

Display Cube 1

The Baird Bowering Collection: Chronological Sequence

The pieces around the perimeter of this room were selected from the donation of Jean Baird. In this aggregation, the acts of receiving, collecting, and keeping, function as sites of creation. This case is an overture to the approximately chronological sequence of the remainder of the cases.

Baird's work in the original control and curatorship of the Baird Bowering Collection is recorded in an inventory list, received with the Collection, which is annotated with her handwritten notes [19].

In addition to her editorial contributions to *71(+)* for *GB: an anthology for George Bowering on the occasion of his 70th birthday* (2005) (exhibit no. 4, *Dual Modalities*), Baird and Bowering co-edited *The heart does break: Canadian writers on grief and mourning*, which is shown here in its 2009 (Random House) [20] and 2010 (Vintage Canada) editions [21]. The subject matter of this volume, which is founded in and dramatizes the role that reading and literature can take in understanding and responding to immense loss, is a testament to the creative and personal bond between Bowering and Baird.

[19] "Jean Baird George Bowering collection" [inventory] [ca. 2019]

[20] *The heart does break* (2009)

[21] *The heart does break* (2010)

Accessing the Baird Bowering Collection

The Baird Bowering Collection, like all of Okanagan Special Collections, can be handled, browsed, viewed, and read in the Corbishley Family Reading Room, during opening hours or by appointment.

Retrieval requests, including for the items currently on display, are encouraged.

If you don't have a UBC card (Library card) please see the front desk to get a Community Borrower Card.

Display Cube 2

TISH 1–19 (1961–1963)

In a now less-common convention in the digital age, these first nineteen issues of the poetry newsletter *TISH* are bound in a hard cover for preservation [23]. *TISH* was a “publication that dramatically changed the course of Canadian poetry and announced a new generation of poets.” In addition to the editorials and poems, the newsletters within are alive with evidence of activity: stamping, folding, mailing, and annotating. Many of the issues here, made on a typewriter and printed on mimeograph, have handwritten addresses of subscribers.

The founders of *TISH* were George Bowering, Frank Davey, David Dawson, James Reid and Fred Wah. This volume is signed by Bowering. Contributing writers include Daphne Marlatt, Robert Hogg, Warren Tallman, and others.

TISH has been described as possibly the “most influential literary magazine ever produced in Canada, of greater significance than even *Preview* or *First Statement*, the two that brought poetic modernism to the country in the 1940s.”

[22] *TISH* newsletter

[23] *TISH* [bound volume]

Display Cube 3

Early works, 1957–1966

Raven No. 5 [24] contains the earliest example of Bowering's work in the Baird Bowering Collection. It was published as a literary periodical by the Alma Mater Society at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). Credited as "George H. Bowering," his poem "The Intellectual Turned Artist" appearing on page 37 has been digitally reproduced to allow views of both the cover art, and Bowering's work within.

In this copy of *The silver wire*, [25, 26] a collection of poetry, Bowering writes to Baird: "Dear Jean, these poems are older than I am!"

An old add [27] – received in duplicate – is also presented such that all pages are visible.

[24] *Raven No. 5* (1957)

[25] *The silver wire* (1966)

[26] "The silver wire" [accompanying insert] [ca. 1966?]

[27] *An old add* (1969)

Display Cube 4

1969 Governor General Literary Award: Poetry

Bowering won the 1969 Governor General's Literary Award in the poetry category for his works *The gangs of Kosmos* [29] and *Rocky Mountain foot* [30].

The gangs of Kosmos features cover art by Charles Pachter, and this book was accompanied by a Pachter catalogue [28] offering lithograph prints for sale. The cover image is titled “#14. *Champêtre (In a field)*, 1968.” The painting, and the cover, depicts Margaret Atwood and Angela Bowering.

Atwood “put [] together” the volume and considers it a “pretty good collection.”

Both books in the case are personally inscribed to Jean Baird, from George Bowering.

[28] “Prints” [catalogue] [1969?]

[29] *The gangs of Kosmos* (1969)

[30] *Rocky Mountain foot* (1968)

Display Cube 5

George Bowering and R.S. ("Red") Lane

A handwritten annotation inside the cover of *The 1962 poems* [31] reads: 1965 / 1st ed. / 1st book / 200 copies.

