

2 Jan. '89--First workday of the year and commensurately the 1st day of resumed work on Mariah. Reread the 1st 40 pp., did a few ~~few~~ small but needed revisions, thought through a couple of adds to the opening chapter and scheduled the writing of them a couple of weeks down the line from now--on the theory that I've got to wallow the big committee meeting scene into shape, starting tomorrow. Feel pretty good, though it's a big day (3:30 now, began at 6:30) and likely a bigger one tomorrow, if I spend the afternoon watching Chris Bennion shoot Bill Irwin at the Rep. Besides the ms mulling I've written a blurb for River Song and a letter to Craig telling him whatever I can think of about promoting the book, and a note to Peter Reeburgh, who did a very deft interview paper on me and Sea Runners for his high school English class.

Unlike last year's sun, this year has begun in cloud and occasional rain. Blessedly, actually, for the country needs the moisture. C and I went up to Edmonds for Sat. lunch and chores, and she tells me I really have to make note of what a small town Edmonds is for us--Gerrilynn running out of Brusseau's to catch us (we'd had a look inside, decided to eat at the waterfront instead because of the crowd) to thank me for telling her of the Montana anthology, ideal Xmas gift for her Lewistown parents; bought a calendar at the bookstore, which promptly brought Betty Morrow running out etc. to ask me about doing a reading at the store sometime this year; on to Anthony's Home Port for lunch, where the dipsydoodle young woman running the desk kept exclaiming Doig?! As in Ivan Doig? The Writer? No. You can't be. Ivan Doig?!--until I finally handed her my business card to prove it/shut her up; and beyond that, to C-Fresh Seafoods where the once taciturn wife of that couple-run business now blabs merrily to us, asks us how California was, and so on.

Well, so far so good. I anticipate that the phone, oh so wondrously silent this past week, will start to erupt, maybe even tomorrow, but I feel firmer about saying no to things this year; a year, in fact, which already feels dedicated to Mariah.

3 Jan.--On the proposition of trying not to be any more of a stick in the mud that I already naturally am, I'm just now (8:15 a.m.) back from walking the park in a wild wind, under a glorious sky. C called back into the house for me to come see, as she was leaving for her first day of teaching; ember-red bottoms of clouds east over the Lankfords' house, lighter tatters blowing past just above the ridgeline. I put on big coat and windglasses and went up to the park--leaving the resumed p. of Mariah, ch. 2, in the typewriter--where the wind was whooping, the still red clouds were dimming while the sky began bluing up, the wisps kept flying beneath it all and a fingernail moon hung bright atop everything. Walked 4 laps, feeling Dinesen fashion as she did on her farm in Africa, this is where I ought to be.

4 Jan.--Notes on watching photog Chris Bennion at work during dress rehearsal of Bill Irwin's show, "Largely New York," y'day afternoon.

--Got there at 2:30 as agreed with Chris, finding my way in through the scene shop, and as I slid in thru a door to the side seats of theatre Chris, in middle seat abt 5th row, saw me and waved me over. Irwin & the show's 2 breakdancers, The Poppers, were on stage. Chris explained in a whisper Irwin was putting a totally new ending on the show--it involved a wonderful bit of business with a suitcase he and the breakdancers are rescuing the glamorous blond classical dancer in, Irwin reaching in as they struggle to open the suitcase and pulling out just a leotard, much embarrassed shielding of faces and so on--from the one Chris had seen just that morning in run-thru; he was shaking his head about how nerveless Irwin is and meanwhile eyeing his watch, because the dress rehearsal he needed to shoot for publicity pics was due to start at 3 and the cast was still on or around the stage, nobody dressed.

--Irwin is slight, maybe no more than 5'8, 9", wearing baggy pants which come up to about his breastbone, black rim (though not heavy horn-rim) glasses, and whenever his black top hat was off, ~~his~~ forehead showed back almost halfway on top of his head, ~~only~~ ^{light} hair beyond. Even standing talking with the technical crew out front he has wonderful finger motions, including a perfect lateral circle with his forefinger, only his forefinger moving.

--Chris sits watching with a camera lens cupped in his hand, thumb and fingers all the way around it, actively cupping it.

--Something pleases Irwin in the on-stage tech'l discussion: "AHH!" He carries a small remote control box in his hand with aerial of about 18" extended, the zipper which is his main schtick of show.

Precise expressive gestures go on, though apparently unconsciously; at one point he gives the "cut" gesture to the scene with a quick gliding finger across throat.

6 Jan.--Snow day, first in 3 winters. I thought it was surprisingly light when I got up abt 15 min. early, 5:15, to turn on the furnace, but didn't pay any attention until C called in to me that the radio said snow. Even then I didn't think it looked like much, but pretty quick it began coming down steadily. By the time C left for the college at abt 7:30, tree branches were thickly lacy and I pretty promptly decided to let the ms pp. happen later today, I needed to get out and see this. Walked up to the park, past one spun-out abandoned car (when I got home a few min. ago the phone machine had C's message that she too had spun out, left the russet Skyhawk on the stub street along Boeing Creek and walked on up to school) and soon stood watching other fizzled attempts, cars making it almost to the road into the lower subdivision--which is only halfway up the hill--and spinning out, having to back down into the park entrance and turn around. The snowfall looks like powdered sugar, but it's surprisingly damp and hefty; occasional tree limbs could be heard cracking off as I walked the park, and now overhead--I've set up the typewriter at the dining room table, for the view out into the snow-etched birches etc.--there are big thumps as clods let loose from fir limbs.

The park was even more elegant than I expected, everything bonneted in white. Bit of fog against the snowy forest of our hillside. The batting cage of the softball diamond had turned exotic; it's a striking shape anyway, like a huge upside-down soup strainer cut in half, and now its 3" diamond mesh was about a third full of snow--that is, each of the hundreds of arcing diamonds had a one-third filament of snow, a hypnotic Escher pattern. I was the 1st person in the park, so as I walked my four rounds, the 1st round produced a dotted line of my footsteps, then the walkway got increasingly perforated--I deliberately was walking beside the previous round's footsteps each time, spacing the pattern--as I did more laps.

Came home, reminding myself to take a broom and jostle snow off rhododendron branches, though they hain't looked too laden when I went up the hill; discovered, when I started on the rhodies out front, that what I'd thought were salal branches inevitably under the snow were actually the rhodies, they were so smushed down. Nothing broken off, though. Snowing heavier now again; I may have to repeat the brooming.

Jan. 6: cont'd transcription of Chris's Bill Irwin shoot:

--Chris in typical moment has lens in 1 hand, light meter in the other, camera arnd neck.

--Onstage, Irwin has the entire cast rehearsing even the curtain call bow. He choreographs it, including coming up with funny bit at the end: he has the cast step forward en masse with him for what the expression on his face says he expected to be a solo bow, he and they all bow, he steps back, they step back--but he has only feinted, moving liquidly forward out of the start of his step back and is proudly out taking his solo bow before they know it.

--"20 min. and we take it from the top," is called; during that break Irwin stays on stage, part of time sitting on floor with legs spraddled wide, stretching, while the tech crew tried out tones of the TV monitor that has a role in the show.

--Chris sits on lip of the stage, a blue ditty bag maybe 8" by 12" on his right hip like a holster. Then he goes backstage, brings out 3 5' boards with a cleat along front edge--it turns out that's to keep film from rolling off the board--and puts 1 across seats 5-6 of center front row, another across seats 7-8 of 4th row, 3rd board across same seats of 5th row. He pushes down on boards, to make sure they're firmly in place. Puts camera bag in seat in 2nd row behind 1st row board, then from it spreads out onto that board the accumulation of cameras and rolls of film he's going to use; lenses too. He's using 3 black-and-white cameras, 1 color. Puts rolls of film into containers, then loads those into the ditty bag holster.

--Onstage, Irwin stands, continues loosening up by floppily leaning forward until his head ~~is~~ is almost down to his feet.

--When Chris puts the cameras on his body, he has: 2 around his neck, one over his right shoulder so that it hangs behind on the side of his back, and the light meter (like blunderbuss pistol) over his other soulder, plus the right-side ditty bag holster.

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Jan. 6: transcription cont'd:

--1 of Chris's cameras has corduroy sling.

--Chris stares down at his steno pad of notes where he's annotated the run-thru of the show.

--as Chris turns toward a person, you're suddenly faced with an entire line of lenses breasbone high, cropping out of him: 2 lenses out his front, one out either side. Like plumbing, or the Xmas tree valves on an oil rig. The cameras clatter against one another him as he walks.

--Dress rehearsal begins, the show ~~is~~ opening with Irwin out front of curtains; Chris is directly below at apron of stage, switches lenses as Irwin starts business.

--In mock warmup for his softshoe dancing, Irwin takes in a big breath, then makes a leaning looping run circling the entire perimeter of the stage, gives Chris a ~~slaphappy~~ slaphappy mugging-for-the-camera grin, spontaneously but in character, as he lopes by overhead, looks back and shrugs, still in the run, when the grin doesn't draw a shot from Chris.

--Chris shoots fast, right arm cocked high, left arm right angled beneath the camera.

--checks light meter; bites lower lip; holds camera up under his neck, lens pointing up, as he waits for ~~Irwin~~ Irwin to become shootable.

--Breakdancers, The Poppers, come onstage, Chris leans back in 2nd row to shoot; moves to side, then to the end of the aisle, then up the aisle, camera always to eye, shooting and shooting as The Poppers madly dance.

--Chris rewinds, twirls to get film out of camera, chews off leader of roll, fires shutter whingwhing-whing to get ready, all this during lull in stage music.

--His shooting pattern now: click. Click, click.

--Chris fills shirt pockets with film, constantly calculating the stage action; wipes brow. He steps up onto stairs at stage right to shoot the Academics. Cups his camera; Irwin spontaneously plays to him again. Chris's fingers check lenses as he watches.

Jan. 6: Transcription cont'd:

--Chris hunches shoulders as he shoots fast and intently.

--In row 4, he shoots fast as the Poppers dance without music. Pauses to click light meter. Shoots fast, ~~leaving~~ leaning forward now, as dancer in pink leotard is being video'ed by Irwin.

--As Irwin does stage business with ~~his~~ video cam, aiming at audience etc., he focuses down at Chris so that Chris and his camera suddenly are on the TV monitor onstage. (When I congratulated him later on his stage appearance, he said "Yeah, but it was only a cameo.")

--Chris reloads camera in 13 seconds, again with characteristic biting off of film leader.

--Chris moves around aisles, trying to keep ~~himself~~ even with fast dance by the Poppers.

--In stunning ~~piece~~ piece of stage business, which takes place seemingly over my head from where I'm sitting in aisle seat of 3rd row, Irwin gets whoosed into the curtain and rises with it, dangling head down, bottom half of him up into the curtain and whatever rig he does this by; Irwin goes up with the curtain all the way to the top of the proscenium!

--Chris, looking forward, reaches behind himself to feel what lens is on the camera hanging down his back.

--Chris leans both arms on lip of the stage, making his own tripod, shoots from crouch.

--Does a 10-second film change.

--Drops one camera from his eye, picks up another before 1st one hits the bottom of its sling.

--Chris, at end, unslings cameras, wipes brow, empties rolls of film from his pocket. From the pace he's worked at for the 70- or 75-min. show, he looks like he's been slaving, sweaty, a little sallow, and not so much content, now that it's over, as simply looking like, whew.

6 Jan. cont.--bushtits in the birches now; flutters of quickness against the unmoving blanketed branches and the slow sift of the falling snow.

Later: Liz called, abt 2:20, to say she's heard from Barry Lippman, and the Maxwells won't go for the editor-out and non-assignment clauses we want. She says Barry is convinced he's going to be kept, the company is buying small backlists and making other encouraging noises, so she thinks we ought to go along and hope for the best, and I agreed. We both feel a big fight to get out of the contract would distract me from writing the book. What happens if Barry gets a can tied to him--Carol and I figure he's got a year or two to produce the kind of results the Maxwells think they want--I don't know, but I'll try grit and bear it with this book, mindful that I'm going to make probably maximum money off it in the advance, no badly how the corporate raiders screw up the rest of its career.

Asked about Tom, Liz hadn't seen him but said she'd read a piece by him ~~x~~ in a new local paper, figures he's at home, waiting on irons in the fire. She had lunch lately with Lorraine Shanley of Harper, who said Tom still is in the running there, but life is confusing at H&R currently too, with Murdoch's takeover bid on the co-owner Collins.

So, we come out, at this point just before the next \$40,000 of the Mariah advance is due us, with Liz summing up to Barry in the lingo the Maxwells probably truly understand: "I told him, so send us the money."

16 Jan.--Not until C announced it to the Rodens y'day afternoon as we were hoisting a drink at their place did I remember: Robert Maxwell right then owed me \$40,000. ~~Rich is a rich writer, me.~~ Blase rich writer, me.

Although I plainly am in immersion in the Mariah ms-- abruptly it's 10 days since I touched this diary--y'day's deep dive was back into Sky. Some of last week's fluttering, which I'm trying to get done while the ms work marches at full pace, was to get Marsh to look over the Audio Press contract for me, then on his say-so, firing it off to DeWitt Daggett so that we can do the recording next week as I had allotted him. Crossing in the mail with that signed contract was DeWitt's marked-up copy of Sky abridging it down to 3 hours of reading time; C looked it over for me

16 Jan. cont.--on Sat. and the start of Sunday morn, then after she listed her suggestions I went thru DeWitt's version and made my changes. She and I are gratified at the evidently quite workable structure of the book DeWitt fashioned, and surprised at how well, that is, how easily the book now reads.

This seems to be Sky's season, for there was also a phone call early last week from Jim Sadwith, scriptwriter and erstwhile optioner of the book, wondering if he could come up and have me go thru my family pics with him sometime. I told him not until the meter starts running on the option, and actually, as I haven't yet seen any of the contract so protractedly being worked out between HBJ and Jim's lawyers, I feel we're no little distance from having a signed, sealed, delivered situation. And while I tried to be polite about it, I made plain ~~my~~ to Jim my dread of having my time eaten up by a movie project. I was in a little better or at least less weary mood when he called back later in the week and he was ~~done~~ and out with the flu, and out of that conversation, as I told him off the top of my head that a few characters at my mother's funeral might typically of the time and place have been wearing a double-breasted suitcoat with their newest blue jeans, the cuffs of those jeans rolled up, Sadwith asked about my becoming a paid consultant and I said that while I was willing to do a 1st session to get him underway, yeah, anything much beyond that was going to have to be for pay, you betcha.

Supper at Tony Angell's last Friday, C and I providing 3 crabs and 2 loaves of sourdough while Tony provided a steelhead and salad. Tony had decided to invite another couple, Jim Elias of the US West corporate structure and his wife Ann, and said to C in the kitchen before they got there that he wasn't sure this was going to work. From my point of view it was so-so, Elias seeming to be a corporate shmoozer who's accustomed to being listened to all the time. C defined something that had me squirming at the time although I didn't know why; in the course of conversation between Tony and Jim about casting the PNB bronze "Ascending Eagles," which is how Tony came to know Jim, Jim kept asking, 3 or 4 times, what the white stuff Tom Jay used to line his foundry pit during the casting was called.

16 Jan. cont.--Tony told him what he figured he was asking about but Jim said no, that wasn't it, what was that called? Everything stalled in this long hiatus, in what had been a conversation about Tom and his foundry which in my mind was leading toward what I eventually got to ask, how's Tom doing at making a living since the original foundry burned down? What C pointed out to me Jim was doing he was trying to perfect his anecdote--i.e., his concern was to have a good story to tell, rather than how the hell Tom is doing in one of the chancier artistic ways to try to make a living.

