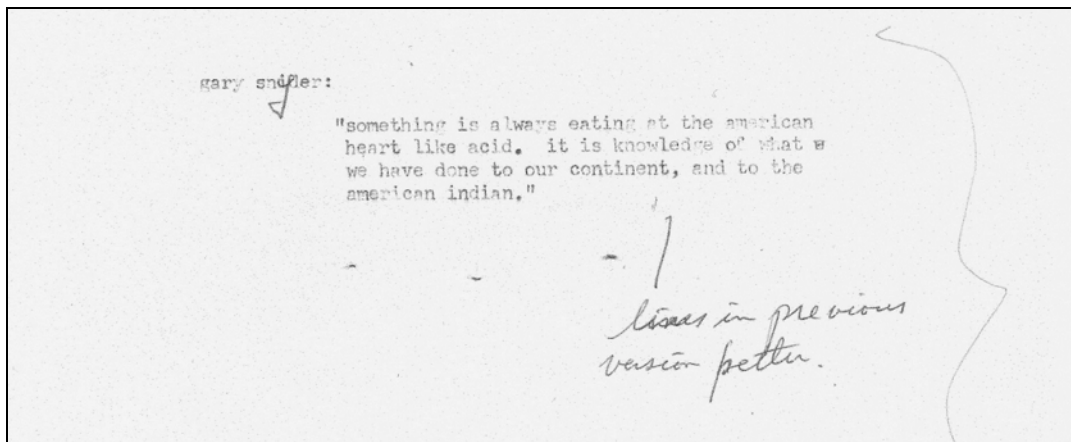
A Note on the Editing and Content Concerns

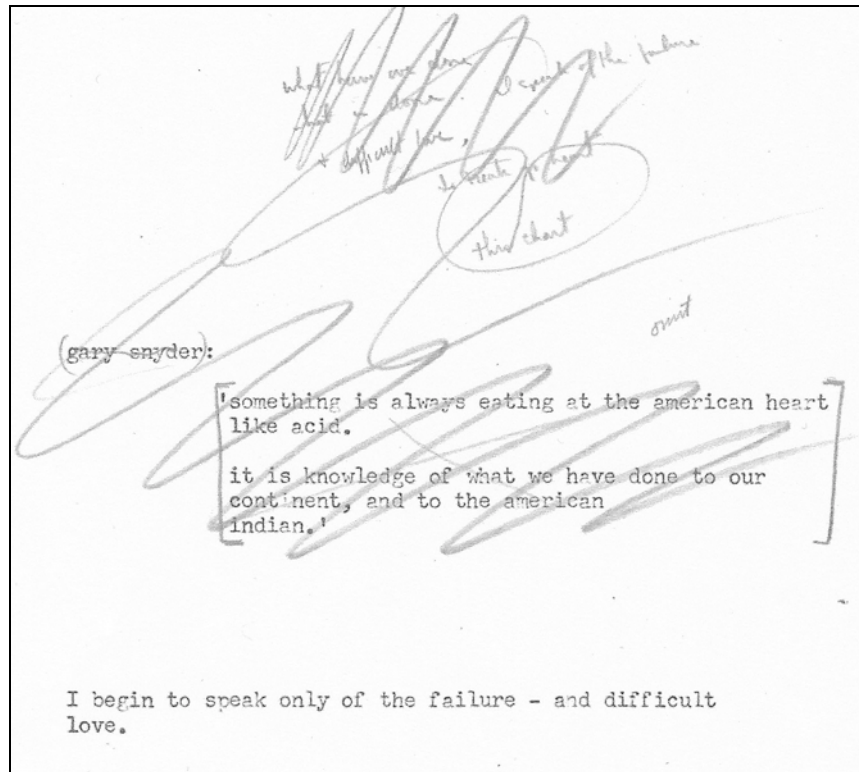
My friend, writer and poet, Bradford Robinson did some serious editing and made many correct decisions regarding content, line breaks and various sentiments that didn't fit, or shifted the overall tone of the poem. My question of late, was the decision to cut a quote by Gary Snyder that appears in the early 1970 drafts. That quote as follows:

Something is always eating at the American heart like acid. It is knowledge of what we have done to our continent, and to the American Indian. Gary Snyder

The poet Andy Suknaski was disappointed to see it excised in the first edition version. Brad bracketed the quote and made an unclear comment: did he want me to remove it, or place it in another section of the poem when he says, "lines in previous version better"?

Judging from my aggressive scribble over the quote during a later edit, my decision appears resolute.





I Think at the Time

I think at the time (1970/71) my sympathies for native Indians were clear in the poem. I probably felt then (as I do now) that this quote from a famous writer I essentially agreed with would too heavily and easily politicize the text. The migration for "free homestead land" in Western Canada raises complex questions regarding /native /treaty/political/ geographical and economic issues that are beyond the scope of these notes.