This collection of poems was published as the second issue of the magazine *Ganglia* and in a limited run of 200 copies.

Bowering provides the introduction to this volume of poetry, and describes how he came to know “Red” Lane during his time in the Canadian Air Force, wherein the two found common ground in both having come from the Okanagan. Lane’s poems within are contextualized with statements of where the poems were written – Kelowna and Kamloops among the locations listed. The book was published posthumously following Red Lane’s death in 1964.

A later-published book, possibly to be viewed as a companion volume, *Letters from Geeksville: Red Lane to George Bowering 1960-1964* [32] is a set of Lane’s letters received by Bowering. Particularly resonant with Okanagan Special Collections are descriptions of places and scenes of the North Okanagan especially Vernon, Armstrong, and Coldstream. The digital reproduction is from Bowering’s introduction to the book, which was published in 1975.

Patrick Lane, in his own right a prolific writer, based for much of his career out of Vernon, B.C. was the brother of Red Lane, and his name appears in this series of letters. Patrick Lane died in 2019.

[31] *The 1962 poems* (1965)

[32] *Letters from Geeksville: Red Lane to George Bowering 1960-1964* (1976)

Display Cube 6

Ephemeral poetry publications (1970s)

[33] *The sensible* (1972)

Chapbook. Published in a limited edition of 200 copies

[34] *Layers 1-13* (1973)

Chapbook

[35] *My lips were red* (1976)

Broadside. Published in a limited edition of 100 copies, of which this item is #65

[36] *Daniel Johnson lying in state* (1970)

Leaflet

What is a chapbook?

A chapbook is a booklet. They are often covered in paper, bound with staples or saddle stitch, and composed of fewer than forty-eight pages. Traditionally, the chapbook has represented a relatively inexpensive and low-barrier, sometimes “DIY” literary format.

Chapbooks, broadsides, leaflets, and brochures, are often categorized as fragile and temporary publications, and are sometimes assigned the format label ephemera. In Okanagan Special Collections, these formats are catalogued as “pamphlets.”

What is a broadsheet, or broadside poem?

A broadsheet is an oversize, single-page publication, printed on one side only.

A broadside poem appears in broadsheet format. Often accompanied by a visual motif, a broadside offers options for artistic expression by providing the poet with a literary “canvas.”

Display Cube 7

Other works (1970s)

A short sad book is fiction by genre but carries a considerable page index of notable Canadian places and figures covered in the book. Under pages indexed “Okanagan” the narrator alleges, “There is a lot of Canadian Literature at the bottom of Lake Okanagan.”

Cover art for both *A short sad book* and *At war with the U.S.* is by Greg Curnoe, visual artist. The former depicts former premier of B.C., W.A.C. Bennett, laughing while reading *A Short Sad Book*. Bowering has called *A short sad book* and *At war with The U.S.* “poetical political books.”

Genève is a poetic translation of shuffling of the major arcana of the Tarot deck.

[37] *Alphabet* (1971)

[38] *A short sad book* (1977)

[39] *A short sad book* (2017)

[40] *At war with the U.S.* (1974)

[41] *Genève* (1971)

Display Cube 8

Curious (1973)

“Bowering’s long poem *Curious* (1973) [42]—which consists of a series of poetic homages to authors Bowering has known in a style that parodies the authors’ works—demonstrates that his social networking is partly an ongoing study in literary composition and in the formation of artistic communities.”

See exhibit no. 14, *Dual Modalities* “Bowering Party Tape” for a complementary description of aural capture of similar “social networking.”

Digital reproductions have been taken, to the extent possible, from a series of photographs within the work, entitled “Vancouver / July 15, 1971 - October 31, 1972.” This section includes depictions of Brian Fawcett, Victor Coleman, Robert Duncan, Stan Persky, John Newlove, Gladys Hindmarch, Lionel Kearns, Frank Davey, Fred Wah, Daphne Marlatt, James Reid, and others.

It is inscribed to Jean Baird.

