

a22 farming?
See page 8

10/23/96

About ???? words

Text in computer has
now intent to reconcile
w/ bullet on p. 17.

SEPTEMBER

[Picture: Rings on water]

Dog in grass

Some shivering nymph is peeling off in the vapors of this
September morn. I cannot identify her from the bedroom, but trout
are feeding at the surface of the pond and nymphs are the likely
victims, by process of elimination. Grasshoppers and beetles are
not active so early, and the trout would rise more subtly for
midges.

It's good to know that the cold-water ecology of our pond
has survived a spell of hot, bright weather. I had no reason to
doubt, mind you, but my world is one of frequent, small, complex
signals, and they reassure me. Nymphs are hatching; Anna has the
kettle on; and my baby bird-dog is licking lines of dried blood
where the hawthorns caught me yesterday. Tessie's nose is cold,
but that's all right: She makes me well by kissing me, just as my
mother did when I was a puppy.

Sky of clouds, vast, luminous, eventful.

This is a month that squeezes us. It is the peak of the year and we want to be out climbing.

[could do harvest in Sept.]

The trout are grooming me too, and bonding me to my home. On a still silver sheet of water, a point appears -- merest neb of a fish -- and becomes a circle shimmering, spreading, subsiding. ~~The picture is perfectly uncluttered.~~ I have caught ^{the picture} it live and will never have to dust it off. It gives me beauty without responsibility, which is what I want before my first cup of tea.

Winslow Homer would have had more courage. He would have caught life and death in that circle on the water -- energy moving from mayfly to trout in a ring tinged with sun's red rise. He would ~~have~~ spoiled my breakfast.

I am not obliged to worry about mayflies, if you don't mind. I choose not to feel for them because they do not feel for each other. The trout are not groomers either, come to think of it, and their distance from one another makes them distant from me. I don't know what consciousness is, ~~for~~ which creatures have it. Grooming, though -- that's something my puppy and I can understand.

So much for the family at dawn. Something is also happening to the greater ecology of the pond, if I can figure it out.

What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake

- Mist billowing from the water means that it is losing energy to clear, frosty air.

- Rise-forms tell me that the surface of the pond has already cooled enough for the trout, which have not been active up there for the past few weeks.
- Conclusion: Small this pond is, it stratifies -- which is to say that it forms layers of different temperatures. And now the warm blanket at the surface is mixing with the rest of the water.

Today, then, is Turnover in the pond and its trout are making their exodus from the depths, which they celebrate in human fashion, by stuffing themselves. Their year, like ours, pivots on the Turnover and other seasonal feasts -- Sun-Coming-Back, Ice Out, and Evening Rise on the longest day. And by chance these things happen at quarter-year intervals, here at 4350 feet above sea level, half-way between the equator and the North Pole. We organize our lives around seasons in fearful symmetry, ripe now, dying soon, reborn, and then another pot-bellied summer.

For the feast of the Turnover, we will eat trout, and trout will eat insects, and such mayflies as may escape will dance once and forever, feasting on sunbeams. All of us take our cues from something in the season: temperature or photoperiod, say. The pond is our table on which food appears by grace, rings spreading forever, perfect circles touched by dawn.

Good day to you all.

stammer, which he has been known to play like a Stradivarius. His stammer that evening was pronounced, since, for the first time ever, he was about to declaim in newly semi-learned English, and, as he now confessed, "Eng-Eng-English is not my c-cup of tea!"

In typical fashion, Michnik began with a joke, about two guys "with the experience that comes with age," who were playing tennis. At one point, the ball rolls into some bushes, and when one of the players goes to retrieve it he is confronted by a frog who claims to be a beautiful



Adam Michnik

princess who has been turned into a frog by a mischievous wizard. If the player will kiss her, the frog assures him, she'll revert to her princess state and marry him, and they'll both live happily ever after. The player pockets the frog and returns to the game. After a bit, the frog, inside the player's pocket, croaks, "Sir, did you forget about me? I'm this beautiful princess, turned into a frog, if you kiss me..." and so forth, to which she receives the reply, "Dear lady frog, I will be completely honest with you. I have reached the age at which I would rather have a talking frog than a new wife."

As the laughter eddied, Michnik offered a gloss: "This frog is Central Europe, knocking at the gates of NATO and the European Union... they don't yet know whether they prefer to have a talking frog or a new wife." But Michnik's joke worked on other levels as well. For one thing, it enabled him to put his own croaking efforts to transcend his linguistic limitations in a magical light, subliminally begging the audience's indulgence.

While Michnik, squinting behind rectangular glasses perched at the tip of his nose, made his way through a survey of the past decade's transformations in Central Europe, an even more relevant aspect of his opening joke became clear. A leader of the take-to-the-streets genera-

tion of 1968, Michnik seemed to be addressing his fellow graying activists—many of whom were present—as, with some melancholy, he spoke of the necessary abandonment of the moral absolutism that once had so energized them.

He explained, "D-d-democracy is neither black nor red. Democracy is gray. . . . It chooses banality over excellence, shrewdness over nobility, empty promise over true competence. . . . It is eternal imperfection, a mixture of sinfulness, saintliness, and monkey business. This is why the seekers of a moral state and of a perfectly just society do not like democracy. Yet only democracy—having the capacity to question itself—also has the capacity to correct its own mistakes."

After citing a host of issues confounding governments on both sides of the former Iron Curtain, Michnik went on, "In each of these debates, there is a need for the presence of a socialist care for the poorest, a conservative defense of tradition, and a liberal reflection on efficiency and growth. . . . Fundamentalists of different varieties condemn the moral relativism of democracy, as though it were the s-s-state which should be the guardian of moral virtue. We, however, the defenders of gray democracy, do not grant the state this right. We want human virtues to be guarded by the human conscience." He paused. "That is why we say, 'Gr-gr-gray is beautiful!'"

He smiled, breathed deep, then concluded, without the slightest stammer, "And all of this has been told to you by a frog from Central Europe."