But we know, pioneers of various religions and ethnicities emigrated from the British Isles, all of Europe and North America. They were lured to the prairie (including an estimated 1000 Blacks escaping from their treatment in the Southern U.S.) by heavy and shifty advertising campaigns: the huge promise of land and a new bucolic life of "free homes for all."

They came mostly blind, I believe, to any other context but their own intent to survive as migrants into a new life. Their world in 1908 wouldn't include any or much knowledge of Canada, John A. MacDonald, Indian treaties, land disputes, or the combine's plans to starve or "educate" Indians into a forced assimilation.

The poem was inspired and *given*, as they say, but not without struggle. As the poet Brian Fawcett remarked, it was interesting to him precisely *because* of my struggle with emotion and sentimentality. And I still feel *that* struggle within the range and context of the following important quotes:

Sentimentality is the failure of emotion. Poet, Wallace Stevens

we have called so much sentimental we have very little left. perhaps nothing. poet, bill bissett

If something is true, it's not sentimental. Comedian, Norm MacDonald.

A Note to Rob McLennan re. current projects:

My current project is to revise *I Wanted to Say Something* – a poem written in 1971 (51 years ago!) chronicling my grandparent's migration from Michigan to the Alberta prairie in 1908.

My revisions are partly based on new detail in my deceased grandfather's 1978 oral memoir when he was 90 years old in The Wheatland Lodge in Strathmore, Alberta. I transcribed his account many years after I wrote the poem and found information that amplifies his original stories, and clarifies some of the queries I had at the time of writing. The project now is to add, delete, and expand details (including the addition of a few lost photographs not included in the 2 published versions). How to get the story right when two memories are transcribing the past?

I *was* making internal corrections at the time of writing in 1971, but purposely left them in the text; for instance, in one picture of my grandfather and a child standing in a field of oats (unsure, I ask, is it my mother/ or my aunt?). Later in the poem, after finding out it *was* my aunt Dorothy, I write, "finally/here is your aunt".

and here, is it my mother/or my aunt ?
hidden in the grass, the oats
brushing
her shoulders

(who gave this life to me ?

the legacy: pictures/and ignorance and love
to look back
upon:

I was also unsure of the cause death of my grandparent's baby. Was my original line, "a baby dies from bad milk" - the improbable or unusual cause as I remember it being told? Not being sure, I changed the line to "a baby dies" in the revised 2nd edition (Red Deer College Press, 1990). Here is my grandfather's account that now indicates the change I *had* to make in the new web version of the poem. A version of "bad milk" goes back in.

Our first boy Clare was born in 1910. When he was 14 months old, Jessie was in the hospital with a pregnancy. I took him over the Philip's but the Phillip's cows got out and were gone two or three days.

Their first milk when they came back didn't agree with Clare and he was soon a very sick boy. Dr. Salmon said he would have to get to the hospital immediately, so I took him on the train carrying him on a pillow. We took a taxi from the station to the hospital. The hospital wasn't able to save him and the next morning he died.

I've decided to place "Bambi's memoir (my grandfather Fred Dalton) as an addendum here to expand his experiences not fully included in the poem: i.e. his 5 year court case and loss to the J.I. Case company, his orphan and work experience as a child labourer, family survival during the flu epidemic in 1917, and his other remembrances re. the 30's drought etc. etc.

Either way, I'm trying *not* to alter the poem's overall balance by over-filling these gaps and therefore, lapsing into a longer prose narrative that risks losing the energy of what's implied / what's unsaid.

Rob McLennan: How does this piece compare to some of the other work you've been doing lately?

And yes, *there is* a direct comparison between my newer poem *from The Field* and *I Wanted to Say Something*. Both poems share subject matter and the memory of growing up in the late 40's and 1950's in Calgary and the prairie farm at Strangmure 40 miles east. I'm still going back to those roots *that* particular space and time.

Added note: My friend Brian Fawcett, who recently died, was an intelligent, harsh and great editor. When he first read *I Wanted to Say Something* his one comment that sticks with me was that he was interested in how I as writer was "struggling with sentimentality" – that risk a writer takes when writing about complex family issues that might end in euphemism or cliché. As Wallace Stevens pointed out: *sentimentality is the failure of feeling*. This truth should be a consideration of any writing that is generated by what otherwise is deeply felt but shallowly described.

Only emotion endures

Ezra Pound

Fred Dalton Story as told to Harold Phillips, 1978.

I was born in a small town near Dowagiac Michigan on August 16th 1887.

I was first in a family of two boys and one girl born to Mr. and Mrs. James Dalton. James Dalton had run away from Tennessee when a young man or teenager and came to Michigan where he met my mother when she was 14. They were married a year or so later.