[42] *Curious* (1973)

Display Cube 9

BC Heritage Poetry Festival (1978)

The Baird Bowering Collection holds two copies of this folio of broadsheets [43]. This copy carries with it signed poems from five out of six featured poets: George Bowering (“Last lyrics: From the mystery”), Lionel Kearns (“The gap”), Robin Blaser (“Tumble-weed”), Brian Fawcett (“Point Grey”), and Fred Wah (from the MS “Breathin’ my name with a sigh”). Only Daphne Marlatt’s (“Coming through”) is missing an autograph.

The festival was held at the Simon Fraser University Pub in Burnaby, B.C. in association with the 1978 Heritage Writers’ Festival, presented by SFU’s Department of English.

The folio was compiled by Roy Miki and published by Talonbooks in a limited edition of 350 copies.

[43] *BC Heritage Poetry Festival* (1978)

Display Cube 10 & 11

Imago (1964–1974)

Imago, edited by George Bowering, was a child of *TISH* and published long-form poems. The Baird Bowering Collection covers volumes one through twenty, with some gaps.

Imago is the magazine of long poems & poem sequences. It was published by turns in Calgary, London (Ontario), Montreal, and Vancouver – wherever Bowering happened to be.

Imago 3, alternatively titled *Listen George*, consists in total one long poem, representing the second publication of Lionel Kearns. The volume is inscribed by Sergio Mondragon and Margaret Randall, to whom *Imago 12*, alternatively titled *Sitting in Mexico* is dedicated. *Sitting in Mexico* consists again of one long poem, written by George Bowering himself.

[44] *Imago 1*

[45] *Imago 3* [*Listen George* by Lionel Kearns]

[46] *Imago 7*

[47] *Imago 9* [*The Saladmaker* by David McFadden]

[48] *Imago 15* [*Back east* by Victor Coleman]

[49] *Imago 12* [*Sitting in Mexico* by George Bowering]

Imago (1964–1974)

[50] *Imago 16* [featuring Daphne Marlatt]

[51] *Imago 17*

[52] *Imago 18* [*Five books of a Northmanual* by Brian Fawcett]

[53] *Imago 19*

[54] *Imago 20*

Display Cube 12

Beaver Kosmos Folios (1969–1974)

Published by George Bowering.

[55] *Three essays on Creeley* by Warren Tallman.

Limited edition of 1000 copies

[56] *Measures: Robert Creeley's poetry* by Ann Mandel (No. 6)

[57] *Robert Duncan: An interview* by George Bowering and Robert Hogg

[58] *Five readings of Olson's Maximus* by Frank Davey (No. 2)

[59] *Sketches* by Gladys Hindmarch (No. 3)

[60] *The oral literary history of Vancouver. Stan Persky's section*
edited by Brad Robinson (No. 5)

[61] *How I hear howl* by George Bowering (No. 1)

Display Cube 13

Touch (1971)

Three identical copies with inscriptions from the author.

Compiled predominantly from works published elsewhere in the early 1960s.

In the foreword, Bowering writes, “I would like you to read them aloud, hearing that punctuation, including the line ending, is part of the composition...If you read aloud, you can hear the rime, & rime well used is punctuation too. Please use it well & we will work to gather, & we will play together.”

[62] *Touch* (1971) inscribed “to Warren” [Tallman?], dedicated 1971

[63] – *Touch* (1971) inscribed to Jean Baird; dedication undated

[64] – *Touch* (1971) inscribed to “Sylvia,” dedicated 1979

Display Cube 14

Poetry (1980s)

[65] “Just five: A poem by George Bowering.” Printed for the Pacific Northwest Library Association Conference, August 25-27, 1983
Limited edition of 100 copies

[66] *Seventy-one poems for people*
Reverberating with *A Short Sad Book* and *At War with the U.S.*
Bowering positions this collection of poems as “lyrics of public struggle.”

[67] *Stuck wasps* (broadsheet).
Limited edition of 150 copies

[68] [3 poems on a broadsheet] (broadsheet)
This broadside may be incorrectly dated, but it is estimated to have been published in or before the 1980s. While catalogued as attributed to Bowering, only the final of the three is marked with the initials “GB.”

Display Cube 15

Anthologies, collected poems, and chapbooks (1980s)

[69] *The contemporary Canadian poem anthology* (1983) volume 2.

Edited by George Bowering. One of four volumes, organizing the works of twenty poets from the leading edge of postmodern Canadian Poetry. This volume features Frank Davey, Chris Dewdney, Brian Fawcett, D.G. Jones, and Lionel Kearns.