We've been having a 3-day blow, calmer at the moment (3:40) but pretty damn strong most of the day, the rain rolling in over the ridges in misty sheets when I walked the park this morning.

23 Jan.--Frost and fog this morning, not just in the actual weather but in the atmosphere of the House of Sky movie option I've just looked over. (Or Faust and Frog, as would be the apt firm name for the Beverley Hills lawyers the scriptwriter Jim Sadwith has handling this for him.) In effect, Sky would or at least could be tied up for 15 yrs, plus side items such as forswearing stage and radio rights for up to 11 years and Sadwith and/or the studio being able to recoup all \$\$ they put into this thru a "turnaround price." I'm to have lunch with Marsh today and get his reaction to it, then I'll need to yowl accordingly to HBJ.

I think my mood will improve after that yowl, probably tomorrow morning. I've been overquiet, brooding on this goddamn movie stuff, ever since the option paperwork came by Express last Thursday. Too, it was an overbusy week, what with Bill Lang on hand a couple of nights, the final logistics (always amazingly time-consuming) of getting a Mariah ms sample ready and sending it in with NEA fiction fellowship application, and writing full-time, on top of it all, on the grizzly scene, a topic I don't really like. (C read the grizzly stuff over the weekend and says it's dandy, so I guess the ms is progressing despite my feeling that it's simply sprawling.) Also, another of the chronic bathroom plumbing problems ...

Phone just rang, it was Marsh saying he can't face lunch, in fact is going off to the dr. to be checked for

23 ~~Mar~~ Jan. cont.--stomach upset from anti-cholesterol drug he's been taking. We re-set time of meeting for 10 tomorrow morning, if he's healthy again. I hope to christ he's OK; said the family diagnosis of his woe ranges from his conviction that it's just an upset stomach to Ann's fear that he has stomach cancer. He offered that jokingly, and I said that was certainly a spectrum of diagnoses, all right.

Well, back to the weekend and my heavy mood; yet another plumbing problem, coupled with the looking-around the property I did on Saturday when the weather cleared enough for some yard work, made me realize--maybe really for the first time--that we may have to move on from this 40-year-old house. C thank god has been in a vibrant mood, her team-taught course going well and her perspective on our strengthening finances and prospects coming thru clearer than mine just now, and so she said she doesn't mind mulling ~~that~~ a move. We agree that ~~in the winter~~ once Mariah is out of the way, it's either move or set aside a season and muscle the accumulating projects of this house and property into shape, all.

Meanwhile, the next 3 afternoons are to go to taping Sky for Audio Press, i.e. my reading of the 3-hour abridgement. Even though there may not be any real \$\$ that eventuates from this, I'm kind of looking forward to it, a finite project with somebody who seems to know what he's doing.

27 Jan.--A winding down day, necessarily decelerating from the week of writing at least a dab each morning--a page a day but ~~at least~~ that's a thousand words gained--amid the movie contract conundrum (which Marsh blessedly is taking on) and the actual attained project, the taping of 3-hr. audio cassette adaptation of Sky. DeWitt and I seemed to agree it went well. Probably I got better each of the 3 afternoons--DeWitt seemed very pleased with the reading of the sheep stampede scene and of my leaving for college, the final scene in this shortened version, y'day; both of course passionate and emotional memories for me--if the listeners, particularly the reviewers, will now just listen all the way thru.

27 Jan. cont.--The taping was done at the studio/home of Kearny Barton, who at first nonplussed DeWitt a bit; DeWitt remarked to me that the place might not be what I expected, as stuff was teeteringly stacked everywhere, but that Kearny's equipment, while old, still was as good as any in the world. Indeed both Kearny and the studio gear seemed topnotch--when I listened to a bit of replay the first day I swear I could damn near hear the whiskers in my beard--and as DeW and I made conversation with him, it turned out that oh yeah, Kearny'd done some music recording--"the Ring Cycle for the Seattle Opera, I don't know, five-six years in a row"--and the music for the Olympic skating champ Brian Boitano, and the Olympic-winning synchronized swim team, and so on. From that and faded clippings on the wall, it's perfectly plain Kearny is something of a maestro.

And so far I've liked working with DeWitt. After lunch with him at the Salmon House y'day, talking over how to market the Sky tapes, I came home and told C that DeWitt listens and takes notes like God intended for people to do. Infuriates me--I'm certain I can even tell ~~me~~ when it's ~~happening~~ happening at the other end of the telephone--when people ask me things that I then think seriously about and they don't hang on to it by jotting it down, just gabble on to the next question. DeWitt don't, and so far so good.

Supper at the Wok with the Nelsons last night, again hilarious. Went to their place afterward for a drink and to see Ann's Chihuly bowl Marsh gave her for Xmas, and got to counting up how many years ~~we've found~~ the four of us have found each other mutually hilarious, 29 years in Ann and Carol's case, 25 since I met Ann and Marsh.

A springlike week, rain last night but only light clouds this morning. Starting to feel like garden time, and one thing I hope to do in this day of dabs is order veg seeds.

31 Jan.--So much for the false spring. Heavy spritzes of snow, off and on, all day. The trees are powdered, though it hasn't yet started sticking to the road. We possibly may be in for cold weather from the terrifically frigid spell Alaska has been having. Carol has provisioned us to a fare-thee-well, a turkey, a ham, stew meat, while I went out and split several fires' worth of wood.

Luckily last night was a night out, first to the UW Faculty Club and the, ahem, Nelson Bentley Graduate Tea for Ursula K. LeGuin. Nelson has been a poetry-nurturing saint on the English faculty, so I wanted to go for that reason, but also to show the flag on Ursula's behalf; with Carver gone, she is our pre-eminent writer at this corner of the country, I suppose, and I wanted to pay her a bit of due even though we don't really know each other. I simply reminded her we'd crossed paths at the OHS Xmas cattle call for authors, she laughed and said she no longer goes to the cattle call, after the year she sat there for four hours and nobody offered her so much as a cup of coffee, let alone a glass of wine. She certainly was soldiering for the UW English Dept. y'day, that 4-5:30 reception, then dinner with faculty folk, then an 8 o'clock reading, then some sort of reception at the Women's Center.

Syd was on hand when we got to the Faculty Club, and Linda Bierds soon came--we'd arranged to go out to supper with them afterward. Hilarious conversation with the two of them, C and me, and Nelson Bentley, Nelson telling us of his 14,000 line epic poem which has been published serially--over 2½ years or so--and which I think is called In Search of the Transcendental Moose. He has Roethke in it re-incarnated as an oyster on Blake Island; that ~~mention~~ mention led to Nelson reporting that William Blake is selling cars now--can't requote the line, but it's a Blakean one about excellence--on TV, and that in turn led to his report on having watched A Man Called Hawk, wherein the hero is in a cemetery, recites some lines of Dylan Thomas, and his buddy comes along and finishes the poem. Which brought up Paladin and Have Gun, Will Travel, and Linda's talent for being able to sing all the TV theme songs of her youth, Have Gun, Rawhide, etc.

More good stuff at supper: Syd that day had mailed off her K. Mansfield ms to Cornell Press, they drove us to a swank Mexican restaurant at 45th & Stone Way, and once there, Linda gave us the news that The Atlantic has taken her poem on the divers to the Titanic.

31 Jan. cont.--On my own so-called literary front, I've been trying to hunker in on the big 2nd chapter of Mariah, and indeed have been whomping hard at it this week, revamping 10 pp/day these past two days. Meanwhile at Macmillan: y'day I called Susan Richman, to let her know I'm indeed staying with the house etc., and she said OK, you didn't hear this from me but Barry has hired a new head for Atheneum, Lee Goerner from Knopf, has worked with Garcia Marquez, DeLillo and so on, but you didn't hear this from me. Righto, Susan, and this morning Liz cheerfully called with the news and I just said oh yeah, good, good. An hour later Barry called, saying I've just hired Lee Goerner etc. and I could truthfully answer, I've heard that name quite a bit.

3 Feb.--Days of big winter. 4-6" of dry snow came midweek, then cold and colder weather, down to about 10 degrees here last night. As ever in snow, Seattle gave up the ghost. C got ~~Thursday~~ Wednesday and Thursday off when Shoreline blessedly closed, and she hiked up this morning in 18 degree weather; 9 of 40-some students showed. Horrendous traffic reports, these past three days; a hundred-car fender bender--California magnitude!--on the freeway near Everett, the state police getting a thousand distress calls an hour at one point. I've gone up every day on foot to walk a few laps of the park--the Olympics were out today, ~~very stark and long~~ looking very snowy and remote, with that blue dust of distance--but otherwise, except for putting out some cereal grain for distressed birds, I've stayed in and worked, indeed have revised 53 pp. of Mariah's 2nd chapter this week. Told C that I suppose actually this is the kind of splendid isolation people apply their hearts out to attain at Yaddo or Macdowell. Both of us feel good in this weather, which y'day and today turned into bright spans of high pressure, the Alaska cold front that spawned this having been the highest pressure area ever recorded, and so this rare dose of white winter has provided both exhilaration and an old edge of worry in me, doubtless left over from Montana wariness about weather. (Main fret, still apt, is the power supply; this house's furnace does not work without electricity. We've foregone having fires in the fireplace during this cold partly because we didn't

3 Feb. cont.--want the chimney yawning ~~in~~ frigid air in all night but also because we want a stash of firewood if the power goes off.)

Meanwhile, some business has progressed. DeWitt called y'day to go over the 5 pp. of cuts needed in the final tape of Sky, and they sounded jake to me. Then just before I began typing this, phone rang, voice says, "This is Lee Goerner." We talked, chatted with some ~~xxxx~~ business thrown in, really, for probably 15-20 min. He's still at Knopf, leaves on the 9th to visit his folks in Texas, begins at Atheneum on the 21st. Principal point of our conversation I suppose was that it hadn't been made clear to him that Liz and I had worked it out for Barry to be my editor--Lee had the impression he'd be, I gathered--and so I woozed that issue around a little, saying he should feel free to use his time getting on top of this new job rather than having to edit me, that I figured this ms was more a galloping voice like English Creek's rather than one that needed the line-editing Tom did on Rascal Fair, etc.

Lee ~~xxxx~~ ended up saying, well, the important thing is we all want to get this book published. Liz and I may have to sort this out further, but my instinct at the moment is to stick with Barry, let Lee settle in at the mammoth job of taking over the Atheneum list. Said he's had more than 20 writers at Knopf and the hard part now is calling them and telling them he's leaving. All in all, a good start for us on both sides, I think; I took the chance to say a good word for Margaret Talcott, and for his part Lee came across as more easily conversational, somewhat more relaxed (so far) than Tom. There's a chance he may get out here in August.

10 Feb.--Weary end of the week, I suppose consequence of having been shut in so much by the weather since the storm of 10 days ago. Sloppy outside, patches of ice, dribs and drabs of mud, and temp still going down into the 20s every night.

Ch. 2 continues to be a trudge, but at least all the back and forth I've done on it the past 2 weeks have brought it to where I can see what it can eventually be--a lively moiling center of the book akin to the rodeo scene in Eng Crk. A lot of eventual work yet to be done on it, but I can at least let it set for a while now in decent conscience.

10 Feb. cont.--Meanwhile, out-of-nowhere things happen just averagely. Phone machine was on the blink y'day-- turned out to be inadequately recorded message, fixable-- and so at one point I picked up the receiver to a woman in Carmel wanting to know how to research her own book a la Rascal Fair, and next a Portlander named Al Bateman who wanted to know if I'm interested in a step-deal for movie rights to any of my books (not really). I meanwhile have a call in to the UW Editors and Writers who want me to talk at their annual June shindig (try me next year) and a couple days ago fended off the sec'y of the Everett Women's Club who wanted (a) me to speak this November or (b) me to speak next spring, i.e. 1990--in either case, committing myself to it now so she could put me in their printed schedule; told her I can't ever envision a time in my life when I'll be able to commit myself ~~unaproximately~~ to a specific date a year ahead.

14 Feb.--Impossible to keep up with the continuing razzmatazz, but to give the gist:

--letter from Ohio woman, by way of Dick Estell, saying how much she enjoyed his Radio Reader rendition of "Dancing at the Ratskill Fair."

--letter from Ranton guy, Valier class of '47, in essence telling that Winter Bros inspired him to build a coastal Indian canoe, then some V'couver film maker told him he had rights to Sea Runners, ~~and~~ borrowed the canoe for filming and bunged it up.

--R Fair, Sky and Winter Bros #s 6, 8 and 10, last Sunday's Seattle Times bestseller list.

--Bks on Tape monthly newsletter came today, announcing R Fair, 7 1/2-hr cassettes.

--Woman phoned, couple wks ago, wanting to know if she and her husband could name their 46-ft boat (that they're to sail around the world in) Rascal Fair. Sure, I said, send a pic.

Amid this, I'm having a by-god-get-things-gone week on the Bearpaw-Chinook scenes of Mariah. C and I are both pushing ourselves thru the week in prospect of long weekend at Cannon Beach.

Oh yes; broke the corner off a front tooth at lunch Sun., to my astonishment our dentist fixed it right up y'day afternoon.

26 Feb.--Last week turned into a phone blitz. We came back Tues. from long nice weekend at Cannon Beach in a restored mood after the walking and loafing there, and while I had a none too sharp gearing-up morning of writing on Wed., things still were going OK until the phone began exploding that afternoon. By nightfall when we unplugged the damn thing there'd been 8 calls. And the next day, there were 10. None of them really amounted to anything consequential in life--except for those on the Rushdie affair, more to come as C and I each participate in a protest event--and all of them eating up time and belching back distraction. I redid the phone machine message to say I'm not available for appearances the rest of this year and am now leaving the machine on virtually all day; C and I are agreed the next step is an unlisted number instead of our current nonlisted, which out-of-town callers of course get by calling the operator.

The weekend has helped, just sitting and reading has produced some rest. Friday night we entertained tooth and nail, what started off as fairly casual notion to take our turn at socializing by having Tom & Carrie Jones and Tony Angell and Nancy McKay here for crab supper escalating into Tony's daughters Bryony and Gilia coming too, and Gilia's boyfriend William Schroeder, i.e. 9 of us, which had C and me saying to each other, 'This is like Thanksgiving!' All went well, though, Gilia and William betaking themselves into the study for teenage privacy and Bry, who I think is showing signs of being a really accomplished artist--those girls are 14 or 15--worked on a sketch of home life in ancient Greece, for a class assignment, which progressed fascinatingly thru the evening. The next night we went back to utmost simplicity of entertaining, Linda Bierds here for solo supper (crab again) while Syd is visiting family in Calif. Linda is truly hilarious, telling us of her career as a clerk at the Seattle Credit Bureau and somehow out of that urging me into telling of my equally wacko career ~~xxxxxx~~ in the AF Reserve, as well as a riveting mind; she's trying to finish up her

Feb. 26 cont.--poem on Meriwether Lewis which is proving to be much the longest she's ever done, and has hit on one of her typically remarkable devices--the lore that if you ever hear a mockingbird sing in its own voice, i.e. not mocking, it means a death; and one of Lewis's friends after L's suicide reported hearing a mockingbird in that vicinity.

10 March--Been some week. I've wrestled ch. 2, the big midsection of this book, one way and another ever since the first of the year, and by the end of last week I still had a dismaying number of gaps. This week I whipped some of those, getting the grizzly and Shelby scenes virtually continuous, and while the 10 or so pp. of transitions and fill-ins done this week are not a big amount, it's all new work and pretty close to final gloss. There still feels like a lot to be done on ~~Max~~ this ms, but at least not as goddamn much.

