3 Jan. '91: At least trying to begin the year flexibly, we're about to go spur of the moment to Bellingham and lunch with Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist. Been a pretty morning, the Olympics in new snow washed in a sunrise rose light when I walked the park, and so we'll get out into it even if the weather does fade.

Social, social us. Last night we went to the Wok with Linda and Syd, traded tales of the snow week and talked about their forthcoming books—Syd's Katherine Mansfield book in March, Linda's book of poems Heart and Perimeter in Nov.; she's dropped the Cardinal Bellarmaine poem, added three, one about Chekhov visiting Sakhalin Island, one a short lyric poem with a girl who appears in two other poems in the book, and another I can't bring to mind; this is going to be a stunning book of work—and then the four of us went to see Dances With Wolves, which had terrific scenery and a really loopy plot. As Syd pointed out, the stereotypes have been absolutely flipped from the old Westerns; all the soldiers were brutes, all the Sioux virtuous (the audience clapped when the Indians ambushed the bluecoats). Among the four of us we also noted Kevin Costner's modern bathing-suit tanline in the scene where he's naked, his un-19th Century diction (Syd says he sounds like her college son Fred, slurry and offhand), the unrealistically winsome weather of the plains (never any wind! no thunderstorms!), how fast everyone recuperated from being slugged with gunbutts etc. and how instantly they healed from the resulting gore... and I entirely disagreed with the philosophy, or romantic view of nature or whatever the hell it was, of a central moment of the movie, when Costner keeps coaxing the wolf until it eats out of his hand. Made me want to shout out, Kevin, quit playing with that wolf. Put that wolf back where you found it. I.e., quit diminishing its wildness for your own fuzzyhearted little passing-the-time-on-the-lone-prairie. Although the movie has been liked and recommended by many of our friends, and I was glad to have seen it, for the buffalo scenes if nothing else, I ended up wondering is this the best Costner could do?

Have been sorting filecards, studying family pics, generally trying to gear up for a week of writing on Heart Earth next week. The week after, it's get ready
3 Jan. cont.--for Arizona; we intend to fly down on the 22nd.

This household brought in the New Year--i.e., the 1st--with an evening of stew C cooked, bread I baked with the ceramic breadpan/add-beer-mix she gave me for Xmas, and a bottle of Eyrie pinot noir from the McMinnville library gig last fall; classy, in every degree.

4 Jan.--Fine bright weather has continued. Got to B'ham at noon y'day, lunched with Ann and Norm--stew!--and walked the bayside park trails to the Fairhaven business district and back with them; we were home by 5. This morn went up to walk our park at sunrise, which is abt 8 a.m., and I have sorted away at pics and family mementoes while C has been on the phone arranging the Arizona plane trip, now to be on the 23rd so Ann McCartney can stay with us the night before and learn the house routines for her 3-nights-a-week housesitting while we're away. Weather's so nice, though chilly, we went outside after lunch and naps, I sawed up some of the fallen limbs the storms brought down.

11 Jan.--Now we wait for war. Tomorrow is Bush's trigger-happy deadline for Iraq to hand back Kuwait, and an awful uncertainty, I think the worst I can remember since the Cuban missile crisis, seems to be ahead. There is a feeling of this society coming apart--it all too plainly has been dilapidating throughout these Uncle Feelgood administrations of Reagan and Bush, more than a decade now, and war may bring real crashes, starting with the economy. I spent a lot of last week trying to jitter our finances into reasonable safety, and may yet regret that I simply didn't jerk everything out of banks and dump it into Treasury bills. I continue to have the nagging suspicion that I'm not imagining ahead direly enough... we shall see. It's not the style of Carol and me to talk things over incessantly, but we have mulled together, agreeing on the finances, bagging the Arizona trip--or at least the airplane version of it--if war begins to make things chaotic in this country, and what I suppose it comes down to with us is that wars come and wars go, but the best we can do is to try to lead our lives so that they are decent ounces of history.
15 Jan.—Slogged the scheduled 2 pp. of Heart Earth into accomplishment y'day—the 8 pp., week's worth, I calendared before we go to Arizona—and this morning have gone back to sorting filecards. This, it's clear one more time, is where I ought to be, in the head-land, the word-country, of books-to-be.

Pecanily: Probably cannot get transferred out of last fall's pocket notebook to here the more piquant details of the bookstore sessions, but while winnowing for lingo reminders I'd made to myself I came across this one: at the Bellevue U Book Store, a 30ish woman hesitantly asked if I could sign a Mariah to her father, and since she'd had a bit of difficulty in asking, I tried to put her at ease by inquiring, Oh, because he has some kind of Montana background? No, she answered, now near tears: Because I love him.

Afternoon, 15 Jan.: Here there has to be an exultation—arrival of the $90,000 Heart Earth check from Liz.

16 Jan., 10:30 a.m.—However dire the Persian Engulfment proves to be, I've approached it this way; turned on the radio at 6:30 as I began to make breakfast, found that the news is of troop movements by both sides but no carnage yet, have not checked back on the news and don't intend to until lunch or after. Instead, came here to the desk to focus into work and have written what I believe will be the new opening of Heart Earth—"She writes in pointblank ink"—superseding the funeral scene I've been concluding is too morose to open with. I'll now finish the letter to Mark Wyman that I began y'day afternoon...and see how bad the state of the world is.
Jan. 25, '91, Wickenburg AZ—Third fine clear day in a row dawning, here where an issue of the 1945 local paper I read through y'day refers to "the wine that is called air." I wouldn't go that far, but it's been a good stay so far, in what amounts to a small apartment in the Rancho Grande motel.

Left Seattle at 6:45 the morning of the 23rd, the plane quickly breaking through the low cloud cover over entire western Washington as level as a plowed field. Rainier, Adams, Baker and the lower peaks of the Cascades all were utterly clear and detailed above the clouds, so that the mountains reminded us of the coastline to Alaska, rising out of the clouds as those northern ones do out of the ocean. The flight to Phoenix, 1100 miles, was exceptionally easy, the plane no more than half full (and the airport waiting area notably less jammed than usual because Iraq-war security measures keep out anybody who doesn't have a ticket), and our four carry-on bags—including this Olivetti portable, I think veteran of Alaskan trips for the Sea Runners, in our small backpack—easily stowed in overhead bins. Even the Phoenix traffic was light, an easy drive here to Wickenburg by lunch. Y'day I got going at the public library, reading the brittle old issues of the weekly Sun of March, 1945, when my folks were here, and when the museum opens this morning I'll see what it offers, if anything, from that time. The past two days we've made before-supper drives, trying to sense out where my folks stayed in the desert cabin about ten miles out of town, and I'm pretty well convinced y'day's drive up a washboard road toward the ghost town of Stanton is the general area.

We're probably in the syndrome Pete and Judy Steen reported when they moved to California from Puget Sound, rushing out day after day to do something while the sun shined before realizing it usually shines there, but in any case I suggested we walk the river trail at the Conservancy's Hasayampa preserve y'day afternoon; quite a lot of bird life, not much of which we Northwest duck-spotters could pick out of the cottonwood and mesquite canopies and identify.
Jan. 27—Leaving Wickenburg. 10 a.m. now, within an hour we'll pack and head north to Prescott. Room 154 here in the Rancho Grande has worked well for us, room for me to spread paraphernalia on this small kitchen table and work a few writing shifts, trying to imagine W'burg 1945 onto filecards, goodsized livingroom adjacent for reading and tv watching. (Never watchers of the stuff when we're home, we've tuned in here to the boggling down of the Gulf War, looking at the CNN coverage—equivalent, we've decided, of an electronic news service, an AP or UPI with visuals—and watching Larry King ride herd on his nightly interview show; King sits, in shirtsleeves and suspenders and almost pulsatingly loud ties, hunched in the same position for an hour every night—with his slick-backed hair, beaky nose and those big hunched shoulders he looks for all the world like a huge peeved hawk peering into the lens.) W'burg itself, as C says, wears a little better every day, but still is a bit scrubby and lacking in real-life activities. Weather has remained lovely; y'day afternoon we went back to the Hassayampa nature preserve to walk its second—lakeside—trail, in perfect shirtsleeve afternoon, so nice we also walked the longer trail again too. Did a better job of bird-spotting this time, managing to identify ring-necked ducks and silky fly-catchers, a bird I'd never even heard of. In our patterns here, we've behaved like we behave; liked the barbecue menu at the Frontier and so ate supper there every night, lunch at the Sandwich Saloon, b'fast at the Country Kitchen. Friday at the local museum I managed to find some 1940s-ish postcards—mostly through the enthusiasm and enterprise of a museum volunteer named Hilde Gross, a retired school librarian who'd read 3 or 4 of my books—to give me a notion of W'burg at the time my folks passed through here, and y'day morning I thought and wrote, mulling the notes thus far. Today while I've been at this, C has been out at the laundromat, absorbing the owner's life story in the few minutes it took to load the washers, she says.
The last day of Jan., Tucson—Bright sun coming in the Quality Inn motel room past the palms and other trees in the courtyard. Weather has been steadily warming since we arrived here 2 days ago in a horrific duststorm, tumbleweeds rolling across the highway throughout the bleak drive down through the desert from Phoenix. We've warily been acclimating to Tucson ever since, liking the looks of the U. of Arizona campus and downtown Tucson, and in talking things over this morning agreed to try some remi dwelling-locating looking tomorrow, in hopes of finding a place to come to after the Montana trip.

Before alighting here, we swung up from Prescott to the Grand Canyon, on a gloriously clear chilly day—although the Canyon itself was not utterly clear, some kind of mist light haze even on that windy day—and did the east rim drive over to the Painted Desert and on down to Flagstaff for overnight. Temp went down into the 20s and it was spitting snow the next morning—the best thing about Flagstaff proved to be our supper at the Adobe Grill, Mexican food better than we had here in Tucson last night at a recommended Mexican place—so we headed south pronto, forgoing our intended drive of Oak Creek Canyon and seeing Sedona. Stopped at the Montezuma's Castle cliffdwelling, which enthralled us both; talk about other cultures, other times, historical piquancy, it's all there in that limestone cliff-cupped remnant. From there we made the drive to Tucson and the bit of a ragged start in this city, where the housing situation isn't easy to figure out.

And it must be noted that C and I find ourselves here in Arizona in wartime, as my folks did in '45. Jet fighters rumble over Tucson a lot of the time—as I savvy it, pilots of both Warthogs and Harriers train at the airbase here—and there have been yellow ribbons, those odd bows on fences and car aerials, and in Wickenburg on every lamp post in town, that are supposed to show support of American troops in epidemic proportions. In Prescott, I saw a pickup zoom past with a staff mounted behind the cab between the twin chrome overhead pipes and a big flag flapping. Meanwhile the war, which began two weeks ago y'day with vaunted U.S. bombing raids, seems to be steadily sinking into bogged-down conditions.
9 Feb.--Helena, on the 7th--top--floor of the Park Plaza Hotel, looking out to a morning of pink-tinged thin streaks of cloud. The weather has been benign for this Governor's Arts Award sojourn, temp in the 40s during the days and no snowfall, only the hardworn patches of gray snow here and there--the Winterfest sled-dog race is supposed to kick off at 11 this morning and they're going to have to resort to some kind of ceremonial start on bare pavement.

All has gone very well on this veer up from our Arizona exploration. Montana has looked and felt good to us after the sere Southwest and our day of criss-crossing Phoenix, for the sake of Heart Earth research, before flying here. The Governor's Arts Award ceremony the night of the 7th was done with great grace by everybody involved. C and I had a stroke of luck in being escorted for the evening by Montana Arts Council member Sue Talbot, wife of the former publisher of the Missoulian and, as she said slightly puckishly during dinner, daughter of the former publisher of the Madison Wisc., newspaper. The Capitol Times, I exclaimed, because it was a talismanic paper to small-city editorial writers such as I was in Decatur. No, said Sue, the other paper; shook her head wrily and said she can remember her father supporting Joe McCarthy. Sue proved just the right combination to spend the logistical evening--dinner at the Montana Club, getting to the Loy Theater, the ceremony--by being bright and pleasant to talk to and not over-talky. As to the ceremony, the Myrna Loy Theater turns out to be the very-newly-done-over old Helena jail, with a small seating capacity, jammed for the night. Each of the 5 recipients was introduced by a competent-enough video done by the Montana Arts Council staff, and the guy, Stan Stephens, fully did his job in this artsy gig Ted Schwinden created 10 years ago. Stephens, a small Elmer Fuddy type to look at, is adept with a script, good on the written rhythms; I figured it was due to his background as a radio station guy, but was told he's actually improved to this degree since he became governor. Anyway, Stephens, who in political terms I couldn't agree with on the time of day, presided nicely and the recipients all did well, heartfelt without going on too long. M.A. Roberts, the Gt Falls
9 Feb. cont.—woman who muscled a symphony into creation there, had a good line in recounting that, having been told by MAC staffer Julie Smith that writer recipients sometimes read a bit of their work etc., M.A. offered to bring her cello—prompting Julie to quickly add that there also were recipients who just get up and say thanks. Lyndon Pomeroy, the Billings sculptor who works in huge steel figures, thanked his colossal family; Joel Jahnke for Shakespeare in the Parks did similarly for that theatrical "family," and Terry Melton, the arts administrator who was in at the launch of the Yellowstone Arts Center in Billings and the Russell Museum in Gt Falls, quite movingly cited, with just-controlled emotion, the Montana figures he'd shared that era with. I got up and read the title section of Sky, then the couple of minutes' worth file-carded at the back of this diary; as I kidded to Sue Talbot, who'd escorted me up the steps to the stage etc., I figured we'd lived up to the Spencer Tracy acme of public performance—talk so people can hear you and don't bump into the furniture.

The reception after the ceremony was a dizzying swim of people, such as: Jay and Linda Doig, Joyce and Ed Celander, a grandniece of Allen Prescott (who by utter coincidence is figuring in my folks's Heart Earth AZ winter), Pamela Sourbeer—who I thought was still in W. Va., but no, she and Wayne are back in the Missoula country—the Bonnet-Arnst-Payton-Hollingstad clan from Gt. Falls, all come in Gary Payson's van and gloriously led by Gene Bonnet in a Baloney Express ball cap; Harriet and Jack Hayne (a considerably politically bracketed evening; Dorothy Bradley sat beside Carol during the ceremony); many people who wanted books signed or just wanted to thank me for the writing. All in all, as C said apropos of me standing in that crowd with the guv's medal around my neck on a blue ribbon, it's a long way from Ringling.
Feb. 11, Tucson—Left Helena abt 7:40 y'day morning on fog-delayed flight into Salt Lake City and by 4 that afternoon we'd lugged $75 worth of groceries into our new quarters here at the Forum. Spending this morning unpacking, C is doing laundry, I've done a rough-sort of research material gathered here and in Phoenix and Helena; our Tucson month is underway. View out the window here from our 4th floor room is terrific; Santa Catalina Mountains looming and changing in the light, foothills neighborhoods, and the back wings of the Forum itself, done in adobe color with pink and turquoise trim and accents of red tile roof. C and I went out for a short walk to loosen up after all of y'day's plane travel and found it windy enough we're going to have to get tractor caps, but there are quiet back streets—this area is largely clinics, rehab center, children's hospital etc.—and an unbuilt-upon swatch of desert vegetation next door, for some walking.

Saturday's events in Helena went fine—with the exception of the Winterfest dogsled race which had to make a ceremonial start on bare pavement in the balmy mid-40s weather—and C and I account those three days in Montana a great trip. The Lewis & Clark Library, in considerable haste when it dawned on the librarians that they could piggyback onto the Montana Art Council's doings, put together a launch of the Center for the Book, and while we didn't see a scintilla of publicity about it or even a printed program, the Sat. morning session by printers and book designers was terrific, and my mostly q-and-a session (I began by reading the 10-min. book dedications piece I have) to begin the afternoon ended up with a filled room. Ann Garner's examples of publications done by her classes at MSU were knockouts—such as their Poetryman comic book of Greg Keeler's poems, and the series of annual faculty cookbooks such as the Philosophers and Microbiologists Salad Book—and Peter Koch, who'd come up from Berkeley, spoke very well and vividly about making books, "externalized dream objects." C and I had a drink with Peter back at the Park Plaza hotel after my session; I knew he was the grandson of Eilers Koch of the Forest Service and great-grandson of Montana pioneer Peter Koch, because during the putting-together
Feb. 11 cont.--of the Montana centennial anthology The Last Best Place, Bill Bevis was fascinated with and kept trying to wedge into the book the lines Peter had once told him from his grandfather Peter's diary of coming from theological training in Denmark to 1860's Montana: "Took my first shot at a Crow Indian today. So much for Jean Jacques Rousseau." Peter told us of the original Peter's report of getting off a Missouri River steamboat in 1867 at Musselshell: heads of Indians were impaled on stakes along either side of the prow nose landing cut out of the bank and on the brow of the bank was a figure wearing only a red shirt and bandages on a bloodied head and knee; the crazed Indian-killer, Liver-Eating Johnson. I don't know the particular history to judge the likelihood of that, but Peter's description of Norman Maclean, whose cabin neighbored the Kochs' on Lake Seeley, rang right; he remembers Norman's loud relentless humming (as he hummed while fixing C and me a lunch drink when we visited him there) as he'd fish the lakeside in front of the cabins—everybody could hear him on the porches of the adjoining cabins. Peter says his father was killed in WWII, and so in fits of yearning he'd hide out and watch the not particularly approachable Norman at his fly-casting; P says his best cast is still Norman's elongated roll-cast he did because of overhanging trees at the lakefront. Peter added that when he finally took a look at A River Runs Through It he realized it was so good he wanted to savor it and so he'd read a page at a time on the toilet. When he eventually saw Norman he told him, "Norman, I read your book. It took me a year—I read it on the toilet." Norman broke out in a smile and gave him back: "That's the way I wrote it."

