

The herder going into Bozeman with us:

My father skeptically calls him Prince Al, for his habit of both smoking and chewing Prince Albert. Rolls his own, dribbles of cigarette ash down his front, his shirt specked with burns from...

--dry grass of summer ahead, we'll be lucky if "this guy doesn't burn down the mountain. And the sheep with it."

--earlier herder who lost 30 lambs in 10 days; Dad fires him, "Roll up your bed." "Bastard him anyway." (Dad finding dead lambs; near teepee, eaten by coyotes?)

- does a count of sheep

used in Sky.

Part of me seemed to be far astray. My legs were bowed.

My hair grew in a long backward sweep which continually collapsed in ^{fell apart} the middle and fell toward each side of my head. I slicked it back with water, slept in a nylon cap like a yarmulka. Then, a couple of years ahead of everyone else, I began to grow a downy fuzz on my upper lip. Grandma, who apparently had been through everything physical which was happening to me, now produced depilatory and hair eventually a razor.

And my brain played. It rifled magazines, re-reading until I could glance through an already-read issue of Life and remember the captions without looking at them. Multiplication clicked and whirred out answers. I could spell by instinct, see what words must mean. About all this, I was sober, probably solemn; only the old habit of roaming outside kept me anchored in everyday at all.

For a week or so, I won bets with one of the saloon steadies by betting on the baseball games which I had already heard the scores of on the radio, and which he saw the results of in the next afternoon's Tribune. As usual, Dad gradually noticed this, and hauled me around to honesty again.

dismissed. When the President ordered that Smith somehow would have to go, Chase simply fired his protege as customs collector and gave him another Treasury job, still assigned to Puget Sound.

The furore that attended Victor Smith's affairs next swept up Surveyor General Henry and Chief Justice Hewitt.

Judge Hewitt, probably innocently and in all likelihood desultorily, handed down a ruling Smith didn't like in a customs case. Smith automatically set out to have Judge Hewitt removed for "utter unfitness for the position by reason of his ignorance of law and his moral cowardice preventing him from executing the laws," as he winningly put it in a letter to President Lincoln.

Meanwhile, Anson Henry's dudgeon against Smith was rising higher even than Governor Pickering's had. Henry liked to dabble all through Northwest politics, here seeking a way to tap his surveying funds to boost a Republican congressional candidate in Oregon, there helping to engineer the creation of Idaho Territory to drain off Democratic strength in eastern Washington. A Victor Smith throwing his political weight around displeased Henry, and he was determined to have Smith removed from influence. Naturally, he took his case straight to Lincoln.

By late 1863, if you're keeping score, the Republic lineup in Washington Territory officialdom read: nearly everybody against Customs Collector Smith; Smith against Judge Hewitt; Governor Pickering against Secretary Evans and District Attorney McGilvra; and McGilvra against Pickering on the liquor issue. Democrats meanwhile were happily winning the territorial legislative elections.

change to
fisherman
may be road

He tucked the cloth in around the back of my collar and combed my hair across my head. Then asked, as if it might matter ~~in~~ in how he proceeded: Where you from?

Gros Ventre. West of there, actually. Up English Creek.

English Creek. English Creek. Never been into that country.

Can a man catch a fish there, if he holds his mouth right?

Oh, it's--so-so. I thought about the 2 license plates showing up on the North Fork road. The creek's usually pretty riley. And you got to fight brush.

The scissors were operating around my ears. What line of work are you in?

Life is choices. I could either tell him that I was merely a wet-nosed fourteen-year-old devoting most of my recent time to digging an outhouse hole and trying to figure out the exquisites of life, or I could say something like I did: Construction.

Doing some excavating work for the Forest Service.

That Forest Service. We'd be better off if that outfit'd never been invented.

Why is that?

All the regulations they put on everything. Why, I get ranchers

Justified...
enough to
cause a lawsuit
to stop.

television, and so could be more esoteric for its private audiences. Books captured much of life, from vegetable growing to aeronautics, and they loom now in long enfilades of shelving like an army of facts awaiting review.

Visitors to our own world, we could range similarly through other enterprises, most of them cousin to the ones just seen -- magazine offices, radio stations, archives. But by now, along the path followed and down a few byways, there gathers a feeling for what the system can tell us, even without the human presence:

The ghostly imagination needs no cranial measurements or reconstruction of bones to learn our appearance. Our portraiture in published photographs, movies, and on videotape magazines, tables for reading, carrels for reading -- all designed to take in information through the human eye from the printed page. Yet, besides books and periodicals there are also microfilm, microfiche, records, films, manuscript collections -- the many capsules of information for public consumption. It is not some daft omnium-gatherum, some hodgepodge of the intellect. The library holds the codes for all the information systems it enfolds, and meshes them into the master code of all, the catalog system. For generations in this country, either the Dewey decimal system or the Library of Congress system have been in general use. In either case, knowledge is divided into compartments. If the Dewey system was favored, the output divvied the face of the continent into squares described on paper

As long as you got time on your hands, he said handing me a fifty-cent piece, why don't you get your ears lowered?

He really was extending ^{himself} ~~myself~~. To that time, I had only had two barbershop haircuts in my life, once when my cousin Karen Reese got married, and then just before I started school in Gros Ventre in the 0th grade. Otherwise, my mother provided the haircuts on me and Alec and my father. I still remember the surprise of those two visits to OO's shop, the elaborateness of a process my mother did entirely matter-of-factly--the mirrors on both side walls, in which you could see yourself ^{to a 110 degree} ~~in~~ ^{by repeated} endless repetition; the green eyeshade OO wore as he hovered around you; the barber chair with curved arm-ends as if the chair was enough of a participant to have its own knuckles. The most surprise of all was the hair tonic, how much OO ^{slashed} ~~put~~ on, positively doused a person's head with the stuff and ^{then} ~~rubbed~~ it in and in like analgesic. ^{all right} ~~with vigor~~. The rosey fragrance was ~~appropriate~~ for when I went to the wedding, ~~I suppose~~. But the other time I was alarmed that it might not wear off before I stepped into that Gros Ventre classroom, schoolhouse, amid so many new classmates. No one has ever known it, but the evening before that first day of school for the first time in my life.

I sneaked a towel out of the wash basket and slipped off down to the

pooh-pooh
water

Melander held Wennberg's gaze in a lock with his own, then gave the serious smile.

"First you speak of too much weight, then of too much height. Wennberg, I think you maybe underestimate how far a man can stretch himself if he has to. Can you handle a Clyoquot paddle?"

