

## Lowry timeline

1909

28 July: Clarence Malcolm Lowry born, Warren Crest, North Drive, New Brighton, Wirral, fourth son of Arthur and Evelyn Lowry

1911

Lowry family move to 'Inglewood', Caldy, Wirral

1915

Lowry attends Braeside School, West Kirby, Wirral

1919

Lowry attends Caldicott School, Hitchin, Hertfordshire  
Summer: holiday to Isle of Man

1923

Lowry attends The Leys school, Cambridge

1925

Publishes first short stories in school magazine, the *Leys Fortnightly*

1926

Falls in love with Carol Brown, to whom he writes prolific and witty letters; and then with Tess Evans ('Janet' in *Ultramarine*)

1927

With school friend Ronnie Hill, writes songs; pays for two of them to be published in London

14 May: sails to Far East from Birkenhead as deckhand on SS *Pyrrhus*. The voyage will form the basis of novel *Ultramarine*

September: returns; studies for Cambridge Entrance

December: reads American writer Conrad Aiken's *Blue Voyage*

1928

September/October: studies German in Bonn. Develops fascination with German Expressionist films. In Bonn, meets Paul Fitte

1929

Stays with Aiken in Boston, MA, as 'paying house guest'

Reads Norwegian writer Nordahl Grieg's *The Ship Sails On*

November: matriculates at St Catharine's College, Cambridge

15 November: Paul Fitte discovered dead in his rooms from gas poisoning. Lowry later claims to have helped Fitte seal up his windows while drunk; 15 November becomes a dreaded date for him

1930

Stays with Aiken in Rye, Sussex  
Passes Part I of the Cambridge Tripos

August: sails on SS *Fagervik* from Preston, originally bound for Leningrad, but redirected to Aalesund, Norway; in Oslo, manages to meet Nordahl Grieg

1931

Lowry's story 'Punctum Indifferens Skibet Gaar Videre' published in *Best British Stories of 1931* under title 'Seductio ad Absurdum'

1932

Scrapes Third Class Honours from Cambridge. Lives in London.

*Ultramarine* accepted for publication by Jonathan Cape

1933

To Granada with Aiken and English artist Edward Burra

May: meets Jan Gabriel

June: *Ultramarine* published

1934

6 January: marries Jan Gabriel in Paris

April: Jan returns home to the US

July: Lowry sails from Southampton to New York to be with Jan

Working on *In Ballast to the White Sea* and short stories

1935

Living with Jan in New York; drinking heavily

1936

May: enters Bellevue psychiatric hospital as a voluntary patient.

His experiences will form basis of novella *Lunar Caustic*

He and Jan travel across the US by Greyhound bus prior to visiting Mexico

October: arrive in Acapulco, Mexico 'on the Day of the Dead' (in fact it is two days before, on 30 October)

November: rent house at 62 Calle Humboldt, Cuernavaca, which will become setting for the Consul and Yvonne's house in *Under the Volcano*  
Begins work on first version of *Under the Volcano*; originally a short story, then novella, then novel

1937

Aiken and Burra visit; Lowry drinking heavily

December: Jan leaves for LA, refusing to tolerate Lowry's drinking  
Lowry spends Christmas in jail in Mexico

1938

July: Lowry returns to LA, his affairs in the hands of attorney Benjamin Parks, employed by

Arthur Lowry  
Working on *The Last Address* [*Lunar Caustic*] and *Under the Volcano*



1939

7 June: meets Margerie Bonner, an American divorcée and former actress

July: Jan files for divorce. Malcolm taken to Vancouver by Parks in order to be able to apply for a renewal of his US visa

September: Margerie joins him in Vancouver

1940

First version of *Under the Volcano* completed

August: Malcolm and Margerie visit Dollarton, on Burrard Inlet north of Vancouver, for a 'vacation'; decide to stay. Neighbours include Jimmy Craige, Manx boatbuilder

November: Malcolm receives final divorce papers

2 December: Malcolm and Margerie marry

1941

Malcolm and Margerie buy shack at Dollarton, Lowry's 'paradise' which will feature in short stories in *Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place*. Revising *Under the Volcano*, *The Last Address* and *In Ballast to the White Sea*

1944

7 June: shack destroyed by fire. Manuscript of *Under the Volcano* rescued but that of *In Ballast...* and revision notes for *Lunar Caustic* lost

1945

11 February: death of Arthur Lowry  
Rebuilding shack and building pier  
*Under the Volcano* completed and sent to Jonathan Cape

