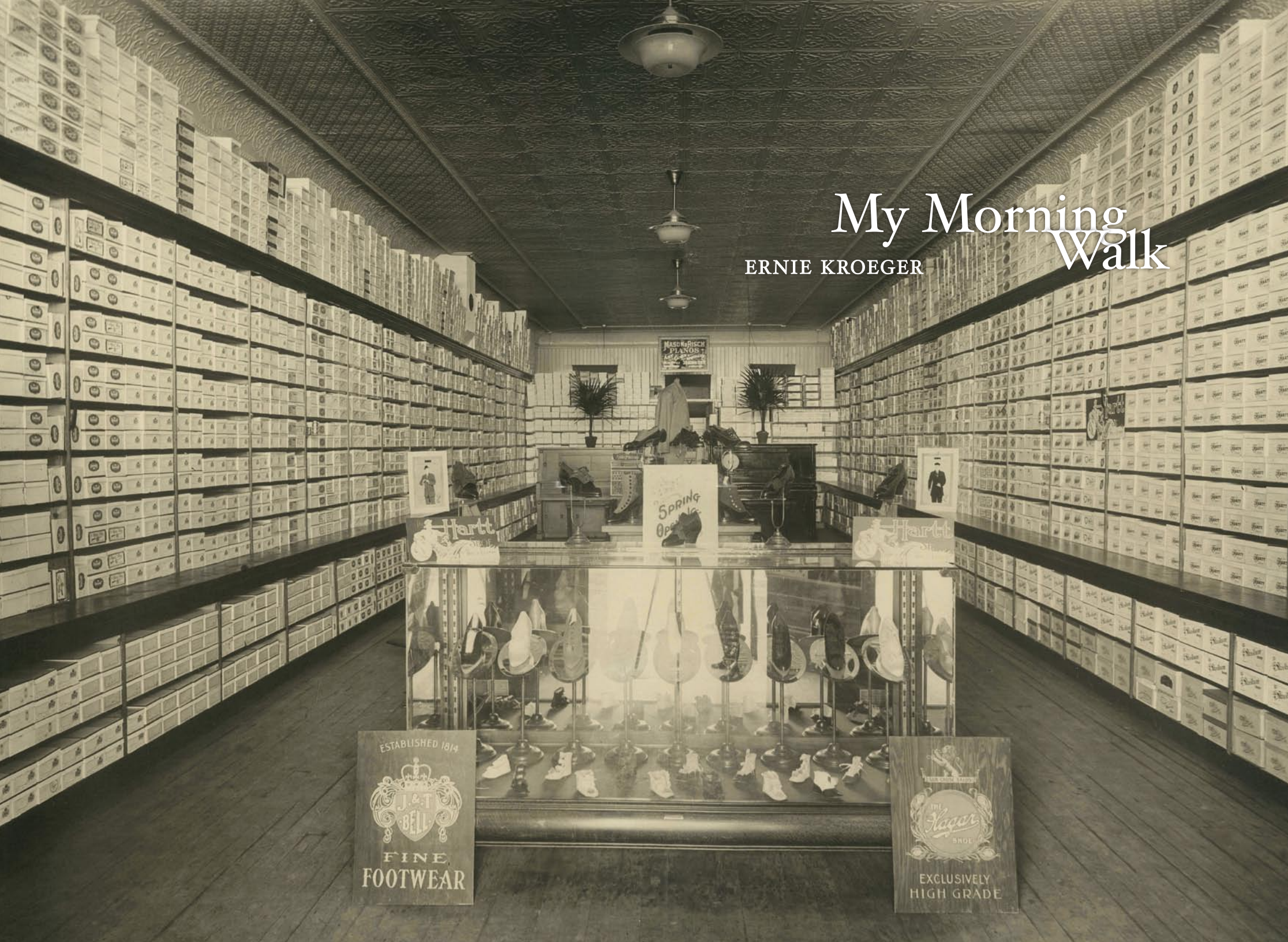


My Morning Walk

ERNIE KROEGER



ESTABLISHED 1814
J & T
BELL
FINE
FOOTWEAR

THE
Vogel
SHOE
EXCLUSIVELY
HIGH GRADE

My Morning Walk

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ERNIE KROEGER

Small Cities Community-University Research Alliance,
Thompson Rivers University
Kamloops Museum & Archives

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Published by:

Small Cities Community-University Research Alliance, Thompson Rivers University
Box 3010, 900 McGill Road, Kamloops, BC V2C 5N3

Kamloops Museum and Archives

207 Seymour Street, Kamloops, BC V2C 2E7

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Kroeger, Ernie

My morning walk / Ernie Kroeger. – 1st Canadian ed.