Melander spent considerable talking to convince Braaf and Karlsson that the best choice was to bring Wennberg into the plan. Braaf volunteered to kill the blacksmith, if someone would tell him how it might be done. Melander agreed it was an understandable ambition, but no. He had thought it through, and the death of a valued smith such as Wennberg, especially when the killing would have to be done here within the fort, would breed more questions than it was worth. "Besides, he is a hill bull for strength. We can use him."

Karlsson squinted in thought, then said that what galled him was to be at Wennberg's mercy. What if Wennberg took it into his narrow bull mind to betray them to the Russians for a reward?

Aye, Melander concurred, that was the very problem to be grappled. "We shall have to set a snare for Mister Blacksmith

Wennberg."

The barber tucked the cloth in around the back of my collar and critically combed my hair across my head. Then asked, as if it might matter in how he proceeded: "Where you folks from?"

Where indeed, given our road record of the past months. My father, ^{elaborately} though, casually encompasses everything from the root years of the Doig homestead to the Morgan ranch of ^{the moment} ~~now~~ with: "We're out here on Sixteen Creek."

"Sixteen Creek. Sixteen Creek. Never been up into that country. Can a man catch a fish there, if he holds his mouth right?"

Oh it's so-so/creek's pretty riley/you've got to fight brush, my father guards the rippling stream that is all but tossing trout into our frying pan every supper time.

The scissors were operating around my ears. "Hold still, Sunny Jim," the barber warned me. To my father again: "Suppose we about got this war won? What do you think of this man Truman?"

Affairs of world and nation get pronounced on while I goggle out the barbershop window at ^{all-business} ~~businessy~~ Bozeman. Women and more women beeline into the shops and stores. This is neither martial Phoenix nor windworn White Sulphur Springs, ^{this is} just only a big town catering to its prosperous valley.

right here in this chair that the Forest Service actually tells them

how many head of stock they can run on a piece of land. And they

call this a free country.

What's left of it, I muttered. More than just the politics of

this barber was bothering me. I still think there is something

unnatural about making conversation with a stranger while his fingers

are in your hair.

You're right about that, he swept on. They are just changing

things all the time.

*I never will
get over ~~that~~
use
feeling
that*

1

That was their first day of stumble, two stairtreads of island when but one had been intended. Yet Melander and his canoe man had alit secure, and after Kuiu the going smoothened. In the days now, they jinked their way southeast amid constant accessible islands. The major island called Prince of Wales rests dominantly in this topography like a long platter, and the strew of smaller isolates along its west is as if that rim of the plateware has been pounded to bits by the North Pacific. Here the canoeists could cut a course which, while Melander said a snake would break its back trying to follow their wake, kept them steadily shielded from the ocean's weather.

The spaces between stars are where the work of the universe is done. Forces hang invisibly there, tethering the spheres across the black infinite canyons: a cosmic harness which somehow tugs night and sun, ebbtide and flood, season and coming season. So too the distances among men cast in with one another on an ocean must operate. In their days of steady paddling, these four in the keen-beaked canoe found that they needed to cohere in ways they had never dreamt of--to perform all within the same close orbit yet not shoulder against one another.

Meals were an instant quandary. Melander began as cook, but fussed the matter too much. His suppers perpetually lagged behind everyone else's hunger. When he could no longer stand Melander's dawdling and poking, Wennberg volunteered himself, but proved too rough and ready. "Wennberg, you're not smithing axeheads here," Braaf murmured

creek and thoroughly washed my hair, just to be sure.

"Let's give Grant a rest, shall we?" Melander offered rapidly. "You obviously have much to say about matters of weight. If there is an eye at the end of every ear, Melander's whirled about the rest of us with an ordinary tongue. Wenzberg hesitated, then nodded as if the words were a fact said.

Grant fetched his way out of sight in the general direction of the landing as the other two, Melander more rapidly than ever beside the wide Wenzberg, slipped to a building not far inside the stockade gate. The building they traversed the middle of the structure, and within its open arched doorway stood three big tables, like stabled iron creations of some nature, aligned from the outside in. The outermost table was Wenzberg's. Melander now turned off into the parade ground from here where Wenzberg stood by the door at his work.

nodded in understanding of the view thus presented, and asked: "So?"

"You have plans to get away from this Russian beach, and I'm coping with you."

"Are you?"
"I am. Like you and Grant and Karlsson will be hung from the top of the stockade for the duration to last on."

from the laden man. "A thinker, hmm?"

"Let's give Braaf a rest, shall we?" Melander offered rapidly. "You obviously have much to say about matters of weight." If there is an axis of life in every man, Melander's whirled where the rest of us have an ordinary tongue. Wennberg hesitated, then nodded as if the words were a debt paid.

Braaf lurched his way out of sight in the general direction of the tannery as the other two, Melander more angular than ever beside the wide Wennberg, strode to a building not far inside the stockade gate. The smithing shop transected the middle of the structure, and within its open arched doorway stood three big forges, like stabled iron creatures of some nature, aligned from the outside in. The outermost forge was Wennberg's. Melander now scanned out into the parade ground from here where Wennberg stood by the hour at his work, nodded in understanding of the view thus presented, and asked: "So?"

"You have plans to get away from this Russian bearpit, and I'm coming with you."

"Are you?"

"I am. Else you and Braaf and Karlsson will be hung from the top of the stockade for the magpies to feast on."

Well dear Mama's going to write you a few lines to let you know that I'm well as far as my health goes. But awfully lonely for Berneta. I just can't forget it. I've been wondering how Ivan is getting along. I wrote him a letter last week and will write him again. I told him I'd write him a letter every week.

Dad: I haven't seen your mother for a long time. She never comes around to see Ivan.

Dad: At last I am going to pull myself together and try to ans. the two nice letters I got from you.

Ivan and I take flowers to Berneta's grave once or twice a week. Soon...

I must carry on somehow for the little son she gave me...

I shall bestow all my love and devotion on Ivan and try ~~so~~ hard to bring

I shall try so hard to bring Ivan up to be the kind of a son his mother

would wish

My father: I haven't seen your mother for a long time, Wally.

My grandmother: I haven't seen Charlie or Ivan since we laid Berneta
away.

My father: She never comes around to see Ivan.

My grandmother: I've got no way to go see them. Then I haven't the
heart to go where Charlie is anyway.

My father: I feel bad to think your ^{she} mother and I can't get along.

My grandmother: got a letter from Charlie yesterday in answer to the
one I wrote and asked him if I could help them in any way. But he gave
me to understand that I wasn't fit to help take care of Ivan. The only
way he can think of me is with pity and regret.

My father: She could have come nearer giving Ivan mother love than
any other person in the world--

My grandmother: He knows he can hurt me through Ivan.

My father:--but it just didn't turn out that way.

My grandmother: I'll write Ivan but I'll not write him.

My grandmother: I'm well as far as my health goes. But awful lonely for Berneta.