Parents were anxious for their daughters to get married in those days and didn't always enquire too close into the suitor's background. At that time that part of Michigan was pretty well forested. Farms were small clearings of perhaps five acres with 2 horses and harvested with a cradle. A lot of the settlers in that part of the state were Bohemian and women did a lot of outdoor work including tying and stooking the sheaves behind the cradle workers.

The cradle was a scythe with a frame above the blade that pulled the grain into a swath. The sheaves were tied with a band of grain stalks around the sheaf with the ends twisted together and tucked under for a knot. Needless to say, there was a knack to it.

A lot of the men worked in the woods in the winter.

My father worked on neighbour farms. He did not have one of his own. Father drank and was not always a good family provider. Sometimes he would be away for days and we would have nothing to eat. Sometimes I used to shiver in my shoes when I saw him coming, as I wouldn't know what kind of humour he might be in. Mother always said he was the best man in the world when he was sober.

As time went on mother found herself unable to care for three children with the support she was getting, so when I was seven she placed my brother and I in an orphanage in the Dowagiac area (Coldwater Michigan).



This is the photo taken just before the three children were sent to orphanages.
Fred on the upper left.

I haven't a very clear recollection of the orphanage. After about a year a Bohemian couple applied for a boy to do odd jobs. In those days it was sometimes the practice for people to get a juvenile helper from an orphanage.

This Bohemian was a huge man with a very violent temper. He didn't drink, he just flew into a rage. I did the chores and odd jobs around the place but I never knew what his reaction would be.

One day he asked me if I had watered the chickens and I told I had. I still think I had but it was a small dish and the chickens may have tipped it over.

The Bohemian flew into a rage and roared, "Don't lie to me." He got me down on my knees and beat me over the back and shoulders with a heavy cowbell strap until they were raw and bleeding.

His wife was nearby and kept screaming, "Stop Louis, that's enough, stop."

These people kept sheep and used their wool. The wife made me a pair of socks, which held up by a woolen string around the top. One of these had chaffed a hole in the top of the sock.

One afternoon I did up the chores, and then came in the house and said "Mother" (I was supposed to call her mother and him father) "is there any more you want done?" She noticed the hole and shouted, "Wait till your father gets home. He will tend to you for that." I went back outdoors and had a good cry, then came into the house again and asked if there was anything more to do. She said, "Get out of here. Go to the devil."

Then I went out and ran away. I went to a lake a mile away intending to cross, but the ice was too weak and cracked so bad that I was frightened and I came back. As I came back the dog met me and barked and I was terrified of the Bohemian, so I hid in the straw stack and spent the night there.

In the morning I set off again but took good care to keep the straw stack between me and the barn where the Bohemian was throwing out manure.

I found my way to the home of a boy that I knew in school. The Bohemians had let me go to school for a while. When I got there I had missed my breakfast and dinner, and dinner and supper the day before that and this was in winter weather.

The boy's parents filled me up with food and took me on to another Bohemian couple. These people were good to me and I was there some time. One of my jobs was to herd the cows. The cows grazed in a clearing in the trees that was unfenced. One of the cows had a bell. I would take them out in the morning and stay with them until milking time in the evening, about 9 to 5. I took my lunch. During these times my constant companion was my pocketknife. I can't remember how I got it or where the money came from, as I never had any money. It was the nearest thing to a toy or plaything I ever had. Michigan had lots of wood to whittle and every boy had a knife, so I at last had the one essential thing.

As time went on and I got bigger the Bohemian got me a job in the woods. A lot of this was on one end of a two man cross cut saw. The wood was mostly maple and birch and hemlock. The hemlocks were big trees and I was so small that sometimes I had to stand on a block to saw across the top of a log.

I did some skidding, part of the time with a pair of tough mouthed mules. I would get them hooked up to a log, and then just as I was ready to attach the logging tongs, they would reach for something to eat and drag me away. That's when I learned to swear.

When I was working in the woods the Bohemian got money. I was a juvenile and he had all rights to my time.

When I was 15 I left the Bohemian couple and went back to my home neighborhood, but not to my mother. I got a job on a farm and by some arrangement had an appointed guardian.

I got tired of doing a man's work without pay. I applied to the guardian for a release. It was granted and I got a job in a Dowagiac stove factory. The pay in the stove factory was \$1.50 per ten-hour day.

In those times jobs were uncertain. When times were good and employer or firm would take on help. If sales fell off they would turn off help to shift for themselves. There was no union to tell them what they could do.

So after a while I got laid off at the stove factory. I found my way to South Bend Indiana by horse bus and started washing dishes in a restaurant. After about four days of that the boss decided I was good enough to be a waiter and put me to waiting on a large Horatio counter. This was a three cent a lunch counter, coffee and a sandwich for 3 cents. The pay here was seven or eight dollars a seven-day week of 12 hour shifts, with free board and room.