Also am relieved to have last night behind me, the read-out in commemoration of Salman Rushdie supposedly to have started his U.S. tour for Satanic Verses here y'day. I'd been leery, not really knowing the organizers and not seeing all that much evidence of organization, but more on hunch than anything else I said I'd get in touch with PEN American Center--so far as I know, I'm the lone PEN member in Seattle--for the statement issued at the NY meeting in support of Rushdie's freedom of expression, in Feb., and any excerpts from the writers who spoke there. That acorn culminated in my being at the top of the program last night, the first writer to speak after the introducers, and I was pleased with how my 10 min. went, the PEN statement, excerpts from Rob't Caro, Norman Mailer and Leon ~~Wiesel~~ Wieseltier--who wrote circles around all the bigger-name writers involved in that NY event--and closed with my own comment, that Carol proxied for me at the ACLU event last week. Scene to remember, backstage--very much seemed that way, in side room of the Scottish Rites Temple on Capitol Hill, writers immersed in learning the "scripts" of their Satanic Verses readings--where a glance one direction took in Murray Morgan, lovely white-haired portrait of dignity with his reading glasses on a string around his neck, and in another

10 March cont.--the consummate John Gilbert, an actor I like to watch so much I keep an eye on him whenever he's just sitting around, and just arriving, Charles Johnson, fit-looking and friendly the instant we finally met, after all these years as Atheneum/Tom Stewart authors. Also met Richard Wiley for the first time, and then Jane Adams arrived, Richard and I listening to her report on her current project, women who "something" too much, and the two of us telling her we're going to do a book on her, women who write too much. Black-uniformed black-bereted guys, a-hung with nightsticks, 2-way radios etc.--some security firm donated its services for the night--clump through and Richard and I say simultaneously "I hope they're on our side." Rick Simonson was on hand from Elliott Bay Books, where Rushdie was to have read; had us all sign a copy of Satanic Verses he was going to send in to Viking, commemorative of the night. Rick took in the scene of cramming writers and desperate schedulers and said actually the book would sound pretty much the same if portions did get mixed up; told him, yeah, that's magical realism for you. ~~Reading~~

Before it gets away from me, shd also note that it snowed again, this whitest winter of our 20-some here, I think; March 1, to match the Feb. 1 big snow. In fact, though it never snowed heavily it just wafted down until we had more snow here at the house than in the Feb. storm, maybe 8" this time. Were able to drive more easily this time, not such freezing temperatures, and so on March 3 I got down to the UW to talk to the grad class in reference librarianship, the one UW stint I always try to do when asked--so much so that Carol went and did the statement-reading in my stead at the ACLU Rushdie event at the same time, downtown--~~not~~ as it's the only shot at incipient librarians about the virtues of books vs. technology and so on. And Sat. night, roads had cleared enough that we had no trouble going to dinner at Linda Sullivan's--Buff Wainwright now resident too--which Linda had arranged far ahead so we could meet Alex Macleod, managing editor of the Seattle Times, and his wife Willy, a Planned Parenthood educator. Good enough evening, though C and I came away pondering whether the

10 March cont.--Seattle Times would have more zing to it if it wasn't run by local boys such as Alex; symptomatically, the managing editorship has been hereditary, Henry Macleod to Alex. Alex was plenty pleasant--a bullnecked decent-featured guy with wavy black hair and a short black beard; he tends enough toward burly that C and I were surprised to learn he's a half-marathoner, in fact running one the next day--but diffident in what little trying we did to talk about life at the Times, and has a new San Juan Islands place to withdraw to entirely on weekends. Hard to imagine he has a fire in the belly about making the Times a slambang coverer of news; and he could be running that gray enterprise another 20 years, at his age.

26 March--We have Oregoned, and go back to work tomorrow, though it is a note on this household that on this last day of spring vacation, a Sunday at that, we've both been pecking away at tasks here at our desks for the past hour, and it's just now 8:30 in the morning.

Had some great days in eastern Oregon during our trip; fine sunny weather ~~was~~ at wildlife refuges at Tule Lake and Hart Mountain, then our last day out, at Smith Rock State Park n. of Bend. Only Malheur, which we'd expected to be the centerpiece of the trip, grayed out in rain, muddy roads, lack of bird flocks. Fine moments of bird-watching otherwise: scads of shoveler ducks at Tule, and a bald eagle who would not deign to budge from perch atop telephone pole even when C and another photog got out and crept beneath him for pics; and in a field with cattle beneath the vast snow-sprinkled escarpment of Hart Mtn., a pair of sandhill cranes. Much good food on the trip, beginning at the Heathman in Portland where we spent our first two nights and then at the Pine Lodge in Bend and Ole's Supper Club in The Dalles. Good visiting, too. Paul Pinterich and new wife Jill, who handles the letters to the editor column at the Oregonian, had supper with us the night of the 16th--which I'd meant to be purely social but which produced an Oregonian item by Paul which had ~~the~~ a banner headline about me mulling the title for my next book--and some fine funny lines resulted. Paul and Jill told of their recent marriage,

26 March cont.--which they simply woke up one day and decided to do--Paul's third, I guess Jill's second--and that night honeymooning at ~~Rock~~ Astoria she thought back over the day's result and said, "My gosh!" and Paul similarly uttered a dazed "Yeah!" At the Oregonian, where he's been for almost 25 years, Paul is a veteran of a lot of battles with editors--when we first met him 10 years ago he was persevering in doing the job of book editor without the Oregonian granting him the title, and he eventually triumphed into the lovely format of 4 pp. at the back of the Sunday Northwest magazine, only to lose it in one of the cosmetic redesigns that papers are gaga about in recent years--and told of a recent meeting, after yet another reshuffle of editors, when the new person in charge asked if there was anything anybody wanted to see happen, anything they'd like to do, and Paul, who'd been inexplicably turned down year after year in wanting to go to the annual cowboy poetry gathering in Elko and do a piece, spoke up with Yeah, how come you won't let me go to Elko, christ, I can see the place from here, and other columnists etc. pitched in, Yeah, hey, why won't you let the guy go to Elko?

And we had lunch on the 17th with Mary Arnstad, mgr of the Heathman, hearing from her the experience of all the honchos of the hotel staff being in a Dale Carnegie course--evidently part of a conscious effort by Mary and the hotel ownership to begin turning the hotel into an institution in the staff's minds, after the start-up years of concentrating on service to the guests--and as person after person spoke, Mary's realization that the staff "are imprinted on me like a bunch of geese," that is, all overachievers in her mode.

Day after that, lunch in Eugene with Dick and Dee Brown. Did some talking about our plans to bop around the Two Medicine country together in mid-June for a few days. Dick is on sabbatical, writing his No Duty to Retreat book for Oxford Press, and said he's been so busy writing he hasn't kept on his reading--only to be reminded by Dee that he'd recently read 40 books as one of the judges for the OAH's Billington prize for western history.

26 March cont.--While we were away Jim and Lois Welch made use of this house for a couple of days, before going on out to Kalaloch, a tiny repayment on our part of all the hospitality we've had from them on stops in Missoula through the years; Jim and Lo live with great grace in spacious digs alongside Rattlesnake Creek, with what is virtually a separate guest wing out over the garage, and our setup of a fold-out couch is pretty paltry, compared. They came back from the ocean Friday night and we had a terrific crab feed here, 2 crabs totaling ~~more~~ 5 pounds. Jim is 100 pp. along on his next novel, which may mean we'll both have books out a year from this fall, first time we've coincided. Lo is running the U. of Montana writing program and the quirks attendant thereto--having brought in Cyra McFadden to teach during spring quarter, Lo found that the driveway to the rental house for Cyra has eroded into unusability, ~~so~~ so Cyra has been staying at the Welches' house while they were here in ours, and today they'll set forth to the eroded driveway with a shovel and see if they can get Cyra in and established. I asked if Richard Ford is still on hand in Missoula; just barely, as Kristina is to begin law school at Michigan and they're selling the big Bitterroot Valley house they bought a year and a half ago. Interesting peripatetic pattern, particularly to ~~a~~ a guy like me who's chosen to stay utterly suburbanly rooted to do my writing.

5 April-- Deep into revising ch. 1; so deep that even as good things happen at large, I scarcely notice. Last weekend brought both Elizabeth ~~and~~ Simpson's impressive dissertation chapter on folklore in my work and a copy of Stegner's American West as Living Space in which ~~found~~ I found he cites me wholeheartedly, indeed movingly. Y'day by way of Sarah Hart an eccentric book catalogue of some kind which ~~included~~ included me in their gallery of greatest living American writers; today the Sky cassette, boxed in sagey green, from the Audio Press. Good stuff, all, but what remains on my mind is the necessity to pile up pp. of Mariah, a lot of the year-end victory over the ms is going to have to be won here in April and May, so I've set myself to try and revise all of ch. 1 this month and rough-draft about half of ch. 3 next month.

10 April--Spring, in fact near-summer, suddenly cruised in. Since Friday noon it's been warm, mostly clear; today has been the bluest of days, and the thermometer now is 69, at 3:40 p.m. C and I stretched out in lawn chairs like exhausted cats in the early afternoon sunshine, and are feeling better for it--plus steaks, strawberries and ice cream for supper, plus supper at the Sorrento tomorrow night with Michael And Louise, plus hearing them in their lecture series gig the night after. Hard as we've both been slogging, some fun is needed. Saturday we spent ~~myself~~ on yard work, carting abt 800# of leaves, limbs etc. to the dump in John Roden's pickup, then ~~merely~~ merely yard-puttered y'day. Puttering or no, I came out of the weekend this morning wanting to start a weekend, and so put in on the ms only one of the funkish days I s'times have, trying to fuel myself with food and tea, slowly daubing in an occasional sentence; Not the kind of big work the ms needs, but as usual on these sorts of days, what I did manage to get done I think is perfectly good.

Phone call today from Laird Robinson at USFS Region One hq in Missoula, at Jud Moore's behest, responding to my request for another fire for Jick to smokejump on, the same day as the fatal Mann Gulch fire in '49. Laird mentioned he'd helped Norman Maclean with his Mann Gulch research, I asked what ~~he~~ he'd heard from Norman, said he had a phone call about a month ago from him--Norman is just hanging in there, able to live alone but with a housekeeper, his memory not good because of lack of bloodflow to his head; he's ~~was~~ aware of the failing memory, Laird said, and aggravated with himself about it. Norman talked of wanting to come to Montana this summer, Laird told him to have his son put him on plane in Chicago and he'd meet him in Missoula, drive him up to ~~his~~ the Maclean Seeley Lake cabin, tend to him a few days I hope that indeed happens, for what can it hurt to try at this stage of Norman's health.

17 April--I'm contributing an ignominious spousal half to our 24th wedding anniversary today, stove-up as I am with what seems to be a pulled rib muscle. Must have aggravated it Friday, when I went out and did some quick hoeing in the vegetable garden, although I didn't feel any bother until Sat. afternoon. Sleeping on it Sat. night really set it off, and I spent most of X y'day immobilized in the rocking chair. Last night was rougher than hell again, and today the pain, sometimes just discomfort, sometimes breath-taking, comes and goes. Particularly galling to be laid up today, brilliant and sunny and anniversary of this life with C too.

Partly from being stove-up and partly from general accumulation of chores, I haven't managed to do anything on ms today; indeed have primarily spent the day drafting a letter to HBJ sub rights dept. saying I don't want them to do the Sky movie deal with Sadwith unless the total tie-up period of 14 years comes down to 7 or 8 years. Carol and Marsh both like the letter--C is Wanging it for me now and we'll give it to Marsh tonight when they meet us at the Wok for annvsry supper, so he can fax it to Claire Roberts tomorrow--but god it took a lot of time.

25 April--Time stubbornly refuses to yield itself to this diary. By the end of last week I did make my deadline on revising the first 1/3 of the Mariah ms--about 40,000 words, gloriously--and as I go off tomorrow to Missoula and Billings library gigs, I'd figured these 2 days or certainly today would give time for a diary entry about seeing Louise and Michael, catching up on owed letters, etc. No way. So many bits and pieces have had to be parsed through that it's now approaching lunchtime--I'm picking C up at the college and we're going to Pioneer Square to get some pic framing started--and there's no prospect of real diary and letter progress this afternoon. So, a few minutes of mood music. Am feeling better, both from some super blue weather and by dint of having a truly sizable core of the ms done now, and these three days in Montana I hope will be an interesting break from writing. Have managed some garden afternoons, over the

25 April cont.--weekend and a bit y'day, and that's helped too; the surprisingly nasty rib pain was gone by late in the week, last week, and I've taken care not to risk anything aggravating, such as sawing or splitting wood which needs doing, until I get through this Montana trip hale and whole.

Hunkered in and unsocial as I often feel--C seldom does, with all the swirl of the college she faces each day--we've been seeing people; dinner with Ann and Marsh at the Wok on our anniversary (they gave us windchimes, we gave them the Sky tape), then with Linda Bierds and Sydney at, sure, the Wok on the 19th, ~~interesting~~ to hear Linda's tales of NY, The New Yorker and so on; then we had John and Jean here for supper Sat. night, C having bought a magnificent roast the 4 of us put a major dent in. And I had coffee with Tony Angell one morning, and ~~was~~ talked with Eliz. Simpson for the sake of her dissertation research an hr and half one afternoon.

Billings, April 28 - In steady snow. The mark of this stay, for my talk at the Mtn & Plains Library Conference, has been constant glancing out my window of my Dude Rancher room to a downtown rooftop temperature sign, which blessedly has stayed at about 35°. If there'd been freezing with this 4" or so of snow - this would be grim. As it is, ranchers & farmers can look on it as equivalent of "a million dollar rain."

I ran into the snow 25 mi. west of Butte y'day, on drive from Missoula, and it stormed in spells & squalls to about 40 mi. west of Billings - couple of hundred miles of storm in a rented Ford Taurus; so much for my bright idea of avoiding small-plane travel travails. Here in Billings steady rain of past few days turned into snow about supper time. I had supper with Nancy Effinger of Jackson, Wyo., library and one of her board members, a woman named Cory; they'd driven thru 10 hrs of snow to get here.

May 1--This day of heavy air, my brain seeming to have turned to mud, I'm about ready to give the alarm, Mayday, Mayday, all right. Have eked out the 2 pp. of fresh ms I needed, requiring all damn day to do it and thinking all the while, my god, is the final section of Mariah going to be like this?

I suppose this is maybe the price of the extraordinary weekend of weather, two ideal summer days to close out April. We did considerable yard work and also considerable lawnchair sitting.

As to my travels of last week, the talks I did in ~~both~~ Missoula and Billings were both hits. Audience of 240 or so at Friends of the Library dinner in Missoula, and probably 150 librarians at the top of the Sheraton in Billings. More anon, on each, when I have the energy.