My father: Almost three months since I lost my wife and as yet, time hasn't done much for me. The days are weeks and the weeks are months for me. I was to the cemetery this morning for a while. It will soon be winter and no flowers to take to her.

My grandmother: Got a letter from Charlie yesterday in answer to the one I wrote and asked him if I could help them in any way.

My grandmother: I'm well as far as my health goes. But awful lonely for Berneta.

My father: ^{assist} I was to the cemetery this morn. for a while. It will soon be winter and no flowers to take to her.

My grandmother: Got a letter from Charlie yesterday in answer to the one I wrote and ask him if I could help them in any way. But he gave me to understand that I wasn't fit ^{help} to take care of Ivan. The only way he can think of me is with pity and regret.

My father: I feel bad to think your mother and I ~~can't~~ can't get along, but it seems we can't. I haven't seen your mother for a long time.

She never comes around to see Ivan.

My grandmother: I haven't seen Charlie or Ivan since we laid Berneta away. I've got no way to go see them. Then I haven't the heart to go where Charlie is any way.

My father: She could have come nearer giving Ivan mother love than any other person in the world, ^{can hurt} but it just didn't turn out that way.

My grandmother: ^{it will} it sure hurts that I can't help take care of Ivan but guess I'll just have to make the best of it.

She was feeling extra good all evening and we talked until eleven that night. She passed away at 2:30 A.M. on the 27th of June, Ivan's birthday. I didn't even have time to awaken Ivan, she went so fast.

I sure feel bad to think that your mother and I can't get along, but it seems we can't. She could have come nearer giving Ivan mother love than any other person in the world, but it just didn't turn out that way.

It is almost three months since I lost my wife and as yet time hasn't done much for me. The days are weeks and the weeks are months for me.

I was to the cemetery this morn. for a while. It will soon be winter and no flowers to be had to take to her.

The second morning he woke up real early and says, Daddy, I just can't to go school today, and I asked him why and he says, You will get too lonesome for me. That didn't work, so he got awful sick. I told him to get up and eat a good breakfast and I would take him to the Dr. I took him to school instead.

Got a letter from Charlie yesterday in answer to the one I wrote and ask him if I could help them in any way. But he gave me to understand that I wasn't fit to help take ^{care} ~~care~~ of Ivan. The only way he can think of me is with pity and regret. I don't think I deserve all of that. For it ever a mother tried to do right by her children I think I have. Maybe he'll see his mistake some time. He knows how he can hurt me through Ivan. I'll write Ivan but I'll not write him.

Mama gets so blue, Seems all I do is cry & cry some more.

Then he blames me for causing her a lot of heart ake.

He doesnt have much to say to me but I'm used to that now.

She's a nice enough kid in a way. But Mama learned Hazels ways what little time I spent with her in Ringling. I nearly got my head bit off several times over nothing.

Have you and Winona had a falling out? Hope you don't feel bad about it as you'll never be sorry. She wasn't the right kind of girl for you any way. You'd found that out if you'd been around her more. Berneta liked her real well because Winona was nice to her and she was never around here only a little while at a time. When you get back again you'll likely find some one that will be better suited and your own age.

The talk is there'll be good jobs for you boys that have been across and in the thick of it.

If Berneta just could have stayed with us. She'd been so happy over the war ending. I haven't seen Charlie or Ivan since we laid Berneta away. I've got no way to go see them. Then I haven't the heart to go where Charlie is any way. It sure hurts that I can't help take care of Ivan but guess I'll just have to make the best of it.

Well dear it's 10:30 and 5:30 comes pretty quick. So guess I'd better bring my letter to a close.

My grandmother: I get so blue. Seems all I do is cry & cry some
more.

My father: The days are weeks and the weeks are months for me.

Some awful sad news ~~news~~ to tell you since I wrote your letter. Berneta passed away last nite. Thats all the word I've gotten so far. I don't know where theyre at or where she died at.

My father: She didn't suffer any at the last, Wallace, for which I am thankful. She was feeling extra good all evening and we talked until eleven that night. She passed away at 2:30 A.M. on the 27th of June, Ivan's birthday. I didn't even have time to awaken Ivan, she went so fast.

We were so happy and she was feeling fairly well all spring.

ch. 5 possibilities:

--Theresa Buckingham's letter to me abt Berneta's acceptance of death: qte?

--the sheep of war, if not used in ch. 4?

--contents of my pockets

--been given bow and arrow as early gift

This was a lull such as before August, 1914; before 00...

As lucid as that, and as falsely tinted. Behind the scrim the coming

horrors

terrors were ratcheting into place... Memory too needs vacations, and

~~xxxx~~ so come such lulls, times that we still sense our own gatherings,

the other greater formings be damned.

I flew back and forth
when needed, staying a week at a time to get him back on his feet,
~~make the decision about more hospitalization.~~ There were decisions
I could make, although I hated them: I could take ~~from the two of~~^{on}
~~them~~ the burden of saying when he must go to the hospital. If I

said so, because I never said it quickly or willingly, it must be
needed.

I would do it again --again with the ~~tears~~^{weeping,}, the doubts, the fear
to be faced that any decision was my own selfishness, my keeping my life
clear.

At times, alone in the house, I would ~~weep~~^{cry} for him, and for her,

^{of course} and for myself. After everything, we still were traveling together,

toward whatever end was coming in on Dad. There was no exactness,

no clear lines of guidance. There was only time, to be lasted out
somehow.

miss
w/ Dad
Dad B 4a

Portland headquarters, for nearly four decades the pivot of research work throughout the region, had but 19.

Well before these structural changes, an entire new field of research was inherited by the Station. It occurred in 1953 when, in a reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, the Forest Service for the first time was given responsibility for forest insect and forest disease research.

To the Portland office, this meant a notable rejigging of agency titles and administrative lines. What had been the Forest Insect Laboratory ^{of} and the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine now became part of the Station as the Division of Forest Insect Research. What had been the Office of Forest Pathology ^{of} and the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering now were reoriented as the Station's Division of Forest Disease Research.

The newcomers actually were many years senior to the Experiment Station as research staffs. The Office of

doors in his manner, he would talk in a measured drawl about the profession as a way of life: "Forestry is partly a science, but the application of it is an art." Then, more measured yet: "Some of the artistry has been a little slow in coming along."

Briegleb, like Cowlin, had hired on at the PNW Station in 1929 for the Douglas fir forest survey. He came west, fresh out of Syracuse University and his hometown in Missouri, in a brand-new Model A. A few days after he arrived, Thornton Munger sent him on his way north to a

Mandrew

We have moved again, V-E Day finding us by radio at the far edge
of the Bridger Mountains, lambing for Frank Morgan, on a ranch that

springtime suddenly
season water

hunkered in to its own life, roads are really a mess in this country

when it rains, and expected us to do the same--it has been raining.