THE PENTAGON SUITCASES

AMONG those to whom tributes were paid during the Committee to Protect Journalists' annual dinner, held last week at the Waldorf, were two people who could not be present. Ocak Isik Yurtcu, the former editor of a now defunct Turkish daily, had to miss the black-tie event because he was serving a fifteen-year prison sentence for publishing "separatist propaganda." Even more disturbing was the absence of Veronica Guerin, of the Dublin *Sunday Independent*, who last June was murdered for reporting about organized crime in Ireland. A looming image of Guerin on a screen behind the podium reduced the gathering of nine hundred Fourth

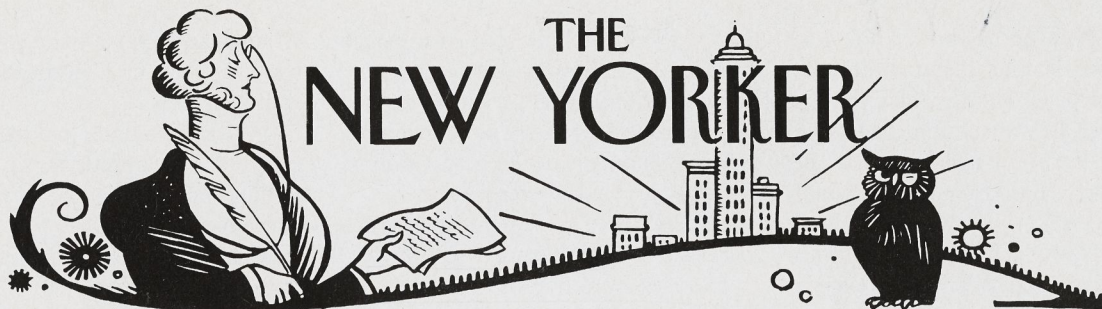
Estaters to somber silence. Then, with the evening's final homage, the mood shifted.

Walter Cronkite, looking more than ever like a beardless Santa, introduced Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., the publisher of the New York *Times*, who was there to present the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award to his father, the *Times*' chairman, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger. Twenty-five years ago, the elder Sulzberger had made the intrepid decision to publish the Pentagon Papers, thereby revealing the United States government's mendacity about the Vietnam War. Sulzberger Junior, in Don Rickles mode, began by characterizing his father as "a man of such limited imagination that he couldn't even come up with an original name for his son." On the day in 1963 that his father became publisher, he said, his first executive decision was "not to throw up." And so on, all lovingly (ahem) delivered, and all rather droll, though not nearly as droll as the old man, who when his turn came settled the Oedipal score with a masterly display of deflation.

He recounted how he had first been informed by the then executive editor, A. M. Rosenthal, that the *Times* had acquired "a mass of highly classified government documents," which Rosenthal intended to publish. "The more I listened," Sulzberger said, "the more certain I became that the entire operation smelled of twenty years to life. I quickly called the *Times*' longtime outside lawyers. Lord, Day & Lord was a well-established firm numbering among its clients the Cunard Line. Whether they were traumatized by the loss of the Titanic I really can't say, but they certainly were cautious. So cautious, indeed, that their senior partner told me that if the *Times* chose to publish the documents his firm would refuse to defend us. With all that cheerful advice, I called Abe Rosenthal and told him that if I were going to go to jail for publishing something, I thought it made sense to read it.

"Do you wish to read it all?" he inquired. "Yes," I responded, "all of it." From the glee in his voice, I should have smelled a rat. It wasn't too long before there was a knock at the door and in comes Abe, pushing a large shopping cart overflowing with papers. With a beatific smile, he announced, "Here you are. Happy reading. He loved it. Right then, I vowed to get even—when I got out."

Until he cuddled up with the Penta-



THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MEASURE FOR MEASURE



Gary Bostwick

LATELY, it appears that justice has become less about the law than about the lawyers. Take, for example, the case of Sonny Gibson v. Geraldo Rivera, which is coming to trial this week in Los Angeles. It concerns a relatively new area of litigation: the ambushing of talk-show guests by hosts who are determined to raise mortification to an art form. Gibson, the plaintiff, would seem to have been a talk-show dream: an admitted murderer (in an as-told-to memoir called "Mafia Kingpin") who had turned himself around and was trying to launch himself as an actor. Rivera, who is not being personally sued, but whose producing company is the primary defendant, is, of course, the host of "The Geraldo Rivera Show."

According to Gibson, he was invited to appear on "Geraldo" in May of 1994 to discuss his transformation. (The producers remember the invitation differently, saying it was understood that Gibson would talk about his bad old days, as well as the new ones.) He arrived at a Los Angeles studio, where he was outfitted with earphones and a mike and seated in front of a TV camera. No sound came through the earphones, and the camera, as far as he could tell, was not running. Gibson thought that he was waiting for the show to start, but in fact it had already started, in another studio. There, Rivera was interviewing two women, both disguised, who—as Gibson's face was intermittently flashed on the screen—told of

having been sexually molested by the ex-mafioso. Finally, Rivera announced that it was time to meet the man in question, at which point Gibson's earphones and mike were turned on, and he found himself facing two angry accusers. After a bit of shouting, Gibson's mike was shut off, and he walked out. Later, he decided to sue "Geraldo" for breach of contract.

The lawyer he chose was Gary Bostwick, who is renowned for having represented the convicted murderer Jeffrey MacDonald in his breach-of-contract suit against the journalist Joe McGinnis, as well as for having defended Janet Malcolm in the libel suit brought by the psychoanalyst Jeffrey Masson for an article that appeared in this magazine. Recently, Rivera and Bostwick met for a deposition in New York. Most such meetings are drab affairs, but this one was not. It featured two masters of the art of ambush, with highly contrasting styles.

When Rivera, who once practiced criminal law himself, reminded Bostwick that his client was a "violent and bloodthirsty" man as revealed through "an expression of soul" (i.e., Gibson's memoir), Bostwick responded, "When you say a book is an expression of your soul, would you say 'Exposing Myself'?"—Rivera's sensationalistic 1991 memoir—"is an expression of your soul?"

