

Frona Lane

Selected Poems



Frona Lane

1903 [Austin, Texas] –

November 12, 2005 [Los Angeles, California]

Lane was born in Dell Valley, Austin, Texas to Henry and Lula Lane. She married Piercy Algiers Bray from Georgia in 1924 with whom she has a son in 1929 in Oregon. They divorced in 1931. She married Charles Wickliffe in 1940 in San Francisco and moved to Los Angeles where their daughter, Marylyn Julia Wickliffe, is born in 1942. Lane works as an instructor at the Franklin School for Adults and publishes frequently with Grover I. Jacoby's magazines. Lane and Wickliffe divorce in 1958. Lane then married Aaron Davidson, a jeweler from Holland, in 1967 (he died in 1994). She is buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, her gravestone reading "Frona Lane Wickliffe."

Third Eyelid. Denver: Alan Swallow, 1951.

Worm, Feed Gently, and other poems. Cabot [Vermont]: The Green Leaf Press, 1957

Two Towns

The women walk with hips in that town;
the children with knees,
hop-scotching the walk squares—
danger only in the lines there.

The women walk with vertebrae in that other town;
the children behind hands
stare from grottos of eyes
through stalactite tears.

Polyhedral City

City with misty eyes, city with several faces,
 juggling sun, mumbling moon,
is Atlas balancing goblets on toadstools;
 jangling bones of headless men.

Corner the rabbit. Butcher the lamb.
 Bag the possum. Salt the sparrow's tail.
Potpourri on a single platter.
 Pile up. Pile up, death, pell-mell.

Spokes of fingers on wheels of hands.
 Count the lucre, ignore the losses.
Music with flesh. Flesh with music.
 Pile up. Pile up, neatly, crosses.

Look this way, that way, quickly, reveler.
 Death pries an intimate door.
Pile up flowers in woven circles.
 Pile up. Pile up more, more.

Clothes Line and a Balcony

In the little light between tall flowers
I could see a split body standing and a half body dangling.
The split body pulled in the half body,
swimming in its sea of sky.

Behind bars of the canary-cage side of the house
part of a woman of no dimension turned between the flowers;
climbed walls of the house of pigeons
and walked through the little light.

Mute Evidence

See them move lips without talking—
talk without moving lips.

They are not saints anywhere walking
with ball-bearing boneless hips.

Not WHY I came is surprise.

WHEN I came lingers.

They know me with Ghandi eyes—
sparrow-quick fingers.

Know me. See them shake tongues—
eyes between marble.

That said is not said with words
but bird-throated warble.

They are not ghosts anywhere walking
with hinged and hollow hips.

See them move lips as mute evidence—
speak without moving lips.

First Quarrel

Words, one-syllabled. and hard as knuckles,
 beat on the thin skull, reason.
Tons of eyes and tongues
 strike like hail out of season.

Fathom the flames how they wither
 the bridal bouquet of intention
till love, still-born, is a corpse
 piled high-with a shroud of convention.

Angels, your wings make the music
 of bees and of birds shot from perches.
The demanding flesh has stripped
 leaves from heaven's white birches.

Spare me the lash of light
 that whips the body bare.
Bring me the candle of night;
 leave it lee-ward on the stair.

The Poet's Ear Is Leaning

The poet's ear is a leaning Pisa
towering the sky,
yet no one would mistake it for Pisa.
Pisa is marble, with a marble base,
while the poet's face
is a bower that blooms in season
with rhyme and reason.

Galileo tenured the tower
to determine the velocity of falling bodies.
The poet tenures his ear
to determine direction of all bodies.

I hope the inclination of the poet's ear
will not, like Pisa's tower,
increase seventeen feet through centuries of leaning
for, without provocation, the ear
would undoubtedly be marble bier
for his face most completely.

Case Histories from Private Files of Dr. X

CASE 1 — SON (REF: FREUD)

Give in to your unnatural impulse&,
if you wish to eliminate your troubles.
Sublimate them and they will make beautiful bubbles.
Child will no longer hate father, love mother,
if he but substitute one thing for another.

Rx for Son: Transfer libido to Fido.

CASE 2 — SUE (REF: ADLER)

The inferior child seeks to dominate, to be on top.
His conduct is ruled by Ego and Will to Power.
Psyche suffers. Esteem is lowered. Watch him cower.
Then comes struggle for self-preservation.
Patient becomes bill-board marked: Reservation.

Rx for Sue: (and memo to me: —*This could be you!*)
Symptoms pure. Doubtful cure.

CASE 3 — MR. B (REF: RIVERS)

Disturbance of another instinct than Freud's sex—
one more fundamental, and much more serious than halitosis,
and caused by reawakening instinct of danger, is war neurosis.
Danger and repressed fear vs. social standards, cause loss of skin,
hearing, speech, etc which unfits for war (&/or work), win or no win.

Rx for Mr. B: Coffee to tea.

CASE 4 — JIM MOORE, ALIAS HARRY (REF: JUNG)

Regression to the infant, to the mother,
and failure to adapt, cause hysterical temperament.
If character is not to suffer further dent,
child must be reborn from Terrible Mother, then forget her.
She is his anima. Too bad he ever met her.

Rx for Jim, alias Harry: Marry.

CASE 5 — INACTIVE. (REFERENCE PRIVATE.) PATIENT DIED.

CASE 6 — BOBBY X (REF: MORTON)

No child is immoral, just amoral, nothing more.

Repressed fear is his trouble; regression to infancy, hence his nightmares; cannot solve problems; cannot free self from self; has no mother, no father, fixation to cope with. (In this case no known relation.)

Rx for Bobby: Take up hobby.

(Memo: Nix! Bobby X has no Oedipus Complex, no Terrible Mother, no public vices, so why bother?)

Song of the Third Eyelid

If I were fly I would view you
through eight thousand lenses.

If chicken I would never, never
raise my lower lid to you.

I would never close my eyes
to such beauty, beauty,
but declare you over and over
in all the tenses,

If I were frog I would stop, O
all normal breathing.

I would hibernate with you, with you,
and breathe through my skin.

Were I hummingbird I would beat my wings
twelve thousand times a minute
to match my heart, my love,
and its beating.

Were I convoy fish I would keep you
close and swim forever.

To Venus I would take you, where a day
is as two hundred.

If camel, I would draw for shade
my third eyelid, my love,
to shield from all weather, whither
we go together.

Crucifix

Though he was innocent as innocent petal-stripped dawn,
they hanged Him, hanged Him naked, naked body eyes of neon.
Pilate, his hands again, said: Robe Him for shroud,
as winter saplings' bare limbs, skull-brain, cloud-sun.

But first he marched—marched with spittle cheeks, about-face,
crushed by hissing lash, tiger-eyes, skull-thorns' leopard sky,
depressing shoulder-arms, limbs under wood—a wooden synonym—
crucifix of marching men, for marching men a why.

The Noon Side of

It is the day the very day the dragon flies.

It is the time of the moth turning into wool-fag

(gold thread only whole skeins of.)

It is the sweat-beaded time of the lizard

the turned turtle,

the blush-black day-cheek choke-cherry.

Turn up the stone worm the face grimacing.

Lean on the bent side of wind turning sunflowers

down from the up side of day bringing noon in.

Who Eats Who?

Dogs eat dogs and men
eat dogs with buns and mustard.
I eat fish. Fish, me.
Some fish jump out of the sea.
Tell me, where shall I run to?