Feb. 12, Tucson—10:20 now, what had been a steady rain all morning seems to have stopped, the day brightening and clouds withdrawing up the Santa Catalinas, which haven't been visible at all—only spurts of carlights coming down out of the foothills fog as commuters went to work. Have been at the typewriter since about 7, doing a first rough page of the writing regimen here; C has gone to the grocery store, should be back soon. Final (maybe) note on the Montana trip, dinner with
12 Feb. cont.—Dave and Marcella Walter the night of the 9th. The day before, I spent another research stint in Dave's library bailiwick at the Montana Historical Society, Dave as usual hauling out useful stuff with his particular mix of diligence and inspiration, and I gained material on Dick Ringling and a few other Heart Earth makings, in the kind of digging-session-interspersed-with-socializing which has become customary anywhere Montanans know I'm on the premises. First, in came Dore Schwinden's fiancee Maureen, a practical-seeming young lady I'm glad to see in Dore's isolated Wolf Point life, who's decided, after trying it last summer, that she can make a go of it there on the solitude of the farm with him. They're marrying in July, in the Helena cathedral, and we're invited. Next, Chuck Rankin, doing what all editors of the Mont. Mag of History do, checking me out on whether I'd care to revive the Taylor Gordon piece of almost 20 years ago that their predecessor Viv Paladin buried in the files. Next, Margaret Kingsland of the Montana Commission for the Humanities in an exultant mood, having me sign a copy of Mariah—which she said she's touted to the NEH as the only novel that mentions a Commission for the Humanities—for the Helena woman who came up with the winning slogan for the Montana Commission for the Humanities. Since the slogan is "landscapes of the mind," quite directly copied from the subtitle of This House of Sky and I signed the award book with barely a lifted eyebrow, I feel I definitely gave at the office. Onward to Sat. dinner. Dave and Marcella also invited a couple of friends from the North Fork of the Flathead River country where the Walters have a cabin, Karen Feather who used to run the Polebridge Merc and Jerry DiSanto, ex-Glacier Park ranger. Liked them both, Jerry a stringy type who retired from the Park Service after being treed and mauled on the leg by a grizzly (and who surprised Dave during supper by saying he thinks Doug Peacock's been right to criticize Park Service handling of grizzlies, using helicopters on them and so on; Dave says that represents quite a mellowing of Jerry's post-mauling attitude on griz) and Karen a humorous do-what-has-to-be-done exemplification. Their couplehood, to stretch the relationship considerably inasmuch as Jerry lives somewhere over the line in Alberta and Karen's in Helena for the 1g legis-
12 Feb. cont.—relative duration with a woman friend who represents the Polebridge country, was achieved, Dave said, when Karen moved into the hospital to take care of Jerry after the mauling. C and I enjoyed them both, and I'm intending that we'll make a North Fork visit to Dave and Marcella this summer, as the area sounds as if it's on the cusp of going—paved roads etc. likely in its future.

17 Feb.—Sunday morning, cool and fresh after rain showers at daybreak. C is shoulderering the laundry and ironing, then we'll go for a walk; this afternoon I do the one book signing I've taken on here, at the classy Haunted Bookshop out at the foot of the Catalinas.

Last week probably constituted our getting our feet on the Tucson ground. I did three morning stints of writing, C using the U of AZ library those mornings for her sabbatical research on Southwest writing, and on Friday I went to the library with her and, she claims for the first time in this life of turning research pillage into bookwords, she got to show me how a library works. Our first full day here we went down Grant Road to the nearest lumber yard and bought for $5 a ruined door and for a further $25 a set of legs and a screwdriver and turned it into a desk along one wall which now holds the couple of dozen books we've already accumulated from the U of AZ library, Bookman's used-book sections, David Laird's rare book shop where we laid hands on a first edition of Ross Calvin's Sky Determines, etc. Carol has applied herself with great focus, already coming up with a tentative set of assigned readings for her Western Lit course—I pointed out to her that I comparably don't begin to have my book done yet. At the same time we're managing to get out in the afternoons—been to Saguaro Nat'l Monument's eastern section and to Sabino Canyon—and are bestirring ourselves a bit in evenings, going to supper at El Minuto last night and then to the Tucson Symphony's Pops in Space performance (which turned out to be a little less than so-so). As we started the day at dawn at the launch of 50 hot air balloons in the race the AZ Star sponsors,
17 Feb. cont.—it made for an unusually giddy day for the Doigs. (I also was in the Star y'day, a well-done piece by J.C. Martin to coincide with today's Haunted booksigning.)

19 Feb.—Have just eked out the day's writing, which—though I feel progress is pretty slow, first-drafting as ever the bane—maybe isn't so bad on a morning of such great weather it's a shame to be inside. I did go for the "neighborhood" walk here at the Forum, out past the Rehab Center and across the flash-flood drainage ditch to the patch of desert scrub next door, but otherwise made myself grind out the wordage. C is at the U of AZ library again this morning, should be back soon.

Sunday's signing at the Haunted Bookshop amazed me, a line of people the full two hours and in fact for most of a half hour beyond the allotted time. A lot of the traffic was paperback sales, the Haunted sold out of p'backs, I think, and I signed many books out of people's collections, but a fair number of Mariah's got sold too. Numerous ex-Montanans among the crowd, but also a heartening number of people saying they'd never read my stuff before. All in all, a great sign of my stuff's popularity, that signing.

Y'day was stormy and I was logey, getting some reading done instead of actual writing in the morning, and in the afternoon C suggested we go back out to Saguaro Nat'l Monument east of town and hike a bit. Terrifically dramatic weather, including a shower which caught us, just a bit, at the end of our half-hour walk and turned into a hailstorm—with clear weather elsewhere, the Rincon Mtns standing out in profile to the south Santa Rita and downtown Tucson in sun to the west. Veils of showers continued, mostly along the Santa Catalinas, until a stunning sunset, the rockfaces of the Catalinas turning ore-red and the line of clouds atop the sun\set an amethyst which, as C said, darkened to bruise-colors. Then after supper we went to the movie Memphis Belle, abt a WWII bomber crew; scenes in the bomber were pretty good, though the plot was too hoked-up to be really good.
4 March, Tucson—The final week now of this Arizona half-winter, and the span of time will probably have been enough. At lunch today at the Teahouse in Tohono Chul cactus park, the most graceful place in Tucson, after a morning hike in magnificent weather up the Sutherland Trail in Catalina State Park, C and I agreed that, yeah, this is living pretty good. But even Tucson's climate isn't glorious a majority of the time, and the city simply is heartbreakingly too big for this desert locale; looking out over the sprawl, as Lawrence Clark Powell wrote in From the Heartland, the sight isn't as good as the site. Maybe we are missing a bet in not taking up some kind of residence here, as Maynard Dixon, Joseph Wood Krutch, Powell himself, Edward Abbey and others did, if we find ourselves in an aches-and-pains existence in Seattle, but so far we don't seem sold enough.

There have been pleasures to being here, such as the hikes in Catalina park and at Saguaro Nat'l Monument East, although we find that we have to reach the uphill point of a hike by about 10 in the morning or the heat and dryness becomes too much for us; what it must be like in hottest summer down here we can't even imagine. The eating has been good, if a bit unpredictable; El Minuto, at the edge of downtown, puts out fine Mexican food and when one of the veteran mamacitas is waitressing all goes well, but last Sat., their thronged night, an overwhelmed rookie barely managed to get us silverware when our considerably long-lost meal at last arrived. In contrast, we reaped local knowledge Sat. night after getting in touch with the local writer Barbara Kingsolver, and she and husband chose the Cafe Terra Cotta to meet us at. We liked them both, Joe a quiet research chemist at the U. of AZ, Barbara with some of the brightness (and even a bit of the physical appearance) of Linda Bierds. She seems to be utterly thriving, a fresh contract in hand from Harper's for her next novel (working title is Pigs in Heaven; after Barbara lamented that her book of short stories got changed from her title of Islands on the Moon to the innocuous Homeland, which people mix up as Heartland or whatever, Carol kidded her that at least there'll be no confusion over Pigs in Blankets), all 4
4 March cont.—of her books under some kind of movie option, and she and Joe and daughter Camille about to go to the Canary Islands for six months on Joe's sabbatical. They live in west Tucson, which seems to have been the writerly part of town—Lesley Silko is out there, and Barbara said Ed Abbey lived about a mile from her and Joe's 4-acre place. C and I had cottoned to Abbey's phone address of the little town of Oracle at the north end of the Santa Catalina Mtns after asking the Haunted Bookshop people how come he was simultaneously described as living 10 miles out of Tucson and in Oracle, 30 miles out; doubtless he didn't want would-be acolytes etc. to know where he lived, but Barbara figures he also liked the ring of Edward Abbey, Oracle.

7 March—A gorgeous Tucson day, entire sunshine but the day crisp, just enough breeze to take any edge off the warmth. This I suppose is the kind of weather we came in search of, but the fact is that days this perfect are a minority here too. It's pleasant in a lot of ways down here—enough that I wonder if the one-good-book-and-then-fade-away history of a lot of Southwest writers comes from the pleasantness of a sunshiny life can hold, though the productiveness of Abbey, Hillerman and Kingsolver shows not everybody succumbs—but Tucson's metropolitan size (to move here from Seattle in effect is to trade one city for another city) and the fragility of the desert (as Carol said this morning, you almost feel guilty hiking on it; there's nothing like the regeneration of the rain forests) gives us pause. We may be back to Tucson, but habitually...?

Had lunch y'day at La Parilla Suiza with another of Lee Goerner's writers, Tom Miller. Tom in essence is leading the freelance life here, under contract to Atheneum for a book about life in Cuba today—I would think time is absolutely of the essence on that one, Castro no spring chicken any more and world politics changing wildly—but going off to Bisbee after our lunch to work on an Esquire piece about the U.S. base at Guantanamo. Says he lives in a barrio here, whose name amounts to "the neighborhood with no name," below
March 7 cont.—the hill with the U. of Arizona's white-painted A on it. When we swapped addresses his turned out to be a post office box, at what he says is Tucson's literary post office—Barbara Kingsolver gets her mail there too, Lesley Silko gets hers...

March 20--The ninth day home, and Heart Earth's writing schedule seems to perk a little better each morning, so maybe that book is actually going to launch itself this spring. Chorewise, I hurled the vegetable garden into being, plopping in lettuce seedlings and WWall onion sets the day or so after we arrived home, and cutting a pair of quick trenches in the clay sidehill, then filling them compost-dirt, to transplant raspberry bushes into; they now look like they've been there forever. And, C and I trimmed (i.e., pole-cut) the north birches and the vine maples outside the kitchen y'day, cleaning the roof as well; this afternoon I face hauling the branches to the dump. Socially, we had a spate of entertaining: Wendy Smith and Joe Mobilia for lunch on Saturday, John and Jean for a drink on Sunday eve, Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan for supper on Monday; as C fairly asked, doesn't anybody invite us out?

1 April--Out we did get invited, twice, even, this past weekend. Easter dinner at Tom and Carrie Jones', last night; Tom showed us half a dozen new watercolors he's just had framed for exhibiting, and as fine a painter as he has been there's an added degree of strength and clarity in his work. Interestingly, in at least a couple of the paintings the 'clarity' comes from Tom's new willingness to not have, say, a certain edge of the picture as detailed and distinct as he used to; in a very strong painting of a ram's skull, he left an almost cactus-like undetailed portion above the skull and it helps bring the focus down to where Tom wants the looker's eye to go in the pic. A good evening with the Joneses, who like us have reached a point where they could buy a new house etc. if they wanted but go on as they are, have been long-married as we are (Carrie said of being around a couple of artist friends who're marrying much younger women that she feels like the Gray Panther in the group), and who pretty much concentrate as we do on the work we hope is worthwhile.
April 1 cont.--And Saturday night at Ray's Boathouse, we had dinner with Jerry and Suzanne Ziesmer, Jerry having been a Latham House resident the same college years I was, 30+ years ago. He's in town working as assistant director on Cameron Crowe's movie about Seattle's singles-and-dance-clubs scene, called Singles; I don't know why it never dawned on me, but there's an entire Hollywood profession of assistant directors, top sergeants who get things ready before the cameras roll, and that's been Jerry's apparently very successful career for the past 25 years--worked with Huston on Annie, Coppola in the Philippines on Apocalypse Now, Alan Rudolph's last movie, and so on. (Jerry jokes, or at least semi-jokes, that for all of his career as an assistant director, he's best known for the one line he had in Apocalypse Now: "Terminate with extreme prejudice.") We went through a spate of whatever—happened-to, and Jerry's rundown on the Latham-or-Hut speeches of our time at Northwestern is roughly: Dick Benjamin and Paula Prentiss, still married, Paula not-acting for some years while raising their couple of kids, Benjamin occasionally directing but his career not really moving because he hasn't had a hit in a long time (Jerry says a director can go for about ten years on one hit, but then...); Paula's younger sister Ann afflicted with lupus; Jack Rakestraw Johnson both Jerry and I last heard of in regional theatre in his home Kentucky; Larry Smith neither could report on; Karen Black is into Scientology, says Jerry, and Vance Jeffries is into being a Hare Krishna; Ron Hogate married Dorothy Collins of Hit Parade singerdom; Charles Ziarko is, like Jerry, an assistant director. Out of the blue, Jerry says, he got a letter some years ago from Bill Vermillion, the Church of God devotee who ran the perpetual hearts game in the Latham back room; enclosed was a check for $40, with the explanation from V's million, now a minister, that during college he stole $20 from Jerry's wallet and here it was back, off V's conscience, with earned interest. In the general Latham spectrum of everybody more or less broke, I hadn't remembered this about Jerry but he's from a mailman's family in Milwaukee, ropewalked through Northwestern as I did on scholarships and board jobs, and I guess what we have in common is that we both buckled down and somehow made our way on in life. Jerry plainly has a mental list, as I do, of people with what looked like more talent and better breaks who didn't make it--on his, Lawrence Pressman, Ann Fraser, the all-but-palpable-superstar Hogate, the aforementioned Vance
April 1 cont.--Jeffries (who I always thought had only a tinpot soul, whatever his--as Jerry says--John Derek looks) and Karen Black (who I regret hearing the crash of; she was a dark horse in that hypertalented Benjamin-Paula-Tony Roberts bunch, besides cross-eyed enough to need two eye charts, and I always liked it that her early movie career ferriswheeled past the likelier suspects). In Jerry's own life, a number of aspects that interest me; one, that he talks of retiring, referring to "the young people" he works with in the movie business--maybe I'm being naive, but I don't see anything comparable to such better-make-way-before-the-age-gap-gets-too-noticeable pressures in writing; and the turn he made in his life eight or so years ago, asking his childhood sweetheart Suzanne out to Hollywood to marry him after Suzanne's husband died and Jerry's first wife called it quits. Carol and I both enjoyed both of them, and we're laying plans to accept Jerry's invitation to come watch some filming of Singles--think we'll do it on our anniversary, when they'll be shooting a dance-club scene in the Stena Lines pier, and invite Linda and Syd along.

Much else going on, not least of which was Carol's first day back at teaching today, but it'll need to wait...

4 April--Second day of mammoth storm out of Gulf of Alaska; y'day it utterly poured, today it's just steady.

Spent the morning shuffling pages and filecards, to get Heart Earth material lightly laced together enough so I can see what needs writing. Feels like progress. Nice dab of encouragement in y'day's mail, $5500 in HBJ royalties; Sky sold 9165 copies last fall, had its best year ever in paperback. Had our monthly dinner at the Wok with Ann and Marsh last night, and I took her Sky agent's 10% in small bills in a plain brown paper bag.