... days ...

..... 1 1/3

use in
ch. 5?

June 19

Was too bad about your buddy being lost in that storm. Mama

told me you had a letter from his mother.

when
Bill
Halvey
put . . .

Ivan is fine, growing like a weed. ~~He~~ Will soon have a birthday.

You don't need to worry about him forgetting you, he remembers

his Uncle Wally and knows what ship you~~are~~ are on. He'll probably

have a million questions to ask you when you get back.

Wally's letter in Meagher County News; the only one I have been able to bring to light, and it is dry, official, censor-shadowed (quote it a bit). (use info, in counterpoint, from the Ault war diary?) Lead into next graf:

In that same newspaper was my mother's obituary.

--summarize the end of Wally's war, the Ault's 1945 combat actions
culminating in presence at Tokyo Bay, just before using his Meagher County
News letter.

at last answer
like
Now comes the only letter from Wally that I have been able to
takes up an entire column down left side improve
bring to light. Sent in by my grandmother, it appears in full on the
front page of the White Sulphur Springs weekly newspaper of July 4, 1945.

Now don't think that this is all that could be said, Wally enjoins. It

is what they will let past the censors. It isn't much. From whatever

bored junior officer was assigned to morale, a dehydrated handout about

the Ault having "experienced many exciting encounters that are helping

to make history each day." The ship's vast half-year war across the

Pacific gets rounded off: ...we have our less happy times like the time

we had to cover the retirement of the carrier Franklin when she was hit. . ."

Deliberate amnesia of hurt and death is the order of the day. *only* The letter's

less canned, more like

final paragraph at last begins to sound like Wally in person again. This

is just about our last operation. Some of it is not as bad as it sounds.

Some of it was worse. [You can imagine how long we were out and what

damage we received. . .] Maybe next spring we will get to see each other

again."

[of print] exactly
In the column beside Wally's letter was my mother's obituary. *was printed?*

boredom

You can all but see the bored junior officer in charge of sanitized

sanitizing

Aultese--we have our less happy times like the time we had to cover the

retirement of the ^{su}carried Franklin when she was hit... (Logbook of the Ault:

use w
B's asthma?

If we could see the life dimming out like a lamp, we would be horror-struck. Yet that is what happens in a final~~ly~~ illness such as Dad's, and we refuse to see the dimming, even as we know it must be happening. We tell ourselves, until we can't any more, that the face is not weaker than last month, the cough not worse, the skin not tighter across the back of the hands. And each time, having to use the "not" confirms it inside us.

Imagine if memory were reversed. We would know nothing of our past, but would see the future, ever foreshortening as we watched. What would we see ahead of us from childhood on? The embarrassment of OO, the astonishing thrill of first sex, marriage, business, age, death, all clipping off the years ahead. It would be unbearable, the harsh beat of time too terrible...

The writer's dread is that only the fingers are talking, that the mind's story has dodged the attempt to piece it deftly out into sentence and episode. But fingers may know a coax to try on memory. One is the plain stroking of a story...

Which brings us to OO. I had been born in 1939, distinguished by two big warts in front of my right ear, a splayed right foot, and red hair.

Being a kid in saloons, as I was, was a way of seeing people when they can't see you.

June 19

Am glad you were on land once again. Bet it seems good even to drink a few beers. Are the natives hard to deal out of souvenirs?

Some days I don't feel too good, but can't complain most of the time.

We aren't working very hard just at present. Charlie has been watching the sheep early in the morn~~s~~ and late in the evenings while the herder would get his meals. Have been teepeeing the sheep from one camp to another, and the coyotes are so bad a person sure has to watch the sheep closely.

I herded them last Sat. while Charlie and Ivan took the herder to Bozeman. I got along O.K. When they came back Charlie and Ivan brought me the nicest pair of brown boots and a bit hat, so I am kind of a combination cowgirl sheepherder now.

use?

Allen Prescott was one of her pallbearers

But mostly, I saw myself. While this may be one of memory's guiles where it makes me ~~read~~ decipher more than was there, I cannot remember when I wasn't aware of looking at the world through eyes no one else had. I believe there simply had been such a strong play of forces to make me feel separate: I was an only child, and had begun growing up without other children around; then came my mother's death, which took away any routines of home life which would have pulled me toward others and brought instead my father's style of making me adult by acting as if it were so. Always there was the reading, which fed imagination and sent it nuzzling all over me. The looseness of ranch life left gave me great portions of time to fill for myself. The small town school had a casualness in which I was taught -- or at least allowed to learn -- some basic skills, but never demanded enough to absorb much of my attention and imagination.

When my father opened the door, a mouse nest fell down onto the
brim of his Stetson. The cabin was a sty. Ceiling paper drooped down
in shreds. The greenblinds on the windows were spotted with flies that
had got mashed when the blinds rolled up. Everywhere the floor was soiled
with mouse droppings and pack rat leavings.

My mother had never yet washed ~~one~~ anything with tears instead of
soapy water. This cabin was no exception. Outside, the meadows of the
Bridgers were green and open, the south fork of Sixteen Creek softly
talking to itself. The price of the mountain summer would be to scrub
this cabin until it nearly floated, and it seemed easily worth it.

②
creek dancing
prancing
in (quicks)

more to earlier

Nobody ever openly said so, but the circumstances plainly declare that it was my coming that sent my father into the Forest Service. He and my mother and Alec maybe could have gotten by as they were, but a family of four was too much to balance on an association rider's pay.

→ As I say, I was born here in the Two country, on the old Ramsay ~~place~~ homestead which had become part of my grandfather Isaac Reese's ranch--which has always allowed me to brag that I came into the world in a homestead shack, though the Ramsay place actually had a fairly substantial house. Anyway, within three months after my advent, my father took and passed the ranger's exam and was assigned down in the Big Belt mountains more than a hundred miles to the south, to the station on Copperopolis Creek.

Or as my mother dubbed that first Forest Service abode of ours, Amfulopolis.