2 May--Not a great day of writing, 3 scrappy pp., but at least a better day. And now some trip notes, starting with the strangest:

I turned in my Hertz rental car, a few blocks west of the Sheraton, about 9:45 the morning of the 29th and was walking to the hotel, head down against snow and to watch against stepping in slush, when I came to the intersection between the Sheraton's block and the Northern Hotel's and there was a white pickup, driverless, aslant across the crosswalk in an interrupted left turn. Then I saw that the driver was out and talking to a woman who was bent over as if catching her breath. Heard him say, "I'll take you to the hospital if you want," and so I paused, to see if I could help out. I simply kind of hovered for a bit, as the woman was up on her feet but looking a bit dazed; I asked if we could help her get across the street ~~to~~ and in under the Sheraton overhang, out of the weather and against a planter there where she could prop herself. She looked at me and, incredibly, asked, "Are you Ivan?" I said I was and she said, "I know you'll take care of me." I got her over to the planter, more walking beside her to catch her if she fell than actually supporting her, the driver trailing us part way, then going back to his pickup. It dawned on me, pretty damned belatedly, that the two of them probably hadn't sorted out names-addresses-etc., so I jotted down his license plate, 3T-309, white pickup with

2 May cont.--a Fruehauf sign on its side, then got the woman on into the lobby of the Sheraton and onto a couch, fetched Peggy, one of the librarians running the conference registration desk, and told her we'd better get some help, she agreed and had somebody phone 911 for emergency medical service. The woman turned out to be Diane Wilkeson, who said she works in "the backroom" at the Mont. Historical Society, so she had likely seen me there and I'm not actually such a public face in Montana that the stricken see me as an automatic Good Samaritan. Maybe close enough, though.

The snow was the other main excitement. I was able to quit worrying about it when the temperature Sat. morning was well above freezing. Indeed, by the time I began my talk at 1:30, in the 23rd floor Skyview Room of the Sheraton with views of Billings all around, I ~~was able to~~ point out to the librarians that when I got up to talk, the snow quit. Indeed, 2 hours or so later when I went outside for coffee and a snack, the snow was gone, sidewalks utterly dry; talk about an intense climate.

The Billings talk went very well. I was nicely balanced between being relaxed with what I knew was a friendly crowd, and intent enough to perform the speech. Also had a powerful enough mike system to compete with the roaring air conditioning unit. Beforehand, I was standing around the Waldenbooks tableload of my books, available to ~~sign~~ inscribe if anybody wanted; the Walden trio of clerks had gone to lunch, so--Montana is so goddam wonderful in a lot of nonchalant ways--the librarians wrote checks for whatever books they wanted and tossed the checks onto the couch behind the table. Eventually people showed up who wanted to pay cash, so I announced an honor system, I'd sign up the books and they could pay for them when the clerks got back. While I was amid all this, a guy came up who looked ~~much~~ familiar, eventually teased me with "Who am I?" which usually ticks me off but didn't this time, for some reason. I told him I was stumped and he announced, "Kincaid!" Sure enough, it was Bob, who as chairman of the Valier American Legion speech content committee, what, 31 or 32 years ago, ferreted me out and got me to enter, my first public speaking ever.

2 May cont.--Anyway, a first-rate audience in Billings, bursting into a roar of ~~big~~ laughter and spontaneous applause at my line, "After all, aren't librarians the bartenders of information?" ~~flack~~ In a considerable sense the Billings appearance was a foul-up, in that only after I'd agreed did it eventually become evident that I wasn't a banquet speaker with the whole 550 conferees for an audience--they didn't have a banquet speaker--but was going to get only a third or a fourth of the several-state assemblage of librarians; but I did as well with it as I could.

Missoula was rougher around the edges, although there again my talk went over dandily. Askewness began with introduction of me by Dale Johnson, the archivist, who started by saying he'd been called by a reporter wanting to know who H.G. Merriam had been and maybe he'd better say something about this man whom the award is named for. Which he did, in standard biographical facts and one tepid reminiscence of Merriam wandering down to the archives to talk to him; then apparently having run out of anything more to say off the top of his head, Dale concluded: "So much for H.G. Merriam." A line that will live in infamy with Bill Bevis, in the Missoula Gang support group in the audience. Dale proceeded to blag me a bit, without ever really mentioning how much I've used his archives--the main point of about me for that particular audience, for god's sake--and in stumbling through the titles of my books at last resorted to "And so on." Earlier, there had been the musical incident. Two music faculty members, pianist and violinist, were to entertain for 10 minutes or so before dinner, and they disastrously chose to begin with "Danny Boy," which the crowd not unreasonably took to be mere background music and kept on gabbing. I noticed everybody at the head table with me had tensely clammed up and was ostentatiously listening; Ruth Patrick, the library director, at last whispered to me the this-is-supposed-to-be-serious-art situation. At the end of "Danny," the pianist forthrightly rises and tells the crowd he and the violinist can't really hear each other, if we'll all just be quiet and listen they'll play and be on their way. Two serious pieces were then played, with the crowd now muted. Lois Welch afterward said of the musicians,

2 May cont.--"The sissies! I haven't been told to shut up and listen since Music Appreciation 101!"

11 May--Have felt in disrepair on the ms, last week and this, appalled at the remainder of first-drafting still to be done--most of ch. 3 & shorter ch. 4, ~~some~~ a few scenes back in ch. 2--and at how stubbornly patchy, damn near random tatters, the make-the-pages-pile-up writing has been, lately. Today I utterly felt I couldn't let the graf-at-a-time stabs go on, so I forfeited the pace of 4 fresh pp. a day, to ~~make~~ concentrate on making the first few pp. of ch. 3 have some sense and continuity. It's parlously late in the week to have done so, but those pp. did take on reasonable shape today, and I'll try do the same--I hope achieving more pp. than I managed to today--consecutively tomorrow. It may be that I'll have to do the rough of this final section this way, a week on each scene. Am perturbed at myself for not being able, at least yet, to make a finishing kick in this final lap of the trilogy; I have only a ninth or a tenth of this long project left to do, but damn, that hasn't made the remaining fraction any easier.

22 May--\$21,000 sums up the day: the last cascade, 2/3 of the total, of the Harper & Row p'back \$\$ for Rascal Fair. I'd expected only the middle 1/3 of that money sometime this year, so the mail with Liz's five-figure check in it got this week off to surprisingly exultant start.

Have spent the day mulling on the final section of Mariah, going through some file cards and the ideas file. Plainly the issue of historical point of view is what it's ever been: Robbins' renewed view of plundered province vs. Malone's view of western romanticism skewing Montana from modernization. From my background, I start off in

Robbins' camp, unavoidably, I think; and try as I may to credit Malone's notion that amalgamation is needed, I end up thinking Montana has been, still is, too thin a base to bear a modern industrial or technological society--too much distance, too much weather, & too much competition from more logical places. Now to see where my thinking ends up, in Mariah.

1 June--June has begun in beauty, a fine clear day, good unheavy air, temperature in high 70s. I'm feeling weary, though such weather does help. The Mariah pp. have not been accumulating as I'd like, the final portion of the book having taken some severe thinking the past few weeks. What gains I have been able to make I hope are lasting ones--such as today's centennial day Gleaner item, really only a sentence long but I think apt to the situation, and a possible final phrase of the entire book, with an idea for Riley's last article to lead into it. And I think I've jettisoned the idea of the Muster Out Custer dance, because in a sense that would give the book two large climactic scenes, that dance and centennial dawn in Gros Ventre; that spares me creating one major scene. It's been unnerving to let the page count slacken for the sake of firming up small pieces of scene, but it has seemed necessary.

We took ourselves to Bill Stafford's reading at Elliott Bay bookstore last night. He was first-rate, interspersing poems with a few minutes of talk about the writing biz, often very funny. A powerful moment too, although I don't know how many in the audience were aware of it, when, 3 or 4 poems into the program, he read one about a barn where someone had written on the wall "Emily hanged her child here in 1885" and the consequent musings of how loss is supposed to make the lost dearer--this in the not-very-distant aftermath of the Staffords' younger son having committed suicide. Bill read it with some emotion, but steadily.

9 June--The blessed part of the ms, editing the full draft of ch. 1. Kathleen Merryman and Linda Bierds both read it for me, journalist and poet, interesting contrasting points of view to have, and I've worked hard today and y'day to chink in the parts (wonderfully few) they saw problems in. Some of the ms changes itself in big gobs, some needs slower tending; will try get this opening ch. spruced up enough, Monday, to send in to Atheneum before we go to Montana.

June 20, in the Hensley 287 Motel in Choteau--
at 7:45 and we're back from b'fast at the Log Cabin,
in the propwash of geezer talk from the 8 or 10 guys
who gather every morning at the center table; Dick
and Dee Brown have just headed for Glacier Park after
the past 2 days of us showing them the country from
here to Browning. All went well in our tour-guiding
of what Dick calls "Doig country, northern division,"
and indeed sometimes spectacularly, such as:
--our 1st night in Choteau we walked Main St. so I
could point out the stores I'd used for Gros Ventre's
main st. in English Creek, and I happened to remember
some mention of Dana Boussard art in the Catholic
Church. We tried the church, which was locked, but
a bearded guy who'd just been to Mass got back out of
car and came and told us to try see the Boussard
stained glass windows with the sun streaming through
them etc. As he talked to us for maybe 5 min., we
said thanks, and for now we'd just have to walk around
the church from outside, when abruptly the door of the
rectory next door flew open and out came a very round
Friar Tuck-like figure, barefoot and in bathrobe,
saying "You want to see the windows, don't you." Father
Mike Smith, as he proved to be, proceeded to give us
the full tour--barefoot and all--and narrated the
Creation story as Boussard has put it into the dozen
or so windows, ~~what~~ which are truly wonderful; not
classic stained glass but modern evocative, a bit
abstract but simple and vivid.
--Y'day morning as we crested the ridge from the south
and Badger Creek came into view, I was starting to slow
and point out to Dick the general site of Lewis's clash
with the Blackfeet when I saw some large white birds
circling overhead. I pulled over, we all baled out of
the car to look: they were white pelicans, about 30 of
them, slowly gliding circles--Dick remarked later they
reminded him of an Escher print, bird pattern of coming
and going merging--and doing a flyover of us, before
they slowly flew their lovely loops south out of sight.

June 20 cont.--And more useful to Dick Brown as a professional historian, our visit to A.B. Guthrie went very well. I had called Carol Guthrie ahead of time--from Seattle--and we agreed I'd call again on the 18th when we were in this country; I did so from Dupuyer--\$1.65 call ~~the~~ for the 30 or so miles to the Guthries--and Carol asked us to come at 4. We killed an hour or more looking at Pine Butte--including my one obvious misstep in the 2 days of showing the Browns around, ~~x~~ following a ~~road~~ road that according to the map would cut us through east of Pine Butte but in actuality wandered and wandered, and eventually thwarted us with a sizable mudhole--and for all that pulled into Guthries', modified barnlike house with its view of Ear Mountain, about 5 past 4. We intended to stay a polite hour, but as I began clearing my throat to leave, Bud said to (his) Carol, "We can have a glass~~s~~ of wine, can't we?" So the~~x~~ visit ended up more like 3 hours. Bud was standing awaiting us in the living room, wearing the nostril-tube oxygen apparatus such as my dad wore but hooked up to a long hose, but once we all got seated at the kitchen table--Bud moves at a shuffle, but does move--he no longer used the oxygen, all the while we were there, and talk~~d~~ed vigorously much of the time. Bud seemed to take to Dick Brown--they have a mutual acquaintance in Kentucky historian Tom Clark, who was Bud's next-door neighbor during his Lexington newspapering years--and ultimately Bud offered to swap ~~Bud~~ Dick a copy of a tape some Kentucky raconteur has done about abolitionist Cassius Clay for a copy of Dick's book on western violence when it comes out. A couple of Bud's stories he told on Sunday I've heard verbatim on our other visits--as I presume I will have if I ever reach Bud's exalted 88 years, he has his set pieces. One is of telling George Stevens, when they were working on Shane, that while he (Bud) had seen all kinds~~of~~ of shootings in movies he'd never seen a funeral, so why didn't they put one in. The other is a bit of writing advice Bud gave to Ferol Egan, when

June 20 cont.--Egan was writing something about the old religious belief that epilepsy was a sin that had to be whipped out of the victim; Bud says he told Egan to begin the book: "Lie still, my son," said the priest as he swung the whip. But other Bud stories were new to me--that George Stevens achieved the memorable gunning down of the homesteader by Palance in Shane by putting a wire around the actor's chest and having a couple of guys yank him over backward to simulate the backward blow of being shot with a .45; and what Dick and I agreed was a great line, Bud telling people that he didn't worry about the wind at their place until there were whitecaps in the toilet bowl. He also is a terrific limerick writer, if the few he recited to us are a fair example. One had to do with a negative review of The Way West, and while I can't recall it all the principal lines involved an Oregon Trail pioneer named Smith, who spoke with a terrible lithp, something something, and grew tired of squatting to pith. Similarly, another involved Titian, painting with rose madder, eyeing his model something something, and went up the ladder and had her. Plus a few jokes Bud told, one of which I thought really funny: of the southern farmer who was lamenting how badly things were going, his pigs coming down sick, cow drying up, and the night before there'd been a revival next to his ~~own~~ oat field and he got up this morning to find all 40 acres fucked flat.

Bud is working on a book about writing fiction--gave us as a ~~xxx~~ sample maxim, "The adjective is the enemy of the noun," which sounds thumping but I think is only true about half the time--and, I believe more valuably, has a couple of chapters written of a real autobiography: his childhood, his "loving mean" father, etc. As Carol Guthrie was showing the Browns where Bud writes, I stayed at the table with him to visit further and he asked whether I take a big advance on my books. I said yeah, all I can get, on the theory that the more they have invested in me the more they'll try make the book a success. He said he thinks I'm right, ~~but~~ although he's never taken more than \$10,000 advance--i.e., he's been rethinking how he's always done.

June 20 cont.—All in all, Bud was remarkably agile, given his health and his 88 years, and bluffly gracious—when C asked if she could take his picture, he at once declared, "I hate it," and then let her with no further fuss. Concise, too. While the others were out of the room I asked how he'd met his Carol and he said she and her husband and kids were at Twin Lakes—near the site of his house—and he broke up the marriage, "I was only 68 then."

Every winter I've worried about the Guthries, out there under some of the worst weather on the continent and Bud's health iffy, and particularly this last winter I wondered how they were managing. Carol G. told us the tale. The wind hit gusts of 130 mph, altho the temperature was 60 above, and then the power went out. Bud's reserve supply of oxygen is 56 hours, and other than that, power is needed for the machine that produces his oxygen. Bud is one for hunkering in and waiting out a disaster, Carol said, but she figured they had to get out of there, pronto. She got him and some oxygen loaded, they left as the shingles on the house were lifting in the wind and wondered if they'd ever see their house still standing again. She drove them into Choteau with one eye out for broken power lines, got them established in Choteau where the weather was calm; then the wind hit Choteau and the power went out. Now it was a choice, Carol said, of Bud going to the hospital or to Great Falls. In the windstorm, now with scouring dust blowing, she chanced Great Falls, and made it to a motel there. Where they were for the next 13 days as the Alaskan Express coldwave arrived. In short, a damn close escape, to have left the house—where everything froze and they probably would have too—and they're agreed they'll have to leave from Jan. to April of every year now.

Before I lost track of it, the showing-around schedule we did with the Browns, as Dick filled an entire pocket notebook and started on another:

June 19, to the Jensen ranch, then on ~~the~~ by the back road past Ben English Coulee to the ~~the~~ Salansky ranch view that made the English Creek cover; north to

20 June cont.--Scoffin Creek and up it to Parocai's fence to show Scoffin Butte and the creek as "Breed Butte and the North Fork"; down the Dupuyer Creek road to Dupuyer; then to Pine Butte and the Guthries.

--June 19, out the Swift Dam road as far as Rappold's turn-in for view of "Noon Creek," actual Sheep Creek; then north on 89 as the route we trailed the sheep to the reservation, with stop near Badger for Meriwether Lewis site in distance; Plains Indian Museum in Browning, lunch at the Glacier Cafe, back to the Two Medicine to see the buffalo jump cliffs the sheep went off of, and the Mission, then on to Cut Bank by that Two Med road; down to Valier--school, fading downtown, Lake Francis etc.--and then back to Dupuyer by the cutoff past Lauffers' and home to Choteau.