After several weeks at the restaurant I got laid off and went to a job waiting on table in a hotel.

From the hotel I went to another hotel in Kawanee and from there to a hotel in Blue Island near Chicago. From Blue Island I returned to my home neighbourhood. Mother had gotten a divorce from my father and was remarried to Del Phelps, a widower with his own farm and home.

She had gotten my brother back from the orphanage and placed him with a couple of maiden ladies that wanted a helper around the place. They took care of him and give him a good schooling, which is something I never had. At one place I stayed I was supposed to be three months in school, but it was 18 days.

I stayed with my mother and stepfather a couple of months. Then as I remember it, I went to Kalamazoo and worked in the stove factory. These were the famous Kalamazoo cook stoves. They had a widespread sale all over the United States. They weren't sold through dealers. The firm had a catalogue and sold by mail. The firm's business slogan was "A Kalamazoo Direct to You"

I went from there back to the home district and got a job across the road from Phelps. It was there I met Jessie Phillips. She was the owner's niece and my future wife, then 14.

Jessie's father didn't approve of me, not on personal grounds but because of my alcoholic father. In other words, he thought I came of bad stock and might turn out the same way. He had a violent opposition to alcohol that lasted throughout his life.

Jessie came to me and told me her uncle was going to fire me on account of this. I said, "He isn't going to fire me." I am going to quit" and I did.

Then I went back to the stove factory. I used to write to Jessie, but I sent the letters to my sister or one of my stepsisters to pass on.

After awhile I went back to South Bend. From there I returned for a visit. Jessie's father was in bed with rheumatism which he suffered from every winter as long as he lived in Michigan. Michigan has a great climate for rheumatism.

Jessie met me at Glenwood railway station with a horse and cutter, bells and everything. Such was romance in those times.

She took me to her home and I stayed there for the night. In the morning we decided to get married. Then I went back to my job. In June Jessie and I drove to St. Joseph Michigan and got married June 21st, 1908. Jessie was sixteen and I was eighteen. We went to Dowagiac again after the wedding and I got a job in the stove factory.

In the meanwhile Jessie's father had been looking for a drier climate to move to on account of his rheumatism. He had looked around some of the western states but didn't find anything that suited him.

He ended up buying some land near what is now Carsland Alberta and asked if Jessie and I wanted to come. We decided we did. From her on the story is covered until Jessie and my Golden Wedding in the Dalemead Historical Committees book, *Tales of Two Townships*. Space in this book was limited so I will go over it again. There will be some overlapping, additions and omissions.

We came on ahead of Phillips and reached Calgary October 18th 1908. We were terrifically impressed by the sight of the Rocky Mountains. We came back to Langdon and set out for our new home on two loads of lumber and with two carpenters that came with us from Michigan.

It was 14 miles to the Mason place where there were eight granaries and we stopped there that afternoon. As darkness came on we went on a mile and a half to Melendy's expecting to stay there for the night. The weather had been mild but it went to 10 degrees below F that night and it was storming. We didn't get away for four days and I was dressed in a derby hat and an "ice cream" suit.

I looked out in that blizzard and could see nothing but bald headed prairie and snow in every direction as far as I could see, which certainly was different from the Michigan woods. I decided the craziest thing I had ever done was come to this freezing wilderness and if I had had the price to get back I certainly would have used it.

It cleared up and warmed up on the fifth day and we were able to go back to the Mason place. We took with us some furniture bought from Melendy's parents who had gone back to the states.

At the Mason place we lived on the lower floor of one of the granaries and the carpenters slept up under the roof.

From then on was one of the mildest falls we ever had. Mason's supplied the material and the carpenters and I built a ten-room house, a barn for ten horses and two granaries. This was on the land now occupied by Max Phillips on highway 24. C.A Phillips own land was east of that.

The weather continued mild and I painted the house (the only paint it ever had) and the barn and granaries.

My pay was three dollars a day. Jessie cooked for her board.

Just before Christmas the weather turned cold and the thermometer dropped to 55 degrees below F. A keg of water in the granary had four inches of ice on it in the mornings.

The buildings were well enough completed so we could move into the new house by New Year's. The oldest daughter was born in the kitchen Feb 18, 1909 (Ione).

Dr. Crawford came down on the train to Langdon; from there out by a mule team loaned by George Fortney and a buggy by Gale Fields. His charge was \$50.00.

Jessie's parents and five brothers and sister arrived in March. We moved over to a section and a half of land I rented from Mr. Hall of Kentucky. Mr. Phillips had probably made contact with the Masons and Halls through the CPR.

There we put up another set of buildings, a five-room house, a barn with five double stalls and two granaries. This mild weather continued and I painted this set of buildings before spring.

A man from Langdon drilled wells on both places but didn't get good water. We hauled household water from a spring in 12-mile coulee.