November: fly to LA to visit Margerie's family and thence to Mexico; Margerie keen to see the setting of *Under the Volcano*  
In Cuernavaca, rent apartment at 24 Calle Humboldt – Jacques Laruelle's house in the *Volcano*  
December: receives letter and reader's report from Cape, offering to publish if revisions are made

1946

January: composes long letter to Cape arguing for publication of the *Volcano* as it stands

April: *Under the Volcano* accepted by Cape in London and by Reynal & Hitchcock in New York

May: returns to Vancouver

December: to New Orleans and thence Haiti

1947

February: in New York for publication of *Under the Volcano*

November: Malcolm and Margerie sail for Europe via Panama Canal  
*Under the Volcano* published in UK  
23 December: disembark at Le Havre

1948

Lowry again drinking heavily  
Travel to Italy

1949

January: return to Dollarton.  
Working on *Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid*, short stories in *Hear Us O Lord...*, film treatment of Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*

1950

May: French translation of *Under the Volcano* published

7 December: death of Evelyn Lowry

1951

Developing idea of *The Voyage that Never Ends* as over-arching scheme for his various works in progress.  
Working on stories for *Hear Us O Lord...*

September: German translation of *Under the Volcano* published

1952

Signs contract with Random House for *The Voyage that Never Ends*  
Struggling to finish any one of multiple works; 'October Ferry to Gabriola', first conceived as short story within *Hear Us O Lord...*, expands to novella and then novel

1953

Margerie agitating to leave Dollarton on grounds of her health  
October: Lowry sends first batch of *October Ferry* to editor Albert Erskine

1954

January: Random House suspend payments to Lowry  
August: Malcolm and Margerie leave Dollarton for the last time  
September: Lowry says a drunken goodbye to Conrad Aiken before he and Margerie sail from New York for Italy  
October: in Sicily, Lowry drinking heavily



- 1955  
July: in England  
September: Malcolm admitted to Brook Hospital, London, for 'drying out'; Margerie believes he needs brain surgery, but doctors conclude there is nothing wrong  
November: Lowry admitted to the Atkinson Morley Hospital, London, for psychiatric treatment, ECT and aversion therapy
- 1956  
February: Lowry discharged from hospital and working again on *October Ferry*. Malcolm and Margerie rent White Cottage, Ripe, Sussex  
31 May: Malcolm and Margerie banned from The Lamb pub in Ripe after a drunken fight  
July: Malcolm readmitted to the Atkinson Morley; discharged in August  
October: Margerie admitted to St Luke's Woodside Hospital, London, for psychiatric treatment
- 1957  
Lowry working hard on *October Ferry to Gabriola*  
27 May: Malcolm and Margerie leave Ripe for holiday in the Lake District, returning on 22 June  
26 June: following a drunken fight, Margerie spends the night with a neighbour  
27 June: Margerie finds Malcolm dead  
1 July: inquest records death by misadventure; cause of death, 'swallowing a no. of barbiturate tablets whilst under the influence of alcohol'  
3 July: Lowry's funeral, Ripe Parish Church
- 1961  
*Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place* published
- 1962  
*Ultramarine* re-published  
*Malcolm Lowry Selected Poems* published by City Lights Books, San Francisco, edited by Earle Birney with the assistance of Margerie
- 1963  
*Lunar Caustic* published, edited by Margerie Lowry and Earle Birney
- 1964  
Spanish translation (by Raúl Ortiz) of *Under the Volcano* published
- 1965  
*Selected Letters* published, edited by Margerie Lowry and Harvey Breit  
Gabriel García Márquez reads *Under the Volcano*
- 1968  
*Dark as the Grave wherein My Friend is Laid* published, edited by Margerie Lowry and Douglas Day
- 1970  
*October Ferry to Gabriola* published, edited by Margerie Lowry
- 1971  
1-15 May: *Under the Volcano* dramatized by Eric Ewans (starring Paul Scofield) – first of three parts broadcast by BBC Radio 4
- 1976  
Feature-length Oscar-nominated documentary, *Volcano: An Inquiry into the Life and Death of Malcolm Lowry*, directed by John Kramer and Donald Brittain for National Film Board of Canada
- 1977  
Commissioned by the Ilkley Literature Festival, Graham Collier's *Day of the Dead* music/prose tribute to Lowry is premiered, featuring some of the UK's leading jazz players and narration by John Carbery. A second composition, *October Ferry & Triptych*, is premiered in Budapest
- 1983  
**Gordon Bowker recalls:**  
'A Saturday school under auspices of the Adult Studies Department of Goldsmiths College. Ron Binns was the speaker and the National Film Board of Canada documentary *Volcano* was shown. The projector broke down halfway through and we had to wait almost an hour for a technician to show up, but not a solitary soul left. It was the enthusiasm of that class that led me to propose a week's conference which Adult Studies also agreed to administer.'
- 1984  
*Under the Volcano* filmed, directed by John Huston, starring Albert Finney. **Gordon Bowker recalls:**  
'The John Huston film reported for the *Observer*, the *NY Times* and BBC *Kaleidoscope* (interviews with Huston and cast), and I did interviews for the BBC Radio 4 documentary *The Lighthouse Invites the Storm*, which provided the material for *Malcolm Lowry Remembered*. For that I spoke with Malcolm Bradbury, Anthony Burgess, Russell Lowry, Arthur Calder-Marshall, Walter Allen, James Stern, Albert Erskine, Kathleen Raine, Carole Hyde (Lowry's boyhood girlfriend), and Anna Wickham's son James – all of whom had been deeply impressed by Lowry in their various ways.'