Bill Lang overnighed with us Monday, then on Tuesday afternoon I went to the U District on chores and to meet Linda Bierds at the College Inn to cheerlead her off to her NYC reading trip. Both of us cherish the College Inn as a kind of acme of mediocrity, and consciously or un-, Linda has begun a ritual that twits the place without the place, of course, having enough institutional memory or elan or anything to know it's
April cont.—being twitted. Regularly now it goes like this: I always arrive first, because I’ve had to allow for time to find a parking place, and I always ask for the same table by the window along the Ave., and some combination of waiters—boy-hostess, sometimes all of them, bring me two glasses of water, two setups of silverware, two huge menues, and then will ask me, every minute or so as if newly discovering my presence (which they are), if I’m sure I don’t want something while I’m waiting; the notion that anybody has chosen the place to wait seems to throw them. Then Linda arrives and we start talking a mile a minute, until some member of the staff registers that there are now two of us at the table, maybe this no longer is waiting, and we are asked what we’re going to have. Now Linda’s ritual: "Do you have," she asks expectantly, "any hot cider?" The answer is perpetually no, and she and I groan and say, oh, but you used to. No, no, never had any, will say the young waiter—ress-hostess—whatever. Yes, yes, yes, you did, we insist, because we’re the only ones on the premises with a lick of institutional memory and we’re both sure we were able to get cider when we first began meeting there years ago. Anyway, we conclude, handing back the menues amid the set-table paraphernalia, we’ll have apple juice. For some reason this further flummoxes the waitperson staff—I suppose my gray beard makes them think here’s some geriatric eccentric come to buy the whole kitchen—and they eventually sort it out with us that we indeed want only two glasses of apple juice; yes, but both large, we assure them. And so it goes at the College Inn where, if they only realized it, they should have a plaque up about Linda and me and these sessions. It’s there that she’s gone over ms pp. of Rascal Fair and Mariah with me, and she and I plotted out how I’d dunk The Stillness, The Dancing through transoms onto editors’ desks, and where she brings first news of New Yorker acceptances and I tell her tales of the bookstore trail—but dimwitted cousin that it is, the College Inn apparently is never going to tumble to us.
April 9--

Today, I:

--wrote a fairly decent page of HeartEarth.

--was invited by a forest ranger in Cody, Wyoming, to the hundredth birthday celebration of the US Forest service..."I'd just feel bad if nobody thought to ask you."

--turned down an architect's invitation to do an AIA session (free) at Big Sky.

--turned down Eric Sandeen's invitation to be the visiting chair in American Studies (35,000/semester) at U. of Wyoming.

--learned that Penguin wants me to do an 8-city reading/signing tour for the Paperback of Mariah in Nov.

April 17--Anniversary #26, which tonight is supposed to have a cast of a thousand—the extras in the dance club scene of Singles being filmed tonight at Pier 48, Jerry Ziesmer having invited us to watch some filming and we chose tonight. Dinner at the Wok first with Linda and Syd, then they're coming along to the dancin' filmin'.

After an arduous first couple of days of word-by-word editing, I at last got the opening pages of HeartEarth to be what I want. The book turns out to need word care on the intense order of Sky's, but at least it's a helluva lot shorter. Spent today mulling, digesting filecards, blue-paging starts of scenes and transitions, and the manuscript at last maybe is beginning to show some lift.

C and I both see that it is days like today that I need, time to think and tinker (which may be one and the same with me). If we can get the projects of this house resolved this summer in a way that doesn't distract me crazy...

Craig Lesley passed through on Sunday, up here from Portland to talk at Plymouth Congregational Church downtown, and his general report is such that I wish to hell he could get better breaks in life. What most worries me is his health news, deteriorating hips that've been aggravated by the terrific sideswipe his car took from another this winter. Craig wants to put off for a few more years the hip replacement his right hip probably needs, but it's going to mean a lot of pain and hobbling. Life keeps asking a lot of him.
23 April—Chinese food and champagne and Alice in Chains for our anniversary, courtesy of Linda and Syd and the Singles film crew, last Wed. The filming at Pier 48 was replete with 400+ extras as the dance crowd Alice in Chains was playing to, warehouse motif, walls of barrels stacked around, some of them ablaze (serving the double function of giving us a little heat), fake smoke curling around and an inexplicable old silent film playing on one wall of the "dance club." It was a treat to watch Jerry Ziesmer, as assistant director, run the scene. In a jacket with Scarface (one of the films he AD'ed) emblazoned across the back, a baton portable mike in his hip pocket and a walkie (crew-ese for walkie-talkie) gunfighter-style low on his hip, with a voice like God's righthand man, he controlled the several hundred people involved through intonations and the directorial sequence: "Prepare to record...kids, let the cameras through, don't bump them...I'm waiting for speed from the recording truck (a double entendre which brought whoops of applause from the dance crowd)...Dancers, you are still too dense, our cameras can't get through...Everybody take one step back...One step back...One step back...C'MON, FELLAS, LET'S GO, ONE STEP BACK...Cue for the sticks...All cameras, listen up: don't roll until I call...and...we are...rolling audio! Roll audio! Roll cameras, please...and MARK IT!

Fun aside, life has seemed pretty damned busy, the 2 pp. a day of Heart Earth having to be ground out pretty hard, C with papers and quizzes to grade, considerable orchestration of house projects needed by both of us--the firewood arrived unexpectedly y'day afternoon in a cord-heap in the driveway, the windowman Ken MacDonald arrived semi-unexpectedly early this afternoon.

29 April--Still coping, coping. A couple of rainy days, plus y'day's downright damned chilliness, kept me from the woodpile, but I'm within about an hour's whacking of having it all split and piled in the woodhouse. C is putting in an enormous day at Shoreline, listening all afternoon to the 4 candidates for division chair; figures she's got to participate, her life at the college depends on whoever is in that job.
29 April cont. -- We seem, emphasize seem, to be squared away with Ken McDonald for new kitchen and small-room bay windows in mid-June, and I'm about to clinch with Centennial Glass for them to put thermal windows in the massive living/dining-room window areas in late May. I hope we're not absolutely nuts to be pouring such money and effort into this house; neither of us seems up for moving to another one just now, and this place is so chilly I go through some physically miserable times in winter; given a day like y'day, from October to April actually.

Social weekend. Sat. dinner at Linda Sullivan's, along with Edmonds friends of hers, Mary Lou and Peter, and Linda's former college roomate Maureen who evidently blew into town from way by way of her hometown Chicago; she pronounced herself "between lives," so it wasn't clear what was up with her. Last night, Jerry and Suzanne Zeismer came here for dinner, our re-pay of their inviting us to the Singles filming. C and I both enjoy them, as C says in spite of the Hollywood mannerisms--Jerry's standard comment is "this is wonderful"--and we gather they're interested in us as people who've combined a home life and some travel; the movie biz plainly has its harrowing side, such as living 4 sold months in a hotel as the Zeismers now are. I asked Jerry what was the worst movie he ever worked on, adding that I meant either the toughest or the most disappointing. He warily chose toughest (though his comments later made it plain Scarface had been disappointing, a movie that turned about 180 degrees from its script by the time the director and the star got through monkeying), and said Apocalypse Now had been tough, all that time in the Philippines, and so was The River, constant mud, heavy boots, wetness; one of the cues Jerry gave as 1st ass't director was in the flood scenes--"lower the levee"! Two earlier stories from Jerry, which I've been meaning to get down here since we had dinner with them at Ray's Boathouse a month or so ago. Both are John Huston tales, the first from the famous mismatch of Huston directing the musical Annie. Jerry, as his A.D., had an awful time getting Huston to pay any attention to the making of the film, Huston boredly simply looking at a video of each day's work on a tiny TV. At last came the day when Huston told Jerry that today he
29 April cont. -- wanted a big TV and Jerry thought aha, finally he's getting into this project, now we'll see the magic of Huston at work. In comes Jerry with the TV, begins to set it up so Huston can see the Annie videos, Huston says, "No, Jerry, we'll leave the big TV on channel 7"--so that Huston could watch the horse races at the same time as the Annie stuff flickered away on the mini-TV. The other story was after Annie, Jerry at Huston's place in Mexico, just the two of them having a beer, and Jerry asks him what he sees as his secret as a director. Huston says, you simply get the best cameraman, the best set dresser, the best assistant director (little nod to Jerry there), the best this, the best that--Jerry says "Yes, but John, what do you do, as the director?" and Huston sails right on: "...You get all these best people, and then you don't fuck it up."

2 May—Y'day was a beautiful May Day, bright blue and into the 70s, today nearly as nice. Last night we had the first salad from our garden, on the usual first of May or thereabout, despite how chilly and damp this spring has been. Other development is a new answering machine/speaker phone, which is so loaded with bells and whistles that it even has a lispy time voice that proclaims, "Wensch-day, two forty-seven."

18 May--A May of rain, today. 53 degrees, fog taking the Highlands, the rain barely bearable but steady. A wild lush spring, after a winter of so much moisture. Our backyard piedmont, the triangular bench of land where we had the big trees taken down a year ago, is jungling itself day by day: ferns, both bracken and sword ferns; almost erupting, and big tufts of grass, and eternal inevitable blackberries, and under the big madrona where I tried wildflower seeds last summer some tall orange flowers I don't recognize have popped up. Sparrows and wrens shop the embankment, fern to fern. Our intention is to put some plantings there--I've been clearing grass and ferns away from the blueberry bushes that I installed last spring and this--but I am enjoying seeing the hill fill itself in, this spring. Amid it all, the big floppy wild rhododendron is a nebula of white blossoms.

Maybe this was a week of turn, Carol and I both feel,
18 May cont.--talking about it last night. Her school year is closing well, good batch of student papers she went through y'day afternoon, and I at last have the first chapter of Heart Earth drafted, plus the pages that turn the corner into chapter two. C is to read them this afternoon. And we have on line the house projects, windows, insulation--with luck, actually with three strokes of luck, one for each contractor involved, we'll have this house tightened and insulated by mid-July.

'Mid it all, from Monday noon until Wed. morning we hosted Ben and Jeanne Baldwin, talismans of our Evanston lives; Ben was my advisor and favorite prof at Northwestern, Carol worked for him several summers in the High School Institute. Not even to mention what Ben grandly proclaims he created--our wedding, where Ben and Jeanne stood up with us. He is 72 now, Jeanne about to be 66, and it was C who cottoned to what Jeanne has done with this transcontinental driving trip--Hilton Head I. to here--of which she does all the driving; she's provided Ben a way to be out and sightseeing, now that his eyes are so bad he can't much read. I suppose Ben is an unlikely shaman, even when I met him 34 years ago he was bald and pudgy and short-fused, but the capacity for work and encouragement in that little man orbited a lot of us around him, from Andy Malcolm and Albert Scardino at the NY Times to horsepicker-guru Andy Beyer at the Washington Post to Steve Bell at ABC to mine own self. Here in this room where I have written all my books, as I fetched out of a closet a paperback of English Creek that Ben wanted me to sign up for his brother, it all got said when Ben grinned a little emotionally and gave me a little tap on the upper arm and said, "I just think this is so great."

23 May--Today is like watching sausage being made; the window crew from Centennial Glass is here replacing the big dining room and living room panes with thermal panes, and right now--almost 10--there are gaping emptinesses where the patio door and the dining room windows were. Miraculously, it ain't raining.
28 May--A fine bright day at last, decidedly after the holiday weekend. Both Saturday and Sunday were rainy, but Memorial Day itself stayed simply overcast and sticky, and we had a good resuscitation of the Lake Union hike tradition. Linda Sullivan, her Mundelein roommate Maureen, Eric and Jan Nalder, and us--six proved to be a good number, people swapping into pairs of talking throughout the seven miles of walking. Eric has just signed a book contract with Grove Weidenfeld, for a book out of his Prince William Sound oilspill pieces in the series that won him and other Seattle Times folks a Pulitzer; this will be on supertankers, and it sounds as if he has great material, pointing starkly at Coast Guard reluctance to really monitor oilships. Eric says there are blind spots in the CG's Puget Sound radar network, and it's the best system in the country. After the walk, lunch at Linda's, bratwursts done on her charcoal grill, tossed salad Carol made, chocolate chip cookies from the Nalders--as we all agreed, eating up all the good we'd done ourselves with the hike.

On Saturday, C and I went to another stint of moviemaking with the Ziesmers, although not seeing much this time because it was a closed-set filming of a love scene--Campbell Scott and whoever the actress is who plays the Linda character, emerging for lunch looking pale and weary after seven takes of the scene in Singles where they plunge to her bed and the phone machine goes off. As Suzanne Z. said when we got there, the actors had body makeup put on that morning, so it was heavy duty shooting. The movie crew has used as a soundstage an Interbay warehouse, behind Rykoffs', which the soundman despairingly described in a warning poster to the crew as "a large echo chamber," and so every time a scene was being shot, red warning lights began flashing, a bell rang once, Jerry as assistant director was heard intoning "we are ROLLING," and all production assistants such as Suzanne shouted an echo of "ROLLING!" wherever they happened to be in the building, and the whole crew quit talking or walking anywhere, even quit setting the catering tables. (And in the case of the drivers, who always eat ahead of everybody else to be freed for chores, they had to stop taking bites lest a fork hit a
28 May cont.--plate; Jerry said it sometimes gets to be hilarious, the production people jumping on the drivers for making noise while they eat, the drivers complaining back that you told us to eat and now you won't let us eat.) After some lovemakey noises--Linda in the scene makes a kind of startled, **pmlnhntux** "oeuh!" probably from landing in bed on her TV remote control--would come the cry "cut!", two bells' signal, and everybody would come alive again. At least comparatively alive, because all agreed it was a pretty slow day and a pretty slow point in the filming, the last few days (they wrap the movie tomorrow, Wednesday); many crew members doing crossword puzzles or reading magazines, and a big jigsaw puzzle was being worked on. While Jerry and then a woman assistant to the director were overseeing the the bedroom scenes ("easy day," said Jerry, "two people in a bedroom"), another assistant--though as I savied it, he'll also be the film editor, which he also did for Star Wars--was shooting a musician's fingers tracing down the newsprint columns of a review. Jerry, who makes no bones about the incredible way money is spent in movie-making, said the musician had been flown back in just to do this finger-walking. Similarly, they were going to have to reshoot--I think today--Xavier McDaniel's locker-room vignette that's part of the Steve-Linda bedroom scene; the X-man flubbed his part, three sentences' worth, the first time around. I kidded Jerry, hey, the X-man just isn't used to performing in front of so many people; Jerry said, somebody ought to teach him to perform. At Jerry and Suzanne's behest, C and I stayed on for lunch, which included Australian lobster tails and an ice sculpture, and amid the fancy food, somebody came around and handed everybody their per diem checks. "Movie camp," Jerry said of all this, "this is movie camp, they come around, take care of us every way you can imagine." Indeed, he said when shooting in LA the crew gets 30¢ a mile for driving to work, on top of all else. Speaking of movie moolah, Jerry and the Singles producer and I guess others of the production crew were exulting in the flop of Hudson Hawk, the new Bruce Willis movie. I asked, because of Willis? Jerry said, yeah, him, but more particularly the producer Joel Silver. Anyway, Jerry and others of the Singles
28 May cont.--production crew had been phoning around the country, asking how bad the reviews were, how low the box-office take. (Jerry reports the worst review was when somebody stood up in the middle of Hudson Hawk and declared "This is the worst American movie ever made", and the movie critic in the audience declared in turn, "It isn't that good.") Jerry was predicting, on basis of what he'd heard, Hawk wouldn't take in more than $8.5 million over the 4-day Memorial Day weekend, when the minimum hoped for was $20 million. Y'day there was a NY Times piece about the final bloated budget of Hawk, somewhere between $65-80 million, apparently, and a crew member was quoted, "This was union heaven."

6 June--Back to gray indeterminate weather, after a giddy day of summer--maybe it was summer in its entirety--yesterday. Supper with the Nelsons at the Wok last night, our monthly pig-out on Chinese food and hilarity. A continuing theme now is Ann's writing for the Ladies Home Journal, pieces at $3000 a crack, 5 million readers; we accuse her of taking over the mind of the nation. Her current piece, for which C and I were both interviewed, is "What is a good wife?" and she swears she's going to go on and do one about mothers-in-law. Invincible lady.

A nuptial Saturday, the afternoon miraculously clearing for Toey Angell and Lee Rolfe. From the fanfare of events leading up to the wedding--a wedding shower?--all of which conflicted with our own visitors this busy spring, we knew it was going to be a big wedding, but not as big as it was. As we gather, Lee's family, the Rolfs, are related to the Hoges, who were in on building the Space Needle etc., and so as we stepped into Tony's yard there were battalions of caterers and a transparent canopy over his entire huge back yard. Tony had asked me to be a groomsman, and so as we marched in and lined up for the ceremony under the roofed sculpting area outside Tony's studio, there was the picture--six bushy graying guys (Tony's cousin Johnny Moy; me; Bert Benler from the English Dept. at Arizona State; Tom Jay, the foundryman/writer/sculptor; Greg Krogstad, photographer; Bob Simmons of KING-TV) and Tony's sculpting assistant Gretchen Dauber.
6 June cont. -- on the groomsmen's (and in Gretchen's case, groomsmaid's) side, an equal number of young things across from us as bridesmaids. That bit of generational, damn near geological, portraiture aside, the crowd for the ceremony itself seemed to consist of Carol and a ton of Rolfes. All went well enough in the actual ceremony, I think -- Tom Jay stepping out to say some words about Tony and Lee's betrothal to each other, Greg playing a flute piece, the minister reading some passages Tony and Lee had composed -- although Bert Bender and I kept an eye on the hornet nest in the corner of the roof and a chainsaw got busy across the street just as the words started being said. Then the march back to the back yard-champagne-food, and there at the reception, unlike the wedding, we saw a lot of people we knew, such as Tom and Carrie Jones, Lidia and Frank Tarver, Bill and Marnie Holm, Pat and Mary Ragen. Tony, with that heart of his as big as a boulder, gave me and the other groomsmen a terrific print of raven courtship. Even before that handsome wage, I had tried to talk Tom Jay and Bob Simmons into the whole bunch of us hiring out as groomsmen at some wedding every Saturday, call ourselves the best guys, sing a little doowop and then Gretchen could step out and sing Love Me Tender while we all went So fine, so fine! in the background -- no takers, strangely.