"I think it was, yes, at the time," Rivera said. "I reflect on it. I ponder about it. I'm sorry I wrote it, but it was clearly a reflection of my soul."

A little later, Rivera referred to Bostwick's client as a "mass murderer," and re-

minded the attorney that Gibson, in his book, claimed to have killed fourteen people.

BOSTWICK: Does that make him a mass murderer?

RIVERA: Well, if he's not a mass murderer, then he's a colossal liar. Either way, you lose.

BOSTWICK: Who?

RIVERA: Anyone who seeks to be unjustly enriched by this preposterous lawsuit.

Bostwick let that one pass, then found an opening when Rivera commented that an objection to a point that his own lawyer had raised was "a good objection." Bostwick remarked, "If I made as much money as you did doing something other than the law, I would stick to what I was doing and let other people who make less money worry what the law is."

At one point, Bostwick wanted to know whether it was true that Rivera, upon being served with papers for the lawsuit, had thrown a "tantrum."

RIVERA: I save my tantrums for less comical experiences.

BOSTWICK: Very Shakespearean of you.

RIVERA: They say that about me.

BOSTWICK: "Coriolanus," I think, is the right one.

RIVERA: Not "Hamlet"?

BOSTWICK: No. I think there's absolutely no ambiguity about you.



Geraldo Rivera

A TALKING FROG

"I-I-I am ex-extremely nervous," stammered Adam Michnik, the onetime Solidarity firebrand, more recently (since 1989) the editor-in-chief of Warsaw's *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Eastern Europe's foremost daily), and most recently a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research, as he began his closing lecture. Michnik is famous for his machine-gun

Frogs

Looking for the Door

The Right Place

~~Wonderful Weather for Frogs~~

September

Check
Feb

The Crow country is in exactly the right place. It has snowy mountains and sunny plains, all kinds of climates, and good things for every season.

Chief Sore Belly, 1833

Before we settled in this valley at the center of the world, we were ~~obliged to~~² earn a living in ~~four~~ distant capital cities, in each of which we caught what was known as "localitis," in the Foreign Service. I was persuaded that I was helping the continents where I happened to be on duty. And sure enough, their problems have grown worse since I left.

Chief Sore Belly had localitis too, and we can be sure that his provincialism was genuine because he expressed it in down-to-earth words. High-flown English is suspect, when it comes from native-speakers of other languages. Chief Seattle, for example, would not have said the things attributed to him. Chief Sore Belly is credible. And moreover his motion has been seconded by Captain William Clark and voted upon by me. Pay no attention to other claimants. Our valley is in exactly the right place, and nothing that happens elsewhere matters as much. Our local frog, for example, is more important than distant presidents, ambassadors, generals, and the occasional endangered monarch.

~~her~~ What makes our frog singular is that there is only one of ~~him~~^{her}. Or ~~her~~. (It's hard to tell, with a frog.) I saw it on what may have been this year's last prowl for trout yesterday afternoon. The cress and filamentous algae had died back over September's cool nights, and our frog found itself exposed. It was a wary frog, though, as I found when I tried, and failed, to

catch it in my net and transplant it to the Home Pool, which is deeper and has better overhead cover. Herons usually avoid the Home Pool.

Herons are not likely to be the frogs' core problem, because they are dying out in other parts of the world. And besides, herons and frogs have been coexisting for centuries on this stream. But then again, the stream as I know it has been here for only a few decades. In its new, wider, shallower, form it favors ^{may} different species -- rainbow trout and herons, say -- as opposed to ~~grayling~~ ^{native trout} and frogs.

Frogs are, in any case, my counterparts of the passenger pigeon -- vastly abundant and then gone. In my childhood's summers, there was no canned entertainment, but there were frogs ~~everywhere~~, bathing on beaches, splattered on roads, and hopping around the lawn. There was time to stalk frogs too, and catch them, turn them loose (preferably in someone's blouse), or even eat them. As food, however, frogs did not catch on. ^{in my favor} They were good-tasting but too easy to catch -- and spooky when skinned. In the fry-pan, a frog's long pale legs looked like mine.

Forebodings are out of place in September. This is a month of blue skies, white-topped mountains, and endless sunny fields. Summer's energy is ripe for harvest by all, except frogs. What's afflicting them? And might it be catching?

There is health in thy gray [] wing.

Thoreau on the marsh hawk

~~Resolve regulation with March~~

Not in March.

Huckleberry is up early, hoping I'll put on rubber boots for the farm or high-topped leather for the prairie. When I slip into house-moccasins, he walks slowly back to his cushion, claws clicking on the tiles, head down. Then he ~~stops~~ ^{Pauses} and cogitates -- and if you think this an exaggeration, you don't know Huck. He covered fifty miles yesterday and will do it again today, if he gets the chance, but while is is home he likes his comfort. He picks up his bed, brings it to my work-table, drops it at my feet, and curls up with a sigh.

We did not teach Huck to move his furniture around. We would, in fact, prefer that he not do so. But it's good to have him close, reminding me not to waste life indoors when the day is bright and the horns are calling.

That part was not exaggeration either. Our sandhill cranes were muted, while they were trying to raise their two young ones, one of which survived and is now getting trumpet lessons in the hayfield. The family is there for food and security -- cold grasshoppers and a healthy distance from the brush. Some predator may have hidden there, before the young could fly, and caught one of them.

Cranes are another of those species to which I am attached by absurd reasons. They look like some people -- and what's more, cranes think that some people look like them. I have this from David King, another person with legs like Ichabod Crane. [] He was walking in a field near mine when two young cranes ran to him for protection ~~against~~ ^{from} his own dog. Rex was under control, but

they did not know that, so David picked them up and returned them to their parents.

As a species, sandhill cranes need no special protection. They have been thriving in recent decades, and now there are more cranes than their habitat will support at some points along their route of migration. Their population needs to be controlled, but not on this farm. We can use as much song and dance we can get.