The Hall place was about a mile and a half west of the Mason place and just west of 12-mile coulee. When the railroad went through Phillip's post office was Carsland and ours was Dalemead.

We had a horse and buggy to get around with in those early years brought from Michigan by Mr. Phillips.

Halls had intended to hire an outfit to do the breaking but I told them I would rather do it. Father Phillips and I bought some unbroken horses in the Cheadle district. I don't remember who we got them from or what they cost. I got four head.

I got some breaking done in 1909 and with the help of a hired man got the section and a half fenced. I got three dollars an acre for breaking plus half the crop.

In the late summer I got a job sizing for Swan and Moore contractors who had been breaking for Campbell and Barrie, a Calgary produce firm. That was three miles south of Langdon. Pay on this job was \$40.00 per month.

That fall two brothers came up from Michigan to run Cooke's threshing outfit. Cooles were from Michigan. They had a Chinese cook, but he wasn't very satisfactory so Keith Swan or Moore said, "why don't you hire Fred Dalton. He's a good cook."

I had done lots of cooking but had never made bread. Jessie had to make the bread. The dough the china man left was black with flies. The weather stayed good and we had a good run. It was the only outfit in the district.

I put in some crop in 1910, but it was one of our driest years. The crop only made a few bushels to the acre. I was only able to get 35 acres of breaking done, the ground was so hard. To dig postholes it was necessary to pour water in.

Moisture conditions were good in 1911, but the crop got frozen out. The land was low and was always subject to frost damage. I didn't have much crop in because I could not do the breaking in 1910.

Mr. Hall loaned money to buy horses. I bought 14 head of wild three and four year olds at a sale in Calgary. They cost about \$30 a piece. I and one or two of the Phillip's boys went in saddle and Mr. Phillips came in with a buggy to drive them home. It was a tricky business getting them out of Calgary without tramping anybody's lawns or gardens. I fell off my horse and sprained an ankle and had to change places with Father Phillips in the buggy. Once out of the city we had open country to drive them across.

To break these horses one of the Phillips boys, usually Leland would help me hitch them up on at a time with one of the team of quiet horses I had gotten from father Phillips that he had brought from Michigan.

We would hitch them up to a single box wagon and let them go. There was lots of space to run in without colliding with anything so we just let them go at a wild run over gopher mounds, badger holes, rock and buffalo wallows until they were tired. We had the wagon box well chained on so it wouldn't bounce off.

There was only one that didn't break-in good. He was always a mean horse. There was twenty head altogether now so we didn't need him much.

With all these horses I was able to break sod with two gangplows. These young horses would sometimes get sweenyed (?) then the remedy was to blister with Gombault's caustic Balsam, which was the best liniment for man or beast ever made. It had a balsam smell.

Sweeny is a strain of the shoulder muscles. The muscles shrink away and leave a hollow along the side of the shoulder and the horse is lame. The blister would stimulate the blood circulation and the shoulder would return to its natural shape.

One of the drawbacks to working horses was the nose flies. These flies actually sting or irritate the lower lip. We hung burlap over their noses at first then somebody invented the wire nose net which certainly was a big improvement.

The country was over run with gophers. Every farm dog and cat and boy was a gopher catcher. We used to scatter poisoned grain around the holes.

Flying ants swarmed in the late summer.

The Hall land was stony and we were always hauling rock. Over the years we filled up pretty near enough to put a fence on one side of a section. The C.P.R. bought them for fill at the drops south of Langdon on the main canal.

As said before 1910 was very dry. However we managed to grow all the potatoes we needed by hauling water to them from the coulee. They were good potatoes too.

Our first boy Clare was born in 1910. When he was 14 months old, Jessie was in the hospital with a pregnancy. I took him over the Philip's but the Phillip's cows got out and were gone two or three days.

Their first milk when they came back didn't agree with Clare and he was soon a very sick boy. Dr. Salmon said he would have to get to the hospital immediately, so I took him on the train carrying him on a pillow. We took a taxi from the station to the hospital. The hospital weren't able to save him and the next morning he died.

Ed was born in 1911. I had bought a half section from the C.P.R. when I went on the Hall place, north 1/2 - 3 -22 -26. I farmed it until Ed grew up, then he took it over. When he retired he moved to Calgary and died there of a heart attack some time afterwards.

I got more breaking done in 1911 (two gang plow outfits now). 1912 was a good crop.

Nineteen fifteen and sixteen were good years and we got market prices. We were growing the earlier Marquis wheat by that time.

About 1917 I bought an International 15-30 kerosene tractor that would pull five plows in breaking. This tractor was hard to start when it got hot so we ran it right through the day.

I got my first truck, and International at a sale near Cheadle in 1917.

We got our first car, a Chev in 1915. It cost something over \$1100. We got a lot of satisfaction out of that first car. We made a trip the coast and a trip to Michigan and saw a lot of other country.