Friday the 30th, met Linda Biards for one of our College Inn applejuiccezvous, each with a brand new book cover. We had to laugh at the disparity -- her Heart and Perimeter cover a delicate ivory, classy thin typefont, teasing collage of bell and twigs as illustration, while my Penguin cover of Mariah all but shouts, Buy this or else. Gave her the 1st chapter of Heart Earth to read, and she and Syd are coming for supper early next week. The Mariah cover, by the way: it's to be the original, which is to say the rejected, hardback cover, and while it's busy as a supermarket by the time the byline, title, a quote, sub-line and the Penguin imprimatur all get loaded atop the picture of Mariah atop the Bago, I think it's a lot zingier than the pallid version Penguin came up with first.
12 June—Climactic hammering in the spare bedroom, where Ken MacDonald and Riley are finishing up the bay window installation. Started Monday morning, and while C and I joke that being around these carpentry projects that whang big holes in the house is like watching sausage being made, in actuality the guys got the kitchen windows into place by Mon. night and the sizable bay in by noon the next day. It’s been hectic, with the noise and dust of construction, but I have ground out 2 pp. of rewrite on ch. 2 every day. C has been finishing up the school year, exams the next 2 days and she hopes done with grading by Fri. night. These windows are project #2 out of this year’s big three, only the insulation left to do, in mid-July. We hope this house is being mightily improved.

Linda and Syd came for supper last night amid the window hammering and seemed to get a kick out of seeing the project happening. The four of us ate crab until we couldn’t hold any more, Syd telling us of being on the notably unsuccessful search committee for a new head of the UW’s Jackson School and Linda regaling us with audience-eye view of the Women’s Studies “graduation” program in which one of the WS students, a street singer, teamed with somebody else into a duo which sang songs of women’s affirmation and got raunchier and more anti-male as they went. Syd and Linda were hilarious as they reported on house-hunting on Bainbridge Island and giving up on the idea because of the cumbersome ferry commute, but not before looking at a charmer of a farmhouse, yellow with white trim, porch all around; Linda can just see herself ensconced there with pygmy goats, a dwarf horse, Tallulah the basset hound—Syd accuses her of wanting every animal to be dog-sized, pointing out that all such dwarfs (including bassets) are mutants and susceptible to genetic defects, and I said I could see it now, the two of them there on Mutant Acres. Linda also brought back ch. 1 of Heart Earth she’d read for me, with invaluable advice to smooth my narrating persona in a couple of places.

Other than persevering through the carpentry, we’ve been trying to make some reasonable money moves, in the face of dismal certificate of deposit rates and bank shakiness. I’m meeting with Piper Jaffrey broker
12 June cont. -- Steve Charlston next week to try to figure out where to put roughly $100,000 of ours and $27,000 of my Defined Benefit Pension Plan, and today C moved $50,000 of her TIAA money into their bond fund and an equal sum into their stock market shares — we’ll see if the luck held until the close of the market, but by late morning of this day when she needed a falling market to maximize her buy of TIAA shares, the Dow J was down 41 points.
7 July, The Duck Inn, Whitefish—About as relaxed as the Doigs ever get, it's going toward 9:30, Carol is taking shower, and in an hour or so we'll meander up toward Big Mountain for some mild hiking. Beautiful clear day, actually a bit cool with the breeze. Y'day we drove northwest of here to Eureka and Rexford—Lake Koocanusa country, north of Libby Dam—into territory we liked a lot, with the bonus that most of the highway from Wh'fish to Eureka is in great shape, recently repaved. Drove out from Eureka, itself a pretty goodlooking little town, to see the Nature Conservancy's new purchase, Dancing Prairie, and across the Lake Koocanusa bridge looking for an Amish colony we never did find; the big booming views reminded us of Idaho country we've been in, around Payette and the Sawtooths.

Carol is out of the shower, doctoring the terrific mosquito bites she got on her ankles and calves when we hiked through the long grass of Sullivan Meadow with Jerry DiSanto and Karen Feather on the 5th. The bites blotched out into terrific red bruise-like areas, very itchy, and the best remedy evidently has come out of advice from the 5 and dime store woman in Eureka where we stopped for an ice cream cone, take some antihistamine capsules. The bites were the only drawback of a fine July 4th and 5th in the company of Jerry and Karen, both veterans of the North Fork of the Flathead River and the tiny community of Polebridge, in essence the Polebridge Mercantile which Karen used to own and the Northern Lights saloon which she still does. We hadn't much sooner alit in Polebridge, just before the noon 4th of July parade, when Karen corralled Carol into being a parade judge; the goal of having all the judges be women professors fell a bit short after Carol and Annemarie Harrod, a sociology prof from Nashville, and so a guy was empaneled. The distinguished judges were unanimously low tech, non-religious and -patriotic, and so gave 1st prize to a group of kids costumed as upside-down clowns, i.e. with fake heads between their legs and fake legs on their arms over their heads; 2nd to a mother and daughter in a buggy, the mother with her face as a flag decoration which included a star-field patch over one eye; and
7 July cont.—3rd went to a crowd favorite, an 80-yr-old guy in a bright red abbreviated bathing suit, riding in the back of a rubber raft tooting a whistle for rafting safety; the judges figured he'd like the apple pie that was the prize. Had barbecued chicken for lunch, then hung around watching volleyball and visiting with the Harrods—Howard is a religion prof at Vanderbilt who’s written about the Blackfeet and the impact of the missionaries—and meeting folks such as Karen Reeves, married to Nat'l Geographic writer Doug Chadwick. C summed up a lot of the Polebridge ambience after Jerry DiSanto, an expert on Glacier Park plants, told us about exotic, i.e., non-native plants, in the area—the human population up the North Fork also includes a lot of exotics, such as a young guy from Britain who works in the Merc and another from South Africa who's one of the partners Karen's leased the saloon to. At the end of the afternoon, we followed Jerry and Karen in their rigs up to a place called Benchmark—up the Hay Creek road (a mile s. of Polebridge), a first right turn and then first left turn, to indeed a rocky bench in the road, about halfway up the mountain west of the N. Fork, with a view of the North Fork valley and about a hundred-mile skyline of the peaks of Glacier Park and beyond into Canada, north of Kintla Lake, King Edward Mtn., etc.; truly a stunning span of scenery. Daubed thick with mosquito dope (they zoomed around us but didn't bite) we drank beer and then wine while Karen, an earth mother if there ever was one, barbecued chicken and sausages for sundown supper. Carol and I slept in the canopied back of Karen's pickup while she and Jerry slept in the back of his '68 venerable white Chevy ranchwagon. Next morning the two of them took us—Karen, at her own great suggestion, driving our rented car so we could sightsee while Jerry narrated beyond Polebridge and south along the N. Fork to Sullivan Meadow and Adair, the original site of what became the Polebridge Merc. The meadow was lovely, a long rolling stretch of high grass (with assassin mosquitoes waiting for Carol) between stands of larch and ponderosa and at the far end, incredibly, the hot orange-red glow of poppies at the site of the Adair store, planted by the store owners early in this century; when we got there,
7 July cont.—we found there was also a thriving lilac bush and some irises. Again, as Montana so many times has given us, an extraordinary experience a bit fraught around the edges; the day turned hot while we hiked the length of the meadow (with deer's ears and occasional horns sticking up out of the grass in the shade of lone trees as we went past) and I had dumbly taken Jerry and Karen at their casual word that this was only a quarter-mile walk (it was more like an hour-and-a-half hike) and didn't bother to take our knapsack with a water bottle in it; C had to heroically pace herself, and I was doing some myself by the time we bushwhacked out of the end of the meadow to the road again. Will try make more of an entry later about Jerry and Karen, both of whom we like immensely, but for now want to get down what was the best story of the weekend, Jerry telling us of the time he was high-country hiking in Glacier Park, off-duty as the Polebridge ranger that he was for 12 years, and came onto film-maker Beth Ferris and her partner Ursula merrily filming mountain goats about ten feet away from them. The only way to get goats that close is to bait them, so Jerry felt—off-duty or not—he had to warn these women they weren't supposed to be baiting them with salt that way. Beth and Ursula indignantly maintained to him they weren't baiting with salt. Well, I don't know what you're doing but you're baiting these goats some way and you're not supposed to be, he told them and left it at that. He later learned that what Beth and Ursula had been doing to attract the goats was peeing on the rocks.
8 July—About to leave Whitefish and the Duck Inn, within the hour this morning. Lovely weather, bright and dry and just cool enough. Given that and how relaxed we've managed to get here, my hunch is we should've planned only this stint as this year's Montana trip; it's going to be some fun to see the people we'll visit the rest of this week, but nothing like as relaxing as this. Ah well, onward to the old haunts.

Went up to Big Mountain y'day, were impressed with some of the lodges there—considerably handsomer than most ski areas—and the tremendous views south all the way to the Mission Range. When we got back, Carol napped—under the influence of the antihistamine tablets that are helping her mosquito-bite infictions—while I walked downtown, then came back and napped too. Then we went into Kalispell, picked up Mary Lou Woodcock and went to supper at the Coyote Roadhouse in Big Fork. Mary Lou has just finished selling out everything in Kalispell—bookstore, her townhouse and a rental condo—and is a bit shellshocked by the suddenness of it, plus not quite knowing what to do next; evidently she'll move back to Billings, to be near her son Jim, a Gazette photog, but Mary Lou's eyes have gone so bad they're another major uncertainty. I've always liked Mary Lou, who was a thoroughgoing bookseller caught in too small a market in Kalispell—3 stores in a town that's barely big enough for 2—and will miss her. I asked if the Montanans moved back from California who bought her store brought some money to it, and she said, truckloads. A last reminiscence she offered from her store years: just after she opened up, This House of Sky came out in paperback and Mary Lou took what she thought was a real ordering risk and ordered 10 copies. The day the books came in, a woman asked if Sky was in p'back yet, Mary Lou brightly said yes, just came in; great, said the woman, I'll take 5. Mary Lou said she almost said in panic, no, you can only have one. Indeed her realization that she'd wildly underordered was more than right; all 10 Skys were gone by 3 that first afternoon.
July 10, in the Montana Historical Society—Have just microcopied the side-by-side stories in the Meagher County News of July 4, 1945, of Wally’s letter from the South Pacific and my mother’s death. So, that strong salient coincidence for Heart Earth is in place now.

Tomorrow, on to the Maudlow country.

We pulled into Helena today just before lunch, from overnighting with the Arnsts in Great Falls. Had a fish feed on their deck last night, Wayne and Genise and us and Hazel and Gene Bonnet and the Hallingstads.

—Now about an hour later, in the State Library, the MHS so busy and hectic today, John Ewers—as Bill Farr called him, the Big Bopper of Indian art history—ensconced in the genealogy room where I usually am able to cave up. Anyway, one more time said no to Chuck Rankin about use of the You Can’t Not Go Home again piece in an anthology—Chuck is simply doing his job as an editor in pressing for it, but I simply don’t want that piece coming out in another format if chunks of it are going to be in Heart Earth as I now intend—and visited a bit with Rich Roeder and Bob Clark, who says he’s beset by Redford’s researchers for A River Runs Through It who don’t seem to realize the story is fiction, Paul Maclean didn’t die in a Helena alley but in Chicago, etc.

Back to the Great Falls visit: Wayne took y’day off and so after we hit town in late morning, having come the really long way from Choteau by way of Augusta and Craig for the sake of the mountain scenery, and Genise took us out to lunch, Wayne and I went out to Morony and Ryan dams, mildly sightseeing, while Carol avoided possible mosquito bites and holed up to visit with Genise. As Wayne and I headed back into Ft. Falls on the Havre road, about a mile from the TV stations we saw a car pulled over to the side of the road, smoke coming out of it. Also all around it, we realized after we stopped to help; the driver, a fleshy young guy from Chester named John Hemminger who seems not to be one of life’s Winners, was hurling himself around the car, cussing and trying to put out the grass fire that had started from his engine fire.

In our rental Chevy we had only two little jugs of water, neither of which made much difference in the spreading fire, but a farmer from Inverness stopped and had an ice cooler which he dumped, food and all, on the burning engine and then dragged a big tarp out of his rig. We got the
July 10 cont.—shoulder-of-the-road flames smothered out with the tarp, but couldn't get at the ones under the car. Next arrival was a state highway cop who'd been ticketing somebody half a mile up the road, he emptied his fire extinguisher under the car, but there still were flames and the highway cop told us all to back off and let the fire dept. deal with it. The car, a big old '73 lunker, began burning like hell, orange flames, black smoke, the owner lamenting "C'mon, fire truck, Jesus Christ!" Wayne never goes anywhere without his camera and so by now he was shooting the scene for the Gt. Falls Trib, traffic was backing up, the car was really burning by now, all of Hemminger's belongings—he was on his way to a job in Dillon—going up in smoke with it. Eventually the Black Eagle volunteer fire dept. truck got there, but the car and belongings long since a goner.

The night before we spent in Cinema Choteau, another adventure in the Hensley Motel (this time, roar of the plumbing in the walls whenever anybody took a shower). That evening, a splendid one of the Rocky Mtn Front in late sun, we went out to see Carol Guthrie, as I hadn't managed to come for Bud's funeral. Carol is coping well, able to talk about Bud and now beginning to think about the business of his books—only The Big Sky is in print in paperback, for instance. Bud, oddly, didn't pay much attention to the business end and it sounds as if his agent Carl Brandt let Bud's stuff slide as his readership waned. I don't see, though, why The Way West and These Thousand Hills shouldn't be in paperback (Arfive and the other two novels are more problematical) and when Carol G. asked Carol and me for advice, we told her to get Carl Brandt to revert rights for her and have him shop the books around, or get a new agent. Otherwise in the pleasant evening of conversation, Carol G.—who can be quite funny and a good mimic—began telling of Dick Hugo's visits; on one, Dick having fallen off the wagon during that sabbatical in Scotland among all that scotch, he stayed really late at the Guthries' and when he finally left to drive back to Ripley's family cabin nearby, Carol & Bud followed him, with their lights off, to make sure he got home safely. The next day Carol said to Ripley she hoped Ripley hadn't been too worried about Dick; Ripley said no, not at all, she'd driven out and
July 10 cont.—parked out of sight near the bridge (across the S. Fork of the Teton) to watch and make sure he got home safely. Another time, Dick and Bud started making big plans to go fishing at Pishkun Reservoir, to the consternation of the wives, both men ailing and terrific drinkers, until finally Carol's son Bill reluctantly said he'd go along and be in charge of them. Plans were laid and laid that day, then relaid, the hour getting later and the sun ever hotter, until ultimately Dick never showed up but his note in their mailbox did, only saying petulantly: "It's too hot." Out of all that nonfishing, though, Bud and Dick wrote each other a poem, and Dick's to Bud was one of his finest. Amid this storying I brought up Carol's knowing Mildred Walker before anybody else of the Montana writing crowd, including Dick, did; it always floors people and they want to know, as Carol G., what was Mildred like? So Carol obliged with description of the Wells College version of Mildred, for-mid-able, and that reminded Carol G. of Dick sitting at their table and in that little boy manner he could have, pouting to Bud of his ferocious mother-in-law Mildred, "Bud, she doesn't like how I eat ice cream. She doesn't think I eat it nice."

And finally, out of that evening (Carol G.'s son Bill, a.k.a. Herb, and his wife Kay, both really pleasant people, were there too) came one of Carol G.'s favorite stories of the essential Bud. It was another fishing story, this time Bill and Carol G.'s son-in-law Eric taking Bud to Pishkun and deciding to come home on roads across the prairie instead of all the way around by Choteau. After hours of tracing out dimmer and dimmer roads they got within a mile and a half of the house but couldn't get across a swamp and so had to go all the way around by Choteau anyway. By this time, midnight, Carol G. and Amy had called the sheriff, but about half an hour later here the fishing bunch came. Carol G. and Amy were livid, and just as Carol was about to launch into them, Bud gave her a vast smile and said angelically, "We have been hilariously lost."
12 July, Bozeman, in MSU Special Collections—C will be here soon for lunchtime (we're meeting Kate Malone downtown) and then it's back to Helena and homeward tomorrow. Good useful trip y'day across the north end of the Bridger Mtns from Ringling to Maudlow in the Toyota 4runner borrowed from Dave & Marcella Walter; a 30-mile trip, and the middle 10-12 miles would be nasty after any rain. C shot a lot of pics for me for the Heart Earth scene I'll do, of my folks getting stuck in a mudhole there; a stop at Moss Agate on the way was useful too in lines of sight to various landforms. Left Helena about 7:20, got to Bozeman before 3, felt like we'd done a day. This is the first time we've seen the Malones since Mike became president of MSU, so this morning we saw Mike's office and then Kate took us over to the presidential house they'll get in August. Mike and Kate invited Bob and Jan Swenson to dinner last night; we went through an unusual number of drinks while waiting for dinner to cook, and whether or not that much liquid advanced it, it was interesting during supper to watch Mike drift into himself—really, into listening to Cole Porter and others sing Porter songs Mike'd put on when we sat down to supper—while the rest of us made chat. Then after supper when I was ready to crash—I still feel a little rocky this morning, headachy—damned if Mike didn't revive and want to talk about the books I'm doing next. And this morning he was as bouncy as usual. Maybe the ideal metabolism for the president's job.