For our purposes, cranes have the virtue of being loud and conspicuous. ~~Our~~ yellow warblers [] and song sparrows [] get less attention because even their music is hard to hear, through thickets of willows and buffaloberry. A small bird that can raise its family among magpies and ^{grockles} ~~Brewer's~~ blackbirds must be good at hiding. By giving the songbirds thick nesting cover near water, we may have done as much as we can for them. But we don't really know.

September is, ^{isn't it?} come to think of it, the month when I know least about the farm -- on purpose. The dogs could tell me more, but they are allowed on only an acre or two of grass near the house. Call it good husbandry. ^{More dogs? enough?} Our cock pheasants will be hard to get at best and might move out, if we were to bother them before their season opens in October. We want our own pheasants, fat with our own grain and fruit, for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

Our ducks, on the other hand, are better to watch than eat. Those grown on the place have the same faint sulphury smell as the trout. (It may come from the watercress beds, which fix

boys. This suggests that many girls are starting

tently left out of the computer revolution.

Editorial Notebook

Farming

10/19/98

Looking Eastward From the Rural West

Among Ranchers, the Talk Is About Solid Fact, Not Scandal

Traveling across the Western plains in late summer and early fall, I seemed to be traveling across the landscape of a national moment — the protracted moment between President Clinton's apologia in mid-August and the House of Representatives' early-October vote to authorize an impeachment inquiry. I tried hard to let the news in general and that news, specifically, slip away behind me like the rough red pavement on the interstate. But no matter how far I went, and no matter where I stopped — at a small ranch in Colorado's Bijou Basin or a large ranch along the East Rosebud River in Montana — the question, sooner or later, arose, "What do you think of this mess?"

I was a carrier, of course, a vector, to use the language of epidemiology. Strangers asked me where I came from and what I did, and my answers made the question about "our President" — a phrase that can sustain a remarkable amount of irony — inevitable. But what I noticed was that in most conversations the question about the Starr investigation and the President's conduct was only a brief bypath leading to more

complex questions, like the role of Nafta and the growing anger over beef imports from Canada and Argentina and their effect on cattle prices.

This was not nearsightedness. Talking cattle prices is just an especially terse way to talk politics, a language that makes the entire Clinton-Lewinsky-Starr saga sound extravagantly adolescent. You cannot make a living from the land for long if you do not think carefully about how you allocate resources. "Now is when you irrigate for next year's hay," one rancher told me as we stood on a Montana hilltop looking across a draw.

Like most of the ranchers I have met, this man knows the value of a solid fact. Like them, he also uses a lot of silence when he talks. I often try to see things the way he sees them, even though it means I have to read the space he sometimes leaves between his thoughts. But the implication I drew from talking about this mess with him, and with other rural men and women like him, was unmistakable. The judgment you want to bring upon a neighbor you bring upon yourself first, to see how it feels. You do not waste scarce resources. You do not blame other people if your children do not know how to act or what to believe. And, after a hard day's work in a world of solid, often immovable facts, you still have to irrigate the pastures and hayfields for the year to come.

VERLYN KLINKENBORG

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79/ 54	Toronto.....	74/ 61	0	57/ 39
57/ 45	Tunis.....	86/ 63	0	77/ 59
54/ 45	Vancouver.....	50/ 41	.33	57/ 43
50/ 25	Vienna.....	62/ 46	0	57/ 43
57/ 45	Warsaw.....	58/ 55	0	55/ 41
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Farming

Sept 7

- An either/or situation in this ^{settled} valley, where wilderness is not an option

(Make this theme of a whole chapter?) ~~first~~
~~clear~~

- Not innocent scapegoats or rational environmentalists. But do preserve open space in big blocks, + do ~~have some~~ know how nature works.
- On my half of the town/country divide.

Forming (Sept

Helps to offset costs
of weed-control,
+ makes it easier on
farmer's fields.

sulphur, if I have this right, and then die back, leaving the element in mudbanks.) Or then again, I may be making excuses for not wanting to hunt ducks that I watched during the summer. They were never tamed, never encouraged to trust me, and certainly never fed. But they got used seeing me around and lost some of the fear they ought to have.

Anna and I are trying to run a farm, not a petting zoo. We are raising crops.

- The barley and hay bring in money.
- The spilled grain nourishes pheasants, each of which is worth a gross of supermarket chickens, in the currency of our table.
- The deer are ~~almost~~ as good, and much bigger -- valuable food by any measure.
- The musicians, from warblers to cranes, are for spirit-values.
- The trout and ducks fall into an odd category: natural prey species that happen not to taste good when grown in this fertile mudland. But they are valuable for other purposes.

Just now the ducks are paying the mortgage with their sky-writing, starting with V. The W and Y are passable too, but the duck alphabet begins at the end and seldom reaches back beyond T.

Some young hunter along the flyway will need wild food as desperately as we did, when we lived far from it, and to him or

her we send our ducks with this hint: Grill them over hot coals and serve them rare, to beat the muddy taste. The mallards I may hunt here in December will be migrants from farther north -- good enough for the duck press.[]

The gathering flocks of ducks and cranes are at their largest now, swollen by young of the year. And by no coincidence, this is also when their food is most abundant. Snowberries, rose hips, and buffaloberries invite attention by conspicuous colors. Spilled barley may be even easier to eat, if you have the right kind of bill.

This little farm, then, is feeding a multitude of vegetarians without much effort on their part. Vegetable matter cannot run away. It does not require the restless brain of a hunter.

Section break (epigraph on next page)

There is, in contrast, only one marsh hawk -- or harrier, as she is called today. She is circling, tilting, and pouncing into the grass for voles, deer mice, and anything else she can kill with feet that are weak, for a raptor. She comes up empty-taloned usually, but she has faith. She will cover miles for her meal and never lose her concentration. Every stoop will be as good as she can make it. The odds are against her, but she will try anyhow, and fail, and try again.

The harrier's gray [] wing will keep her in food. It will keep her prey healthy and wary, too. But for her, the voles would lose their volition. They would overeat, overpopulate and take up some volish vice.