How

When Mac opened the door of the station a mouse nest fell down
onto the brim of his Stetson. The place was a sty. Ceiling paper
hung down in shreds, the greenblinds on the windows were spotted
with flies that'd got mashed when the blinds rolled up. Everywhere
the floor was thick with dirt and mouse droppings. They say every
Forest Service wife gives her first cabin its first floor-washing
with soapy water and tears. I never was much for tears, but I used
soapy water on that Copperopolis station until it nearly floated.

almost

cut in Aug. '92 revise

It isn't much. From whatever bored junior officer was ^{stuck with} ~~assigned~~ mail

↓
omit

duty, a dehydrated handout about the Ault having experienced many exciting encounters that are helping to make history each day. A version blandly at odds with the daily monotony of the steel cocoon: 345 men in a vessel 365 feet long and narrow as a tunnel. With enough ocean weather that Wally, for one, spent the rest of his life very much like the legendarily fed-up sailor who began walking inland with an oar over his shoulder and when no one could recognize the implement, settled there. In the censor's version, even a rare case of high jinks is sanitized to occasional recreation. (The logbook of the Ault, in contrast, had trouble keeping a straight face about a crew member reprimanded for applying to his own use, one case of beer, property of the United States.) As for the general run of destroyer life, it is officially masticated into: We have completed one of the longest and hardest assignments of the war. By the longest we mean the number of endless days we steamed the Pacific combat areas, carrying the war to the Japs. By hardest we mean the tiresome hours spent on watches and general quarters stations and the routine job of provisioning, refueling and rearming at sea. (Again, the logbook is the repository of memorable times such as the captain blowing his stack:

more?
with...

0932 Moored starboard to S.S. CAPE MARTIN, berth 125, San Pedro Bay,

Leyte Gulf.

1034 Commenced taking on ammunition.

1154 Following entry by direction of Commanding Officer: The Commanding

Officer, AULT, is appalled and dismayed at the disinterested lethargic

and incompetent performance of the officers and crew of the S.S. CAPE

MARTIN. The delay and procrastination in transferring ammunition to ~~the~~ AULT

was beyond tolerance. It is incredible and inexcusable. Only by furnishing

AULT'S personnel was the transfer of ammunition finally completed.)



The Ault was wending its way into history, but greatly beyond the bloodless fashion that was handed around to send to the folks at home. The ship is in Samuel Eliot Morison's naval history of World War Two, a photograph of the destroyer taking on fuel in heavy seas, white water smashing over its every deck. *(long, hard work ...)* Even more auspicious, the Ault and Wally made it into Tokyo Bay for the surrender of Japan: the admiral from the battleship Wisconsin was determined to attend the ceremony, the Ault was chosen to transport him. Taxi service into the moment of history. A night soon after, something Wally and the other young sailors had never seen, their ship's running lights: By order of Commander Task Group, all ships turned on navigational lights for the first time since December 7, 1941.

changed

But on this run of the snowblade, what my father looks forward to most of all is the defeat of Deep Creek Canyon, the one piece of earth I ever knew him to despise. Time upon time the canyon had been his gauntlet to drive during the years of hospital dashes to Townsend with my mother.

To look at, Deep Creek is a beauty. Summoned by the Missouri River in the Broadwater valley ahead, the clear creek speeds along within touch of the road, tumbling rhythmically down white steps of elevation, bumping past rockfaced cliffs, drawing the mountainwalls of forest hypnotically to its banks; but as a driver you are inside a snake. Deep Creek engorged us as quick as we returned from Arizona in 1945. Took us 4 hours to come home after a supper visit to our relatives in Townsend, my mother wrote then to the young Pacific version of Wally. The gas line on the car was plugged & we'd go about a mile, then get out and blow the thing out with the tire pump, all this to be imagined in blackest night with other cars hurtling around Deep Creek's treacherous blind curves at our gasping Ford. My father has never been rapid to credit any Ringer except my mother, but he swears that Wally could drive the treacherous canyon blindfolded.

Not only is he pleased to see Deep Creek mastered, he gets a charge

The lambing crew was short-handed, and my mother viewed a couple of them as short in the head, too. The kid herding the drop band--the maternity ward of ewes--has a saddle horse and he never gets off all day long outside of to eat lunch. Too lazy to get off a horse was one thing, and too comfortably ignorant to figure out sheep was another. There's an older man who looks after the broadcasting--spreading the sheep out to graze--a nice guy but no sheepman. In the yard of the cookhouse was a hospital ewe who had been doctored for maggots

more remote and it would be Tibetan, ^{have been}
Maudlow, though. Any tinier and it would be ~~invisible~~ nonexistent. ^{have been}

Even my mother from none too cosmopolitan Moss Agate and Ringling calls

this the sticks.

--This ricochet ^{of ours} seemed to have more zing to it, ^{than most} (but could it last?) ^{how long could it carry? (into summer here?)}
^{quote a 'summer'}

--The capable Morgans ran their place themselves after (lambing)

- But villagers?
- desc. Big Belts, etc.
- Here around corner from Bridger Mtns
- 16 creek ^{same Big Belt}
- When Mile or so it had to sprinkle (depots...
of Maudlow was ~~one~~ of those (sprinkles)
- Ooat

Maudlow mattered because of the summer ahead of us. This latest
Morgan ranch, seemed to have
ricochet of ours, from White Sulphur to the work for the Morgans

more zing to it than most; but how long could it carry? Wd be nice quote

But the capable Morgans ran their place by themselves after
once lambing was

over,

the Ford once more loaded and into action. Aimed, though, where?

The familiar work and the green ^{Vim of the} Gallatin Valley lull her. Would be nice
here for the summer...trees in the yard, a lilac bush out in front...

somewhere in this time comes the photo, ^{undoubtedly} evidently my mother's, of me
peeking through the board panels of a lambing corral, my father in there
(jaw jutted, hat cocked) amid a cloud of lambs. ~~in~~ As I peek through
the panels, I am more winsome than I can ever be again.

Vim?

Vitality ~~was back~~ has risen in both of them. Charlie is working

like a beaver. He wrangles bunch^es, spends some time with the drop band,

works in the lambing shed, in fact anything there is to do. Berneta

meals...
was cooking for seven, savoring

not

I've been having a little more asthma but not so bad.

familiar
The country

is lulling them... would be ~~kind of~~ nice here for the summer... trees in

the yard, a lilac bush out in front. Yet is it home if the only walls

are mountains, the only floor (infinite) earth? There is a ~~door~~ door on

the heart, on the outer side of which the land can be loved for its

sheer self, but on the inner, humanly-clocked side the need for (domicile).

Beyond the bunkhouse.

What about the door on the heart?

December 25, 1962. Orange as an ember, the canyon plow slips out onto deserted Highway 12 and skims west, grooving a pathway through the crystal-fresh snowfall. The huge bladed truck here at the rumbling start of the plowing run appears to be in the middle of absolute white nowhere, the highway only barely creasing the snowed-over sagebrush flatland. But this first stretch west of the highway maintenance section house makes merely the top-of-the-stairs landing before the road dives between Grass Mountain and Mount Baldy, dropping and dropping like twisty cellar stairs, nineteen unremitting miles of curves and constrictions. Winterlong, Wally drives the plow down the canyon of Deep Creek as many times of day and night as needed.

crystal
heart of
a cloud

no-white

Beside W *now*

In the truck cab with ~~him~~, guest passenger for this dusk run before Christmas supper, perches my father. (I am in bellicose Texas, activated to an Air Force base there during the Cuban missile crisis.)

