

# What We Hold In Our Hands/ a Slow Road Reader

by Fred First

## Part One

**Bridging the Nature Gap/** The distance we allow between our children and nature has costs

**Snake Tales/** Early life with a biology major, hints of things to come

**Rehabilitating a Fallen Forest Giant/** Chestnut living again in tomorrows forests

**Local Economies and the Story of Stuff/** Our insatiable hunger for stuff must come to an end

**The Foolish Farmer of Erewhon/** An allegory of a blogger seeking kindred minds

**Living Where we Belong/** How do we form bonds to the places where we feel most at home?

**Bonny and Clyde and the Killing Fields/** Yellow jackets and a drive-by shooting

**Your Own Slow Drummer/** Noticing the small things means slowing down, paying attn

**Grandparents on Orange Alert/** Travel safety failures can take all sorts of forms

## Part Two

**Better Without Batteries/** Sometimes the simple and cheap are the best toys

**Dragonfly Migration/** A summer back yard air show easily missed overhead

**Miss the Water: Now /** A look at one of the things we take too often for granted/ water

**The Parlor Fan Jesus/** A familiar face from childhood churches lives on

**Fast Roads of Floyd/** The landscape shapes the roads and should slow us down

**Closer to the Bone/** We will keep chickens and here's why

**Time Machine/** An unforgettable moment crystalizes the way time and matter move

**From a High Place/** An epiphany of land "ownership" and stewardship

## Part Three

**Unstructured Play: a Necessary Nutrient of Childhood/** free play, the risks, the benefits

**Floyd County's Alien Invader/** Kudzu, Bittersweet and the loss of native lifeforms

**Company is Coming: Resistance is Futile/** The cussed ladybugs we live with

**Mt. Rogers Rally Remembered/** a tribute to a Mountain, mountains, and those who love them

**A Writer is a Hunter of Words/** to capture a story is our task, we're writers if we bag it or not

**Shaped by Place/** how we adapt to the landscapes of our lives or change them to suit us

**Floyd County: No Place Like Home/** simple things ground us and give us sense of place

**Clutter: In the Eye of the Beholder/** a wry look at messes, his versus hers

**The Way We Were: High School Reunion/** a time machine look at who we were and are



## Part Four

**More Than Child's Play**/ A found tailless kite was the greatest fun of all

**The Hairy Ones We Seldom See**/ Mammals besides us are afoot

**Plastic is Forever**/ Essentially all plastic ever made is still with us, Benjamin

**Thar's a Moose in Air Hoose**/ The way we speak is programmed way deep

**Fred's Victory Garden**/ The thrill of victory or the agony of deer feet?

**Two Hands Clapping**/ The desert island illusion shattered by HoneyDo vines

**Father's Day Poem**/ A celebration of adversarial love, son to father, and a beer

**A Hollibear Family Tree**/ Inspired by the hope our daughter'd get what she gave

## Part Five

**Abby and the Queen Anne's Lace**/ The wit, whimsy and wisdom of kids in nature

**September's Tiny Zoo**/ the bestiary of local late summer arthropods is amazing

**Whose Rights, Whose Ways?** / Power lines: Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em

**Digital Reading: More Taste, Less Filling**/ is Google Making us Stupid?

**Our Greatest Resource: Each Other**/ The "social capital" we have in community

**Wood Heat--Home and Hearth**/ The ambivalence in care and feeding of the woodstove

**Things That Go Bump in the Night**/ A story of homeowner (and pet) angst

**For Better or For Worse: The Wedding**/ Another goodbye is to set them free to grow

**In Sickness and in Health**/ A marital Horror story too good not to tell



## Part Six

**Early Physics**/ Jumping, climbing, balancing/ don't let their bruises limit learning

**Seeds of Doubt**/ Our young nature sleuth goes all "crime-labby"

**Ravens on Buffalo**/ a true tale of a Wild Kingdom moment on a local mountaintop

**Please Santa: No New Clothes for Christmas**/ How many clothes are enough already?

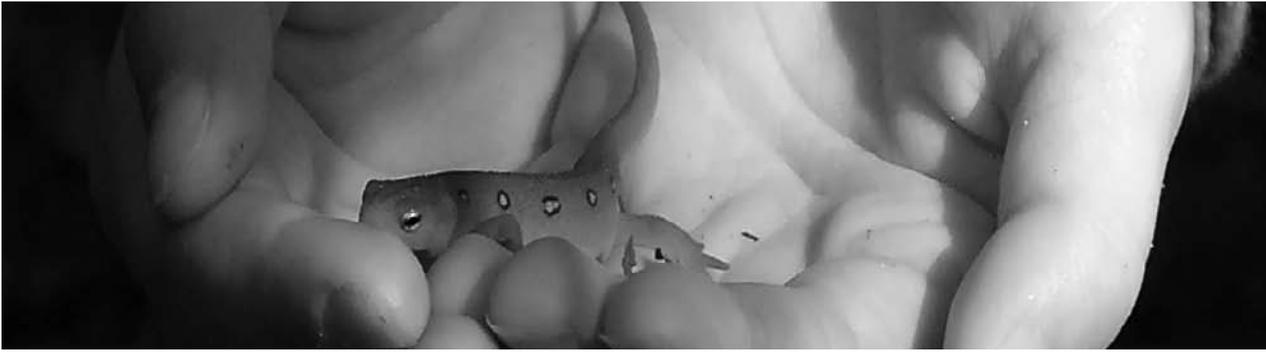