Gambling is a tax on stupidity. []

John Baden

The harrier's search is tiring, with many failed stoops and a few large rewards at irregular intervals. She cannot waddle from one spilled grain of barley to another, like the ducks. Their vegetarian diet is easy and abundant, by comparison to the harrier's long hunt.

Something keeps her going. Call it faith: A belief that does not rest on evidence. The harrier needs ~~an unreasonable~~ hope, after miles of hunting without catching. And she has it. Faith is simple for her. *Hunt till you drop.*

It is not as simple for us, but in our hunting mode we achieve faith. Maybe that's where we got it in the first place, when hunting and gathering were all we had. We still do not think we are wasting time when our partridge fails to appear in the first nine miles. We reckon that we are narrowing the odds, and keep on walking. We have faith that we will be given what we deserve. We believe in our quarry.

Correction: We suspend disbelief. We expect to find the partridges in our tenth mile. Or we watch a human enter on stage, imitate another person -- and be that person. Our ability to believe the unbelievable is a trait to marvel at, and a danger to fear. It gives us great leaders and vile dictators, great artists and organized crime.

There is a boom in gambling even in this remote mountain

valley, where there are so many better things to do. Enter a bar -- most call themselves casinos now -- and watch men and women sitting on stools, dropping their earnings into computerized poker machines and waiting for Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, [] rendered electronically. The gamblers are allowed to win just often enough to keep on losing. Each of them knows this, rationally, but each has heard of somebody who won big....

The harrier plays better odds. On her tenth stoop or fiftieth, she will get her lark and eat all of it, with no share to the casino, the mob, or the government. The hunting instinct in its original form is outside the economy.

[2. Trophies. Our hunting instinct is about food in the sense that our sex drive is about babies. We are all trophy-hunters, looking for partridges, buffalo, and images worth painting on walls of our caves.]

Saw a large Gange of Elk in the plains and Deer in the river bottoms.... I saw Several Antelope Common Deer, wolves, beaver, Otter, Eagles, hawks, Crows, wild gees both old and young, does &c, &c.

Captain William Clark, 1806

From our breakfast table, Anna and I can see five months. The colors of our year are moving uphill in bands, coming ripe and turning old before we can get to them.

- The wet, flat bottom of the valley still looks like summer, though the grain has been harvested, the hay is

drying in windrows, and the streams are clear as the air. Rainbow trout remain fair game for us anglers, but browns and brookies are moving into the spawning riffles. They don't mess with my marriage and I don't mess with theirs.

- One step up, the benches are yellow with wheat stubble and tan with prairie grass. Populations of partridges and sharp-tailed grouse are at their greatest mass -- broods grown and not yet culled by winter. But they are spread over much greater areas than trout, which makes the hunting harder.
- In the next higher band, mountain streams run down narrow evergreen valleys with splashes of yellow aspens. Ruffed grouse are there, and usually moose, black bears, and white-tailed deer.
- Those pale patches on the foothills are savannas in the sky -- big Douglas firs with grassy openings for elk, mule deer, blue grouse, and huckleberries.
- The highest peaks are accepting snow as a down-payment on next year's crops. The marmots are denning underground, leaving no food for the grizzlies. But if the rocks are bare, thermal currents [] above them are the continent's greatest flyway for golden eagles. Bald eagles, accipiters, buteos, falcons, and harriers are coming through too, in roughly that order.

My list resembles that of Captain William Clark because we are looking for the same things. So was Chief Sore Belly, for

that matter, and our ancestors on both sides forever. We are separated by centuries and languages, but we know what we want. Give us a fat deer, a grouse, a trout, or a bucket of berries. And if the eagle sends a pinion spinning down, we will be grateful for that too.

~~Our~~ game may be more abundant then ever today, though divided into smaller pieces. Take partridges, for example. A thousand of them would not add up to a bison -- but the partridges are harder to get, and we need help to find them. Not a horse. You cannot run a partridge. It takes a bird dog to find one, or a raptor.

Clive Ponting, a British environmental historian, points out that an accurate account of human history in 30 minutes would devote 29 minutes and 51 seconds to hunter-gatherers, more than 8 seconds to settled agricultural society and a fraction of the last second to the modern, fossil-fuel-fired industrial world.¹

[For F&S] I am a harrier, short-necked, long-tailed, gull-winged. I am a coyote in the grass. I am a golden eagle wheeling and diving on pronghorns. I am not a shrike hanging shriveled birds on barbed wire.

Nature is not what I appreciate. It is what I do. It is the prairie of my exertion. I do not love it from a distance. I sweat on it. I stumble into its prairie-dog holes, get up, and take my bearings from the mountains. I have given my knees to the rolling grass and got my hunger in return.

I am not feigning the primitive. There are no teepees on my

lawn, ^{primitive} no artifacts on my shelves. The land I walk has been grazed for ten thousand years, but the grass beneath my feet is untouched. It moves as I pass through. Wind blows and voles scurry. I am first man leaving first footprints on the prairie. I am hungry.

See November for epigraph / Section that could work here.

Opening day is an act of creation. You drive to the prairies when the east is red and shadows give the land texture, but by the time your truck is bouncing down a dirt track, light is coming from everywhere. The sky makes you dizzy, with no clouds to hold it together. Yellow fields are bare too, ringed with gray sagebrush hills and beyond them mountains sharp-edged as cardboard on a stage. You like all of this or none of it. It makes you want to leave, if you need things to clutch. It fills your lungs, if space is what you like. Either way it wants life.

Last night you stepped outside to guess at the weather. You wished for game abundant as the stars and, having wished, you shivered. For every twinkle there were eons of cold black space.

We will populate this space, but let's not name our colonists till we have made them perfect. We want them fast-growing so that we can find them soon as the wheat is cut, and fertile, with coveys of two dozen in the places people think empty. The new birds must prosper on short-grass prairies with the antelope, along sagebrush edges with the rabbits, and in the grasses farmers plant to keep their topsoil from blowing away. Let's have big broods around the lonely farmhouses too, and

behind the retirement home at the edge of town. And let's have birds that that will thrive near the grain stubble our native upland species have not learned to use.