Their ^atrucial blue haze of ^{7 + trace}cigarettes already accompanies Wally and Dad; both of them ^{was}habitually ^{men}smoked like a fire in a coffin factory. *men always they both*

Otherwise as unlike as brothers-in-law ^{can't help but be,}chronically are, the two of them get along best when they're out like this taking on the world together.

They ^{was}are still pleased with themselves and each other from hunting season that autumn, when on the ultimate day, with Wally's eleven- and thirteen-

^{Dad's Dad}year-old sons along, on an open slope in the Castle Mountains they got into a herd of elk and blazed away, fantastically bagging three big bulls. *transition*

Their hunting vehicle was Dad's aging little Jeep. They somehow crammed the most massive elk into the back of the cab, antlers out like giant furniture legs, then strapped the other two beasts across the hood, and ^{drew a deep breath}

started down the mountain with their new ton and a half of elk. Immediately the Jeep's brakes gave up. Dad managed to swerve sideways to a stop, peered down the miles of mountainside to the Smith River valley below

and told Wally his nerves weren't ^{not} quite up to this. So Wally took over behind the steering wheel (I can see him grin a little at the windshieldful of elk carcass, hear him give out with his unfailing dictum: "The main thing is, not to get excited") and crept the Jeep **into** motion, groaning the load of wild meat down the mountainside in low gear.

My father that autumn was sixty-one years old, and with the bad turns of health ahead of him, the elk bonanza was his last great hunt. Now, in the canyon plow, he is keen for another wizardly drive by Wally.

Familied up for Christmas, the two men share a past bigger than their in-house divisions from each other. Snow-tented Grass Mountain ahead is mutual to them too,

Wally's recreational horizon from the section house every working day, my father's remembered summer mountain from the herding honeymoon with my mother. More than that, though, **as** this run of the snowblade begins, my father looks forward to ~~any~~ defeat of Deep Creek Canyon, the one piece of earth I ever knew him to despise. Time upon time the canyon had been my father's gauntlet to drive during the years of hospital dashes to Townsend with my mother. To look at, Deep Creek is lovely enough, the

clear water tumbling alongside the road, rockfaced little cliffs weaving into the forest; but as a driver you are inside a snake. Deep Creek engorged us as quick as we returned from Arizona in 1945. Took us 4 hours to come home after a supper visit to our relatives in Townsend, my mother wrote then to the young Pacific version of Wally. The gas line on the car was plugged & we'd go about a mile, then get out & blow the thing out with the tire pump, all this to be imagined in blackest night with other cars hurtling around Deep Creek's treacherous blind curves at our gasping Ford. My father has never been rapid to credit any Ringer except my mother, but he swears that Wally ^{could} can drive the canyon blindfolded. Not only does he like to see Deep Creek mastered, he gets a greater charge yet out of Wally's latest stunt with the plow. The highway safety engineers have busily installed reflector posts on the shoulders of the road all through the canyon. ^{These} ~~They~~ of course stand in the way of the purpose of the canyon plow, which is to shove Deep Creek's snowfall off the road, and Wally has demonstrated to Dad how he is eliminating the new metal posts one by one, accidentally-on-purpose dropping the wingplow at just the

right instant to shear a post off at its base and send it zinging up into the timber like a phosphorescent arrow.

At the head of the canyon, my father sits forward to watch, and Wally gears down the 000 horsepower and 00 tons of truck and blade. The snowplow starts down the brink beside Grass Mountain into the first curves of Deep Creek and commences zigzagging.

—————

When the German half of World War Two was taken care of in May, 1945, V-E Day couldn't even find my father and my mother and me by radio.

As you can see from our address, a railroad mapdot called Maudlow which actually was seven miles from us, we have moved again, the chosen eye-taking rough land this time that ~~remote~~ horizon where the Big Belt Mountains and the Bridger Mountains meet. We are lambing for Frank Morgan, my father's second season of sheepwork that spring.

eye-taking

of my mother barely has time to lament a lack of a radio battery.

December 25, 1962. The canyon plow rumbles out of ~~the section~~ ^{its garage} ~~house~~ ^{heading west,} and begins skimming the fresh snowfall off the highway. Wally ^{Winterlong,} ~~big bladed truck~~ drives day and night as needed ~~in the winter.~~ On the seat beside him, ^{before Xmas supper} passenger for this dusk run through Deep Creek Canyon, ^{patches} is my father.

(I am in bellicose Texas, activated to an Air Force base during the ^{There is some, too. + times than he can} Cuban missile crisis.) The canyon was my father's bane, always there ^{has been} dark and twisty whenever a hospital run had to be made with my mother to Townsend. (It was laying in wait as soon as we returned from Arizona in 1945: qte letter) He declares Wally can drive the canyon blindfolded.

Not only does he like to see the canyon mastered, he gets a charge out of Wally's latest skill: ^{safety engineers} ~~the Montana Highway Department~~ have installed

Rms of Auburn who are to get take care of, but they have missiles

transition:

--description of winter? snowing?

--make the point about the start of the plow run being on the straight and level, comparatively. (Comparatively, this start of a plowing trip from the section house is straight and level, 0 miles across sageland before the head of Deep Creek

- middle of white nowhere
Here at the start, [orange truck] seems to be in
• middle of white nowhere

2nd draft

December 25, 1962. The canyon plow rumbles out of its garage
and, ^{carvy} ~~heading~~ ^{pushing} west, begins ^{cream} skimming the fresh snowfall off the highway.

Highway
onto ~~at route~~ 12
lair
middle of
mountain

Winterlong, Wally drives the huge bladed truck day and night as needed.

On the seat beside him, passenger for this dusk run before Christmas

supper, perches my father. (I am in bellicose Texas, activated to an

there Air Force base during the Cuban ^{missile} crisis and still waiting to see ^{whether} whose

~~Kennedy's missiles are going to take care of Khrushchev or Khrushchev's missiles are going to take care of whom.)~~

missile
improves

are going to take care of us.) The two of them and Wally's young sons

journeyed during hunting season too; high in the Castle Mountains they

got into a herd of elk and blazed away, bagging three big bulls. Their

hunting vehicle was Dad's aging Jeep, and with elk crammed everywhere in
^{my cabover}

and on it, the Jeep's brakes immediately went out. Wally took over
and ground their way down the mountainside in low gear. My father ^{by then} was
sixty-one, and with the bad turns of health ahead of him, that elk
bonanza was his last great hunt. Now he looks forward to the plowing
of Deep Creek...