21 June--7:20 a.m., and we're to make leisurely drive to Billings today. Have just had breakfast in the Log Cabin, an institution for us here in Choteau, as it is for the geezer crowd--60ish farmers, a townsman or two--who takes over the center table every morning for coffee and gab. This part of the country is a great listening post, as ever. Dick Brown caught the prize comment in the Antler Bar when a guy moved down the bar to listen attentively to the TV weather forecast and having done so said: "Moderate chance of rain, fair chance of rain--what the hell kind of forecast is that, I've got a roof to tear off."

The best line of the trip thus far, though, came y'day from Germaine Stivers, the zingy dark-haired young wife of the manager of the Boone and Crockett Club's TRM Ranch. Her husband Tom, who was in the big meadow near Salansky's, fixing fence broken when elk stampeded during biologist Gary Olson's attempt to count them (245 elk, Germaine says), and ~~xxxxx~~ thus out of our reach across a highwater ford of Dupuyer Creek, is a wildlife biologist who did the state's grizzly management plan before these 2 years on the TRM ranch--he's about to go back a state job--and so the Stivers live equably enough with grizzlies around. (Germaine said there was one a half ~~mi~~ mile or so up the creek from the ranch house where we were.) But to

21 June cont.—the story: Germaine (this spring or last, I'm not sure which) had the job of bringing a couple of cows and their calves into the shed at night, and so at dusk went out with a bucket of feedcake to a pasture near the house, rattling the cake in the bucket, calling and calling, but no cows, no calves. She made a circuit of the ~~pasture~~ pasture, started toward a patch of brush along the creek where the cattle might be, but decided, no way, I'm not going in there in this grizzly country. She went back to the house, Tom was peeved she hadn't got the cows and calves, said he bet she hadn't even gone around the whole pasture, and out he went with the bucket. He got to where she'd stopped in front of the brush, shaking the bucket, and sure enough, out came the cows with the calves behind them—all of them racing past Tom at a dead run. Uh oh, he thought, and sure enough again, out came a sow griz and her 2 or 3 cubs. Tom ~~he~~ quickly stepped behind a tree and hearing the mother "whistling at" the cubs—woofing for their attention, urging them along—Tom did some woofing of his own, and the mother griz took off up the creek with the cubs romping after her. One of the cubs got hung up in barbed wire climbing a fence which had a woven wire bottom and Tom thought he was in for a hell of a situation if he had to go out there and free a cub, but the cub worked ~~loose~~ loose and the bear family was gone. Back to the house goes Tom, comes in whistling, merrily tells Germaine he's kind of glad she didn't go in that brush, there were grizzlies in there. Germaine, still steamed for having been accused of not searching the whole pasture, ~~was~~ is even more so at Tom's casual news of the grizzlies and ~~erupted~~ summed up her vision of having been eaten and digested with the eruption: "You could have found my glasses in a turd!" "Shit, Tom, in the morning"

Germaine, born and raised in Shelby and a 1st-grade teacher in Choteau until she and Tom went to the TRM 2 years ago, says there are about 180 cattle on the place now, with eventual plans for 250. The ranch has stunning country, its north boundary along ~~what~~ my "North Fork" valley; a mark of the weather, though, is that the overhang of the ranch house is guywired to the ground by several strands of thick cable, against the wind.

21 June cont.--Of this shared trip with Dick and Dee Brown, Carol remarked it's not at all like me to invite someone along that way, and so both of us--and I hope the Browns--are especially pleased at how well it worked out. I suppose the rare impulse came to me because I knew Dick had looked over the WSS and Ringling country--"Doig country, southern division," he calls it--by himself and mentioned he intended to visit this area, and as I admire his scholarship I thought, hell, why not try showing him around. He's an excellent gatherer/interviewer, retaining threads of thought--i.e., if some incident interrupts what we'd been talking about, Dick soon goes back to the same topic at the point of interruption--and self-evidently a believer in the same approach C and I have, go out and take a look at things. Dee meanwhile was enthralled with the abundant wildflowers, in this wonderfully green Montana June, and the Rocky Mountain Front--as C has said, evidently I can't overdo description of those mountains, people are keen for more.

Ennis, 28 June--Celebrated my half-centennial y'day with tour of the northern loop of Yellowstone Park-- C and I agree that a short day in Yellowstone every some years is about right--and a terrific supper at the ~~Continental~~ Continental Divide restaurant here. Karen, wife in the couple that runs the Cont'l D, came by our table the night before and noted that her birthday is the same as mine, so I got her a goofy card of a bear eating a birthday cake.

The Madison Valley is terrific again this morning, perfect shirtsleeve weather, the Madison Range in outline, and in fact this whole trip has gone excellently so far. I was pleased with my reading last Friday night at the centennial conference in Billings, and Louise and Michael were in top form too; she read a new story titled "The Dress" and Michael read the Yellow Raft scene in which Rayona and her mother go ~~back~~ to the Montana reservation. At C's urging, I put together a segment from the English Creek rodeo scene and the opening scene of Mariah, which indeed ~~was~~ to work well.

As for the conference, we met and heard some topnotch people--Don Worster, Dick Etulain, Barbara Allen--and there was a fine bonus as well. While we were having breakfast with Michael and Louise and their daughters Persia, Pallas and Aza the morning after the reading, talking of travel plans, rehashing the night before, general conversation, Louise raised her coffee cup in a toast and relayed the message Lee Goerner, at the NY Aids benefit reading they'd been at a few nights before, asked her to ~~pass~~ pass along about my Mariah ~~sample~~ ms sample: they love it at the publishing house.

Have also picked up much of the info I need for scenes in the final third ~~of~~ of Mariah--Sunday we drove to Colstrip (our second time through remote woebegone Lame Deer in the course of this research) and across the Crow Reservation to Pryor, emulating the route Jick and Leona drive together, and the next morning I trudged around downtown Billings counting empty storefronts between the brassy highrises of

28 June cont.--the Sheraton Hotel and First Interstate Bank; 35 dead businesses in that 10-block swatch. And on Sat. afternoon I was walked through a wedding-in-the-atrium of the Holiday Inn--good details such as the bride entering from the video games area.

Today, onward to Gt Falls and the Arnsts, then to Lewistown in a few days.

1 July--In the Yogo, Lewistown. We've been on the road 2 weeks and a day, and this 4th of July "weekend" is the home stretch of this trip--although it does include launching ourselves 250+ miles the opposite direction from Seattle, to Fort Peck and Wolf Point, tomorrow. I've accumulated a lot of file cards--several last night just on the microphone woes and other quirks of the Country Showdown local talent contest at the high school here--and C has shot a lot of pics, indeed now will be shooting with two cameras--the backup a new \$50 Vivitar bought y'day at the Target store in Gt. Falls--because her original one tore the roll of hard-won Missouri Headwaters shots she'd wanted to use in her Western Lit course. Except for that, this has been a good trip, much helped by stationing ourselves for several nights as we've done in Choteau, Billings, and now here.

Spent the nights of the 28th-9th in Gt Falls with the Arnsts and fished in Wolf Creek Canyon on Little Prickly Pear Creek and the Missouri River with Wayne, Genise and Tana on the 29th--as we all agreed, a mighty amount of fishing, just no catching. The weather has heated up, into the mid-90s that afternoon and y'day, so the Doigs were fairly sun-sozzled (actually so were the Arnsts) after hours of glare off the fishing water. When we pulled into Gt. Falls, to my surprise--though I should have anticipated something of the sort--we found ourselves not in an evening of visiting with the Arnsts, but at a gathering of the Bonnet clan at Vicki and Chuck Hallingstads', with me and my just-passed 50th birthday the occasion, not to say the target, of the evening. Birthday cards and a few joke gifts--I was reminded of our across-the-street neighbor Dick Lankford, a few years ago gamely

1 July cont.--reading out card after card about the declining potency of the 50-year-old male; at ~~his~~ least the Great Falls version was more generously humored than that--put me more in center stage for the evening than I'd counted on, but I think I ~~cop~~ coped. Probably most memorably, when Toni Arnst lit the one candle on the cake baked by Cille Payton, I gave a grandiose theatrical puff to blow it out, and blizzarded the loose coconut sprinkles of the frosting all over Toni.

Before Gt. Falls we spent my actual birthday in Ennis and Y'stone Park, as I guess I already noted. And before that it was Billings, which--only a week ago--seems far back. Should note the logistics of public speaking etc., which I've just made a file card on about last night's mike horrors at the Country Showdown amateur night here in Lewistown. I arranged with the conference organizer, Jennifer Thompson, that I would meet Leonard the janitor at 7:30 at the school auditorium where Louise, Michael and I were to read that night, to ~~make~~ make sure we had workable mikes, lectern, light enough to see by, etc.--I now carry a list in the back of my filecard notebook. Got there to find a big old oaken lectern and nothing else. Nope, says Leonard, no way to fasten a gooseneck mike to that lectern; no gooseneck mike, for that matter. He and I tried various configurations, the lectern so massive you ~~couldn't~~ couldn't set a mike stand beside it and still have the mike head anywhere near your mouth, traipsing through the school to see what the board room might have for cannibalizing and so on, until at last we rigged the unlikely-looking setup of putting the most sensitive mike we could find on a stand directly in front of the lectern, 2 feet or so from the ~~speaker~~ speaker's mouth. I told Leonard not to let anybody change it in any way, as I'd tried it and it sounded as good as we could do; came in that night after rendezvousing with Louise and Michael and Gretel in the lobby and naturally the mike had been moved, to the side of the lectern where I knew it wouldn't pick up, and to ~~the~~ boot, the local NPR correspondent had taped her mike atop the stage mike. Margaret.

*1 July cont.--Kingsland, bless her, was our guinea pig by virtue of saying a few things on behalf of the Montana Committee for the Humanities and introducing Gretel, so by the time we got underway with the actual readings, yes, the mike had been moved back around to the front where I'd spent that hour with Leonard to achieve. Where we performers were sitting there was a mighty echo, and I wondered how things were going for the audience, but afterward Carol and others told me the sound was just dandy.

11 July--Home, and at work. Y'day I sorted filecards of the Montana trip, nearly 100 of them, and today launched into the revision of the middle of the book, ch. 2. I think it perked up fairly well, in the remake I thought out before leaving for Montana: changed the opening from Jick on his way to tend sheepcamp to livelier scene of phone awakening him, and will similarly put some zip of motion and event into what I'd originally intended as a big set scene, the centennial committee meeting. Was reluctant to immerse into the writing this morning--god, how I'd like to have a summer off--but the work went along okay once I got started.

Have just interrupted this for the latest, and we hope the last for a hell of a while, crucial house repair--a new toilet. If I'd been less busy on the manuscript--a chronic if--I'd have clued Carol to have the old toilet, propped up in its inner workings by a homemade repair I made years ago and had to remake periodically, replaced when she oversaw the replumbing of the whole house in April. But that detail got away, and we've had crankiness from the toilet and what seems like the-sound-of-toilet-refilling-half-the-time ever since. I was loath to honcho the getting of new toiletry, both because Carol, her East Coast father's daughter, is better at overseeing contractors than I am and because I didn't want plumbers on my everything-is-equally-important mind while trying to rev up into the Mariah ms again, but I've done it and we hope to christ this handles the problem for some considerable time.

1 August--Another month, another variety of Mariah deadline. July achieved the revision of the first 2/3 of ch. 2 that I needed to; last week I did a ~~thunder~~ thunderous amount of work, 10,000 words of revision which included the grizzly scene that emerged as one of the best in the book. This month, the next 5 weeks, have to provide the finale of the chapter--the Chinook scene--plus the smothering from scene to scene. Am trying a 4 pp/day pace, though there'll be many when I need to write that much instead of revising/writing.

How we're fending, I won't really know until C gets home from her first day of jury duty. It's supposed to be 2 weeks, and she's been game to do the citizenly thing. We do have the nice prospect of this weekend with Linda and Syd at their Camano cabin, an interlude for C at least.

Otherwise, on her birthday a week ago Monday we went up and hiked Ebey's Landing, then had supper at the Wok with the Nelsons. John Roden came for supper last night, while Jean's in Britain, and the night before Pete and Gail Steen were here, back from North Carolina for their high school reunions, Vashon and Sequim.

19 Aug.--Drought in the diary. Between the daily slog on the Mariah ms and trying to nurse my bad back--evidently a casualty of all the hours in the car in Montana--I do not get to these pages. Nor would I ordinarily, today, a Saturday and a muggy one to boot; but I have felt like putting in some desk time today, changing a few word choices I noticed in vetting y'day's work and in fact ending up peppering up a page, the one where the cattle ~~shineworm~~ drive comes on tv--I put in the cowboy going hyaah to either a recalcitrant steer or TV Purvis. Likely my ~~shank~~ internal deadline clock is ticking, estimating what needs doing to get this middle section of the book done, or at least virtually so, by the Labor Day mark. At the same time we're being startlingly social, dinner out with the Walkinshaws at the Santa Fe last Thurs. night, lunch in Edmonds today to pick up picnic supper we're taking to the Rodens tonight so we can watch the TV rerun of Winter Bros on their color set, and tomorrow morn is breakfast and walk with Linda Sullivan and Buff Wainwright.

Aug. 19 cont.--Last week had serious socializing, or at least what was supposed to be; I'm not sure yet how it'll prove out. Lee Goerner, Tom Stewart's successor as publisher of Atheneum and thus more or less heir to me as one of Tom's writers, came north from the Squaw Valley writers conference he'd been at and called on Charles Johnson and me. He did some ms work with Chuck, who has what may be a terrific combination sea story-slavery novel in the works for next fall, but it was shmoozing with me, first time Lee and I had met though we've talked on phone etc. He was considerably distracted, drawn in on himself, I suppose by the new job, a fairly new marriage (in a TriBeCa 2-roomer), plus which he'd come down with a cold and was running on Coricidin. Certainly Lee ought to be a good pencil-on-paper editor, having handled (at Knopf) DeLillo, Edmund White, Michael Herr's Dispatches, translations of Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende. Problem there is, I don't need penciling as much as I need shrewd championing of my stuff to the world, as Carol Hill did for Sky, as Tom did for Rascal Fair. Lee will have another year under his belt by the time this book is poised, and Barry Lippman, my nominal editor, has tried thus far to keep me happy with Macmillan, so maybe it's all going to be copacetic. But while I got along with Lee well enough, we didn't click so wonderfully that I'm at all dissuaded from trying to put my next book, or maybe two, up for auction after Mariah. What I suppose is happening is another rite of passage, as when Carol Hill departed from my writing life; now I'm the veteran in the deal, with a new and learning publisher. In justice to Lee, though, I've got to remember that he's very much paid his dues, coming into publishing as a go-fer at Knopf, fetching Gottlieb's lunch, until working his way up to Atheneum publisher at 42.