18 July—Pleasant morning, maybe the best weather since we got home from Montana last Saturday. That return trip went very well in the rented Chevy Lumina, 12 hrs from Helena to here and neither of our backs complaining.

C has been outside patching holes in the siding after y'day's insulating, while I spent the morning here at the desk mildly puttering away at the books-to-be. Re-read some of the 1st ch. of Heart Earth and thought it looks strong.
28 July—High summer this afternoon, 80ish on the thermometer outside the office window (now at 3:30) without seeming hot or, thank god, humid. We got home y’day a little after 12:30 from a two-night stay with Tom and Carrie Jones at Copalis Beach, the cap of a highly social week. Tuesday we had dinner at the Wok with Ann and Marsh, our monthly rejuvenation with them, and the next day, C’s birthday, her uncle Tom Muller and his wife Lydia were in Seattle on their way to an Alaskan cruise. C took them to the Burke Museum to show them coastal Indian art, then I met the three of them at Ivar’s Salmon House for lunch, and Tom and Lydia came on out to the house for the afternoon and supper. Tom was the youngest of the hard-raised Muller family, 16 years younger than Carol’s dad, and made his way up in the world—Navy, college, engineering, eventually one of the owners of the Lesley industrial valve company—from a childhood of being raised by whichever of his sisters could manage it at the moment. He’s very bright and focused, always thinking, and C and I enjoy him. In the course of his visit two of his comments—a grumble about Congress and the remark that he wished a would-be manufacturer he’s a consultant to “would get out of his own way”—were so like Frank’s, despite the two of them not really having been around each other as they grew up, that I thought, my god, genetic vocabulary!

Thursday we got to Copalis Beach about 2 in the afternoon, knowing only that Tom and Carrie were borrowing an oceanfront place from somebody named Gandy, and finding that it’s a full, handsome house owned by the widow of Joe Gandy, attorney and car dealer and general mover and shaker on projects such as the Seattle World’s Fair. Carrie, it turned out, house-sat and lived with the Gandys as a college student and the connection has lasted ever since, more than a quarter of a century; indeed, Carrie and Tom have told Mrs. G. that if she’d like to sell this ocean house they’d like to buy. Carol and I enjoyed our couple of days of visiting there—despite some fog and humidity—but concluded living there probably wouldn’t be our style, remote as it is and amid the slaughtered Olympic Peninsula timberlands. The place has been good for Tom’s painterly eye, I think three paintings done in the month or so they’ve been there and at work on another;
28 July cont.—one he completed while we were there is titled "My Neighbor's House," a warm, almost jolly picture of a red birdhouse atop a stump which Tom spotted only a few houses away from the Gandy place. Tom's work seems to be deepening, reaching to combine his genius for detail and moods of light with a new willingness to leave portions of a picture more open and suggestive than he would have in the past. Tom during our stay was presiding over various workmen coming by to give estimates on weather and pest damage to the Gandy house, but late Fri. afternoon he got free to take a beach walk with me—I'd blunked out, from allergy, into a nap earlier while Carol and Carrie walked—and we must have made quite a scene ourselves, me like a tent peg beside lanky loose-made Tom. In shorts and with his sweatshirt sleeves rolled up, Tom was all arms, legs and considerable feet, wearing a Cleveland Indians baseball cap that, by hiding his widow's peak, makes him look minny like a teenage boy on his way home from a sandlot game. Tom walking is always on the move—more like, always on the fidget or the veer—looking and looking for angles of a scene to paint, picking up seashells and rocks to study their color; fascinating to watch him, like seeing an artistic antenna on the alert. Throughout our stay Tom turned out to be keener and funnier, and more of a conversationist, than we'd seen in the dinners we've had together over the years. Partly, too, Tom tends to be thrust into a gawky adolescent role around Tony Angell, in Tony's mammoth bonhomie style of kidding and joking, but it may well be Tom who's been turning the profounder corners of art these past few years. As Carol said of Tom, as she sometimes says of me, he knows one big thing.

Tom and Carrie were terrific about putting up with what turned out to be a kind of Ivan Doig Jamboree; they'd asked us to bring the video of Winter Brothers and my Montana Gov's Arts Award ceremony, but beyond that, there was the incident of their neighbors. Nobody in the Iron Springs compound of several dozen homes yet comprehends that Tom is a world-class artist, and so the night before C and I arrived, the next-door neighbors whom Carrie and Tom had invited to dinner were just beginning to take a polite look at Zumba the painting Tom was working on when somehow my name came up between Tom and the man of the couple.
28 July cont.-(a leprechaun-like little guy who Tom says introduces himself with "I'm fickle!"--his name is Joe Fickel), and Tom said yeah, Carol and I were coming to visit; this guy yelled to his wife, "Elsie, Ivan Doig is coming here!" She in turn wheeled around, Tom's painting now utterly ignored, to catch up with this breathless news. (The Fickels turned out to be former Bellevue residents, and Elsie had been at my Town Hall talk there years ago.) The next day when we were all padding around the house in our stocking feet after beach hiking, I told Tom and Carrie I was doing them an immense favor, they'd now be able to say Ivan Doig took his shoes off in their house; they in turn assured me they were going to cut up and sell the sheets I'd slept on.

2 August--A week which started with what I any more regard as a chore--a book review, this one of Mary Clearman Blew's book--and is playing out into formidable house projects, C repainting the living room and dmal dining room sills now that we have the new windows in and the repainting of the eaves and mending of the seams under the flashing awaiting me. The weather has turned good, though, and I'm feeling fairly perky this morning. Now 9:30, C gone to a haircut, I've been back into the pleasant old habit of reading 10 daily pp. of the Dictionary of Regional English--tucking away lingo for future books--and have also gone through the "un-" words of my American Heritage dictionary to see if I can come up with a better verb than the usage early in Heart Earth, "uncertain my mother"; conclude that I can't, and indeed "uncertain" is imaginative enough that it isn't even in the dictionary.

Liked Mary Blew's book a lot, should be a breakthrough piece of work for her. Called up Bill Lang to check my memory that he and the other Montana Bills were blown away by Mary's piece about her father cutting her and the rest of the women in the family out of his death—all three of the family— or fortune—haunted Bills, Bevis and Lang and Kittredge, separately told me what a barn-burner of a piece that was, evidently Mary impressing them with a real instance of unblinking "awe and rage" toward a conundrum parent—and Lang as ever was precise and definitive about that arresting moment of Mary's at
2 August cont.--the Montana myths conference. Indeed, he added that he figures that conference, with the spur of Mary's piece, was the birthplace of the Last Best Place anthology; in the foreword Annick and Bill Kittredge remember it as coming to them in the drive home from the conference, but Lang says he recalls Annick already saying "Wouldn't it be great if we could..." in the hallway during. Lang also cites how important Margaret Kingsland was in all this, in what might be called the "un-good-old-boy-ing" of the West by Mary. In the planning of the myths conference, which Lang was in on, he remembers Bevis wanting to make it into a textbook occasion of examining myths and Margaret doggedly heading him off, saying no, that won't quite work, let's have it broader than that--with the result that Margaret's freeing up of the format gave Mary Blew the chance for that seminal piece about her father, and probably the beginning point of her book.

I slogged all day Tuesday, a beautiful day I truly hated to miss outside, on the review, then got up an hour early on Tuesday and slammed out the final page, so that C and I could get out into precious summer. Went up to Ebey's Landing, but a fog bank (chilly wind) was clamped to the bluffs there; extraordinary, really, the heavy coil of fog with the tips of the Olympics perfectly bright beyond. We were in a good enough mood, in the zesty unhumid weather, that we didn't even particularly mind losing the hike, and came home in good spirits after a sandwich lunch on the pier in Coupeville.

16 Aug.--Beautiful August weather again, with the newly rehung windsock swaying gently from a madrona on the hill. A thunderous amount of work on this house has been done since two weeks ago: C and I painted the new bay window and outfitted that fine new little sitting room that looks out onto the hill, installed a wall lamp and ordered a single-bed foldout couch for that room, and the mother-and-son electrician team of Carol and Michael Curley--in a mammoth Monday, start of this week--installed new lights over our desks and electric panel heaters in the shop and near the dining room and completed most of the wiring for a generator hookup to run the furnace and the study lights during a power outage--plus C washing the new living room.
16 Aug. cont.—windows, me reworking the roof flashimg on the patio end of the house and repaintimg the west eave, both of us hanging 5 new pics, including Tony Angell's "Courting Ravens" in our bedroom; plus a lot of general puttering. Even so, it's been hard to gain; Michael Curley ran into termites and ants in the crawl-space during his electrical work, so now we face getting an exterminator in here and then one of Einar Johansen's men to do repairs under there—besides which, for all the work we've done on the shop this summer, the door is still unsilled and an absolute tunnel for cold from outside, and I haven't even managed to think about putting glass doors on the fireplace to stop heat loss during the nights this winter.

Carol goes to the dermatologist this morning to have a couple of sun-damage spots taken off her face, and then we're to start on clearing my desk, indeed it and a couple of others. We're both doing well, and prospering financially and in other ways, but the unending busyness of a household we try pretty hard to control is still a bit of a dilemma.

26 Aug.—A week ago I was out on some errand and saw a Seattle Times headline TANKS ROLL IN MOSCOW; now the pieces of the Soviet Union are calving off like icebergs from a glacier. The junta that failed—Marshall Nelson reports that Mitch Olejko of his law firm came up with the tagline "coup lite" for the insubstantiality of the putsch try—looked like ghosts of Brezhnev and his Politburo; Yanaev in particular looked and behaved like the kind of robobureaucrat a degree worse than being an apparatchik, I think the Russian phrase is a chenovnik. For whatever reason, possibly the reluctance of KGB commandos and some key military groups to be the gunsels for a return to hardline rule, the putschists ended up at least two gunshots—Yeltsin and Sobchak—short of cowing the country. In one of the best lines in what has been extraordinarily well-written reporting in the NY Times, Bill Keller said the Russian acronym of the "Committee for the Emergency" coupsters, which I think was VKChP, sounded like a cat choking on a hairball. What shows every sign of the disintegration of the USSR has been moving at an
26 Aug. cont.--astounding pace. With the coup less than a week dead, republics are quitting the USSR right and left—one provincial leader said why not, the center has committed suicide—and with the Communist party poleaxed, the issue suddenly is becoming Russia—Yeltsin—against everybody else, a kind of Yugoslavization of the USSR. What days.

I was interrupted in this yesterday and so today, the 27th, marks the point we've been trying to get this household to all summer. The electrician Michael Curley unexpectedly instantly reappeared y'day afternoon to install a new fluorescent fixture over Carol's desk after the track lighting simply didn't work out for her, and today Doug of Einar Johansen's outfit came and tore the 40-year-old formboards off the footings in the crawlspace, thus ridding us of aging dampening wood that had been attracting the goddamn ants. Y'day morning I at last finished the roofwork, by daubing the perimeter of the skylight fist-thick with tar, and today Carol and I installed the second wall reading lamp in the renovated small room. It has been a ton of work since early June: the new windows, corners of the roof repaired and the eaves painted, the shop cleaned and painted, the window sills painted, new lights in the study, some furniture bought, new edging along the rear of the house, some landscaping done, a hell of a lot of caulking, bookshelves winnowed, some files winnowed and rearranged. At last, though, we can look around this house as it catches the light in its interesting ways and see a great deal of grace.

Nonetheless managed some socializing the past two nights, dinner at Mark and Lou Damborges' (along with their Queen Anne Hill friends Chuck and Nancy Bagley) and last night with Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan, to celebrate their finishing of their housepainting, at Bella Luna. Next Monday, Labor Day, we go to Portland to start our northern California trip and we both seem ready for that getaway.
16 Sept.--Back at work, with less flummoxing than usual. Part of this good mood must be the weather, bright and fine and no load of humidity. There are days here--this is the third in a row--when you think you'd be nuts to live anywhere else. On the other hand, last Thurs. and Fri., first full days back from our Calif. trip, were gray and dragggy.

The trip south as far as Chico and Davis seems to have been a clarifying one, which we needed. We've concluded to try buy a place in Ashland, maybe preferably a lot; cast our lot, winterwise, eventually, with somewhere simply not as rainy as Seattle but without having to be sunnily perfect.

Luckily this house has seemed pleasant to come back to (though we were staggered at the sumptuous yet livable house that Brad and Carol Knickerbocker managed to come up with in Ashland) and its chores less mountainous than they were at the start of the summer. Even so, I did spend the equivalent of a strong half a day slopping sealant onto the rails of the grapestake fence between us and Lee Cochrane.

The trip went well enough, though it got off to a veer at the start when I told C there wasn't much sense taking me to a prospective place to live in 100-degree heat such as Chico and Davis were having and took us out to the southern Oregon coast for a couple of days instead; and we got motelied out after 9 nights. But we liked the looks of Chico, a town with some past and substantiality to it (in contrast to Paradise, which looks like it's been airdropped along a strip road, and Yuba City, which truly does seem to have every franchise America has been able to think up; honest to god, California sometimes seems like fragments of different planets) and kind of cottoned to downtown Davis, though we were seeing it without the swarm of students, and the new housing we looked at there was pure Yuppie Potemkin Village. California is ever interesting, C and I both fond of it even when we're often exasperated or appalled. Duly noted this time: mailbox-like receptacles on neighborhood street corners for return of video casettes; the dippy reggae-rap, performed by an Oriental guy whose only two performing hallmarks were a constant identical grinding of his hips and his chirp of "Respect! Respect every time!" whenever so much as one band clapped in applause of him at Chico State;
16 Sept. cont.--the timewarp Sixtiesness, people looking like the reincarnation of Wavy Gravy. But the agricultural glory of the Sacramento Valley and the rest of the California breadbasket; a stunning produce machine, that whole country.

17 Sept.--Another first day of the rest of my life. Just called Lee Goerner to congratulate him on his new vice presidency from the Macmillan mahatmas and he said he'd been about to call me with the news that Susan Richman has resigned. She's handled the publicity on all 4 of my novels and been one of my favorite persons in publishing as well, so while this is not quite the sea change of Carol Hill going out of my book life, it's quite considerable. Lee wants to talk more about it; he's waiting for phone call from Thomas Pynchon who's blurring a book for him.

18 Sept.--Last night Susan Richman called, wanting to be the first to let me know of her leaving, just as she always wanted to be the earliest to read me a review of any of my books. I would sometimes fake past the fact that an editor or somebody had already called the review to me, but I couldn't on this, and Susan said with her little dip of disappointment, "Oh. I wanted to tell you." Though she won't pinpoint beyond saying she isn't quite sure why it didn't work out with Bonnie, it was Bonnie Ammer's xxx promotion a few months ago from head of marketing to also being in charge of the publicity and art departments that brought Susan to leave after 29 years in the same job; she said the last few months had been "rocky" for her, maintains that while "change is hard for me," this is "good." Susan is greatly more tightly wound than even I could ever dream of being, so I may never know what exact incident precipitated her out of Macmillan. I told her if it would help, feel free to fly out and spend some time with us. She seems, though, to be professionaling her way through this, has lunch dates lined up through the end of October to look for a new job. May she thrive again.

Midsummer weather is back again for 3d day in a row,
18 Sept. cont.--80ish in the city though it's cooler than that here. I am unexpectedly a page or two ahead in the resumption of Earth, and in resolutely taking off this afternoon--ignoring blurb-seeking galleys that are coming in daily, phone calls to be made, chores out of the house--I may have hit on a work rhythm I want to maintain penciled it in for Wed. afternoons ahead until the promo season starts, anyway.

25 Sept.--Back pain, worst in some time, has got my attention. Began in earnest last weekend, likely a combination of resumed regimen of sitting-in-a-desk-chair-and writing and sleeping wrong on it; this is the version with pain or tightness down the back of the leg as the tipped disc pinches the sciatic nerve, so I've been doing exercises and hanging by my hands from the contraption in the shop. Will give it this week and next, then try figure the next step. Part of the problem with this back woe is how goddamned boring it is, restricting usual exercise and activity and making me key the day to back care.

Back or no damned back, I have pecked out 4 pp. so far this week and if I can get a couple more tomorrow and Friday I'd better consider it good.

27 Sept.--Have persevered, by exercises, through what I hope may be the worst of the back pain. By and large have got the real pain up out of the back of my leg into the back, though the leg is still weary and a bit achy.

Awfulness out in the world. In y'day's NY Times was the memoriam ad that HarperCollins ran for Michael Dorris's adopted son Abel, and this morning I sent Michael and Louise all the note I think of: "Our inexpressible regret about Abel. The two of you have shouldered so much in life already; our concern and affection is with you as you bear this, too."