Birds adapted to so many habitats would become abundant across the northern grain belt. We had better give the coveys a smell that our dog can catch from afar, so that he can range wide; but then let's bring out his best work by making the new birds fast on their feet and quick to flush. And we will want a dinner big enough for a hungry hunter, if everything goes right.

The hardest thing is to provide a myth that will teach humans how to treat their prey. Let us, therefore, call our bird partridge. And let us now confess that others were using that name for some thousands of years before we got around to it. Partridge is one of the oldest Indo-European words -- one that scholars use to trace the origins of language. It has lasted because the sound is nature-based, imitating the bird as it flushes. We can travel back through Rome on those wings, back through Greece, as close to Eden as wings can carry us.

This pilgrimage is not in the spirit of John Bunyan, mind you. More like Geoffrey Chaucer. The sudden prrrr of wings must have reminded our ancestors of another sound, because partridge and fart have the same root in our mother language.

By another quirk of history, most Americans think of this bird as decoration for a pear tree. In real life our gray partridge uses space for cover, avoiding trees, the raptors that use them, and the humans who are drawn to them. It has been a

good strategy. You won't see much about the partridge in American writing, though it is as thoroughly naturalized as the pheasant and the brown trout. Our continent has had more generations of partridges than of Smiths and Kennedys. We are the partridge capital of the world, and nobody knows it.

Landowners prize pheasants but dismiss partridges as "quail," "little chickens," or "redbirds." (The red-brown comes from tail-feathers and a crescent on the breast.) The old-timers I grew up with talked of "Hungarian partridges," because Hungary is one of the places from which the birds were imported a long time ago. Hunters may call them "Huns" because this is the newest part of the New World and history does not weigh heavily on us. As anglers we do say "partridge"; centuries of fly patterns enforce continuity. And scientists call the bird Perdix perdix -- Partridge partridge -- the type form, partridge redux.

Gregor set off with that fast, silent, purposeful walk, and the other chimps in camp followed him.... hunting behavior is interesting in that the chimpanzees show the beginning of cooperative endeavor -- so characteristic of human hunting societies....

Jane Goodall, In The Shadow of Man²

Sun rose red over the Crazy Mountains when I stepped from the truck into cover that stretched all directions, though it did not cover much. Maybe nothing but a partridge or antelope or jack rabbit would consider it cover at all. I let Huckleberry out for the farmer to see, pup and I making the happy noises of hunters

who have not yet run off the first thousand calories.

"Ssshh," said our host. "Listen."

I listened. Couldn't hear anything.

"I can't either," said the farmer. "Nothing."

≈

Huckleberry's hunting instinct descended from wolves via certain dogs that were developed to hunt partridges five hundred years ago. During his flight through time, he misplaced a memory or two and was expecting -- who knows? -- mallards or meadowlarks or moose. Whatever he sought, he did it at high speed and long range, learning by process of elimination. But populations of ground-nesting birds were at a peak, that year, and within half an hour the right kind turned up.

Imagine yourself as one of a score of partridges sneaking through bleached grass, congratulating yourselves on eluding a human. Over the horizon comes a cruise missile. It reaches the middle of your band and detonates. Your buddies fly. You fly. But you do not all fly off in the same direction, as you would prefer. It is every bird for himself.

I had a different view of the process. The pup did not explode; he just caught scent in the middle of a bound, tried to stop in mid-air, and turned a somersault into the birds. No wonder they scattered. One swung my way and fell at the shot.

Huck ran to his first partridge and picked it up.

The golfers would not invite us caddies to their stag party, so we climbed a tree and looked

through the window. Couldn't hear the music but she kept good time. When she lost her dress, Charley lost his grip. Took half the leaves with him on his way down.

Anonymous by request

My notion was that dogs and humans come to some things without instruction. Teach Huck to hunt partridges? As well teach Charley to watch a strip-tease.

Bias identification: Dog-training is better than lawn-mowing, but still a chore for me. And therefore I had tried to find a pup who could learn on the job, with time enough and love. You could call this the natural way to train, or you could agree with the breeders who produce lots of dogs. [Check for rep] Mine was, in any case, not the school method. It was the apprentice system, the way young Italians learned about gluing violins and drawing pictures.

Huck brought me his bird without training. What else would he do with it? I had a game-pocket and he didn't. But he continued to sniff his first partridge in my hand, nose deep in fragrant feathers, and I guessed he'd done a Charley.

I saw where some of the other birds from the covey lit, and in this too my usefulness surprised Huck. He knew that I was nose-blind and had suspected that my incompetence extended to all of hunting. He worked in front of me, nevertheless, if only to be sure that I would not beat him to anything good, and where wild oats thickened the edge of the stubble he overran his partridges again. And again one swung close enough to shoot. The pup was right under the falling bird this time, having discovered that

partridges taste better than boots.

He may also have understood that I had a third talent he lacked: the ability to get our mutual prey in the air. If I had started him on stupid pen-raised quail, in the usual fashion, I would have to train him not to pick them up. No danger of that with real wild partridges. Without my help, he would not catch them.

Something, in any case, had jolted the time capsule between my pup's ears. It may have been learning process or just smell of partridge, old and new and wonderful. He moved off at a different pace, this time -- a taxi instead of a take-off -- with nose extra-high, into the breeze. He angled off to get the wind right, quartered slowly into it, and pointed again.

He would be tempted to break when his birds began to run, so I moved in fast from the side and blocked their exit. Sometimes even gray partridges wait a little too long.

On my side, and Huckleberry's, was the fact that he was programmed to stop when he scented birds close by. My part was to reinforce the pointing instinct -- and a partridge is, for a natural-born pointer pup, the best of rewards. In this and most things we were a team by temperament, man and dog bored by drill, rewarded by secrets in the grass.

