Layers of Limestone

by Keith Inman

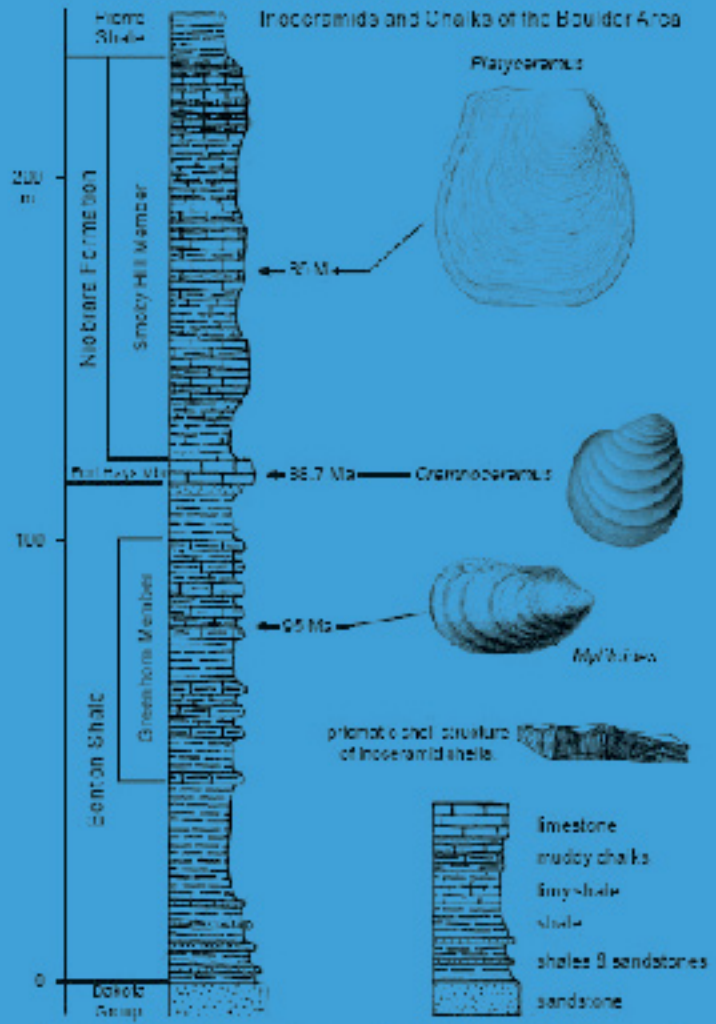

Figure 5. Chalks and inoceramid zones of the Boulder area. *Mytiloides* spp. and *Cremnoceramus* spp. shells typically have maximum diameters of 1.5 cm. *Platyceramus* spp. shells have shell diameters up to 1 m in the Fort Hays Member.

The Old Church Lane

Who are these stones
that fell
in the field
behind our eyes

that try to rise
and harken
an early setting
of sun

and march
the carnival streets
listening
for our drumming hearts.

Shale

The lacrosse ball thumped
the walk and the wall
before resting
in the mesh of the stick.

Thump-thump,
thump-thump.
The next throw long-hopped
denting the siding.

A window scraped open.
"Take it off to the school ground,"
his father bawled,
"Leave me some peace."

The ball rolled into the garden,
as the gate rattled shut
in its loose foundation.

Boys, fleet
in their sway of youth,
and with nothing to do, nestled
in the leeside shelter
of the brick building.

Thump-thump.
Thump-thump.

The Way Mud Hardens

The door from last summer
lay exposed on the hillside.

The paint was gone leaving
only weathered grain.
Joseph opened it
to a passage of worms
and pale roots. "Come on!
Grab an end!"

Wayne and Hakim took a corner each
and helped carry the raft
through the grasshopper wheat.

Their ship, their whale,
its styrofoam belly sagging,
pulled through nails, was plopped
on the shore of the cow pond.

The boys stripped,
turtled their clothes on a log
and pushed off, the brackish swill
washing their browned feet
as their ship pitched and rolled
under her mates weight.

Hands became oars and rudder
as they powered out
from ribcage trees
into a wider expanse of light.