I know no details and don't want to intrude with a phone call, but I greatly wonder if whatever happened to Abel happened in Kalispell, in the wake of the move to Montana.
28 Sept. -- Called Carstensen y'day afternoon, having had to junk my intention of getting over to see him this week, and though the emphysema is eroding what he's physically capable of (which he seems to fully know) he's still full of mordant anecdotes. I don't think anybody ever got around to taping an oral history of Vernon, so I'd better set down at least a few of y'day's Carstensian stories:

--Some mention of the high price of academic books made me tell him I'd just ordered vol. 2 of Dictionary of American Regional English, and that reminded him of a legalistic coup of (in Vernon's view, anyway) dubious pride by his lawyer son Fred. Fred was in on the defense of the tobacco company sued by a woman who claimed she'd never known that cigarettes could be so damaging to her. Turning to DARE, Fred looked up "coffin nail" and cited its century-old (1888, actually) usage. and, Vernon says, quite dazzled his tobacco corporate paymasters and others of the legal team by learnedly citing the state-by-state common usage of "coffin nail"--which is right there in plain sight in DARE's computerized map of the usage (on p. 717).

--Vernon wanted to know if I see the NY Review of Books and when I said no, he launched immediately with relish into the C. Vann Woodward episode he's been watching in those pages. In his review of D'Souza's book, C. Vann said something like--and here Vernon comments that C. Vann must have had his hearing aid turned off to the sound of his own prose--providing minorities a place in the academic world is nothing new, Duke had led the parade in hiring John Hope Franklin to teach black history. Vernon says in a couple of weeks, the cascade of letters hit NYRB, most pertinent -- including one from John Hope Franklin pointing out that he had not been hired to teach "black" history and citing some examples from his Duke days that his professional life there was not free of racial prejudice. C. Vann at the end of the letters wrote that his old friend John Hope must have got up on the wrong side of the bed that morning, but Carstensen says Franklin has told him of considerable snottiness he got, starting as far back as his graduate days at Harvard. I think Franklin's dissertation may have been on an antebellum white family, but whatever it was, according to Vernon he first had to withstand his
28 Sept. cont.—Harvard advisor's suggestion that maybe he'd better write about somebody like Booker T. Washington instead. And Carstensen relays two Samuel Eliot Morison episodes. The first, when Franklin as a student first met Morison and M. looked him up and down and told him his, Morison's, people had always been against slavery. Remembering my own old term paper on Morison and Commager's elite Eastern sneering at Faulkner in edition after edition of their textbook, I like the other Franklin episode even better. One of those Morison-Commager editions blundered on into the civil rights era with a line still in it something like, apropos of Reconstruction, "Sambo had been pacified by..." When the crap at last began to come down on Morison about that, he sent for Franklin—in Vernon's version, actually sent a limousine, maybe sometime when Franklin was visiting Cambridge—and brought him to his house and presented him with a piece of paper he wanted John Hope to sign, to the effect that nothing prejudicial had been intended by the old "Sambo" remark and no offense taken. John Hope told Carstensen: "I did not sign it."

7 Oct.—Back at the Heart Earth ms, after last week of either doing speeches or getting them ready. All went well, though as ever I found the speechwork an exasperating amount of effort, given the time consumed in rehearsals as well as writing. Anyway, Wednesday was the first public reading from Heart Earth, to 550 employees of the King County Library System, and I pretty well nailed that performance, getting a big second round of applause as I tried to sneak out of the room after I was done. Lovely weather that day at Seattle Center, bright and just crisp enough to be comfortable in my light summer blazer; the weather in fact for the past 3 weeks or so, until it began to fray a bit on Saturday afternoon, has been a remarkable Indian summer, day after day of sunshine and 65-76 degrees. The more involved speaking of last week was in Bellingham at the Book Fair there Friday night. No money to speak of, but I did it as a favor to Chuck Robinson at Village Books, and I suppose did myself some good in tendering the constituency, some 250 people turning out to hear my House of Sky speech. And I guess not so incidentally,
7 Oct. cont.--we sold the first-ever paperbacks of Mariah Montana, shipped specially from the warehouse for the event. Did a pretty fair amount of books after my talk--to my indignation, they pronto ran out of Sky the next morning at the official booksigning shindig. C and I were put up at DeCann House bed-and-breakfast, nicely run, though as usual at b&b's I was bed-weary and half-starved by the 8 o'clock breakfast time. Had a little time before my 10:30-12 signing slot Sat. morn--which didn't produce much in the way of selling books anyway--so we went down to the Bellingham marina to G dock where the "Rascal Fair" is moored, a 49-foot sailboat (owned by local people who asked me if they could name it after my book) of beautiful lines and detail. I'm a little appalled that people sometimes--hell, maybe most times--figure it's my boat, but I'm also a little amused that this is clearly the easiest way to "own" a boat, never have anything to do with the damn thing.

12 Oct.--A Saturday at home, with one of Einar Johansen's carpenters coming to weatherize the shop door, and so some time to catch up a bit in the diary. The main note is that as of Thursday, the 10th, I hit a point with the Heart Earth ms and the conditions of my desks where I felt I simply had to stop and spend time reorganizing, and it turns out to have been the beginning of the spacewalking for this book--the point at which I can write anywhere in the book, make things happen wherever they want to in the ms, instead of grinding out pp. of rough draft quota. Some good details began to emerge from my go-through of file cards etc., and some wonderful sentences that'll get inserted as I work onward now. Heart Earth doesn't quite yet have that magical feel of a book instead of a manuscript, but it is getting there.

Extraordinary national day yesterday, the televised Judiciary Committee hearings of Anita Hill testifying against Clarence Thomas. I went over to see Carstensen in the afternoon who'd been watching the hearings (I determinedly hadn't been, needing to keep the Heart Earth mood of progress flowing) and he said he thought Hill had cooked Thomas's goose, in the lurid details and effectiveness of her testimony. That's about the best
12 Oct., cont.—to be hoped for, that this will provide a way for enough senators to vote against Thomas; what a cynical maneuver the Thomas nomination was by Bush.

The good news for the world lately had only a day or two of play, as other stuff stuttered into the news; the stepping-down from tactical nuclear weapons and at last the grounding of those everflying nuclear-armed goddammed B-52s. It has taken the collapse of the USSR and the specter of nationalist-amok republics glomming onto tactical nukes to bring this about, but whatever it took is worth the lessening of nuclear war by accident.

On our homefront, I don't see that I've noted in here the confirming news from HBJ that they intend to re-issue This House of Sky in hardback, by and large along the line of the terms I suggested (primarily, a continuation of the 15% royalty rate). Likely this won't produce any big numbers, either in print run or ultimate royalties, but it's pretty much free money, whatever does come.

Went to Tony and Lee's last night for supper, along with Bill and Marty Holm. Pleasant fairly quiet evening, Tony talk taking a few instant-camera shots of us which showed us all looking sprawled and relaxed; Tony himself was more at ease than I've seen him in a long time, his life at last settling down. Bill Holm is one of my heroes, incredible scholar and artist of coastal tribal art. I gather Bill is probably about 67, his family having come here from Roundup, Montana, in 1937, and he looks a little like a really well preserved cowboy, short, just a hint of a belly; and a trim mustache, small white variety. His hair, though, is Carl Sandburgian, a square-cut white thatch, and Bill's face and hands appropriately enough look carved, weathered into what they've become. Bill is I think about 5' 5", but I noticed his hands are bigger and squarer than my own fairly big square ones; his thumbs and fingers are about half again bigger in diameter than mine. All kinds of tidy strength in that wiry little guy who by the force of his mind and gameness to perform the art that so many people would simply study has made himself into the cosmic expert. Bill still writes so many scholarly papers that it cuts the time he'd like to spend painting, so I asked him what his typical day is like. Told me, well, for
12 Oct. cont.--instance, all he'd got done y'day was to work on his paper for the American Museum of Natural History coastal art show he and Marty are going to in NYC next week; then he thought for a half-moment and added, oh yeah, he had gone to the airport to pick up a caribou skin somebody had sent him. And the day before, somebody had sent him some mountain goat horns etc. to practice on for a horn spoon carving workshop he's going to do in Alaska. Bill seems to me a remarkable bonus, someone who couldn't necessarily be expected to exist, in coastal Indian art--so profound a scholar/artisan he's been able to teach tribal members the art they'd lost.

On the fiscal front, the stock market keeps wallowing so much that Carol pulled $100,000 of her pension money out and into the TIAA bond fund. And I had the eyebrow-raising experience of seeing my Wells Fargo SEP/IRA holding of 400 shares of Nordstrom drop $3400 in one day--the stock fell 6½ points (since it regained almost half that). Really should quit probably playing around with Nordstrom stock, volatile as hell; over the years we've made money on it a couple of times, took a loss on some last year, now this. The other financial move of our week was to buy a $10,000 7-yr T-note, at abt 7.2%; I'm not real keen on tying up money that long, but shorter-term rates are so miserable that we figure we may as well do the best we can, maybe in even fairly small denominations of T-notes, for the time being.

16 Oct.--Rain on the roof, the first such sound since before Labor Day. The long languid spell of weather continued into last night; it was springlike when we came home from Jim Welch's reading at Elliott Bay; then sometime after midnight the wind started roaring. These very first splatters of rain, at 10 until 7 this morn, may in fact not amount to much, even as C and I hope that if it's going to be cloudy it'll provide a good soaking rain.
22 Oct.--Coping, coping. Phil Cook is here working on our electrical system, installing the inverter and batteries we're rigging up to handle power outages. Amid it came Janet Kraybill's call with the travel logistics of my Penguin Mariah tour, and Merrill Burlingame from Bozeman abt a ms history question I'd asked him. Now it's about 3 p.m. and off I go for a haircut.

Snow showers in the Bridges this morn
and white ground a few miles north of
town, toward the Mandan country. Carol
and I will assess at 9 whether we try
some driving around, or stay hunked up
here until the Country Bookshelf signing.
We're at least glad the snow-squall of
suppertime last night didn't keep up - the
snow was coming horizontally on a stiff
wind.

Decey weather aside, this trip has gone
fine in its main event. My bit in Mike
Malone's inaugural ceremony y'day went
over well, and I felt I did it about as
well as I can, on my Spencer Tracy
theory of performance - remember your
lines and try not bump into the furniture.
The ceremonial day was enlivened a bit,
although not as much as Carol & I would
have liked to see, by a small group of
students protesting against Gov. Stan
Stephens' and his 87 cutback of legis-
latively appropriated funds. The students,
a corporal's guard of only 15 or 20, were
chanting "Ban Stan" & "Stephens Out,
Bradley In." On our way to Romney Gym
I fought up for the procession & and I came
up behind Mike & the Commissioner of
Higher Education John Hutchinson, and
Oct. 26 cont. - We were appalled that Hutchison seemed to be suggesting to Mike that the campus police be used against the protesters. Mike said he didn't think the union had the legal right, and as things evolved, the students chanted outside the Student Union as we proceeded in. The Gwu and ex-prof Bill Tidy were walking in front of me & I was offered to swap places with the Gwu to put him on the side of the procession away from the chanting, but Stephens claimed no, the protesters didn't bother him, "they shot at me in Korea" (i.e., the Korean War). He managed to joke about it, telling the head of the regents that he'd sent the students a note saying they didn't know how to spell "Matthes" - the regent's name - right, putting it on their signs as S-T-E-P-H-E-N-S as they had. During the actual ceremony the faculty representative, Arthur Coffin, recited the awful statistics of Montana faculty salaries, etc., Mike made plain the chronic lack of funding, and it's implicit in my remarks was that universities outlast politicians, so the Gwu had a few remarks of clay if they registered on him. Evidently a barometer of his mood is how red his muddy face gets, and it was plenty red even as he joked past the chanting protesters.
In an act of self-rescue I wasn't sure I was capable of this far into a long and dogged year, Friday I put together virtually all of a 4,000+ word introduction for the hardback re-issue of Sky. Felt I simply had to get it done, even though it's not due until into the new year, because one more element has been dealt into the schedule with DeWitt Daggett's landing of the audio cassette rights to A River Runs Through It. If DeWitt doesn't come down with economic panjandrums as he figures out a royalty for me for being the audio reader—he managed to get exclusive rights to the book, which meant he had to bid against New York audio outfits for it—we want to do the recording in December and be ready to launch the cassette just before Redford's movie version comes out next fall. Why Redford hadn't snapped up the audio rights and done a cassette himself, I will never figure out. Maybe it's just chicken feed to him.

Cork Smith of HBJ called last Tues. or so with further confirmation of Sky's rebirth, really to take my suggestion that it be issued next fall, putatively as 15th anniversary of my finishing the ms, instead of waiting for 1993's anniv. of publication. Meanwhile the autumn royalties for Sky (and WBros) came and they're up about a third over last year, $3050 total. There's probably not a lot of dough awaiting in this Sky re-issue, and I'm chancing some hardback returns subsuming the p'back royalties that've been so steady, but this seems so much worth a try...

Back in ostensible reality, Heart Earth, I'm vamping around in the second chapter, trying to have the first 2 chs. in rewritten, pretty-darn-close-to-finality version by the end of this year. May not quite make it on ch. 2 as there're a few gaps to be filled from scratch, but shouldn't be far from done. C has read ch. 1, which I finished rewriting on I guess the week before last, anyway before the Bozeman trip, and thinks it's beginning to sound booklike.

I made basic Bozeman notes in pen while we were awaiting the Saturday booksigning; I think what it came down to was that the audience liked the evident care I'd taken in preparing what I said and the Jeffersonian twist to it, and
Nov. 4--Mike seemed happy to have me on hand (not to mention relieved he got out of the day without demonstrators doing something major to the governor, who in Mike's estimation is "a vindictive sonofabitch"). It actually was one of my phrases that I figured was pretty good but didn't know it was that good that carried the day: the place broke up in applause when I said Montana has had enough nerve to put a guy who writes books actually in charge of something.

That night instead of the hoopla of the dinner dance we sneak off on our own and had dinner with Bill Lang and Marianne Kedington; they seem happy in their new marriage, hurrah for them. Then the book signing at the Country Bookshelf went exceedingly well. Mary Clearman Blew and I co-starred and while we stayed busy enough that we didn't get a chance to visit very much, she seemed in good spirits and remarked that she was glad of this chance to be together as she's always considered me a kind of peer (that is, in the having grown up in the same way, having a lot of the same internal habits, sense). I said yeah, maybe like relatives of the best sort, not actually related. Two notable moments from our bookbuyers. Three women and a kid came up to Mary's side of the table, the youngest woman--late 30ish--asked Mary if she knew her. Mary shook her head, then recognized the boy, who'd been a playmate of her daughter Rachel; these were Mary's nextdoor neighbors from Havre when Mary's marriage was going hideous. Mary straightforwardly told the main woman that she'd recognize the final chapter of her book, then Mary asked the woman how she was doing. She answered with the anthem of women in those marriages: "Just trying to hold it together."

As for my emblematic customer, it was a thin blonde woman in her late twenties who asked if I had really grown up on a sheep ranch. I said sure, and she said been doing some herding herself, which I didn't take seriously until she added, at Siebens--the biggest sheep outfit left in Montana. Asked me if I knew that lambs now were numbered with spray paint instead of the old dip-brands and I laughed and admitted I sure didn't. She then told me she'd been put in charge of the bum lambs at Siebens' last spring, and as she was reading Ride With Me...while she herded, she decided that instead of numbering a certain lamb she'd name her "Mariah Montana" and spraypainted her up
Nov. 4 cont.--accordingly. Came shipping time this fall, her husband and another hand were running the cutting chute and looked down and saw "Mariah Montana" coming—and cut her back, didn't have the heart to send her to slaughter.

Nov. 8—Y'day and today I seem to be going into a kind of hibernation, storing up for the Mariah publicity season that begins with a plane to San Francisco next Monday. I did some semi-decent work on Heart Earth the first couple of days of this week (there's a desert scene or two in ch. 2 I haven't faced yet, and maybe will have to immerse myself into file cards before I can face it) and on Wed. hammered out the intro for Ruth Kirk and Jerry Franklin's book on the ecological web of the Olympic rain forest, but y'day I paid attention to my body and spent some time flopped on the sofa and some other time reading. Even so, a day "off" included the arrival of DeWitt's contract offer on my doing the taping of A River Runs Through It and my riposte letter, and the arrival too of my plane tickets for the Mariah crosscountry trip.

Last night, a time on the town with Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan and Linda's editor at Holt, Marian Wood. First time I'd met Marian, though our correspondence goes back a considerable way, I guess initially about some blurb request from her and then most famously to my lobbing Linda's "The Stillness, The Dancing" poems through the transom to her. Marian is very bright, talky, and has a wonderfully prismatic sense of humor. And she nicely works her craft. On that ostensibly social evening, she slid in a question as to who was my agent, and when we got home, Carol said There's an editor who wants you; know how I can tell? she kept making nice to me (i.e., Carol). She added a couple of chapters I hadn't known in our epic of getting-Linda-published-at-Holt. Said when the packet of poems and my cover letter showed up, she was going to write me and say sorry, she just doesn't handle poetry, but to stay on my good side she figured she had to look at the poems enough to sound knowledgeable (which I had counted on). She read them in bed that night and after about an hour said to herself, oh shit, I have to publish these! Just to make sure she asked Jack Macrae, then the Holt
Nov. 8 cont.—editor-in-chief, to look them over. The day after that, she was sitting next to Jack in some meeting and he began scribbling to her, "What I think about the Bierds' poems is...", then stopped and crossed that out and started over; "They seem to be to be just really..." then crossed that out and just wrote, "I think I'm in love with Linda Bierds." Onward it went from there toward sales conference time, the first since Bruno Quinson moved from Macmillan to become publisher at Holt, and Marian didn't know him and had a very tiny complement of books to show for herself—one book that was a dud and one a nonentity and "THE Stillness, The Dancing." Bruno got her aside, Marian understandably apprehensive; then he told her "Stillness" was the best book on the whole Holt list. Marian claims she didn't even know the topper she was putting on that. At the sales conference she described how Linda's poems had come to her, without specifically naming me, and Bruno later asked her who the transmitting author had been. When she told him me, Bruno lit up from his affection for Dancing at the Rascal Fair his last year at Macmillan.