27 Aug.-- Patio writing, for I think the first time this unwarm summer and likely the last; autumn is entering the air. This has been a fine quiet Sunday; fireweed seeds flying white and longlegged down the breeze, sometimes catching in the spiderwebs that net down from the eaves and trees and even the garden vegetables, this time of year. I spent some of the morning reading over the middle third of the Mariah ms--last week was a signal advance, the 70+-page finale of this section completed--and making notes for revision (probably after Thanksgiving). The start of the chapter is still slow, I'm afraid, and not quite meshed as it needs to be; same difficulty as there was at the same area of Rascal Fair ms, I think. Good side of that is that the RFair section eventually got solved and I think reads perfectly OK in the book. Later parts of this Mariah mid-section ~~are~~ are fairly zingy--the griz scene, the kind of wacko but at least inventive Shelby scene, the Chief Joseph-Chinook ~~amalgam~~ amalgam. I still have this week to work away at the half dozen gaps and few areas of rewrite, so I should be able to halve those by the time I close down work on this section next Friday. Then after a Labor Day semi-holiday--the 3-day weekend probably here at home out of traffic and some kind of outing for ourselves the two days after that--I go on the ~~final~~ final third of the book (about half-drafted already), the last stint on these three books that will have taken me about 8 years by the time Mariah is published.

Another decent outcome of last week, or what should at last be an outcome; exasperated demise of the long negotiations with scriptwriter Jim Sadwith's Beverly Hills lawyers about the House of Sky film rights. I thought the logjam was broken when I suggested, just before we went to Montana, that I take less money as the first advance, practically give S'with a free shot at script development for a yr and a half, in exchange for them knocking the total contract time down from 14 years to 9. S'with's people told HBJ they agreed to this, and so it was supposed to be a matter of just redoing the HBJ-Sadwith agreement to

27 Aug. cont--incorporate all the changes that had come about ~~because~~ because of our three-sided yowling, HBJ's, Bev Hill ~~sky~~ shysters, and mine. When I'd heard or received nothing by about mid-August, curious, I asked Claire Roberts of the HBJ sub rts dept. where things stood. In the revised contract draft she sent me, Sadwith's lawyers had put in a clause by which I (not HBJ, who ~~would~~ would be the actual contract signatory) would give up all legal right--a right in the Berne Conventiony worldwide--to sue if they "mutilated" Sky; with that came an author's guaranty which amounted to Sadwith's right to sue me--before, or for that matter regardless of, suing HBJ--over anything; that I would be responsible for any damages if HBJ resisted paying them, and so goddamn on. I had just taken a quick look at the stuff and put it aside with foreboding until I could phone Marshall Nelson, but before I could call ~~M~~ he was on the line to me, mad as I've ever heard him, about the gall of the Beverly Hill lawyers. He at once settled down and gave me reasoned advice--say no, the contract can't be signed with those offensive new sections in it--but I considered it the last straw, and C very much backed me up. I wrote to Claire at HBJ to call it all off, then settled back to see what would happen, because as Marsh and I read the original Sky book contract HBJ probably could go ahead and license the movie rights to S'with (though I'd still get 90% of the money). Before my letter got there, Claire called Marsh ~~to~~ to talk about HBJ's woes with said Bev Hillers about other clauses of the supposedly agreed upon contract, and in hearing of my letter she said, Oh good, we've come to the conclusion we can't reach agreement with those guys either. Marsh sees it as an instance of hardball lawyers getting carried away with themselves (on S'with's side; ~~maxi~~ S'with himself probably is going to be chagrined as hell to find this has all crashed; I have a suspicion he's probably already done some work toward a Sky screenplay) and of HBJ's lawyer (who is in Orlando, not in NY where Claire is, thus making one move remove of clarity and common-sense conversation

27 Aug. cont.--in this already-fuzzed method of communicating) not tumbling early enough to what was going on with the rapacious guys on the other side. This should, though, be a clarifying experience for me. Our finances now are such that it's not so important for Sky to even, or at least foreseeably, be made into a movie, and so I should be able to follow my original~~ly~~ instincts--which I put aside on account of Sadwith's proven track record and ready availability; if the contract had been decent, all would've been fine--and not ~~talk~~ talk to would-be moviemakers unless they've got serious money and will option for a reasonably short time, as happened with Sea Runners.

Linda Bierds came for crab supper with us last night--Syd is in LA visiting her father--and had a grand story of ~~her~~ triumph at the New Yorker. The last batch of poems she submitted to Alice Quinn there were all turned down, including one about Brancusi that~~z~~ Linda had thought might be taken. A few days ago, a phone call from Alice Quinn: We've come to our senses, she said, about the Brancusi poem--is it still available? It turned out that Alice had wanted to tout to Linda's editor at Holt, Marion Wood, some young poet in need of notice, and so had called Marion, in the course of which Marion said, Have you seen that Brancusi poem of Linda's, it's just terrific. Alice hemmed something about not being sure she's seen it (this side of the conversation filled in by Marion's phone call to Linda about an hour after Alice's to Linda) and so Marion said, Oh, I'll send it right over, you've got to see it. When she did see it, for the second time, Alice realized it was too good to let pass. Literary landmark~~z~~ in Linda's career, first time she's been called and asked for a poem.

Let's see, what else. Carol redirected some of the investments we inherited from Frank's estate and put the sum into 1,000 shares of Nordstrom--said she's always wanted to do that--which responded by shooting up 5 points.

Sept. 14--Back at drafting on the Mariah ms, ch. 3 now, the last big one; rough day y'day of gearing back into it, but today was better, some ideas came. Carol is utterly right; this ms takes on life when I have the characters in session with each other.

Quickly, very quickly, a bit of what's been going on:

--So far this week I've more or less dealt with the perpetual House of Sky movie negotiation (Sadwith now wants to see the Sea Runners contract to judge whether he can go for a Sky deal similar to it; Marsh is exploring with HBJ whether he--Marsh--can go ahead and frame the kind of deal I need on that basis); ~~xxxx~~ Sea Runners p'back rights (told Liz OK on Penguin's offer of \$7500-- I get half, Atheneum half--to renew if it can be for less than the 7 yrs they asked for, and if a phone call is made to Harper & Row first, to test their interest); and the goddamn plumber, whom I encountered for the first time in the flesh when I dropped by to leave a note asking whether he's going to get the noise out of the pipes or should I get somebody else and bill him accordingly--he and his workmen will be here next Tues., he doesn't want his name on anything that isn't right; sure, you bet.

--C and I got away to ~~the~~ Dungeness Spit, 1st night at Hill Haus in Pt. Angeles and the next at Juan de Fuca cabin, on the 5th and 6th. Utterly gorgeous weather, as it's been ever since--fine warm Indian summer. We managed 3 hikes on the Spit. I also managed to gimp up my back again, I guess from ~~the~~ sleeping on it wrong at the J de F. Was truly stove up by the time we got home, had to call Gp Health, get anti-inflammation pills, begin hanging by ~~the~~ my hands even more and laying on floor with legs up at right angle, etc. Am better now, somewhat to my surprise.

--Entertained last night, Trudy and Howard Forbes here for salmon supper, in thanks for their offer to us to use their Mt. Rainier cabin. Howard, a gentle soul, told me of an even gentler friend of his in WWII, a man who himself never swore, who once heard Patton exhort his troops against the Germans, "kill the men and fuck the women."

Sept. 14 cont.--Finally, the worst news, I think from Labor Day; Paul Ringer died in Australia, only a week or so after he'd been diagnosed with cancer. He must have been in his mid-70's, second oldest in that family after my mother. I simply had never thought of him as near the end of his life, and C and I had some thoughts of traveling to Australia, seeing him again, sometime in the next few years.

Sept. 22--A week of spinning it out of my guts, in Stegner's ineffable phrase. Got the needed 16 pp., y'day's vital 4 through a headache that clamped harder and harder (the white reminder slip here at my eye edge: Anybody can write on a good day), and some of this week's work seems among the most inventive yet in the book--Leona studying Russian, for ex, and Riley's Song of Solomon column, which is about as sophisticated a 400-word piece as I can (or probably should) do. So, okay, slam away at it like this until Thanksgiving and I'm going to have a book or damn near.

Am hoping, probably vainly, some of the chore aggravations around the edge of life will wane now. I spent considerable time, effort and fuming this week, and some earlier weeks, trying to get plumbing contractor Gene Johnson back here to rid us of the banging in the new pipes he put in for us, last April. They've about driven us nuts, ping and whanging for a couple of hrs every night while we're trying to go to sleep, and after Johnson half-assedly simply kept throwing his junior plumbers at the problem, 5 or 6 times, last night he finally came, diagnosed, and either solved or palliated the problem with expansion joints at either end of the hot water pipe from the kitchen to the bathroom--it turns out that copper pipes, touted to us by Johnson's right hand man for longevity etc., expand and contract more than galvanized ones and that's what we've been hearing.

C, bless her, took that ~~round~~ round with the plumber and sent me to hear Bill Kittredge and Annick Smith read in the U Bookstore Series last night. You just never know: Bill was reading from his Hole in the Sky ms, the final chapter about his friendship and drinking delirium

Sept. 22 cont.--with Ray Carver and as he went along he looked down into us of the audience and realized Ray's first wife was there looking up at him. Said he did some quick ~~substitution~~ editing on himself, but actually it's a loving piece on Carver, and the ex-wife came up emotionally to Bill afterward. One dynamite says-it-all line Bill has in the piece: once when he was visiting Carver in Cupertino and they each, each were going thru a quart of vodka a day, they one afternoon went into a liquor store to stock up and the clerk took a look at them and said, "Jesus Christ, are you guys together?"

Life is real and earnest, far beyond frets about plumbing problems. As we were saying goodbye last night, Annick suddenly asked me, "Did you hear about Bevis and Juliette?" I shook my head, instantly half-sick afraid of what I was going to hear, ~~how~~ because C and I had talked about, worried about, the risks of the adventurous Far Eastern trip they've been on. But it was infinitely worse than that: Juliette's daughter Sarah Crump killed herself. Bill and Juliette had to be found in Fiji, be given the news; they came back, stayed with Jim and Lois, and have since resumed what they'd interded in Japan, the right thing, try to go on. Sarah was 22, a mercurial black-haired little girl when we stayed with Bill and Juliette during the Who Owns the West conference in May '79, and I worked on ~~her~~ Winter Bros in her room, looking down onto the lawn where Bill was reading This House of Sky, daytime hours while Sarah was in school. She was a precocious pianist then, and became precocious at other artistic tries afterward, but never as good as she wanted to be at any, from reports we heard. I last saw her ~~when~~ 2 years ago when I was signing Rascal Fair at the U of Montana bookstore, and she came by and talked, lively, someone whom I would have thought had everything to live for.

Oct. 5--Last week was such a brutal stretch of work-- I wrote fresh pp. on Monday, used Tuesday to reorganize file cards, and so had to whale the necessary 25 edited pp. out of myself in ~~three~~ the remainder three days-- that I've tried to step back and take a breath of sanity's air this week. Deliberately took y'day, Wednesday, completely off, by going up to hike Ebey's Landing (saw one bald eagle and two constantly windriding hawks, one of them occasionally folding his wings in and making a brief bullet dive to new location) and then reading nonwork stuff after I got home. Stopped at C-Fresh to bring home salmon steaks, which with Shoreline's salmon bake at lunch today means two of the Doigs' last three meals have been salmon. This morning, managed to do the requisite 5 pp. of editing/rewriting--leaving me then afternoon to contemplate mail and clip Gt. Falls papers, a chore I'm groaning under--without half-killing myself, and if I can keep up this pace that produces 5,000 pretty close to publishable words per week, until about Thanksgiving, I should have the book about whipped.

Monday, had lunch with Marshall Nelson and went over his try at a Sky movie contract ~~with~~ to send to Sadwith. We worked out that he'd limit my indemnity to amt of \$\$ I received from contract, and would tell S'with no turnaround fee is possible--Jesus Christ, that amounts to a money back guarantee, to this guy who stands to make probably 95% of the money if the movie ever gets done--and will make the point that we're not willing to dicker much.

Weather turned, somewhat, y'day; Monday and Tuesday, C and I had the spectacular pleasure of flopping in lounge chairs in the sun in October, a bit of each afternoon.

I don't get much about the world into these entries, but history is happening as plainly as I've ever been aware of it--the hemorrhaging of the Communist regimes in eastern Europe. The East Germans bailing out to the West have been an astounding drama, people leaving their entire

lives heretofore behind them, handing the keys to their abandoned cars to reporters outside the West German embassy in Prague.

11 Oct.--10:30 and I've already put in a day and will put in at least one more, today. C and I woke up about 3, got up a little after 3:30, so I was in here editing ms before 5 this morning. This afternoon I fly to Spokane, get picked up and taken to Coeur d'Alene for my reading tonight to the Western Literature Association, when I'll get their career award. Have just listened to and gone over the remarks and reading again, and feel decently set for performance, if the logistics don't get crazy; I hated to do it, but I had to write back to WLA prez Barbara Meldrum and ask her to scotch her plan to take me and the WIA biggies to a floating restaurant before my speech tonight--no boat rides, please.

Did strong days of editing, polishing really, on 1st chapter of Mariah, Monday and Tuesday. Y'day afternoon Elizabeth Simpson came and questioned me for the sake of revising her dissertation; I think she's done an exemplary job--consider myself lucky to have had such a commonsensical yet insightful person doing this--but her advisor wants to know what theories--of history and Christ knows what else--I write out of, so I tried to frame an explanation that I'm not very theoretical that might be swallowable by him.

Things are going well, I think, though both C and I have shoulders to heavy wheels this week. Her Western lit course seems to be soaring. One of her star students is Jean Ferrill, wife of Art Ferrill of UW history dept., and before Jean gave her bio report on Stegner this week she asked her 11-year-old daughter what to do when she got up in front of the class. The advice: don't hide your face behind the paper, don't mumble, and don't put your hands in your mouth.

12 Oct, Coeur d'Alene - Bering. Last night's reading of the March gringly scene did everything I could have wanted. I was on beam, performing about as well as I can - maybe the best sense of pace I've yet done - and the auditorium & mike setup at N. Idaho College were 1st-rate; plus, a respectable audience, 3-400 - lots of townspeople as well as WLA members - and great good comments & requests to sign books, after. Then had a couple of drinks in hotel bar with K. H. Hodge, Annick, Ron McFarland of U. of Idaho & Bob Wrigley & Mary Chairman Blew, just-rate company all. Maybe helped by the fact we're all parking parking along, books in. offing - Mary was signed up by Don Frank at Viking for her books of essays, & when I asked her about delayed short story collection held up by Compliance Press's woes with the failed distributor, Mary said she & Jim Hepworth, who runs Comp/ice, had just looked at cover possibilities, Jim wanted to reject them all, & Mary inimitably said no, see this one. Probably the only time in publishing history the publisher passed & moaned about cover art & writer said, hey, good enough, let's go with it. Bob Wrigley, whom I like immensely, has a poetry ms at Illinois, titled

Oct. 12 cont. - What My Father Believed; said his father is a New Deal Democrat who lately, at age 66, has found he's repulsed by what American society has become. Bob also has the oddest honorific job, this Friday, I've heard of: he flies back to Lewiston from here for part of that day to read sonnet he wrote for dedication of Lewis-Clark College's new library.

15 Oct.--Coeur d'Alene has come and gone, so has Mark Wyman, and so has much else, this past week. The Idaho trip went splendidly at that end--Thursday interviews by Greg Morris of Penn State/Erie and young reporter for the C d'A paper both went fine, and I got acquainted with Patty ~~Limerick~~ Nelson Limerick by mooching a ride to the Spokane airport with her and Sue Armitage--and was marred only by having to spend more than an hour and a half in the Shuttle Express airport van, getting home from SeaTac. Traffic was tied up in downtown Seattle, really from Boeing Field north to I don't know where, from 6:30 that night to 7:30, and while our van driver managed to bail ~~out~~ us out of it over Beacon Hill and eventually across Montlake, his fine-tuning of finding our addresses wasn't as good as his general strategy. Traffic is becoming the utter bane of this region. The next morning, when Pat McClatchey was to swing in--coming down from Mt. Vernon--on 175th and pick Mark up to take him to the WHA meeting in Tacoma, he hit a traffic jam as early as Everett and ultimately could not cut one lane to the right to get off at 175th, eventually managing at 145th and circling back, 35 min. late; and then it was solid traffic all the way to Southgate on their Tacoma trip.