**Carolina Bays**/ A Google Earth discovery that remains unexplained to this day

**Floyd County Airspace**/ An amazing way to trim trees almost ended in flames!

**My Woodlot in Life is Enough**/ A new approach to winter wood/ cut the small stuff

**Assaulted and Battered**/ A rare un-peaceful evening here in the Outback of Floyd

**Driveway Moment**/ A slow moment for the perfect lighting at the perfect place



## **Part Seven**

**What They Hold in Their Hands/** Touching, feeling, holding: hands-on nature

**The Demise of the Eastern Hemlock/** The sad loss of a forest favorite, gone for good?

**Snake in the Grass/** A bright green snake amongst orange and yellow leaves. Wow!

**This Land Isn't Their Land/** A mental exercise to imagine your mountains disappearing

**Conversion Experience in the Floyd Outback/** A tale from my geeky side-PC to Mac

**Clean Hands: the Oldest New Idea/** A history of medical discovery we tend to ignore

**When a Tree Falls in the Forest/** Fred with chainsaw contends for the Darwin Award

**We Can't Get There from Here/** A raging Goose Creek risks a dog-gone dog

**Aging Through the Lens of Time/** On my determination to be a Lost Boy forever

**Resolving to Succeed: A New Year's Hope/** What we believe, we can achieve. Really!

## **Part Eight**

**Calling Them By Name/** We are better stewards when we know our neighbors by name

**A Ghost That Lives Off Trees/** A natural history ramble about a parasitic plant

**A Handful of Spiders/** Ever wonder what lives in those clay-pipe things in the garage?

**Making Other Arrangements/** We've come to the end of easy, cheap oil. Now what?

**Wellness and the Power of Hope/** On the power of the "gazebo effect" to heal us

**Moon Shadows/** A rare free-verse record of a powerful sensory experience

**Our Fortress Garden Worth the Costs/** Extraordinary measures to keep deer at bay

**Wither Winter Weather/** Sorry wooly worms, weather prediction still a crap shoot

**The Greatest Gift/** Mother's Day/she and I exchanged stories to pass on down

## **Part Nine**

**The Ah, the Aha, and the HaHa/** A fun way to think about outdoor wisdom and learning

**Mystery, Myth and Matters of Fact/** Are there mountain lions about or aren't there?

**Sea Change May Alter the Tide of History/** We can't afford a future of business as usual

**Child Evangelism/** A strange story of childhood experience--read in Forest Gump's voice

**Your World and Mine: From a Distance/** The world is our oyster with Google Earth

**The New Physics of Firewood/** The book's only practical advise--save your back, woodsmen!

**A Nose for Winter/** The sense of smell powerfully connects us with moments and places

## Part Ten

**Grace, Descending**/ A most wonderful aerial choreography, hawks mating. Or only a dance?

**Things I Like About Summer**/ Sort of a “house that Jack built” celebration of the season

**October Homecoming**/ Finding Virginia/ A brief history of finding home on Goose Creek

**Front Porch View of Spring**/ A vignette taken from an ordinary extraordinary moment

**The Long Way Home**/ The only tale herein that might make you choke up. Does me.

**Wayward Virginian**/ Our son wrote half of this, we lived every minute of it. Note the gray hair.

**This Old House**/ Just when I think there’s no life left, I see over the horizon. There’s more!

What We Hold In Our Hands: a Slow Road Reader and my first book, *Slow Road Home ~ a Blue Ridge Book of Days* are available locally (at the Floyd Country Store), at my speaking events in the region, and direct by mail order at the link below, and (if you opt for convenience instead of feeding a hungry writer) via Amazon.

Mail-in order form: <http://goo.gl/n5gTg>      Order via PayPal: <http://goo.gl/8wBhA>

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