There is this, too: more times than he can cuss it, the canyon has been

my father's bane, always there twisty and treacherous during the years

of hospital runs to Townsend with my mother. (Deep Creek lay in wait ^{engaged us}

as quick as we returned from Arizona in 1945: after a visit to ~~my~~ Townsend,

my mother wrote Wally, took us 4 hrs to get home. ^{come} The gas line on the

car was plugged & we'd go about a mile, then get out & blow the thing out

with the tire pump.) 000 horsepower and 00 tons sit under my father...

He swears that Wally can drive the canyon blindfolded.
and he is ready to see ~~the canyon~~

Not only does

he like to see the canyon mastered, he gets a charge out of Wally's latest

skill. The highway safety engineers have installed reflector posts through

the canyon. They of course stand in the way of the purpose of Wally and

the canyon plow, which is to shove Deep Creek's tons of snow off the road,

^{has} ~~shown~~ Dad how he ~~blind~~
and Wally is eliminating the metal posts one by one, accidentally-on-purpose

dropping the wingplow at just the right moment to shear a post off at its

Here at the start of the plowing run, the ember-orange truck seems to
be in the middle of white nowhere

Orange as an ember, the truck here at the start of the plowing run seems
to be in the middle of white nowhere, the highway out in the open of
snow-tented sage country. But this stretch, from the highway section
house, is only a landing before the road--between Grass Mountain and
Mt. Baldy--drops like twisty cellar stairs into the lower valley to
the west, 00 miles of curves and constrictions.

where
Tind
of
MOR.

Beside Wally in the truck cab now, guest passenger for this dusk run before Christmas supper, perches my father. (I am in bellicose Texas, activated to an Air Force base there during the Cuban missile crisis.)

A blue cigarette haze of truce accompanies the men; they both smoked like a fire in a coffin factory. Otherwise as unlike as brothers-in-law chronically are, the two of them get along best when they're out together like this. They still are pleased with

themselves and each other from their hunting season that autumn, when on the ultimate day, with Wally's eleven- and thirteen-year-old sons Dan and Dave along, they got into a herd of elk on an open slope in the Castle Mountains and blazed away, fantastically bagging three big bulls. Dad's

aging little Jeep was their hunting vehicle. Somehow they crammed the most massive elk ^{behind the seats} ~~into the back of the cab~~, antlers out the tailgate like giant furniture legs, then strapped the other two beasts across the hood, drew a deep breath and started down the mountain with their ton and a half of elk. Instantly the Jeep's brakes gave up. Dad managed to swerve sideways to a stop, peered down the miles of mountainside to the Smith River Valley below and told Wally his nerves were not quite up to this.

May 4
MAUDLOW

Nowhere ever written, then or since, was the simultaneous fact of earth;
the acrobat heights of Montana earth that kept her so alive, until they
killed her.

#

Nobody got over her. Doig or Ringer, those around me in my growing
up stayed hit, pierced, by my mother's death in the mountain cabin. My
father was wrenched back and forth by how agreeable the return to Montana
had been for Berneta, and how with no warning it struck her down; how
risky the one last mountain summer turned out to be, how unsaveable his
wife's health ultimately was. To my grandmother, her suspicion of "out
there" was horridly proven, Berneta taken from her in some remote visitless
place. Having had to toughen herself against so much, Bessie Ringer now
faced what would never go away, death of a daughter. For Wally, the reaction
was a lifelong clutch at his sister's last letters, the keeping of news
that shot in just as it became clear that he himself would survive the war.
Always after, for all of them, it was not simply that Berneta had died young.
There was always the echo-plus of "out there in the Maudlow country,"
"up there on the mountain," "on Ivan's sixth birthday." A private family
dialect of magnitude and consequence. The Sixteen country held that

Don't think that this is all that could be said. What was slighted

worst of all in the officially prepared letter home for Wally and the others

was the actual business of war, taking toll. Nowhere the sense that this was

to be the merciless summer when lone B-29 bombers would send down atomic

firepower and ~~obliterate~~ ^{incinerate} Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Deliberate amnesia of

hurt and death is the order of the day. The destroyer's sailors had watched

planes become fireballs, had plucked survivors and bodies from the ocean

when the carriers Wasp and

Franklin and Hancock and Bunker Hill were aflame, had felt the close ~~brush~~ ^{pass} of kamikaze attacks, had gone through eighty straight days of Okinawa combat.

But the warworld of the Ault is rounded off to: We have our less happy

times like the time we had to cover the retirement of the carrier Franklin

when she was hit.

Only the letter's closing lines at last seem less canned, more like

Wally in person again. This is just about our last operation. Some of

it is not as bad as it sounds. Some of it was worse.... He leaves off

in a dreamtime of his own, trying to deploy himself into a future. Maybe

new manner
of bombs
a device
to consume cities
... in our heat

70-1-20th

promised

brunt into over them

fed ammunition into byrate gunnery

not

true

more?

7 sitting straight
w. world

"But what the hell was he thinking of with a north door?" North is storm country, snow and blow waiting to swarm in any time you open such a door between November and April.

Berneta sends her gaze out the rickety screen door, down the lunge of gulch toward the Maudlow road. "Maybe," she says, "he wanted a good long

"You know go to hell But you a melonhead A can guess why"

look at who was coming."

*that other ch. in season - 4 - out
chuckles at her p t o*

My father laughs in agreement. "Like maybe a game warden, could be."

in night w. world not stand of fence

So we've come to rest, ~~this moment~~, in notorious territory. Not

simply in terms of the comatose old homestead's history of contraband venison, either. Where we are, is the extremity of the Sixteen country.

this stand of fence,

Under those horizon views from this meadow, Sixteenmile Creek scampers through the confused geography from every direction, the main channel twisting down from the Wall Mountain country in the north and skewing west to its eventual union with the Missouri River, joined midway by the Middle Fork sailing in from the east and the Ringling country through a sharp canyon. Then there is a last, orphan section of the creek springing from entirely different drainage. The stream streaking down our gulch is that offshoot, the South Fork of Sixteenmile Creek, the sly tether of the Big Belt Mountains

to the Bridger Mountains. We are where, from countless spots in my parents' past, there was that eye-taking rough horizon of the Big Belts and the Bridgers butting up against each other. Behind us, Hatfield Mountain of the Bridgers sits like a mile-tall apartment building facing down on the stark alleys of the Big Belts. The Big Belts, though, have a last laugh in the isolation they inflict over the entire neighborhood. A forest ranger somewhere up toward the South Fork's headwaters and the Morgans' sheepherder some miles in to the west of us, and the cabined three of us, are Hatfield's only dwellers. Life here is going to take some acrobatics. We are in for a climbing summer, the saddlehorses huffing constantly on the slopes behind the cabin, we know that much. But the meadows of the back of the Bridgers are going to be worth it--such grass, this rain-fed early summer, that the sheep will fatten on it as if it were candied.