[70] *Selected poems: Particular accidents* (1980)

Edited, and with introduction, by Robin Blaser. Records reflecting the composition of the introduction, which treats the works of Bowering in depth, can be found in the Robin Blaser fonds at Simon Fraser University's Special Collections & Rare Books in Burnaby, B.C.

[71] *Smoking mirror* (1982)

[72] *Ear reach* (1982)

Alcuin Chapbook no. 3. Printed by Peter Quartermain at Slug Press in an edition of 126 signed copies, of which this is #39. Featuring colour visual motifs reminiscent of typewriter art.

Display Cube 16

Kerrisdale elegies (1984)

A loose adaptation/translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duino elegies*. From the back of the 2008 Talonbooks edition: "It is extraordinary that one can take the measure of how radically cultural sensibilities can change throughout a century by a careful reading of only two texts – in this case ... Rilke's *Duino elegies* written in the midst of the First World War, and George Bowering's brilliant response to Rilke's call, the *Kerrisdale elegies* composed in the midst of the Cold War."

Note the special edition binding of the 2008 Pooka Press edition, composed of multiple chapbooks and bound with a paper ribbon. Printed in limited edition of 82 copies, of which this is #13.

[73] *Kerrisdale elegies* (2008)

Talonbooks

[74] *Elegie di Kerrisdale* (1996)

Empiria [Italian translation]

[75] *Kerrisdale elegies* (2008)

Pooka Press

[76] *Kerrisdale elegies* (1984)

The Coach House Press

Display Cube 17

Caprice (1987)

Set in the ranching territory and rangelands outside of Kamloops, B.C. *Caprice* is an example of Bowering's postmodern experimentation in the western genre. Its descriptions of landscapes provide a literary lens into the regions that speak to Okanagan Special Collections collecting focus.

George Bowering stated that "I noticed two things about the western: one, that they were all very male-centred, and, two, that it always has something to do with dry land... And so I said O.K., I want to make a western which is female-centred. I would just turn everything around—that way it is not just a parody but an investigation of a western, putting it on trial, almost."

[77] *Caprice* (1988)
Penguin Books

[78] *Caprice* (1994)
Penguin Books

[79] *Caprice* (1987)
Viking

[80] *Spencer & Groulx: from the forthcoming novel Caprice* (1985)

There are 326 copies: 300 numbered, signed by the author and stitched into paper wrappers; 26 lettered A-Z, signed by the author and bound into boards by the unanonymus Charlotte Bagshawe, of which this is copy #154.

Display Cube 18

1980 Governor General Literary Award: Fiction

Burning water won the Governor General's award for fiction in 1980. While officially "fiction" by genre, *Burning water* has been characterized as being a laudably factually accurate account of George Vancouver's four-volume record *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World 1791-1795*. Bowering soon followed *Burning water* with two further novels about the "west," *Caprice* and *Shoot!*, and together, the three books can be read as a trilogy.

[81] *Burning water* (1980)

Beaufort Books

[82] *Burning water* (1984)

General Publishing Co. Limited

[83] *Burning water* (1994)

Penguin

[84] *Burning water* (2007)

New Star Books

Display Cube 19

Place-based works

A blend of genres resolves in assertive treatments of place in many of Bowering's notable works. *Bowering's B.C.* [85], provincial in scope, is an historical text – and in fact the inscription to Jean Baird on the title page is from “George Bowering, historian.”

Writing the Okanagan [86], brings the relevant toponym directly into its title. Compiling selections from dozens of prior works, and invoking locations such as Peachland, Osoyoos, Vernon, Rock Creek, and Oliver, this volume promises the reader “the wonder of the Okanagan” in poetry and prose.

Shoot! veers northward into the Thompson, where Bowering constructs a novel around the history of the “Wild McLean Boys” gang. While like *Caprice* it conforms to many conventions of the Western genre, “*Shoot!* quickly moves beyond a simple adventure novel and becomes an anti-western by denying the romance of “the west” and, instead, ranging across myriad politically charged issues, including Aboriginal land rights, violence and racism on Canada's western frontier, youth violence, power of the Hudson's Bay Company, mixed-race relationships, and the death penalty.”