≈

Huckleberry picked up his second partridge and brought to me, wrapped in feathers on that September morning, sun high, almost too hot. And now that he had the idea, he showed me how to

populate space. He found birds out in the stubble and birds in the draws, but most of his finds were near the edge between the two. Perhaps it was just that I felt comfortable with that border to hang to. I had not seen the draws from my truck but they appeared every half-mile or so, all of a sudden, as if the fields had cracked in the heat. On south-facing slopes, yuccas rattled out their seeds when I brushed them. In the bottoms were seeps of water filtered down from the mountains, and around the pools and on the north slopes were snowberry bushes, box elders with old magpie nests, and even willows. We traveled from Sonora to Alaska every time we crossed a draw.

Eventually we reached foothills too, and Huck disappeared over the top. I did not want that climb, not when I was two hours overdue for a sandwich. I whistled, grumbled, hiked part way up, blew my whistle again, screeched my pup's name. He did not appear. I kept climbing, knees creaking. When I crested the rise, Huck was there, pointing a covey. It was drama for a stark stage. Floodlighting by September sun. My contribution had been the comic relief.

In my game-pocket, when we reached the truck, were about three percent of all the partridges we had seen. Montana hunters seldom take more than that portion of the population in a whole season, according to a biologist's survey. But I did not remember flushing so many upland birds in one morning before, anywhere. Our first day was the best, and Huck seized it.

We went home with the makings of two partridge dinners for

our sweat. Anna aged them on wire racks in the refrigerator, and then she and I had a plucking party on the west porch under the aspen trees and I was pathetically grateful for her help. Talked about anything she wanted, for a change. Promised to trim the cinquefoils and meant it, though I could not swear, these years later, whether I got around to it, ~~next spring~~.

What I remember is that we drank iced tea, watched feathers drift away in the breeze, and let young Huckleberry out when he yipped. We thought he wanted company. He thought he wanted to point those feathers, in case there might be a bird in them.

Huck has never been a comfortable dog, not like Tess. Inside the house, yes, his domestic personality takes over. He sneaks into the bedroom, when it's time for us to get up, then picks up Anna's shoe, trots around with it, and makes her laugh.

In the prairies there are no giggles. Usually, somewhere in the day, there is a covey. On the way to it a coyote bitch may flirt with Huck and try to lead him over a ridge, where the pack lies in wait. There are bobcats, too: Some of them have learned to hunt partridges. There are porcupines that hurt, skunks that aim for the eyes, and climbs that try my heart, but not his. Sometimes there are rattlesnakes in early season. Huck has managed to smell them in time, so far, and give them space.

[For F&S] He gives me space too. I need his help, endless as the land is, empty as it seems. The prairie has more life than than the woods, but no trees to shade my mind, no houses to shelter me, no road to lead me. I am a trawler on sun-bright

seas. Huck is my net sweeping wide, catching schools of bright things.

ven•er•y[1] (ven'ε-rEE) n. [Archaic.]
Indulgence in or pursuit of sexual
activity.
ven•er•y[2] (ven'ε-rEE) n. [Archaic.]
The act or sport of hunting; the chase.
[Etymology: Middle English venerie, from Old
French....]³

Passion is what matters in all this. You get it without effort when you are a teen-ager, but later your blood cools and you may have to chase passion instead of waiting for it to pounce on you. Only a few poets have a surplus of flame life-long -- or life-short. You and I have to hunt harder. Ten miles is enough, if it is through tall grass and up draws and out in stubble and maybe, with luck, up the ridges blooming with gayfeathers and silver sage.

Your passion may happen in nature, if you are reading this, but it is not the only possible place. Michelangelo chased passion to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and you might even get waves of it riding a keyboard. But Nature is where it happened first. She's obsolete now but she's still out there, hot and cold, scratchy and wet, brutal and kind. She is young, ever young, and then dead.

You want to blame somebody, but the poor guy driving the bulldozer is just making a living. Fences will hem Nature in. They will protect an exurb with green spaces and paths and groups of people doing polite things.

Meanwhile passion is boundless and she's pretty as ever,
where you find her. Nature does not get old, like her children.
We will return home from her company with all passion spent. We
will have burned it to good purpose on one more day and one last
century.

≈

The gray partridge is tougher, hardier, faster-running, wider-flushing, and stronger in flight. When your first covey gets up, you may wonder if you will ever hit such a bird. You do however, get open shots. birds feel good running around all day in straw they can see over. They see you; you do not see them -- not even in a field where you think you could see a grasshopper in the next county.

All things run in cycles and the Partridge partridge is moving up. At least, I'm running into more hunters who rank them high. The dogs out in front of them are hotbloods, better bred than any human. Both men and dogs are likely to be exiles from some big town, but in a few days they look as if they belong in spare, silent country.]

~

[Material on dogs left over from Portugal. Could use some of this in first blue grouse story.]

Trooper was floating too, warmed by mother sun. But he was no hero either. He had grown older and sick, and then he had recovered. He got from this a whiff of death. He knew less of it than me but enough to separate him from wild animals. (The grouse always dies young and bold. He lives in constant danger, evades it if he can, but flies into the valley of death without fear.)

The grouse flushed wild and flew so far that we could not find him again.

[They had changed genetically since the Middle Ages. Back

then, their worst predators had been raptors and the best defense-mechanism was hiding rather than flying. A pointing dog could creep into a covey and turn his head from one bird to another while his human shot them on the ground with a crossbow, which is an exceedingly slow and cranky weapon.⁴ In post-revolution Portugal we could seldom get close enough even with a shotgun.]

Trooper loved it. Perhaps for him the good scents came from rabbits that had hopped around before dawn, but the old dog knew that I was too stupid to decipher his illicit pleasure. And he could range widely to either side instead of being hacked back constantly into place, which was necessary in a line.

Trooper and I were in one of those. I wanted him to run wide and point coveys, but after an hour's search he simply stopped, puzzled. Then he tipped his muzzle down and looked between his feet. There was a partridge, dead. It was still faintly warm, and I supposed that it had flown as far as it could after taking a single wild pellet of shot from one of the fusillades. The bird gave me no exhilaration but added a comfortable weight to my game-pocket. It also gave me hope that the rest of its covey was somewhere around. Red-legged Partridges figure out what is happening after the first hours of opening day and seek secluded places for the duration.