Enjoyed Mark's visit. Like our mentor Carstensen, he has a knack for anecdote, and my favorite of several was from his trip to Poland for research on his returned emigrants book, when a Polish historian friend guided him into an archive for some specific papers and they were

15 Oct. cont.--met by a broadbeamed babushka sitting at a desk and vigorously repeating a phrase over and over to them. Mark had learned to say prosha, Polish for thank you, and so politely met each assertion of hers with prosha, prosha; meanwhile his Polish friend Adam, he noticed, was speaking rather forcefully to the woman, and at last she let them in to the papers they wanted. Mark asked Adam just what she'd been saying. Adam reported it was: "Fuck off! Fuck off!"

On another front, we none too intentionally bought into the plunging stock market on Friday, when QFC stock we'd been mulling dropped below 30, and with a cashed-in CD in our checking account, I told the Piper Jaffray broker to buy us 1,000. Monumentally impressed with ourselves that we at least have a chance of buying low, today we tried for another 200 shares of BellSouth if it dropped--it didn't--or yet another 300 of QFC if it goes below 27½, which it hadn't by a day's end. For the first time in our lives, C and I feel we have enough money ahead to try spread it out a little ~~in~~ where it might make some more.

19 Oct.--Earthquakery: night of the 17th, C and I listened to the first 10 minutes or so of NPR news, then switched it off to talk over Sadwith's lawyers' latest stab at a Sky movie deal--with luck, that deal-that-would-not-die finally has a stake through its heart and is vanishing; more about that in a bit--and then met Ann and Marshall Nelson for our monthly dinner at the Wok: they walked in with news of the 5:04 p.m. San Francisco earthquake, concern for Marsh's sister and bro-in-law in the Bay Area, etc. (Turned out okay; the bro-in-law ordinarily drives the Highway 880 section where people were killed, but that day took a bus home a little early.) We watched some of the TV coverage when we got home from the Wok, and again last night after supper (NPR did a fine job during supper). ABC was miles better than the other 2 networks, though even they--during Koppel, Tues. night--switched away too often to talking heads instead of piggybacking on their KGO affiliate's news people delving through the damage areas.

The quake has an oddly pertinent resonance with my Mariah work, as I've long had in that ms Jick's concerns

19 Oct. cont.--about Mariah following Riley to California, and maybe as early as last year I wrote Jick's scornful line to Riley, "We'll count up after the earthquake." Now that one has happened during the calendar of the book, I'll need to have the characters react to the quake news.

Earthquake news and 190-point drops of the stock market aside, C and I are laboring tooth and nail. I worked over the entire Holiday Inn wedding scene, about 5500 words, the first 3 days of this week, did another 1000-word revise in the Billings section today, will do another tomorrow in the Ekalaka section, besides much other general coping, and even as I write, Carol is ironing, after having done her coursework for tomorrow.

The Sadwith non-deal: Marshall N. did a brilliant job of working over the contract that HBJ and Sadwith's lawyers had hammered and tonged out, but couldn't conclude, so after S's legal beagles saw our try, as Marsh put it they accepted all our changes except what really counted. Those were three things I've been determined to be ironbound about: S's turnaround clause, which I regard as simply a money-back guarantee from me to him--any money he'd put into this deal, which after all has been his idea rather than mine, would have to be repaid to him even after a failed attempt by him before I'd be free to deal with somebody else; indemnity limited, on my side, to the total amount I'd have received from the deal; and a flat 5-year period from signing to finished movie, or the rights revert to me. The Sadwith team's junior lawyer, whom I've taken to calling Kiss of Death Stuhlberg--he was the one who caused me to call off the deal, the HBJ version, the first time by slapping in a bunch of boilerplate clauses giving ~~me~~ Sadwith the right to collect damages from me before even having to try suing HBJ--reappeared in these negotiations with Marsh, and thus none of the 3 crucial points got settled anywhere close to my satisfaction; the Sadwithers insisted on a turnaround clause (they just went deaf when Marsh pointed out he'd negotiated an earlier movie contract with no turnaround clause with Columbia Pictures and Robert Redford), and on 5-yrs to

19 Oct. cont.--principal photography after the option periods, which immediately stretches it out to a 9-yr deal again, and their offer to smooth over my indemnity-limit concerns by including me in the general insurance package against lawsuits didn't really smooth with me as it wasn't clear what restrictions and loopholes the insurance company would then want. In short, the Hollywood notion of what's needed to make a book into a movie and the Seattle/Montana/writerly notion of not wanting to risk everything we've got on a goddamn deal which ~~the~~ Sadwith came to us with, just don't jibe. I really have no quarrel with Jim Sadwith, who seems a perfectly competent scriptwriter--although as I've said in exasperation to Marsh and HBJ, he ain't Sir Robert Goddamn Bolt, is he--but I truly do hope he and his law warriors have taken this as a final no; if Sadwith calls me again, as he did last time, to say how much he wants to make Sky into a movie, I guess I'll have to point out to him we don't get everything we want in life.

8 Nov.--The kind of day it's been: at 9:40 this morning, Montana's centennial closed, the moment of statehood news in 1889; I was so blearily slogging away at the Mariah ms, ridden with the flu or whatever I've had for the past ten days, that the time went by me an hour or so before I ever noticed.

23 Nov.--Thanksgiving, and a great bracing of my mood. Tuesday I finished the final chapter of Mariah, "Dawn Articulating," and while I have an eastern Montana gap of 25-50 pp. to fill in by Christmas, I'm at last at the point in the manuscript where I can dab and polish, scan and tweak. Spent all day y'day happily at that, and even did some this morning; zingier dialogue and ways to make the story flow come to mind a lot easier at this stage.

This kind of finishing-it-at-last-by-God mood is even more mesmeric than my customary immersion in writing, and so it's vague what has happened lately that ought to be caught up on here. Certainly one of the best things C and I have done lately is taking ourselves to the Juan de Fuca Cottages over her Vets' Day weekend; steady rain when we got there Fri., on thru Sat., and

23 Nov. cont.--Sunday was brilliantly clear and windless, perfect on Dungeness Spit. Here at the desk, in the biz, the phone has been ringing increasingly. Carol Barnard, Emmett Watson's former Girl Friday for his column, now runs a speakers' bureau and was sounding me out about talking to some local club; asking about topics--i.e., whether I only talk about writing--she said, for instance, "Emmett has several different titles but they're always the same talk." In that same realm of local newspaper dwarfism, Jim King called a couple of times this week, wanting me to be on a panel for a Washington Literacy shindig (told him nope) and failing that, how about donating a book, but in the course of it he said he owes me an apology. How's that, ask I. Well, when he was editor of the Seattle Times, Jim got an inquiry I sent in about possibly doing something on a regular basis in the Sunday magazine and he routed it off and it came back to him about a year later--and his apology now was for never getting back to me. That must have been fully a dozen or fifteen years ago.

On the more orderly side (I hope) has been Larry Schneider's engineering of an invitation for me to speak at his school, UCal at Northridge, next spring. Since Larry thinks they can pay a couple of thousand bucks (albeit no expenses) C and I think we'll do it, make a spring break trip to southern Calif. and take some desert country out of it. I'm trying to be excruciatingly careful about what I commit myself to, in the year ahead, needing to squirrel away time to retool this office, do some thinking toward Son of House of Sky, and ease off on myself a little. Can't remember if I noted this, but recently I turned down Patty Nelson Limerick on a U. of Colorado conference she would have built specifically on Sky and my keynote talk--how towns and people can live beyond birth and boom--i.e., into the normal cycle of maturity and old age--in the West. Luckily, people are a bit charmed or at least impressed to find somebody who'll tell 'em no; when I told Patty I just felt I physically have to slack up a bit, then asked how her own work is going, she said: "I'm sitting here thinking, can I learn something from this experience?"

Nov. 23 cont.--On the other hand, somebody evidently not at all charmed to hear "No" was Sadwith and his legal beagles; Marshall and I have checked with each other, and neither of us heard so much as a "screw you" from the Hollywooders when we mixed Sky flick.

So, an improved outlook for me, now that I seem to be over the hump, without yet being over the hill, on the Mariah book. And today should be especially fine. Fourteen friends on their way here, in 2 hours, for Thanksgiving feast.

27 Nov.--In Prague, crowds have been jangling their keychains and calling them "the last bells of communism." What a time this has been, the Berlin Wall breached, the politburos falling like dominoes. Bush and gang don't seem to have a clue what to do in the future, but the possible benefit of that is that they may not get in the way of what the East European populaces are managing to do. Doing it, too, in the face of what happened in Tienanmen Square. Impossible to tell what all is being set loose, in this reBalkanization, but for now it's also impossible not to be thrilled for ~~for~~ those people shrugging off the gray old apparatchiks.

Began today on the mass of notes, blue sheets etc. which need to become the Big Dry section of Mariah, maybe as much as 60 pp., by Xmas. Am going to try to average 4 pp./day, rough combination of editing 2 and inventing 2. Am at the point of the book where I more or less keep working through the weekend--although I hope to Christ not every weekend--without particularly feeling the strain, because the touching-up such as I did on the ms Sat. and Sun. is really quite pleasant to do.

Thanksgiving: good but not great, but we'll gladly settle for good. Tony Angell and Susan Fahy, Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan, Mark and Lou Damborg, Jack Gordon for a couple of hours, Linda Sullivan and Buff Wainwright, Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist and Norm's daughter Christina, Phil DiMece and Marian Biscay up from Bend--I think that was the total. The line of

27 Nov. cont.--the day was Susan's; after she'd been here a couple of hours, she came into the kitchen where C and I were checking the turkey and shyly said, "I found this whipped cream in my purse," pulling out a pint carton. Everyone seemed magnificently congenial, as they somehow tend to do at our Thanksgivings, and Tony was superb, responding with wonderful lore when Mark asked him something about the spotted owl/timber controversy; amid his remarks and telling us details of birds and habitats, Tony commented that he regards humankind as a blip in the evolutionary process, and C said afterward that's exactly the kind of perspective our Th'giving bunch, which tends to run a little heavily to social workers perpetually working on their own social frets, needed. She said too, something I hadn't seen, that it's a good idea to have at least one "performer" amid our considerably unostentatious friends, as Dixie Canfield has pepped things up for us a time or two and as Tony did this year.

16 Dec.--Yesterday, mid-month and mid-afternoon, I finished the full draft of the Mariah ms. The last haul, which went on for the past couple of weeks, was the characters' roving of eastern Montana from ~~the~~ the Judith Basin in a loop around to Billings--about 75 pp, in what seemed a staggering number of scenes as I put it together. Was wearily apprehensive when I finished it, but C found it reads perfectly well, and in looking back over it this morning a bit it looks okay to me too. It'll take some time to sink in, to rev me down, but the Doigs are about to begin a new era, the first 6 books--and most of all, this decade-long work on the trilogy--behind us now.

22 Dec.--Gearing down--or up?--toward Christmas and our weekend trip to Portland. Mercifully the going-over of the 1st ch. of Mariah took only the 1st 3 days of this wk instead of every damn breath of it, and so I am starting to decelerate from the deadline pace. Unless I find something radically misdne in chs. 2-3-4, I'm okay now getting Mariah off to NY by mid-Feb., and possibly before. Also am pleased at how this book seems to zing along. Last night I read around a little in the opening scenes of

22 Dec. cont.--English Creek and Rascal Fair and I honest to God think this one moves better, defter. It also seems to edit up spiffily--a lot of good language already, ~~in~~ sentence by sentence, and a few lines of dialogue or description or rumination by Wick deepen the resonance where needed.

Am just off the phone with Lee Goerner, who C and I find is a different personality, vastly more relaxed and funny, now that he's trudged barefoot over the coals of his 1st year at Atheneum and has his own list of books in prospect.

31 Dec.--Came into this decade by handing in the manuscript of Winter Brothers to Carol Hill in NY and wondering what she or anybody else would think of it, and I go out of it with Winter Brothers being used in college courses and four novels achieved since.

Doubtless some of the same symptoms in my life now as then; waking up earlier and earlier--the past month or two, I usually am awake at 3:30, get up abt 4--as the ms work plays me out and into bed by 8:30 or 9 each night. Will wean myself away from this, at least somewhat, in the new year with Books on Tape to lengthen the evenings and some back care to see if I can get rid of the ache that brings me awake. And the gutwork the writing ever wants; this past week I hoped the opening scenes of ch. 2 of Mariah would need only light going-over and instead I had to slam away intensely, Tuesday through ~~Thurs~~ Saturday, to get them paced and textured to match ch. 1. C did an invaluable editing read for me y'day, finding three grafts of landscape description to unplug and speed the narrative along. And on Friday I apple-juiced with Linda Biersds (we always ask for cider, we're always told they only have apple juice) at our reliably mediocre meeting place, the College Inn, and got her two good suggestions--blessedly small handleable ones--on the book's final scene. There's still a stiff month of looking-over, checking, etc. ahead, but the one virtue of this week of exertion is that I didn't fall behind, am now where I have to be in the schedule of making this baby dance.

Lots of riffles under the bridge since I managed to do anything remotely resembling regular diary entries. 1989 has quicksilvered into either 1789 or 1848, the brittle

31 Dec.--old regimes of Eastern Europe falling apart one after the other under the push of crowds in the squares. The emblematic Beckett died a few days ago, precisely as events sounded more and more as if he was writing them: before the Rumanians shot the Ceausescus on Christmas Day, they evidently jailed them for three days in an armored car constantly on the move; at the trial when the prosecutor for the revolution--more likely the coup d'etat--asked Elena C'cu what she knew about the "genocide" of the repressive shootings, Nicolae C'cu burst out on her behalf, "Her scientific papers were published abroad!" The ultimate description I've read of Rumania's morass is utterly Beckettian, Kunderan, Havelian, too: "To live as they live is not to be living....So when the spark fell, they were off." Whatever comes next, it has been exhilarating, majestic, to see people topple those governments. And now, even more nakedly than when Reagan was doddering through eight years, this country is the one with the aging apparatchiks trying to run things.