Co-published by Kamloops Museum & Archives.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-9739407-4-9

1. Kroeger, Ernie. 2. Walking–British Columbia–Kamloops. 3. Kamloops
(B.C.)–Biography. 4. Kamloops (B.C.)–Pictorial works. 5. Artists’
books–Canada. I. Kamloops Museum II. Thompson Rivers University.
Small Cities Community-University Research Alliance III. Title.

N7433.4.K76 M94 2009

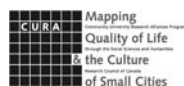
971.1’72

C2009-900586-7

Design Glenda Mathew

Set in Hoefler Text

Printed in Canada



*“One could spend a lifetime trying to come to terms with a few
square miles of the earth’s surface.” — Ted Relpb*

INTRODUCTION

When I look at the city I live in, I see a space that is activated primarily by people driving around in cars. The simpler way of moving through the city by walking is, in comparison, almost invisible and somewhat marginalized. When I drive I'm in a very constrained and directed world, but when I walk I feel free and can move at my own pace.

This small book describes my morning walk, a kind of ephemeral sculpture, in which I animate a particular area of Kamloops: Lower Sahali and a portion of Downtown. By walking it repeatedly, I build up layers of memory, with each new walk being overlaid on previous ones. The historic photographs I use also form a layer of this memory and, while these images are borrowed from the past, they contain enough lasting information to depict the present day landscape.

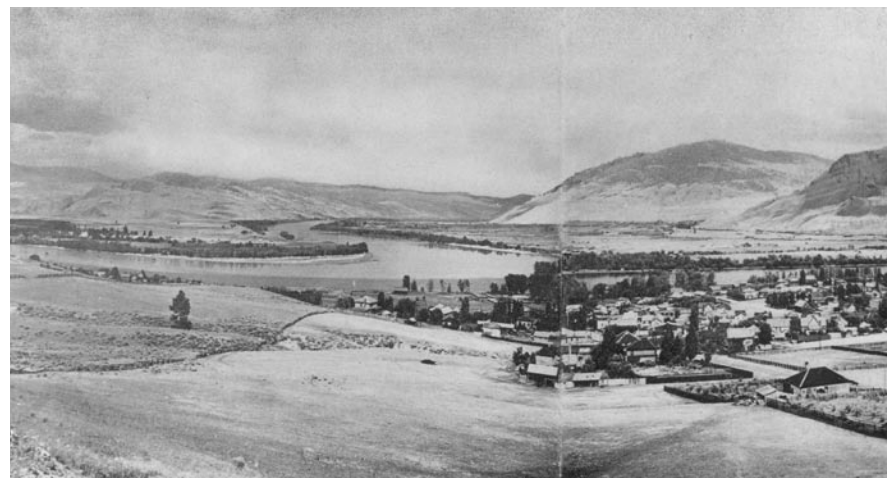
My words describe a short journey in the present that intermingles with the past. The words and pictures used to describe the walk have a certain documentary accuracy but cannot compare to the actual experience. Though this book can be read on its own, it is best used as a guidebook to this particular area of the city. I have attempted to stay faithful to historic references and to the topography, but there nevertheless may be some minor inaccuracies.

It's impossible, except in one's imagination, to be in two places at the same time, but with this book in hand it may be possible to be in two times at the same place.

When I moved to Kamloops I developed a morning routine. I love walking and within the span of an hour or so, I can walk downtown, have a coffee and walk back home. I begin my walk in the hills southwest of Kamloops, in a small settlement called Panorama Village, appropriately named for its expansive view. Mount Peter and Mount Paul are visible in the distance, though somewhat hazy because of recent fires. There's a scent of sage in the air as I follow the well-worn trail downhill through scattered pines and bunchgrass. The soil on the trail, described as a *light-brown friable sandy loam*, is as fine as moon dust and leaves well-defined footprints.



I stop briefly to take in the view. It is very still this morning and where the two rivers meet is like a giant mirror. Even so, I can see a distinct line threading out from Indian Point, made by the waters coming together. This line is always visible and distinguishes the turbid and murky North Thompson River from the more filtered and clear-flowing South Thompson.