From that time on I got a new car about every fourth year. Jessie thought they ought to last another year. Father Phillips was of the old school and he was sure they ought to. We were "wasting too much money on cars." However after four years they began to need repairs and did not make a good trade in. We had different makes including a Ford or two.

Cars of that period weren't easy to start in cold weather. I had a garage with a small stove in it and didn't have much trouble.

Dorothy was born in 1916. In 1918 we got included in the flu epidemic, but we all pulled through. Jessie had pneumonia with it and was really sick. I was good and sick myself. Ione got off the easiest and was big enough to help the rest of us a little.

None of us went to a hospital. The hospitals were full. Roy Thomas, the hired man did the outside work. He didn't get the flu. He used to fry bacon for breakfast and when I was sick the smell of that bacon used to turn my stomach. I swore I would never eat bacon again. I don't remember when Roy Thomas first came, but he was the ideal hired man and with us eight years. The kids liked him and everybody and everything on the place like him. I paid him \$100 a month more than the going wages.

We finally got a good well at about 200 feet. This well was witched. It was a good soft water. ~~Trumf~~ from Langdon spent most of one winter drilling it; with cold weather, breakdowns and everything.

Nineteen twenty-three was our biggest crop. That is the year Vivian was born. I had a section of the Hall land in crop that year and 200 acres on my own half.

Wheat made 50 bushels per acre and weighed 64 lbs per bu. Labour was scarce and the government brought in harvest help from England. Green help cost \$4.00 a day for stooking and there was a lot of stooking; no combines yet. It was hardly safe to let one of these men drive the threshing team.

Prices went down as they always do when there is a good crop and we didn't make a lot of money out of it.

It was one of the years in the early twenties we had our first grasshoppers. At first we poisoned around the edges of the fields with poisoned bran, with molasses for a binder.

I built a frame on the front of the car and Father Phillips sat on that and scattered the poisoned bran with his hands. It worked and we saved the crop.

Sometime in the mid-twenties I got my first combine. There were no swathers then, so to combine you had to let the crop get dead ripe. Some of the parts on this machine didn't line up right and kept cutting out. Jessie was on the road all the time for repairs and bought up all they had.

We couldn't get the combine to work (Case), the crop was too ripe to cut and thresher and it ended up by being a dead loss except for some feed.

I sued the company for loss of crop and the rest of the payments on the combine. According to the terms of the agreement in those days you had to notify the company within a week of so if there was anything wrong with a new machine.

The weather was wet that fall and we couldn't use the (combine - ?word missing). I lost the first case so I appealed. The whole case dragged out over about five years. I didn't get any crop damages in the end but I wasn't forced to make the rest of the payments on the combine.

I lost one crop completely from hail during the twenties and had damage to others.

In the fall of 1929 the depression hit. There had been a lot of gambling on the stock exchange and grain exchange. Stock prices soared and the grain exchange was loaded with paper wheat.

The bubble burst, the market collapsed and then followed ten years of record low prices and crop failures: "The Ten Lost Years". Everything went wrong. There was drought, furious wind and soil drifting, grasshoppers, sawfly, feed shortages, cold winters.

Mrs. Phillips was a good butter maker and she taught Jessie. To get some cash I used to take their butter to Strathmore and deliver it house to house for 20 cents a pound. Actually that was a pretty good price, but in the days of homemade butter it was pretty variable and if you could find any one that had 20 cents they were willing to pay for butter they were sure was good.

This lasted a couple of years then I started taking butter and eggs once a week to Calgary and delivering door at 20 cents per pound for butter and 20 cents per dozen for eggs. Eggs weren't as systematically handled in those days and weren't always uniformly fresh. My customers were glad to get eggs they knew were fresh. Some people got as little as five to ten cents for butter and eggs in those days.

Some of the years I was making these trips I took Mrs. Phillips in every week to her eye specialist. She was not my mother in law. The Mrs. Phillips lived between Dalemead and Langdon on the way to Calgary (Harold's mother).

She had glaucoma and had to get the pressure on her eyeballs tested once a week. This was done by pressing a fine steel point against her eyeball and I suppose the pressure registered on a dial. This was the way the doctor checked the progress of the disease. The charge for these was a dollar.

I used to pick her up at the old greyhound building on 7th ave and 1st street west to go home. One day she wasn't there and I nearly went out of my mind trying to find her and worrying about what had happened to her. Someone finally told me she had gone away with someone else, so I phoned out and found she was home.

She went blind in time as glaucoma patients often do, but she was faithful with her treatments and for several years when she was going in with me she was the best glaucoma patient Drs. Hakney Gunn and Shore had.

We had our troubles during the depression, but we never went hungry. We hauled water from the Coulee and grew a garden and we had our own meat, milk, butter and eggs.