Joseph stood, straddling
the paneled boards,
and began shifting
from side to side, too dive

into his own waves. Waves
that rolled like any other wave
toward all shores.

Wayne called out, "Watch out
for snappers. They'll bite your pecker
off," his own small trunk cupped

in his hands. Joesph thrashed,
"It's got me!" It's got me..." he gurgled
and sank, pink palms up
in the elastic stillness
as ripples napped the gunnels.

First Snow

A toque covered his horns;
her halo glowed
under a scarf.

Huddled
crown to crown, their thoughts
warm in the fire of the abandoned
trail zagging the zigging
drifts snow-swirled
up low-leaning trees
that shook
their diamond hoods
in the soft breeze
as snow-devils danced
with streetlit-angels.

She grabbed his shoulder,
twisted him back
beyond himself. They fell
through clouds,
featherless,
wings flailing.

Crushed Gravel

She was amazed how loud gravel
could be under tires,
and turned the headlights off.
The garage door drained
to darkness, the way marriage
runs out of light.

Along the sidewalk, she shuffled
to the residual refrains of bass chords
resounding in her ears. Night's
cold edge hugged her jeans. A yellow

trapezoid sprung open across the front
yard, snaring the points
of her little black boots in the harsh
light. Charlie filled the doorway,
the glass between them.

Halfway to the road, a possum
stood startled, ready to flee, but not
play dead. "You reek a beer," Charlie
said, forcing her to brush past
his gut. She wanted to belt
out a rebellion of youth, its sweet
smell and taste, as he
flopped back
in front of the monster
flat screen.

Beyond her reflection,
the possum stared at her,
at the light without heat
shining from the house.

Curve of Days

The dragonfly landed
on the composter.

William didn't move
as the creature shivered
in the breeze; he could feel his pulse
against the haft
of the shovel.

A single drop of rain
splat one of the glass wings
against the plastic.
The body shuttered
as the wind
held it's breath.

The brittle husk rattled
up, cartwheeled,
end over end,
a fleeting clock
across fresh mowed
grass.

At the fence,
it struck an invisible web
across morning's base
tied to an evergreen.

Stepping Out

The old man in white,
shirt tucked in, leads her

in her colourful dress and hat,
something a horse would eat,
to the bench beside the church.

He crosses his hands over the duck head
cane and watches one end of the street. She
straightens the large,
soft jeweled broach pinned
over her heart
shining
the light of her grandmother,
and watches the other.

Above them,
ornate soffits and cornices curled
with flowing leaves and acorns
support a roof that doesn't need
support.

Ice cream dollops leopard
the sidewalk. Kids
scotch around
crazy painted pots overflowed
with bright flowers,
cell phone couples stare
at their thumbs, the boy
who didn't want ice cream
screams.

"You said you didn't want any!"
cries the father, leading him away.

In the overstuffed curio
shop, tourists are told
to "Mind the step, please."

September Clash

steel clouds train
the escarpment

descend
the tree ridge,

a cleft rock Chieftain
fears hail.

Layers of Limestone

Sometimes, the best place is where you are,

a deer in the Park stands on its hind legs
to reach an apple from an upper branch,

the fox under the pear tree stares as you
barbecue hot dogs under an umbrella, in soft

rain, the symphony plays Mendelssohn
at the University, an audience choir

of finger conductors and toe tappers,
on the helicopter ride over grids of grapes

you spiral with Red-tails circling highways,
the Falls, factories, fields and lakes, biking

up the canal trail past a ship you swear
you'd seen in a Greek port when you backpacked,

atop the escarpment, Toronto floats on diamonds,
you catch salmon in the morning, drive to Erie,

the low rise of Pennsylvania, land perch
all afternoon, walleye as the sun sets,

your mind stretched with tragedy, comedy,
drama, at the many theatres, on winding miles

of river roads orchards bloom, the corn
higher than neighbouring hedges of golf link

communities with green carpet lawns
and the light of flowers around homes,

and still, there is the rest of your life.

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Declared the 'people's poet, 'Keith Inman has been writing since his twenties and has become an award-winning poet.

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