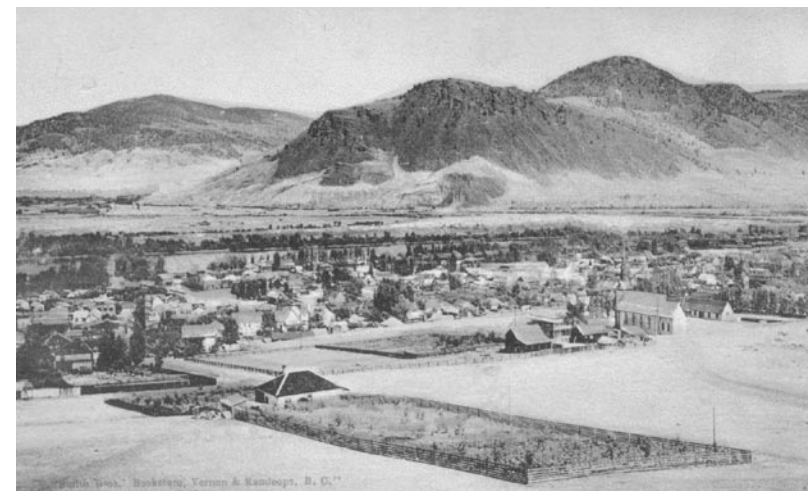
The first part of the trail is steep and then it levels off. I walk downhill between the large ponderosa pine and St. Ann's Academy and wonder about a group of people gathered in the distance. It looks like a funeral, but later I find out that it was a corner-stone laying ceremony for Royal Inland Hospital. On the far horizon, behind St. Ann's, you will see the peaks of Panorama Village.



At the bottom of the hill, just out of sight in the previous photo, I walk behind the houses on Loma Bella, past the car in the driveway and along the stone wall towards Columbia Street, which is busy with morning traffic and people racing to work. The signal light makes it relatively safe to cross, but even then I have to watch out for cars running the red light.



I cross Columbia at First Avenue and make my way along the far side of the fence. The foreground lot is the home of J.R. McNabb, the high school principal. He has a huge yard and the local kids love to raid his garden. At Nicola Street, I make a sharp right and follow the lower horizontal fence line toward a cluster of buildings and Sacred Heart Church.



On Nicola Street is one of my favourite blocks because it's so shady. The houses are well kept and I sometimes meet people I know. There's a friendly young man in Grade 12 who is always interesting to talk to; I heard from a friend of his mother's that he wants to be Prime Minister one day. Occasionally I greet two women having coffee on their front porch and we chat about the weather or the latest movie. Sometimes I run into a philosopher on a morning stroll with his dog Sonny. The other day we talked about the aleatory nature of branching narratives. This morning two girls are playing hop-sotch in front of the first house. One of them turns and asks: How come you're taking so many pictures, mister? The answer is complicated, so I simply tell her I like taking pictures. What are you going to take a picture of next?, she continued. I really didn't know so I said it was a secret. A long Ohhh followed, then she turned back to her game. At Second Avenue, where the city grid makes a jog, I turn left.



At the southwest corner of Battle and Second is Sacred Heart Church and St. Louis Mission. Today is Ash Wednesday and as I walk by, I hear a choir singing, accompanied by an organ. In front I see Father Kennedy at the door directing the congregation out. This seems odd, but the organ plays on and the choir keeps singing. Everyone is walking a bit too fast and it's then that I notice smoke at the rear of the church and realize it's on fire. Strangely, the hymn continues, but when the last member of the congregation exits the choir follows, still singing. The accompaniment stops abruptly and the final person out is the organist. The entire church and its contents were destroyed in the fire, including the large organ which had just been installed the previous year. Already there are plans to rebuild the church at the corner of Third and Nicola.



As I turn northward to continue my walk, I see that a large crowd has gathered across Battle Street. They are not there to watch the fire, but to see the unveiling of the Cenotaph. In spite of valiant efforts to get everything completed on time, the clock still isn't working. It's actually 7:50 AM and I'm looking forward to my cup of coffee. I wind my way through the crowd, across Memorial Park, and down the stairs to St. Paul Street.



To my right I see Walter U. Homfray and Douglas Allen holding bicycles and posing for a snapshot. The photographer has focussed and is ready to click the shutter, but when he sees me he looks up and waves me out of the way so he can take the shot. I wave back to him, cross St. Paul and continue down Second Avenue. I haven't seen him around here before and wonder who he is.