Dogs, we're rife with dogs again. Sheepdogs, at least in theory,

Flop with a wonderful half-mast ear that begs affection and Jack with the pale eyes, barely blue, of a born chaser. Even my father can find no grounds to object to their conversion by Berneta into housedogs, because it immediately became plain that only one or the other can be used on the

savage
rocks

well?
No

of a mile each that the land in the West was surveyed into, the section-line roads that ruled us wherever we drove in that country, the boxlike rooms fitting no other logic? Whatever ingrained ~~straight~~ edge it was, to this day I have some of the family unease with any house whose axis angles off from a compass reading of absolute north-south or east-west.



Slamjam it all into yourself at once and what a weight everybody's
circumstances make. Hard to decide, even, whose in the family is worst.
Her father dismal in his coughing old age, ancient choreboy stuck in an
annex to a chickenhouse. A life gone downhill from Moss Agate couldn't
go much more low. Her mother tough as a grindstone against her father
and yet putting up with all the allowances asked by the Norskie. And
her mother and Charlie, barely able to be civil to each other. Berneta
knows she is at the middle of that situation, daughter-wife tug of war,
but can't see much of anything to be done about it. Charlie Doig and
Bessie Ringer neither one is ever going to be quick to give in, and a
person had just better charge it off as one more price of family. You
can pick your clothes / you can pick a rose / but kin and nose / you can't
pick those. Includes brothers, who're somehow both easier and harder than
parents. Paul, closest to her in age and outlook, but a distancer and
being made more so by the war; there in the army in Australia he has
married an Australian nurse and ~~there's~~ every ~~intimation~~ ^{gives} ^{indication} he may stay
in Queensland after the war. Wally, out on the Ault. She thinks his
is the unfairest story, in a way. The one of all the Ringers who has
his essentials intact, youth and health and a warmth toward life's possibilities.
Instead of the duty of war, he could be devising

but his has.

you can't think

dismal

too well



Here comes the part I really hated, the hair tonic. How much of that pooh-pooh water the barber sloshed on, positively dousing a person's scalp with the smelly stuff and rubbing it in and in like analgesic.

Gabbing a mile a minute while he messed around up there; "This'll fix you up for the Fourth of July, got your firecrackers picked out yet?"--

I could not help but think there was something unnatural about making conversation with an absolute stranger while his fingers were in my hair.

7
insert info about Charles Rung:

go through homestead file in detail, but possibly mention at least:

--his helping neighbors with harvest, otherwise never leaving the place except one winter.

--cattle getting his 1st grain crops

--homesteaded in 1915

insert info about Charles Rung:

?
--go thru homestead file in detail, but possibly mention at least:

--grubbing out brush to make the meadow

--Pennsylvania-born; homesteaded in 1915?

--root cellar and other details

--thinness of soil

her trial shout: "Ringling, Ringer, Rung!"

~~_____~~ Charlie Rung teeters in the cabin doorway, fifteen summers before,
drawn by a disturbance in the air. The toot of a grouse, was that?

He squints at the meadow, his handful of cows with their heads
already dug into the grass again.

Not sure now he heard anything, he regrets the nips of his chokecherry
wine at this time of day. Homebrew for lunch is not a sound idea.

He steadies himself to look around the place, sort out what ~~needs~~ ^{wants}
doing next. As ever, his eye can't get past it; the stack of house lumber,
no longer the fresh yellow when he hauled it here three years ago, four?
Took receipt of it straight out of the boxcar at the Maudlow depot, borrowed
the Morgans' big gutwagon and labored the wood up here load by load, damn
near tipping over every time at every gulch. And there the pile sits,
board footage for four rooms not counting the screen porch. Rafters and
studdings and gables and shingles, the whole shebang.

The thing of it is, the house exists in Charlie Rung's mind; the
only discrepancy is that it needs to be framed up and nailed together.
Time he did that; he can't fully fathom how it hasn't happened already.

a danger
quit w way
to
sections of
his potato
patch
can
up at
type slope
at
his

He'd done fine with the barn, and been triple careful with the walls of the cabin, so as not to wake up some clear January morning frozen stiff.

But the carpentry* of the house he hasn't quite attended to, yet.

Middle of June, already. Haying is going to have to be done soon,
and the barn mucked out for winter, and ^{about to need doing} firewood chopped for winter too,
and he isn't a youngster any more. All at once he knows he will never
budge that lumber.

~~Spain will
tel. Antonio?~~
yes
A led
Blat is in the echoes now, the sheeps' ^{medley of baa} baaing bouncing here to there
on the mountain as the ewes are mothering up their lambs. They're ready
to shade up, and Berneta ^{too} ~~as well as them~~ drops down for a rest.

needs?
potato
new
cellar
mach

section to come: our herder shows up, brought in by the Morgans' camp tender. My parents have decided to do the herding themselves after shearing, but for the three weeks or so until then, we need the help of a herder to contend with the tough terrain and the coyotes. This method ~~is~~ is called "tepeeing," with the herder staying on guard with the sheep all the time, spending nights on the sheeps' mountain bedground in his tepee; full-time sentry duty, in essence. As a line from my mother's letters will tell, the routine is that my father goes up and oversees the sheep early each morning while the herder cooks his own breakfast, then the herder takes the sheep for the day and my father moves the tepee to where the sheep are to spend that night. This herder, though, turns out to be a mere "scenery inspector" who loses thirty lambs to the coyotes in ten days, and when my father counts the sheep and finds the loss, he fires the herder. The scene leads into the coming of the next herder.

the herder was the frazzled one and the cannonading had stopped.

—————

But a mere few more days into Prince Al's term of herding, on the fifteenth morning of June, my father comes into the cabin disgusted.

Right there with him as usual, I'm excited, a bit traitorously, by this latest bulletin.

"Can ye believe it," he lays it out for Berneta, "that scissorbill of a herder has to have a trip to town already. Compensation papers of some damn kind he needs to fix up."

She too is getting her fill of wartime sheep help. "Quite an imposition on these herders, isn't it, to ask them to actually herd."

My father steams out the choices. Deny Prince Al the trip and he may quit the job. Or greatly worse, sulk for several days of misbehavior with the sheep and then quit. Hang onto Prince Al if we can, is the least nasty ~~necessary~~ conclusion. The only virtue evident in him is the one that counts, he isn't losing lambs left and right.

until shearing?
yes

"I better take the sheep tomorrow," my father brings himself around to the necessary, "while you run him in to Bozeman." Berneta has done this a skillion times before, ferrying a hired man so that a toothache

skillion