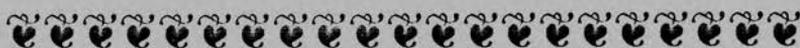
C and I, at least, are thriving. Going up to Molly and Phil Cook's bed-and-b'fast place at Padilla Bay tonight for New Year's out of the house. Portland at Christmas served us wonderfully, both of us relaxed and rejuvenated after those couple of days lounging in the Heathman, eating the terrific food there, strolling Portland. Craig Lesley and Kathy Stavrakis had supper with us the 23rd, both of them mellowing out visibly during the evening as they recuperated from houseful of kids and relatives. Craig's agent is touting a move to Fisketjon at Atlantic Press for his next book, in hope of more push, which Craig is thinking over; at least he seems in more stable editorial hands at Houghton Mifflin now, after losing 2 editors in about a year, by Marc Jaffe taking him on. Next day, Xmas Eve, Bill and Dorothy Stafford came in from Lake Oswego for lunch with us at the Heathman. I'd hesitated to ask them, because of the Xmas Eveness factor, and because we didn't know what their holiday mood could possibly be after the suicide of their son earlier this year, but decided they could do the deciding about whether

Dec. 31 cont.--they wanted to come. They did, very much, and we had a wonderful time. Both Staffords are as charming as kittens, and it was my first real chance to talk shop with Bill, and for that matter him with me. When I asked his work schedule, it turns out he writes for an hour or so first thing every morning, I think before breakfast, and when I wondered if he keeps a notebook or journal for seed, he said no, what he does is to process the preceding day there in that morning session. He mentioned, for instance, having walked his daughter's guest dog that morning and noticing how the dog would dreamily hold a position, as if mulling; and probably that detail will come into a daily poem. I can see both the benefit and the pitfall of Bill's way of working. The review of the day before always provides fresh material, something to work on. The pitfall is that what it provides is incidental, not the major questions (such as Linda Bierds' quite deliberate and I think intellectually brave journal workings on matters such as the ordering of chaos) and the very dailiness of the poetry-writing produces maybe too many poems instead of fewer, stronger ones. There's more I hope to ask Bill--he's to teach at Centrum this summer and said maybe we could get together again then--such as the structure(s) he puts into that daily writing-of-a-poem; if I've heard this right, Bill was not a fan of Dick Hugo's "letter" poems, which would seem to me just the same kind of effort to make a poems happen. I incidentally asked Bill how he met Dick and he said it was when Dick invited him to teach a stint at U. of Montana.

Maybe 3 weeks ago, the piquant experience--20 years after my own dissertation defense, a couple of hundred yards away on that campus--of attending Elizabeth Simpson's Ph.D. defense that I was the topic of. I think it was Dick Dunn's idea for me to come, and I gradually divined that Elizabeth wanted me to, so I elbowed the schedule by doing that day's writing on the weekend and went. Elizabeth did well, certainly well enough; dawned on me, watching her confront tablefull of middle-aging males anointed with tenure, some of the odds a woman is

Dec. 31 cont.--up against in academia. Not that anybody on this committee was out to get her, at all. Her supervising prof, Mark Patterson, seemed very proud of her, and Dick Dunn chipped in on her behalf once when a circuitous question had been asked. I tried not to say too much but enough to help out occasionally, as when Elizabeth had to try make her case that my work doesn't seem to fit the standard critical theories; there I chipped in about my reasoning that I don't use irony because people don't live in irony, they live in earnest, and also backed her up by talking about the sense of folk poetry I get from checking things out with people actually doing jobs, such as Mike Madel the bear mover telling me about "darting off" grizzlies with tranquilizer gun. Outside during the pro forma vote of approval on her, I told Elizabeth at least she didn't fuck up as badly as Hal Simonson, who in a question about western writing was trying to cite Day of the Locust as an example of--and there got stuck for the word, growing redder and more labored as he tried to think of it rather than paraphrase, while the rest of us sat and watched him struggle for it; I finally suggested "apocalyptic," and he said yes, that was close, and managed to go on--it turned out "eschatological" was what he'd been trying to come up with. Sorry for Hal, but it did take heat off Elizabeth, right enough.

And what else. Supper the other night at Bella Luna with Tony Angell and Susan Fahey, at which, C and I having invited them, I found I'd left my wallet at home when I changed pants and Tony dug out his checkbook; am about to write him a thank you note saying C and I figure we'd save some real money by inviting him out every night.



**PUBLIC
READ-OUT**

from Salman Rushdie's

***THE
SATANIC
VERSES***

Thursday, March 9, 1989, 7:00 P.M.
Scottish Rite Temple
1155 Broadway Avenue East

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PROGRAM

Program chair: Mike Siegel

Welcome: Sue Davidson, Mike Siegel

Greetings from PEN American Center: Ivan Doig

Excerpts from *The Satanic Verses*:

Murray Morgan
John Gilbert
Roger Sale
Anthony Lee
Rebecca Wells
Stefan Rowney
Jim Altoff

Charles R. Johnson
Jane Adams
Marilyn Stablein
Rose MacHardy
Richard Wiley
Eric LaGuardia
Sally Kilkeny

In solidarity:

David Bosworth
Chris Brecher
Meridyth Burnett
Linda Clifton
Catherine Commerford
Faith Conlon
Katherine Hanson
Cathy Hillenbrand
Carolyn Wright

Tom Lockwood
Chuck Meyer
Ginny NiCarthy
Niko Popov
Elizabeth Schilling
David Shields
Sandi Sonnenfeld
Sara van den Berg

Freedom of Expression Round Table:

Chair: Alex Gottfried

Participants: Sue Madden, Dan Levant,
Richard Labunski

Audience questions and comments will be invited at the conclusion of the round-table presentation.

Endorsing groups:

American Civil Liberties Union of Washington, Elliott Bay Book Company, The Literary Center, Network of Editors and Writers of the University of Washington, Open Hand Publishing, Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association, *Poetry Exchange*, The Real Comet Press, Red & Black Books, The Seal Press, University Book Store, University of Washington Press, Washington Coalition against Censorship, Washington Library Association

Special thanks to Scottish Rite Temple, KING Broadcasting Company, The Seal Press, and the numerous volunteers whose assistance made this event possible.

FIRST AMENDMENT

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; of abridging the freedom of speech or the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

my remarks at Public Read-Out for Salman Rushdie, 9 March '89

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I've asked to speak tonight as a member of PEN, an international organization of poets, playwrights, essayists, editors and novelists, that works to defend literary freedom around the world. I'll be reading the statement issued by PEN American Center, ^{and} excerpts from three of the writers who spoke out at the PEN-sponsored meeting of ~~writers~~ support for the rights of Salman Rushdie, and indeed of us all, in New York on the twenty-second of February--and ^{will} close with a brief comment of my own, as a citizen and a writer.

On behalf of its 2,200 members, PEN American Center issued the following statement:

"We express the gravest concern over this most extreme form of intimidation, the sentence of death which the Ayatollah Khomeini has declared against Salman Rushdie and his publishers. We understand that many members of the Muslim community are outraged by the reputation and rumors of The Satanic Verses, which they deem blasphemous, and we believe that they have every right to peacefully express their deeply felt reactions to this or any other literary work. We protest, however, in the strongest possible terms, all limitations on freedom of expression: be it the banning of books, the burning of books, and particularly the issuing of death threats against writers. We condemn the extreme action of attempting to silence through execution a writer who is exercising his internationally recognized right to freedom of expression."

biographer

Here are the words of Robert Caro:

The heart of the controversy... is, of course, freedom of speech and expression, the freedom in the case of writers of fiction to imagine, the freedom in the case of writers of non-fiction to empathize and re-create, to conceptualize-- to think, bound only by the limits imposed by our own limitations.

...The issue raised by the Salman Rushdie controversy strikes at the very heart not only of authors' rights, but of Americans' rights to read what they want. It strikes, in a way, at the very heart of the liberties supposedly guaranteed by our Constitution.

We were taught that if a book truly succeeded in casting light on the human condition, it would endure. Reviewers might criticize it, controversies might rage about it, but readers could read and judge it for themselves. If the book succeeded in its aim -- and the aim of all books worthy of enduring is basically ~~at heart~~ the same, to cast light on the human condition -- it would endure, for it was there to be read.

Now, suddenly, a book is not there to be read. That issue is not going to go away.

Next, an excerpt from novelist Norman Mailer:

We are scribblers, who try to explore what is left to look at in the interstices. Sometimes we make mistakes and injure innocent victims by our words. Sometimes we get lucky and make people with undue worldly power a bit uncomfortable for a short time... But now the Ayatolla Khomeini has offered us an opportunity to regain our frail religion which happens to be faith in the power of words and our willingness to suffer for them.

A serious book which may or may not have been irresponsible in part, as most serious books are--I cannot pretend to define the issue more closely since I, I fear, in company with the people issuing the death threats, have not yet read it, although I certainly intend to--yes, this serious yet possibly irresponsible contribution to serious literature, if it had been treated like other serious novels which are almost always in part sacrilegious, blasphemous, and secretly against the state, would, if it had encountered no formal outrage, have

suffered the fate of other serious books. It would have received good, even hearteningly good, but still modest sales, it would have been discussed, and taken its small place on the shelf of serious works to be picked up again by a few devoted readers.

This third excerpt is from Leon Wiseltier (Weasel Teer), literary editor of The New Republic:

In the midrash, Rabbi Simon ^{told} ~~tells~~ this story. When the hour approached for God to create man, the angels in heaven arranged themselves into factions. Some of them said: create him. Some of them said: do not create him. Kindness said: create him, for he will act kindly. Truth said: do not create him, for he is nothing but lies. Justice said: create him, for he will act justly. Peace said: do not create him, for he is nothing but strife. What did God do? He seized truth and hurled it to earth. *There Rabbi Simon's story ended.*

For opposing man, truth was punished with his company. Man cannot withstand truth, truth had argued; and so man set out to show that truth cannot withstand man. Man would lie, and show his power. Man would have power, and therefore lie. We are here today to denounce the power that preys upon truth.

But I believe that when truth fell to earth, there were men who gathered it up, who sheltered it, who took it into their keeping.

we, in the
 West, must not gloat. We must remember that Europe, too, was
~~once~~ ^{once} a stifled, theocratic, feudal, crusading society, that
 burned books and burned people. It was blasphemy that made
 us free. Two cheers, today, for blasphemy.

Sir Thomas

(11)

In the West, we read More and Milton and Galileo and Spinoza and Locke and Voltaire and Jefferson and Mill and Mann and Tucholsky and Koestler and Sakharov a little smugly, because they won. Glibly we attach a historical inevitability to the triumph of their spirit. We recognize the persecution of Salman Rushdie: the man of the word against the man of the Word, the power of the word against the power of the powers. We know all about the debt that democracy owes to heresy. But we forget, sometimes, that it did not have to be so. We forget, sometimes, that freedom was also ^{the} fruit of tragedy.

Let us be dogmatic about tolerance.

For we, the lucky ones, have been taught, at this late date

in the history of infamy, when even we needed the lesson,

that democracy has its martyrs, too. I pray that Salman

Rushdie does not become one of them.

Those words of Leon Weasel Teer conclude the PEN excerpts, and finally, briefly, these words of my own:

Those who would ban this book, whether by blackmailing its author with threats to his life or by turning their abuse against publishers and booksellers, would have us believe that the words between the covers of Salman Rushdie's novel are what is at issue. But the issue is entirely one word: free. To keep tyranny from infecting it, a society must declare that its people are free to read a book such as this, or free not to read it--but above all, free to have that choice. As Salman Rushdie's words go free here tonight at this gathering, so does the message that freedom is stronger than those who try to bully it.

Thank you.

University of Washington
Graduate School of Library &
Information Science FM-30
Seattle, Washington 98195
March 6, 1989

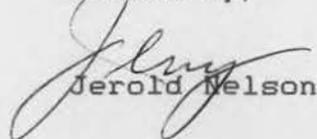
Ivan Doig
17021 10th Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan,

Can you guess the first thing that students said when we had the opportunity to discuss your visit? In suitably egocentric fashion, I suppose, their first remarks were something to the effect of "how nice to finally have had a speaker who appreciates librarians!" Once we got that out of the way, we had quite a useful discussion of the opportunities for providing service that grow from a patron who is seeking "discovery" of information not yet well defined, as well as the complications which can arise. I don't suppose that we arrived at any definitive answers, but I think we enhanced our appreciation of the role which professional judgement can play in such a situation.

Whatever we may have "learned" from the event, it was a rare pleasure to have shared the perspective of one who so deftly transmutes the inert elements of book-bound records into 24 karat filigrees of vivid life. This kind of encounter inspires all of us to tend carefully our accumulations of unassayed ore, apprentices patiently in wait for the visit of the sorcerer.

Cordially,


Jerold Nelson

CWA 1

Thank you, Barbara, and all of you. It means a lot to me to have a career/award from this group, because I'm pretty sure the WLA is more kindred to its literature and those who write it, than is any similar scholarly organization. You come up against, on your faculties and in your departments and classrooms, the same geographic fallacies that we and our books do--that "the West," in conjunction with literature, must mean the West Side of Manhattan Island, for instance. So, it's with a sense of talking with neighbors and professional kin, that I tell you that the thrust of your sessions and papers here--which I'm glad I'll be able to hear some of, at least tomorrow--is highly encouraging to those of us trying to make books about the West.

My remarks before reading from Martín at Western Literature Association, Coeur d'Alene, 11 Oct. '89

You bring passion and common sense to the study of our work, and as my Montanan father would have said, by God, you just ~~can~~ can't beat that.

Barbara asked if, /before I do tonight's reading, /I'd care to say a few minutes' worth about my views on writing, and yes, I would.

pause

It is my utter belief/that writers of caliber can ground their work in specific land and lingo and yet be writing of that larger country, life. Specific geographies, but galaxies of imaginative expression--we've seen them both exist in William Faulkner's postage-stamp size Yoknapatawpha County, and in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's nowhere village of Macondo, dreaming in its Hundred Years of Solitude.

In my view, we're seeing this more and more strongly in the universe of fiction--around the world, writer upon writer whose work, at first glance, seems to be far away from the self-appointed literary capitals--such as New York, London, Paris, the usual suspects--but in fact their work has moved the central powers of fiction to where they are. They're far too many to list here now, these writers who have originated in what the major metropolitan conglomerations of the world would consider to be the outback, the far corners, the back pockets of the planet, the edge of the world.

But what's going on out there--and I hope, out here--is a style of rich, chance-taking fiction. For a generation or so, the U.S. literary fashion has been "show, don't tell." Depict your characters and their surroundings, while forswearing that old literary demon Rhetoric. Thank God, no such advice ever reached Shakespeare. Nor Thomas Keneally in Australia--nor Nadine Gordimer in South Africa, nor Trinidad-born V.S. Naipaul, / the world class of writers who have shown us in such vivifying novels as *The Playmaker* and *A Sport of Nature* and *A Bend in the River* that it is possible to write fiction with character as well as characters.

While experimental fiction in this country has been nearsightedly eating its own tail, and minimalism has been yawning in condescension toward people who have to shop at the K Mart instead of Banana Republic, show-and-tell has been occurring in world literature and, guess what, the old grade school dictum is still valid--we can learn fresh wonders from the experiences of others.

The arrival of this new world class of writers I think has significant reverberations for those of us trying to write about the reaches of the American West. For one thing, they provide us the always useful reminder that we are not alone--that others too have faced landscapes dauntingly bigger than themselves, have come to terms with remoteness, have been tempered instead of broken by hard times. For another, it's notable that so many of these strong new "outback" writers come from former outposts of the British Empire, and their novels are skeptical of governance from afar--of the tendency for those on the geographical fringes to also end up with the thinnest shares of the society's wealth.

I'm only able to report to you how one writer ~~he~~ happens to be the one I know best, since I meet him in the mirror every morning ~~has~~ felt it valuable to be able to look around, on the geographical outskirts, and see how others have found their creative equilibrium. While I've been spending the 1980's tapping out a fictional trio of books that will give glimpses into my own created world of Montana during its first hundred years of statehood, it's been heartening to me to know of books such as The Book of Ebenezer Le Page, by G.B. Edwards, and Riddley Walker, by Russell Hoban, which push the language out into odd, eloquent corners of the world--the Isle of Guernsey, and post-Nuclear Holocaust England.

So, I look around at this end of the country, and beyond, and take heart that there's quite a bunch of us out here, out there, ^{writing} at our own centers of the universe, and they're not the ~~metropolises~~ metropolitan, polar centers; that there's a new kind of eloquence being created in fiction which is not just an eloquence of the West, but an eloquence of the edge of the world.