At Macmillan this week, the major earthquake has been Robert Maxwell's death, in whatever happened on that yacht. There's no telling what will happen in that financial empire, but as far as Heart Earth is concerned I don't feel too badly off, with half the advance banked and the manuscript still in my hands for the next 14 months. We'll see, not only at Macmillan but in the larger account book of the world. The U.S. recession is getting uglier, and while C and I feel we're doing phenomenally well financially, it's hard to know what is safe to do with money.
Nov. 11, aboard United #1721 to San Francisco - About halfway through the flight, uneventful so far; plane only about 1/2 full. I have 3 seats to myself. This is the real start of the Marlin paperback tour - Mill Valley tonight, Berkeley tomorrow night. The to-and-fro from the airport doesn't improve; takes about 2 hrs. from our house to take-off, same amount of time as the flight itself.

Y'day Carol and I went to the Pacific Pipeline open house, an immense affair - huge new warehouse and a big turnout of bookstore people, not many of whom I knew from my book signings - e.g., many of them must be from elsewhere than the 01-5 corridor. Veteran book reps Jon Ranola and Ted Lucia and I all marvelled to each other how Vito Perillo has built Pipeline; we remember when he was selling how-to-grow-marijuana books out of the back of his car.

Crossed paths @ Pipeline w/ mystery writers JA Lance & Mary Dahléim, didn't see any other writers.

MT. Shasta off the wing now; still not much snow on it.
Nov. 13, aboard United 41468 from San Francisco - a real cattle car flight, a smaller plane substituted for scheduled 727 and all seats full with much shuffling around to get carry-on baggage crammed away.

And, the business guy in the seat behind me is punching numbers on his calculator, jarring my seat about like a kid's foot kicking it.

So, travel is no more tawdry than ever. As to the business of this promo tour, all went okay - 50 or so in the Book Depot audience and probably more like a hundred at Cody's last night, plus a good crisp interview by Sunny Waters on KKSF - although I'm a little spoiled by such royal bookstores (and commensurately royal signings and readings) as Elliott Bay & the U. Book Store.

Penguin put me in the Shattuck Hotel in Berkeley, which was OK but no more than that - about one renovation (of the rooms; the lobby etc.) is in decent shape, and the bar is good) short of comfortable. Both Berkeley & San Francisco are site with homeless people - in SF, some of the beggars have signs saying they're AIDS victims, and as gauntly derelict as they look, they likely are. Some also have cats, and their signs plead for $ for the cat's upkeep.


Nov. 13 excl. - Both cities are much dirtier than they used to be. Berkeley in
particular thirsty and rundown in its
streets. I was warned about Telegraph Ave.,
and in fact there was some aggressive
pan handling, but I didn't feel in physical
danger.

Andy Ross himself handled my reading
at Cody's, which surprised me because I
knew he owns the store & does the book-
buying - it turns out that since he split
with his wife Joyce, he's had to take on
the reading series she handled, too. Going
through all that domestic -y - business
turnout has Andy looking like Woody
Allen's evil twin, tense & unshaven. With
all else on his mind, Andy is kind of
hilariouly without the usual screen of
tact, if he even had it in the first place -
I chuckled when we entered the reading
room & Andy said in surprise, "Oh,
there's a crowd!" and again after my
reading when he exclaimed, "That
was good!"

Nov. 14 - Before I go downtown in an hour to do a signing
at Brentano's at Westlake Mall, a few more bits about
the San Francisco trip. At Cody's a goodlooking young
blond guy asked during the question period if I could
recommend a book about Montana's bloody labor history,
and I told him his best bet was to rob Mike Malone's
bibliography in The Battle for Butte. Afterward he
bought a book and came thru the signing line.
Nov. 11 cont.—he was a graduate student, I asked him if he was working on some kind of labor history project at Cal. He said no, he's a longshoreman in San Francisco, "just working on living and dying."

Also in the crowd at the reading were two guys in the front row, one wearing cowboy boots and one ruggedly goodlooking, and I figured them for simply a Bay Area gay pair. I did wonder a bit further when the rugged one closed his eyes throughout my reading and looked like he was zonked out. But came the question period and he snapped right up and had a good question, as did the cowboy-booter. Later in the signing line, they introduced themselves as Jerry and (I think) Tom Hellman and said their father was a Butte guy who was jailed in the 1950's under the Smith Act for being a communist—his name was John Hellman, and the sons either said he was the last person in the US, or in Montana, to be jailed for being a communist.

Carol handled an immense number of chores while I was gone—including returning the microwave oven; we just don't seem to be micro-ing type, kept trying to find anything the damned thing would do better than the way we already do—and found time to have supper with Linda Sullivan and walk around Green Lake afterward.

Last night, though I was a little worn from the cattle-car flight home from San Francisco, we went to Linda Bierds' reading of Heart and Perimeter at Elliott Bay, and she was really terrific. I don't think she stumbled over a single word in all those intricate poems, and she's reading now with wonderful confidence and verve; she always was a good reader, but now she's getting splendid.
Nov 28, Minneapolis airport - Am staying aboard, amid the plane cleaners, for this hour-plus layover. Pleasant seatmate on the flight from Seattle, a young Northwest Airlines mechanic from Anchorage, with an annoying resemblance to Dan Quayle.

In the past 3 days, the stock market nosedived 120 points, a windstorm unseated a 35-foot cown of one of our Sitka spruces and missed the house with it by only 2 feet, and De Witt Daggett & I came to terms on recording A River Runs Through It. Enough, in other words, is going on.

The windstorm Sat. night was sobering, making it clear to C and me that we have to think about trimming or cutting down our big trees out front. The wind, a continuous roar, woke me up about 11 p.m., and as I groggily lay there trying to decide whether to use earplugs, the joyners' yard light next door went out, signaling the power outage that lasted about 12 hours. Soon after the power went, we heard a crash, not an awfully loud one, in front of the house; both jumped up to look by flashlight and found the driveway a wall of spruce limbs, the tip of the fallen tree top extending past the nearest Skyhawk (which I'd prudently pulled in as far as render the carport as possible) and the butt and trunk of the
Nov. 8 cont. - tree hung up in the nine maples in front of the kitchen window, about 7 feet in the air. C & I figured we'd better evacuate the bedroom, too near the big trees, and so hauled out sleeping bags on the study floor to be as far as possible from possible fall. Uneasy night, as we tensed time and again at the roar of the wind & wondered what it would happen next. Terrific rain too, meanwhile.

On my mind as well, & I'm sure C's too, was that this would be the first test of our emergency power system; it would it work? Came dawn, we flipped switches & pronto had the furnace going, lights on in the study and coffee made. Incredibly, we even had Sunday NY Times, which had been blithely laid at the front door around the mound of fallen tree in the driveway. We called Floyd, who's done tree trimming for us before, at about 7:20, and by 10 that morning he & his helper had our downed crown sawed up & cleared away & were on their way to their next job.

As to 2 River, DeWitt reluctantly took my 7½% stopup @ 16,000 copies while I reluctantly took his offer of 5% royalty, so maybe we've managed to cut a fair deal. We're to do the recording the 2nd week in Dec. Last night C & I listened to the recording DeWitt made of Norman
reading the beginning and end of the book a few years ago, and unfortunately I don't think Norman's somewhat shaky and flat version will provide either a lead-in transition for my voice (although maybe DeWitt can work some tape magic) or much of a guide to rhythms or inflections. Ongoing to be interesting to see what this audio project amounts to.

I'm half-beguiled that Robert Redford didn't snap up the audio rights to River along with the movie rights - he could have spent 3 days doing the recording & sold about a million copies - but I suppose it was just chickenfeed to him. To me, though, it's a nice bit of gravy, and it's probably DeWitt's biggest Audio Press venture. As I told him on the phone last night, I'll do my goddamnest to do a good job of River.

So far so good in this 1st-class flying; the seat - & legroom are just about what they ought to be on any flight.
Nov. 19 - Boston, in drafty front of a Waldenwood. We'll see if I sell anything at all, in this dubious venue, but at least the WHO & Monitor radio interviews went well this morning. Am being escorted by highly efficient Sally Cooperstein, and the weather is lovely - 60 in, sunny - so Boston is an amiable enough experience so far.

Nov. 21 (I think), waiting for United Fl. 611 to leave - ground at National Airport in D.C. Y'day's schedule - 2 signings (including a reading) and 4 interviews - is catching up with me now; I'm ready for a nap that I probably won't get until Chicago hotel. Had breakfast this morning at The Tandem: outside, in balmy Nov. weather! - with Noah Adams & Neenaah Ellis, Noah did a 10-city car tour for the paperback of St. Croix Notes - his own idea, a good choice of places such as Dayton, Lexington, Cincinnati, St Paul etc. - so we swapped bookstore stories. Neenaah is freelancing as a radio producer & doing some with it. They're both glad to be back in Washington after ill-fated Minnesota stint; Noah says they used to drive to other cities just to see people who didn't have sameness of Twin Cities residents, & Neenaah says it was like living in one department of a dept. store.
Nov. 22, aboard American 17241 at O'Hare, heading toward an hour behind schedule because of fog. At least we're on an airplane. Original situation was that plane coming from Montreal diverted to Indianapolis and would get here as fog permitted; from somewhere, American produced this plane at another gate.

Enjoyed being in Chicago again with its feel of being a going city and best food of trip last night at Papa Milano's (veal parmigiana, great sauce). But in book-selling terms, it was a dud: only about 20 people for last night's reading at Barbara's Bookstore on N. Wells—manager said it'd been just as paltry at Emily Prager's reading earlier in week.

I nonetheless did one of my best readings ever—despite crowd being probably smallest ever in 15 years—second all-time low established on this trip, along with one book sold at Boston Walden's—including Latham House scene from Sky in celebration of Evanston/Chicago years & Sky's hardback rebirth.

10:15, airborne at somewhere over Dubuque, an evident counter-effect of O'Hare being fogged in was that runways were plentiful for planes going out. Instead of usual stackup in taxiing, this plane taxied out to a runway, revved up & took right off.
Nov. 22 cont. - Even when there's not fog and
locale isn't O'Hare, logistics of travel
are fairly often wonky. After huge day
of interviews in Wash'n, I waited for
5:30 supper I'd carelessly ordered from
Harley Park Hotel's room service, as
Politics & Theme reading was at 7. At 5:45
I called rm service to ask where meal
was & of course was told it was on its way
up which it of course wasn't. At a
couple of minutes before 6 I was just
dialing rm service again in desperation
when knock on door came. I stormed over
and opened it, to be met by a scared-
eyed woman who looked shenan and said,
"I'm sorry I'm late." Well, hell, I couldn't
function in Penn or somewhere any better
than she does here, so there went my ice.

This morning in Chicago, I clearly
had ordered room service breakfast for as
early as possible 6:30, in hope it would
arrive at least by 7. I was just starting
to towel off after a shower, at 6:15,
when there came knocking on door and
a bellman blandly announcing here was
my break/ast.
Nov. 23, aboard NW jet #7, which just got airborne @ 10:40, an hr and 1/4 late in a Minneapolis snowstorm. I'm relieved to be heading home, after fog @ O'Hare yesterday & this morning's 19-degree weather & blowing snow in Twin Cities. And glad to be in 1st class, which provides some space but still is no picnic — kept my big corduroy winter coat on until takeoff, clipping in when stewardess checking boarding passes was wearing a full-length coat & heavy gloves. (There was snow inside the boarding ramp.)

Won 2 out of 3 in Twin Cities moon signing @ Borders was slow - 80 books sold, but 1 hour. Public Radio interview for Midday show next week went well & will air to a 5-state area & last night's reading @ Hungry Mind was to a standing-room crowd & produced a good signing afterward. Gathering from reports, that a 'respect at "The Mind" is when owner David Knowsky himself is on hand for a reading, & 2nd year in a row there was David in his own shaggy - actually, disheveled - self, he even conversed with me about having traveled to Montana with his new wife. And Mary Healey, who's now running readings, is good & competent, an improvement over guy of last year.
Nov 23 cont. - The Mind is a fine bookstore, buzzing with activity (downright clattering, now that it has added)[Tyre of Contents , restaurant] I require a lot of praise by reading writers to ignore. Background decimals - people in audience told me last night they could hear fine, even if I couldn't. I read the BB scene at end of Hannah's 1st ch. to then opening of Heart Earth, as a test light for Elliott Bay performance this Tuesday where I want to be as good as I can.

Again was accosted there. Twin Cities prose stuff by Isabel Keating and as last year we clicked as a kind of Calvinist Butch-o-Sundance team, getting places exactly when we were supposed to, Isabel briefing me on interviewers & bookellers & me passing along to her scuttlebutt & I'd picked up from Boston & D.C. sources. Not coincidentally, she's also a favorite of Michael Dorris -- says she got a nice boost in business from Michael's praise of her in a Publisher's Weekly piece - so I can say why, all of us liking inside boy of books big, getting a kick out of professionalism when we do it or see it done.

Had dinner last night with Gail & Janks. Now that Gail has sold her bookstore, she's only modestly thinking of starting a
Nov. 27—The morning after Elliott Bay, the morning before Thanksgiving: celebrations abound. Last night’s reading at Elliott Bay bookstore went wonderfully, the audience of 245 (the maximum 175 paid attendance and another 70 in the cafe) responding well to the first BB scene in Mariah and, as Carol said, rapt when I then read from the Heart Earth manuscript. And in the question session I was quick and loose and quick, at home in the El Bay surroundings and amid so many of the Montana diaspora in the audience. My God, I was even asked how the US economy is doing, and managed to describe the
Nov. 27 cont.--slowing-down sensation of the country I thought I noticed worsening day by day as I traveled the East last week and concluded, re jobs and income risk, with C's 1st law of wingwalking: don't let go of anything until you've got hold of something else.

Before the reading we had dinner w/ Mark & Lou Damborg at Il Tiratzi Carmi a block south of El Bay, and while we all liked the look of the place, C and Mark's food wasn't as good as it should have been (the place is pricey), Mark thought the wine was a bit off--so much for one more try at solving where to eat in the El Bay vicinity.

Y'day morning I taped an interview on country-and-western KMPS which will air some Sunday in Dec. Homework paid off, in that I'd sent the interviewer, Don Riggs, pages from the trilogy where I'd made up songs, leading up to the c-&-w group The Roadkill Angels in Mariah. Riggs, a W.C. Fields-nosed caricature of an Irish uncle, made no pretense in the interview of having read the book--"What's it about?" he honestly asked--and so the c-&-w music angle gave him something to lead toward. Talk about chainsaw professionalism: I was about 5 min. early for my scheduled 9:30-10 slot, intending to go to the bathroom before sitting down with Riggs; but no, the receptionist instantly called him and here he came, led me to a studio, fired up the equipment, questioned me off the top of his head and gave his trademark infectious chuckling for spice, and by the time he'd smoothed his way into the sign-off of the interview, the nonstop session was within a hairsbreadth of an exact 6 minutes, as allotted in airtine. I was on my way out of the building by 9:37.

Also since the last diary entry--my lord, this is a busy time--was a surprisingly decent signing at the 11th & Pike Waldenbooks and a very productive one at the NCTE conference. Dan Lundy, the academic marketing director at Penguin, met me in the registration area of the Seattle convention center and said I had a crowd waiting. Oh, sure, I said, thinking he was kidding. No, he said, there're 20 or so people on line. And so there were, and a good number after them, of teachers taking the chance to buy Mariah for half-price. Before long
Nov. 27 cont.—Craig Lesley came by, on hand for his Dell anthology Talking Leaves, and pretty quick here came Shawn Wong, whose anthology The Great Aieee has been published by Penguin. I told them I felt culturally deprived, not being an anthology editor. Then here came Jack Prelutsky, the very funny children's book writer. So, both Walden's and NCTE, which I anticipated were going to be grim chores, were good.