I moved slowly in the center of the dog's orbit while he swept the slopes for a quarter-mile on each side. In perhaps twenty minutes the scent entered his nostrils and coursed back

through his spine to the tip of his tail. I watched it happen. Back and tail stiffened as he crept closer to paradise. When he was sure that he was at its gates, he stopped with tail high and one foot off the ground. He waited for me. The covey did too, almost. Only the last bird was close enough for a shot. It flushed with the usual bravado and died in the air. Trooper had it at once and was so excited that he brought it almost to me before remembering that he should have had a taste while he could. We both stopped and sat for a rest. I clutched our prey as if it could still get away, then relaxed, fluffed its feathers smooth, posed it. The bird was relaxed too. The old dog turned his eyes from partridge to me.

[following may repeat Pheasants]

Trooper and I hunted together because we had the same cells down the middle of our backs. When he was pointing some scent strong and close, a ridge of hair along his spine would ruffle. My back hairs fell out during the Pleistocene but the cells where the hair used to be still worked fine, so there I'd be, out in a dawn field believing my dog. He made mistakes but he did not lie. Something sudden always happened when I took a few steps. Maybe it would be a hedgehog; maybe it would be a stray cat; and once in awhile it was a partridge.

* * * * *

"In Japan for an international conference on religion, [Joseph] Campbell overheard another American delegate, a social philosopher from New York, say to a Shinto priest, 'We've been

now to a good many ceremonies and have seen quite a few of your shrines. But I don't get your ideology. I don't get your theology.' The Japanese paused as though in deep thought and then slowly shook his head. 'I think we don't have ideology,' he said. 'We don't have theology. We dance.'"⁵

Trooper hunted.

I followed.

One grouse was enough to make an opulent meal.... with dinner fluffy in my game-pocket, [ends].

Passion = logs on the fire. There are more flames as long as there are more logs.

[As well teach Tom to kiss [] Becky.]

[Nature was what he did. It had consequences he could smell, feel, taste.] [The rest is to admire-appreciate-love -- from a distance. What can a pup do? What can a child do?

What do they do, where smog keeps out part of the spectrum? What do they do in the inner city?

Original opener: Some shivering nymph is peeling off in the vapors of this September morn. I cannot admire [her act] properly, not without getting out of bed, but the rest of [the show] [month] nature is doing things that make sense, if I could figure them out.

All of the actors are certainly prompted by seasonal [cues] -- temperature or photoperiod, say -- and pond is their [tableau.]

Rings start at a point and spread forever, perfect circles touched by dawn. Good day to you all.

[It would be the best season for fishing, with the home stream high, the rivers low, and all of them clear as air.]

[Oct: The world's a stage [] and these seats suit us fine.]

-- not Rubenesque people but Lincolnesque people, if you don't mind.

An alarm opens the season at five in the morning.

["End of the Road" here?]

[Or use quote from barking study.]

The difference here looks to underlying reality.

Dog-breeders do an important job for love, and I love them back because it would be impossible for me. Dogs in quantity are worse than humans. We, at least, are allowed to run loose, but most dogs aren't, and odd things happen when they are jailed. They bark, for example. Scientists did a study to find why dogs bark and concluded that " ." [use epigraph?] Unfortunately, the scientists seem to have kept their subjects in kennels.

Huckleberry informs me that the bark is a warning, sometimes, but more often a protest. Dogs in kennels are bored.

[Perhaps the casinos make more sense than sales at the mall. A gambler need not worry about a house to hold her possessions. She can be free as a harrier.]

[We had to watch the chimps to find out what we're like.]

[We are obsolete, wanting old things. We're a niche market. A niche is a recess, as for holding a statue. We're in there

looking out while the crowd rushes by. But we're not cast in marble yet.

But passion is about extremes, so if we hate the new world of cities surrounded by malls, we might as walk into the old world of villages surrounded by wilderness.

Do you know how retrograde we are, culture-wise? [Walk into any bookstore and ask to see what's on the shelves. Fantasy nature.]

When I was a young man, I knew that I had been born a little too late. My father and grandfather got the best of both nature and technology. They could hop into a Model A Ford, or in Grandpa's case a Cadillac heated by lifting a flap in the firewall. [] They could drive to Minnesota, row into Woman Lake in a lapstrake boat, lower a minnow, and catch as many walleyes as they cared to eat. Or they could drive the Ford [] over Bozeman pass in the mud, hopping out when they needed a grouse for dinner. They could visit the Firehole River, tie a size 16 Quill Gordon on a 4X gut leader, and show a four-pound brown trout his first dry fly.

I'm lucky, then. I've got a bottle of 1889 Port that a friend gave me to baptize a book I wrote. Wine and book are both about nature. The Port tastes better now than it would have a hundred years ago, even if I'd been there. Wine is not something that I know much about, or intend to learn, and anyhow Port does not taste like blackberries or hazelnuts or anything so simple. It tastes like the end of the last century. We've made it to the

next, anyhow.

Tomorrow Pup and I will start up a creek-bottom where the blue grouse may still be, but probably are not, and follow their life-cycle a thousand feet up to a ridge of very old firs, and shoot a bird for dinner if I can, and if not watch one fly all the way to the bottom.

[do not expect to harvest pheasants as we would harvest barley, which stays where we planted it. Farming is a risky pursuit, but reasoned -- like most of the other profitable things modern humans do.]

[Our ancestors acquired faith first, then reason, and the complex brain that lets faith and reason exist side-by-side in the same skull. And all of this happened while we were still hunter-gatherers.]

(1) From a column by Jessica Matthews, Vice President of the World Resources Institute. Washington Post, January 4, 1991.

(2) NY: Dell, 1971. pp. 210 and 205.

(3) American Heritage Electronic Dictionary, Third Edition, 1993. I have edited the text for brevity.

(4) Arkwright, William. The Pointer And His Predecessors.

Tain:Argue, 1989. (Reprint of the 1906 London edition.) pp. 29-40.

(5) Campbell, Joseph, with Bill Moyers. The Power of Myth.

NY:Doubleday, 1988. p.xix.