First International Lowry Conference at Goldsmiths College, London. **Gordon Bowker recalls:** 'Muriel Bradbrook and Arthur Calder-Marshall were among the speakers. Richard Hoggart, then the College Warden, turned up, as did Michael Hastings, the playwright, who briefly considered writing a play about Malcolm and Jan, along the lines of his *Tom and Viv*. Stephen Spender was scheduled to appear but cried off at the very last moment. Melvyn Bragg came along at short notice to talk about his documentary on Lowry, *Rough Passage*, and wrote about the occasion in *Punch*. There was a meal at Bertorelli's for all the contributors, and a visit to The Fitzroy Tavern where the landlord refused a lovely photograph of Lowry which the BBC had had framed for us and which was intended for the bar-room wall to stand alongside Dylan Thomas. For the occasion we mounted an exhibition of photographs of young Lowry (donated by Russell Lowry), and Ron Binns mapped out a 'Tour of Lowry's London'.

'A couple of days before the event Calder-Marshall rang to ask me to set up a jug of water on the table for him. "But," he said, "I want you to fill it with gin. Nobody will know." And so there he sat giving his talk and sipping away merrily throughout a somewhat "fiery" discourse which began with a wonderful story about Lowry's inability to stop drinking!'

5 July: Nanaimo, British Columbia: premiere of Michael Mercer's play *Goodnight Disgrace*, a dramatisation of the relationship between Lowry and Conrad Aiken

1986  
9 July: 'Laruelle's tower' in Cuernavaca is preserved by the actions of John Spencer and friends

1987  
International Malcolm Lowry Symposium, University of British Columbia, Canada

1988  
29 September: death of Margerie Lowry, aged 83

1989  
28 July: documentary *Malcolm Lowry en México* premieres in Cuernavaca and Mexico City

1993  
The Malcolm Lowry Room nightclub established by Michael Turner in Vancouver. It runs for four years

1999  
Lowry conference at the Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico City, with Gordon Bowker, Hernán Lara and Raúl Ortiz

2002  
November 2: First Malcolm Lowry International Colloquium, University of Morelos, Cuernavaca, Mexico

2006  
An exhibition, *Quauhnahuac – Die Gerade ist eine Utopie (the Straight Line is a Utopia)*, curated by Adam Szymczyk at the Kunsthalle Basel, takes the Aztec name for Cuernavaca and brings together historical and contemporary artists to 'investigate the idea of journey' with reference to Lowry and *Under the Volcano*

2007  
27 June: 'Malcolm Lowry: Fifty Years On' symposium, University of Sussex, followed by visit to Lowry's grave and an evening in The Lamb, Ripe  
2 November: Second Malcolm Lowry International Colloquium, University of Morelos, Cuernavaca, Mexico

2008  
21 February: first Lowrian Day, Cuernavaca, Mexico; showing of *The Hands of Orlac*; launch of the Malcolm Lowry Foundation blog

2009  
23–25 July: Malcolm Lowry Centenary International Conference, University of British Columbia, Canada  
28 July: Third Malcolm Lowry International Colloquium, Cuernavaca, Mexico  
25 September–22 November: Lowry centenary arts programme presented by the Bluecoat in Liverpool