[85] Bowering's B.C.: A Swashbuckling Adventure (1996)

[86] Writing the Okanagan (2015)

[87] Shoot! (1994)

Key Porter Books

[88] Shoot! (1996)

St. Martin's Press

Display Cube 20

Pseudonyms (Ellen Field)

For a time, and among other pseudonyms, Bowering wrote under the pen name “Ellen Field,” which was, according to Bowering’s website, created to allow entry to certain contests.

Other pen names include: Eric Blackhead, Helmut Franz, E.E. Greengrass, and Ed Prato.

[89] *H* (1988)

[90] *A, you're adorable* (1998)

[91] *A, you're adorable* (2004)

[92] *G* (n.d.)

Display Cube 21

Chapbooks (2000s)

[93] *Rewriting my grandfather* (2005)

George Bowering wrote the poem “Grandfather...” in 1962. The author’s “relationship with this early and much-anthologized poem is explored in the Nomados publication titled *Rewriting My Grandfather.*” Related digitized archival audio has been made available online, as compiled by Deanna Fong at thecapilanoreview.com.

[94] *A knot of light* (2005)

Printed in a limited edition of 52 copies

[95] *Some answers* (2007)

Printed in a limited edition of 100 copies

[96] *Montenegro1966* (2007)

Printed in a limited edition of 40 copies

Display Cube 22

Chapbooks and alternative formats (2010s)

[97] *Los Pájaros de Tenacatita* (2013)

Published in an edition of 115, of which the first 25 copies are signed by the author. Written in La Manzanilla del Mar, Mexico in January 2013, each of the poems is a fulcrum which consists of six lines divided into couplets.

[98] *Animals Beasts and Critters* (2008)

Poems written in an abecedarian format, intended for children. Text is stapled at the gutter inside a folder. Illustrated by Tony Bellette.

[99] *That Toddlin' Town / Baby Don' Ya Wanna Go* (2016)

Display Cube 23C

Recent works (2019–2021)

Bowering continues to write across genres, but the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic have spurred reliance on new technical modes: *Soft zipper* and *Could be* were jointly “launched” by Zoom in June of 2021.

[100] *Soft zipper. Objects, food, rooms* (2021)

Personal memoir including reminiscences of small town Okanagan youth

[101] *Writing and reading* (2019)

Essays

[102] *Taking measures* (2019)

Six-decade selection of serial poems, edited by Stephen Collis

[103] *Could be* (2021)

New poems

Display Cube 24C

Artifacts of dedication (2003)

This wine barrel lid was dedicated to Bowering from his “hometown of Oliver, B.C.” on the occasion of his becoming Canada’s first Parliamentary Poet Laureate. It is dated to July 10, 2003. It is believed to hail from the Tinhorn Creek Vineyards, also in Oliver, B.C.

Bowering has been named a permanent citizen of the City of Oliver.

The underside of the lid has legible signatures from Kenn Oldfield, T. Schafer, Patrick Deakin, Linda Larson, and Katie Pushie.

[104] Wine barrel lid

Display Cube 23B

The Baird Bowering Collection permanent display

The Baird Bowering Collection is an ongoing part of Okanagan Special Collections “open stacks” – while the books stay in locked cabinets, most of the titles are visually browsable as a library collection. It is catalogued so that the items cohere together as a discrete collection; other titles will not be interfiled, regardless of classification or call number.

The visibility of the pamphlets included in this exhibition is more of a rare event, as they are normally housed in numbered envelopes and placed in boxes for storage. Other oversize or fragile items are stored in our climate-controlled vault.

All of the items can be requested for circulation within the reading room.

Display Cube 23A

Baseball

A recurring theme in Bowering's writing is sports – especially baseball. See also exhibit no. 2, *Dual Modalities* to see Bowering on the face of a promotional baseball card.

[105] *Baseball* (2003)

[106] *The Diamond Alphabet* (2011)

[107] *Taking the Field* (1990)

[108] *Baseball Love* (2006)

Display Cube 24A

Biography, method, and criticism

[109] *He Speaks Volumes* (2018)

[110] *How I Write Certain of my Books* (2011)

[111] *A Magpie Life* (2001)

[110] *A Record of Writing* (1989)