I had an agency for Maytag Washing machines and I sold radios, the old fashioned kind with a horn. I don't remember the price of the washing machines but my commission was \$20 and I probably sold about 50 of them, some of them across the Bow River south of Carlsland

These deliveries to Calgary and the selling required the use of a car. One of my cars was a Willys Knight. It had no valves but operated on some kind of sleeve action. It was a good-looking car and the quietest running car on the market. It was a bit lacking in power, speed and pick up.

By the time the depression was over, the Halls were hard up and they sold the place at a very low price for cash. Over the years we had had a lot of crop loss - frost, drought, soil drifting and combines, so by that time I was flat broke myself.

So I disposed of the implements and live stock (the horses were hardest to part with) and moved to Calgary and went into real estate. I operated as Park Real Estate. I was at that about 8 years and did well at it. and made a lot more money than I ever did farming. The business was nearly all houses, which were priced around \$5,000. Mortgage rates were about 6%. During the later years Vivian helped in the business.

Jessie and I traveled. Since we got the first car we made nine trips to Michigan. We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in 1958 and our diamond wedding in 1965.

We celebrated our 65th anniversary in 1973 at the Palliser Hotel. There was a large gathering of friends, relatives and old neighbours and flowers and messages from the premier and prime minister.

Jessie died Christmas day. On the way to the hospital she expressed regret at spoiling our Christmas.

I batched for several years. Vivian was not far away and kept an eye on me. I was in Northwest Lodge for a while.

On August 16th 1977 I celebrated my 90th birthday at my son-in-law Ben McKinnon's and Vivian's summer cottage at Chestermere Lake. My old Dalemead neighbour Martin Vandervelde was there at the age of 93.

There were other old neighbours from Dalemead and Carsland and many friends.

I am now in the Wheatland Lodge in Strathmore and have a bright clean room and the best of care. I am in good health and comfortable. I often walk the two blocks over town. The big drawback is that my eyesight is about gone and I can't see even to play cards or watch television. This makes it hard to put in the time and of course this off to one side of the old neighbours I had in the country and my Calgary friends.

I have two daughters left, Dorothy and Vivian. Ione died from an unfortunate spinal anesthetic. I have four grandsons and three grand daughters, 7 great grandsons, 6 great grand daughters

October 1979

FREE HOMES FOR ALL.

Government Lands in the Canadian Northwest,

HOW TO OBTAIN THEM.

HOMESTEADS PRE-EMPTIONS AND WOOD LOTS.

GOVERNMENT LANDS.

HOMESTEADS, PRE-EMPTIONS AND WOOD LOTS.

A "homestead" not exceeding one-quarter section, or 160 acres, is a free grant from the Government. Any person, male or female, who is the sole head of a family, or any male who has attained the age of eighteen years, is entitled to a homestead. The condition under which the grant is made is that the homesteader shall reside on and cultivate the land for three years. The person receiving a homestead entry is entitled at the same time—but not at a later date—to a pre-emption entry for an adjoining unoccupied 160 acre tract. The settler will not be called upon to pay for the pre-emption until the expiration of the three years that entitles him to receive a deed from the Government for his homestead. The price charged for pre-emptions within the Railway belt is \$2.50 (10s.) per acre.

A settler is allowed a period of six months after date of entry for entering upon and taking possession of the land, but he must not be absent from his homestead for more than six months at any one time without special leave from the Minister of the Interior. *Only the even numbered sections of a township are open for homestead and pre-emption entries.*

Should the settler find that he cannot comply with the conditions of the three years' residence, he is allowed to purchase his homestead by paying \$2.50 per acre therefor, provided that he has resided on the land for twelve months from date of entry, and has brought under cultivation at least thirty acres thereof.

Any person who has obtained a deed for his homestead after three years' residence may obtain another homestead and pre-emption entry.

Settlers that have not sufficient wood growing on their homesteads can purchase from the Government wood lots not exceeding twenty acres in size at \$5.00 per acre. In addition to this, settlers are allowed, free of charge, a permit to cut timber on vacant Government lands—a sufficient quantity of wood, house logs and fence timber to meet all their requirements during the first year of homesteading. They are forbidden to dispose of wood from their homesteads, pre-emptions, wood lots, or what they may obtain under free permit, to saw-mill proprietors, or to any person other than an actual settler, for his own use. A breach of this condition, or non-fulfilment of homestead conditions, renders the entries of homestead, pre-emption and wood lot subject to cancellation. Should such cancellation be made, all improvements become forfeited to the Government, and the settler is not allowed to make a second homestead entry.

The attention of intending emigrants is drawn to the fact that the privilege of obtaining a pre-emption will be discontinued after January 1st, 1885. For those who wish to obtain large farms at a cheap rate, the coming spring will therefore be the most desirable time to emigrate. The title of the lands previously referred to remains vested in the Crown until after the Patent is issued; unpatented lands cannot be seized for debt. In case a settler dies, the law allows his executors to fulfil the homestead conditions, thus securing the estate to his heirs.

