



## Bijaboji: North to Alaska by Oar

*Betty Lowman Carey*

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## **Bijaboji: North to Alaska by Oar** Betty Lowman Carey

Betty Lowman was 22 years old in June 1937 when she climbed into her beloved red dugout canoe Bijaboji and set out on a journey from Puget Sound to Alaska. Traversing some of the most treacherous waters on earth, the journey would have been a risky act for an extreme adventurer in any era; for a young woman in the conservative 1930s, it was a venture of almost unimaginable daring. Betty pulled it off, and now, 67 years later, she accomplishes an equal feat--a book of pure adventure. Bijaboji is a classic of boating literature worthy of a place beside *The Curve of Time* by Muriel Wylie Blanchet, whose coastal narrative dates from the same period.

Betty slips through quiet water by moonlight, her oars dripping with phosphorescence. She goes deer hunting with a young Native man near Sechelt. She travels with a boat full of exuberant Boy Scouts for a few days and she visits lightkeepers, loggers, fishermen, doctors, missionaries and other coast dwellers who live in beautiful, isolated places and who speak openly about their lives, loves and politics. She also braves storms, rapids and blistering heat. In Douglas Channel Bijaboji capsizes and Betty loses her oars and everything she owns, except her boat and her sleeping bag. She is trapped on a precarious rock ledge for three harrowing days until rescued by Native fishermen.

Through it all, she copes with her growing celebrity as people all along the coast watch for her, at the same time as they wait for news on the abdication of Edward VIII and on the disappearance of another female adventurer, Amelia Earhart. This is an amazing account written by a smart, strong, funny, independent woman with a glad heart and an abiding love of the BC coast.

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