

July 12 Fort Laramie

As America expanded westward, this outpost in the Wyoming wilderness played a crucial role in the transformation of the West,... It was also an important staging point for the U.S. Army in its dealings with the plains tribes displaced by migration and settlement. From The Official Ft. Laramie Map and Guide.

1

the foundation mounds house only grass
the wall stones going back to soil
baking in the sun

the lacquered buildings resonate,
my boots
on hollow floorboards the
officers' quarters
sleeping only bear-rugs
their skins aged to powder
their mouths open, silent
soldiers in the daguerreotypes
on the mantle stare one
face blurred.
on the wall above, a bow and arrow cross
the bow holding its draw
its sinew rotted

all fixed
behind the Plexiglas

2

inside the saloon I ease the heat---
an Old-Fashioned Sasparilla a piano
silent in the corner
billiard balls spread across a table
all an abandoned game

books in the gift shop
of mountain men
Indian wars
pioneer journals
a Fort Laramie Harmonica
an Official Fort Laramie Tin Cup

a girl with dull blonde hair
and a pink sundress
pounds a metal canteen
on the concrete floor around the water fountain
a mother studies a miniature

of tiny buildings
tiny tipis
little soldiers little
Indians

outside, three boys on the new-mown lawn
take turns shooting each other
and dying