The fees charged are as follows: Homestead, \$10; pre-emption, \$10; permit fee, 50 cents.

LIBERALITY OF CANADIAN LAND REGULATIONS

CONTRASTED WITH THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES.

The fee for taking up a homestead or pre-emption entry is only \$10, whereas it is \$26, and in some cases \$34, in the States.

The privilege of receiving a pre-emption entry at the same time as that for a homestead is granted is denied to the settler in the United States.

The settler must reside *five years* on his homestead in the United States, as against *three years* under the liberal regulations of Canada.

The taking of a homestead in Canada does not prevent a settler from purchasing other Government lands.

The following liberal allowance of timber is given to the settler on prairie lands free of charge: 1,800 feet of house timber, 400 roof rails, 30 cords of wood, and 2,000 fence rails—equal in value to about \$60. No such grant can be obtained under the land regulations of the United States.

Particular attention is drawn to the fact that settlers, on completing their homestead conditions, are allowed the right to obtain a second homestead and pre-emption. This concession on the part of the Government has only lately been allowed, and this fact alone places the Canadian regulations, in the matter of liberal treatment of the settlers, far ahead of those of the United States.

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- ☐ The land where the opportunities are unlimited and the climate ideal.
- ☐ I am prosperity to him who would enter my gates.
- ☐ My storehouses are full and overflowing.
- ☐ Write to my friends
JOE LIMITED (REAL ESTATE)
CALGARY
and let them tell you all about me.
- ☐ They represent many of my best subjects.

*Yours Intensely
Alberta
Canada*

Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Canada: NA-789-21

I am the Great Alberta, an advertisement for the province, June 1910

The *Dominion Lands Act*

The *Dominion Lands Act* was a federal law that received royal assent on 14 April 1872. It allowed for lands in Western Canada to be granted to individuals, [colonization companies](#), the [Hudson's Bay Company](#), railway construction, municipalities and [religious](#) groups. The *Act* set aside land for [First Nations reserves](#). [Métis](#) lands were organized by the government outside the Dominion Lands Act, using the [scrip system](#). The *Act* also set aside lands for what would become [National Parks](#) (1883). The *Dominion Lands Act* devised specific homestead policies to encourage [settlement in the West](#). It covered eligibility and settlers' responsibilities, and outlined a standard measure for [surveying](#) and subdividing land. Some 1.25 million homesteads were made available over an expanse of about 80 million hectares — the largest survey grid in the world.

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A note to Dr. J. Weingarten regarding an intended Part 3 to *I Wanted to Say Something*.

I originally envisioned *I Wanted to Say Something* in 3 parts.

Part 1: *The Legacy* was inspired by my grandfather's Kodak box camera photos and stories starting with his emigration from Dowagiac Michigan with my grandmother Jessie, and their arrival by train in 1908 to a homestead near Dalemeade Alberta where they farmed and raised a family during many years of difficult times.

Part 2, *The Moving Photo Graph* was meant to chronicle the movement/migration from rural farm life to city life – and to chart my own memories of growing up in Calgary during the late 40's and 50's with my grandparents and parents, Ben and Viv McKinnon. We were the second generation in this family lineage and lived in a back room suite in the Dalton rooming house at 2111, 14A Street. In the early 50's my dad built our house at 2115 15th Street where I lived until the mid 60's.

I began Part 3 as a way to place myself as a young adult measuring the world I found myself in: Prince George, B.C., in 1969 and where I began the poem. I was surprised to unearth the drafts of Part 3 at the UNBC archive to find that it was extensive, and in terms of length, in balance with the other 2 sections.

My friend, the scholar Dr. Jeffrey Weingarten, who has given me great support and critical academic insight with his queries and essays (see *Post Memory and Canadian Poetry of the 1970's*) was curious about my abandonment of Part 3. It's not easy to explain what prompted my decisions over 50 years ago, but I do remember being in a kind of mental and emotional darkness, and the sense that the 3rd section of the poem was premature. I came to a conclusion that it didn't fit; I had entered a poem of "second intensity" – without enough conviction or knowledge to give it the weight to survive.

A couple of years had to pass before I found a directional move to a language that *could* reveal the social and personal miasma I was experiencing. Thanks to the prompting from poets Red

Shuttleworth and Brian Fawcett, and the continual support of John Harris, I came at the “peeled-back surface” of self and place, and for the next 10 years wrote the poems collected in *The the*.

When I think of it now, and in answer to Jeff, Part 3 was a preliminary attempt before I began *The the*, which contains the content and experience I couldn't begin to write about in 1971.

July 10, 2022.
Prince George
B.C.