I pass the museum, but then stop, and decide to go in for a quick look at some of the pictures on display. By chance I meet the new curator and, since I show such an interest, he asks if I would like to see more of the collection. It is then that I stumble across the photograph that really marks the beginning of my walk.



Pulling myself away from the pictures, I continue onward. In this view, looking east along Seymour Street, I cross from right to left. You can just see the museum nestled in the poplars on the right. This photograph was taken by Mary Spencer, famous for her pictures of Bill Miner, the train robber. Unfortunately it has suffered some water damage on the left hand side.



I continue down Second Avenue on the sidewalk beside the Royal Bank and turn right onto Victoria Street. I admire the architectural details of the new bank, especially the Corinthian capitals, and notice that the city has installed a handsome new cluster light on the corner. Now if only they would pave the streets! Later that day I read some terrible news: the wiring in one of the lights was faulty and a horse came too close and was electrocuted.



Passing the newspaper office, I can hear the presses clanging and scraping in their familiar rhythm to get the day's news out.



Next, I pass the Sussex Chambers Building and stop in to say hello to John Scales, a local photographer who has a studio on the second floor. Just above the central doorway you can see his sign. What you can't see is his slogan: "If you have beauty, we can take it. If you have none, we can make it." He's busy photographing a parade from the corner window, so we exchange brief greetings and I carry on.



I ignore the parade because I'm late and hurry along the sidewalk past the curious man, the small group with the dog, past Kennell's Shoes and Mallery Drugstore.



Finally I reach my destination and walk into Scott's to order my morning cappuccino. Not only do they make the best coffee in town, but the designs they create in the foam are truly works of art. Photographs of the best ones hang on the wall. The new owners have studied with a coffee guru in Seattle. They tell me that they plan to change the name of the shop to Cowboy Coffee, which they think is catchier. I join my friends at our usual table and one of them asks: How come you're so late this morning?



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For some time I have had the idea of linking photographs to represent the experience of walking through a particular place. The exhibition *Making the Scene*, held at the Kamloops Museum and Archives in the fall of 2007, presented such an opportunity. I would like to thank the other participating artists: Doug Buis, Donald Lawrence, Eileen Leier and Melinda Spooner for making it a success. In preparation I spent many hours researching at the Kamloops Museum and Archives and would like to thank Susan Cross, Elisabeth Duckworth and Dennis Oomen for their assistance in finding photographs and historical information. Thank you also to Barry Prost for providing access to photographs from the Camera House collection. A list of the photographs with their reference numbers is included on the next page.

I was inspired by conceptual artist Stanley Brouwn, who has based much of his artwork on walking. He once declared that all the shoe shops in Amsterdam comprised an exhibition of his work. By good fortune, while thinking of a suitable response to this work, I found a photograph of a shoe shop interior in the Kamloops Museum collection. The photograph, seen on the cover of this book, was taken circa 1920 by little-known Kamloops photographer John Scales. I liked the graphic symmetry of the photograph and became intrigued when I noticed the reflection of the photographer's legs and those of his tripod in the glass display case. What better place, I thought, to begin my own walk than in a shoe store?

I spent a surprising amount of time walking in an attempt to correlate historic photographs with present day places and must therefore also thank the City of Kamloops for keeping our sidewalks in such good shape.

Thank you to the Faculty of Arts Research and Project Award Committee for supporting this work and to the Dean of Arts, Ulrich Scheck, for initiating the award. Thanks as well to Johanne Provencal for copy-editing. I am also grateful to the Mapping Quality of Life and the Future of Small Cities Community-University Research Alliance, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, particularly to Will Garrett-Petts for his ongoing and enthusiastic support. Finally, many thanks to Glenda Mathew for much needed help with editing and for designing such a beautiful book, but most of all for her loving support.

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PHOTO CREDITS

Kamloops Museum & Archives

Cover unnumbered; page 9 #3612; page 11 #9158; page 13 #31; page 15 #7664; page 17 #2552; page 21 #188; page 23 #8565; page 25 #1769; page 27 #3834; page 29 w85; page 31 #1749; page 33 #1807; page 35 #6592; page 37 #346.

Camera House

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THE AUTHOR

Ernie Kroeger is an artist and educator living in Kamloops, British Columbia.