Dec. 6—I wish the past week hadn't got away from me, diarywise, but it did. Miraculously, I did get Tues. and Wed. in on the Heart Earth ms, doing bits of rewrite in the opening chapter. But otherwise the week has gone to general busyness: recuperating a bit on Monday after the strenuous Portland schedule (including a drive home that turned hideous an hour north of Portland on Sunday night, when an accident ahead slowed traffic to one long dangerous accordion traveling 5-15 mph for about an hour) in heavy rain, going through A River Runs through It to pencil in the rhythms and emphases for the audio reading I'll do of it next week, beginning to total the year's finances for my pension plan report. Amid it all, quite a quantity of diplomacy with Olson Furniture to get our August-ordered and promised-by-Thanksgiving sleeper couch delivered; I at last cajoled them into putting itm onto the truck when it was delivering to Whidbey Island and dropping it off with us on the return, yesterday—Thurs—afternoon, capping off probably six phone calls to Olsons since Monday. The sleeper completes the little bay-window room at the back of the house, which now looks very spiffy indeed, a real gain for this house this year. Also, I surprised myself yesterday by cobbled together our Christmas letter, featuring Brian Basset's "Adam" comic strip in which the baby's springy toy goes "doig doig doig" while sproinging and employing Happy Holidays in a typeface I scissored out of the fashion section of the first NY Times Magazine I came to in the pile; Carol similarly this morning zipped through her 102 course syllabus for next quarter—we evidently can go like hell when we have to.
Dec. 6 cont.—I'm just back from the penultimate book-signing for the Mariah paperback, at the U Book Store, and it went well enough, a line for 20 or so minutes, then sporadic people, and meanwhile I signed up a ton of books for the store's special table of autographed books. Had a bonus bit of auld UW lang syne when Andy Johnson, now a govt documents librarian who was in the NW Collection when I began on Sky and Winter Bros, was chatting with me and I asked, isn't that Georgia Kloostra over there? It was indeed Georgia, the grandly generous newspaper librarian who dug stuff out for me and turned me loose in whatever holdings she had, back in that same era as Andy. Tomorrow, I will Cross the Bridge—always spoken that way in the environs of Lee Soper at the U Book Store, since Lee once told me in his most ambassadorial tone, "Tom Wolfe wouldn't Cross the Bridge"—to the Bellevue branch of the U Book Store, where I usually outsell the U District store. And that's it, for the '91 bookstore tour.

Portland: went better than I dreamed it could. Looking Glass as ever was only middling, but I think they do sell-through the signed books I leave, and Powell's was a strong signing, the Powell's in Beaverton I think even better (about a 45-minute constant line, many people buying the whole trilogy), and busy again this year at the Oregon Historical Society cattle call, I'm pretty sure over a hundred books sold. Along the way Carol and I swanked it up in the Heathman, had dinner there with Craig Lesley and Kathy Stavrakis—Kathy gave me an immense compliment when she reported that Craig read through the Rascal Fair blizzard scene I'd sent them for their western anthology, didn't say anything for a moment, then said, "The sonofabitch can sure write"—and then lunch before the OHS shindig with Bill and Dorothy Stafford. Thank heavens they took the initiative and called the hotel for us, as we hadn't managed to line up anything with them and would have been sheepish about trying it at the last minute that way. But Bill and Dorothy are perky as the devil—dual devils, actually, in their cute but with-it personas—which greatly gladdened C and me, as there'd been a two-year interval since we last saw them and as best we can figure, Bill must be in his upper 70's. Anyway, they were bubbling
Dec. 6 cont.—with being just back from Poland, where the USIA had toured them for Bill to do readings etc. They had a glorious time, and are off to a Miami gig soon, and so on. Bill always likes to talk a little writing business with me, so he asked who I could recommend to read. I told him Ismail Kadare, particularly Chronicle in Stone, which was new to him, and The All of It, which he didn’t know about either, and he in turn touted Primo Levi to me, whom I should indeed read more of—particularly The Periodic Tables as Bill specified. Then Dorothy and Carol went off to our fi room—it turned out they spent much of the OHS shindig going around together, Dorothy evidently getting a kick out of Carol and regaling her with the inside skinny on sundry people present, including a refreshing lambasting of Tom Vaughn after we’d heard every possible (and probably mutually deserved) lambasting of Dr. Trampusch as his did dud successor at the OHS—and Bill and I sauntered over to start signing books. Along the way Bill told me a nifty anecdote he’d heard from an inkeeper he knows on the Oregon coast, of a Kansas woman guest who’d come to see the ocean for the first time, went and had a look, came back and told the inn man she wouldn’t be needing the room any more—“It’s (the ocean) not as big as I thought it’d be.” Quite a Staffordian moment as we were at lunch in the Heathman, too, when a young man named Tod came over and shyly but bravely asked if he was Bill Stafford, he’d seen him in a video. Then Bill introduced me and the student blinked and said he’d done a paper on me. I believe Bill rightly gets a lot of this, as the time he told us of when he was in Cannon Beach when a young waiter led him back to meet his dishwashing girlfriend and said simply, “He wrote ‘Ask Me.’” Aye, Bill. What the river says, that is what I say.

9 Dec.—I hadn’t intended this propinquity, but apropos of the above line, this morning I begin the audio reading of A River Runs through It. 7:25 now, DeWitt likely on his way from the Edmonds motel. It’s also the morning after Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia shattered what was left of the USSR, and we’ll see if the tanks roll
9 Dec. cont.--this week as DeWitt and I tackle River. Also an extensive account in the NY Times this morn of Maxwell's diddling every account he could get his hands on in his last weeks, which points more and more to the probable sell-off of Macmillan. Fractured times.

13 Dec.--Friday the 13th notwithstanding, today DeWitt and I nailed the finale of A River Runs through It. We shall see if this reading is something I'm remembered for. Certainly the majority of it isn't a virtuoso performance, but DeWitt and I both were busting our guts--indeed sometimes trying altogether too hard--to do credit to Norman's beautiful piece of work, and there are parts of it--the confrontation between Norman and Jessie and to my surprise, some of the fishing instruction parts--that I gave what I hope are distinctive Montana rhythm and emotion. Then there was this morning's run of aces. Yesterday, Norman's tricky paean to Paul catching his final fish, full of electrical metaphors and probably Browning-like oblique rhythms, gave me a hell of a time. The hour before DeWitt showed up this morning at 8, I went over that section and the book's finale, totaling 8 or 10 pages, remarking emphases and word units and found that the rhythms DeWitt had wanted from me were still in my head. So when we started recording about 8:15 at the nice little studio loaned to us at Shoreline College (after unpromising omens--a guy driving out of Shoreline in the wrong lane just as I was turning in, and having to search around the Shoreline library to find an unlocked door), I hit what felt like a comfortable stride, and could tell by DeWitt's lack of interruption and coaching that this felt like a good take to him too. We just kept going and at the end, DeWitt took off his earphones, blinked twice at me and said, "Wow!" I sprawled across the recording table toward him, the entire upper half of me probably oozing into a grin, and said, "How about that?" With another quick tense break or two, trying to stay keyed up, we swept back to the opening of the book and re-did the first 22 pages in to have it in the same "on" voice I'd had at the end of the book. DeWitt was obviously happy and relieved, though I felt the sessions all week were
13 Dec. cont.—pretty good and sometimes quite fine. But after we finished up today and came home here for lunch, I found out why he was particularly relieved, and for that matter why I'd half-sensed a pickiness, an almost overexertion, on his part this time that I hadn't remembered from our other two cassette projects. Put simply, Robert Redford. Ten days or so ago, I guess pulling his head out of the movie-ing of River or chitchatting with John Maclean or something, Redford heard of the recording project and notified DeWitt he'd be interested in being the reader. As DeWitt says, the commercial implications were big enough that he had to consider Redford, although I sure as hell would've been terminally pissed off at DeWitt if he'd made that choice after he and I had reached an agreement and I'd wedged time out of my schedule for this stint of recording. It turns out that my ruthless scheduling turned the tables my way. Redford, overbooked on projects as ever, couldn't do the recording any time soon, and DeWitt accordingly decided to go with what he calls the literary aspect and the integrity of River and stuck with me. I truly missed one of the great lines of my life after DeWitt 'fessed up to this. When we'd hit the part of River where Norman [redacted] cites what his father was reading in Greek in the New Testament, DeWitt had pulled down his headphones with an uh-oh look and said, "We've got a [redacted] problem, how's your Greek?" I raised an eyebrow at him and, primed by Greek's similarity to the Russian alphabet I know, said, "Lambda-omicron-gamma-omicron-sigma, logos, good enough?" Out of which I should have told him, "Goddamn Redford wouldn't've read Greek for you!"

That little near-sideswipe from celebritydom aside, it was good to work with DeWitt again and I learned considerable from him in this circumstance of reading somebody's stuff besides my own. Such as, the technique of arcing some sentences instead of word-by-word rhythmning through them, and somewhat similarly, brightening the ends of sentences with up-emphases where my normal inclination might be to declaim down. Norman's final phrase in the next-to-the-last graf, for instance, I did as "and the hope that a fish will rise" instead of the more solemn "and the hope that a fish will rise." If this recording has
13 Dec. cont.--any merit it's probably the blend of DeWitt and me; the reading undoubtedly gains by not being as "performed" as I'd tend to do, as I'm used to in bookstore readings, but neither can it be "simply read" to the extent DeWitt often advises; the socko session this morning I'm sure will reflect a vocal emotion by me, a kind of loving concern for Norman's story and its characters, that is what makes it really work.

18 Dec.--This must be the Doig version of time off, tinkering as I did yesterday by, as I told Carol, curating her--transferring a couple of boxfuls of her childhood pics and memorabilia into acid-proof boxes, to make space in the inner room for more book storage. She kidded in turn that inasmuch as I now know more about her past than she does, how does it look? Told her it looked pretty good, she seems to have been active, happy; also there's wonderful evidence of her ability to focus, as in her WWII collection of autographs and military trinkets.

Wanted to put down here some further info about the River audio project. For future reference, it seems to me that three through-lines of performance are involved in a good reading: timbre, pace, and speed. Pace I take to mean the rhythm and emphases that can be brought out of the writing, while expanded as well as the larger section-by-section variations so that every part of the book doesn't sound like every other part, while speed is the rate of the speaking voice, the modulation of quicker or slower. Also wanted to note my phone call on Dec. 7 to Norman Maclean's old fishing buddy, the fly-tier mentioned in the book, George Croonenberghs. In marking up my reading "script" of the book before DeWitt came to do the recording and in thinking ahead to possible interviews etc., I got curious about the actual fate of Paul Maclean, remembering that I'd heard he actually was killed in Chicago instead of Montana etc. I called Bill Kittredge, to draw on what he'd heard when he and Amick were thick with Norman during their River script-writing try, and he said Norman had indeed told them Paul's death was in Chicago, but Bill thought it'd been some time after the setting of the story, maybe even in the '50's; he thought too that Norman had gotten Paul some kind of a job, maybe in public relations at the U. of Chicago, and then
18 Dec. cont.--not had too much to do with him. More to the point than my call to Bill, though, I remembered I'd glancingly met George Croonenberghs, probably at the Welch's big party a night of the Who Owns the West conference in May '79 (which was where G and I met Norman), and so I dialed Missoula information for any Croonenberghs' listing, figuring I'd at least gain the proper pronunciation of the name for the River reading, and to my surprise the listing still was for George, not any later generation. His wife Jean answered the phone, said she'd get him, and in a few minutes George himself, who I figure must be well into his 80's, came on the line sounding fresh and no more than 60ish. I took it as a wonderful omen, too, that he'd come to the phone from tying flies. He confirmed that Paul had been "beat to death" in Chicago but that it actually was in the spring of '38 as Norman has it in the story--George remembered it being springtime when his father told him about Paul's death, and when George couldn't come up with the actual obituary of Paul he thought he had, he went out to the Missoula cemetery and called back ('C took the call later that day) with the dates off the Maclean gravestones: Paul Davidson Maclean 1903-1938, the parents John Norman Maclean 1862-1941 and Clara Davidson Maclean 1873-1952, and then the info about Norman, whether from the stone or not I don't know--born Clarinda, Iowa, Dec. 23, 1902, d. Aug. 2, 1990. George related that his father had bought the old parish "manse" of the Macleans, at corner of Pine and Stevens (I think he said Stevens now is Ryman St) and ultimately had Missoula's first gas station on that site. Said he'd begun fishing with the Macleans early, "carried the reverend's basket," learned to finish off the tying of the reverend's flies; also said he later fished a lot with Paul and didn't know of his "problems" until the final year or so. He believes fishing was "a pressure relief" for Paul and that the move to Chicago--George used the word "enticed" to describe Norman's persuasion of Paul to Chicago, although I don't think he meant it damningly--did Paul in by taking him away from that outlet for himself. I asked George what Paul looked like, he said he was about the same height as Norman (thus not much more than 5'6" or so, not the 5'10" description in River) and heavier, fuller in the face. The Croonenberghs had a Seeley Lake connection with the
18 Dec. cont.—Macleans as well as a Missoula one; they had the cabin just north of the Macleans', thus making the extraordinary lineup of families there the Kochs (Elers Koch, of early Forest Service reknown), the Macleans (Norman retaining that cabin and summering there well into his 80's) and then the Croonenberghs; George says they all shared an ice house. Remembering our visit to Norman at Seeley Lake when he hummed around fixing us a drink before lunch and Peter Koch's memory of Norman humming as he fished at the shore of the lake, I asked George and he said yes, Norman was always humming away tunelessly that way, "it got kind of monotonous." I hope I can remember, next time we're in Missoula, to get in touch with George and see if he'd take us out to the Maclean headstones and show us the part of town they all lived in.

26 Dec.—Christmas '91 is history, and it took the USSR with it. Gorbachev's resignation yesterday left him as a kind of second Kerensky, the forces he unloosed leaving him behind. There's utterly no telling what's going to happen next, but at least the Cold War came to a non-nuclear end, thanks largely to Gorbachev.

On our own twig of the planet, we did holiday double-headers both on the 24th—keeping with tradition in stepping across the street to the Lankfords' annual mammoth open house, then Linda Bierds and Sidney Kaplan coming for Xmas Eve dinner—and the 25th, when we went to the Rodens' for lunch and then had Margaret Svec, Burt Weston and Linda Sullivan here for dinner. All was affable, all was bright. Linda B. was hilarious in describing going to her first UW English Dept. faculty meeting, where, max as she said, they discussed whether they were going to talk about the selection of a new chairperson. At the Rodens, John was hilariously grumpy when presented with quiche for lunch—"I thought we were going to have waffles!"
That title section of my first book is the archway of words to the Montana
of my mind. Like many another of this state's sons and daughters, I was propelled
away from this home earth in search of a living—and since the last of my summers
here as a hay hand who, when the first drop of rain hit a windrow of alfalfa,
would scoot to the bunkhouse to read Faulkner—since those hired hand days, I
have been to wherever I could best harvest words, in Illinois and Seattle,
in London and Scotland. By the time, sometime next year, when I finish my seventh
book—about a Montana-hearted young woman who was propelled from here to the
Arizona desert by World War Two; a young woman who happens to have been my mother—
I will have written books about the west of America from Kalalaka to Cape Flattery,
and from Sitka, Alaska, to Phoenix, Arizona.

(remarks at Montana Governor's Arts Award ceremony, prefaced by reading
title section of This House of Sky, Helena, Feb. 7, 1991)
And as I have come and gone through this archway of words, my hope is that I have been able to re-populate the Montana of the mind with some citizens/a lot more interesting than a failed hay hand turned word hunter—some of them my own family brought home from memory, some of them such as Jick, and Beth and Varick, and Angus and Adair, and not least, Mariah, the McCaskills of the Two Medicine trilogy who are the rambunctious progeny of my imagination.

Tonight, with this honor that is so generously being given to me here, I feel that this award also is honoring all of them—all of us, within our houses. of sky.
I figure I get brought home to Montana on occasions such as this to say things that current Montanans are just too naturally modest to say. So, let me live up to that, right away, by pointing out that Montana surely would have been Thomas Jefferson's favorite child.

Of course, it's particularly easy to get away with saying that in the general vicinity where one of the Missouri's headwaters happens to be named the Jefferson the River. But on an occasion when Montana by choosing Mike Malone to head this university has had enough nerve to put a guy who writes books actually in charge of something—with your indulgence, Mike, let's invoke a little Jeffersonian patrimony for this treasured state.

(remarks at Mike Malone's inauguration as president of Montana State U., Bozeman, Oct. 25, 1991)
"That original do-it-yourself carpenter of statehood" was the President who insured America a future west of the Mississippi River with the Louisiana Purchase—assured that there would be Jefferson's children, states such as Montana. The Thomas Jefferson who dreamed big and yet tended to the architectural details of every building when he founded the University of Virginia was the exact Jefferson who sent his personal secretary Meriwether Lewis to join with William Clark to achieve the West's, and Montana's, greatest exploring expedition. And it was the Monticello farmer Jefferson's belief in yeoman agriculture that was embodied in the homesteaders' settlement of so much of the northern West, with Montana far and away the foremost homestead state.
And so if this part of the country is more than a little Jeffersonian in origin and inspiration, not surprisingly is it Jeffersonian in the magnitude of its contradictions as well. A rural region of glorious open space, constellated with cities where those of us in the Montana diaspora have gone to find work. A roaming ground for individualism, and America's most fertile area of communitarianism in the form of Hutterite colonies. A dominion of nature, where man's marks have too often been ruinous. Time and again, the compelling Jeffersonian vision westward has had to blink the hard facts of drought, distance, Depression—the opposing proposition that as a scholar of the Great Plains, Carl Krenzel, once put it, "a humid-area type of civilization cannot thrive in the semi-arid American Plains without constant subsidy or, lacking this, without repeated impoverishment of the residents."
Not the least of the challenges to a university that will help take Montana into its future is to look both at the face of the land and into the dreams of its landsmen and landswomen.

So, Mike, I get a terrific kick out of the fact—although you're probably entitled to some mixed emotions about it yourself—that a historian now gets to enter the history books he's been writing. In the year 2001 when you and Lang and Roeder do the next revision of your textbook—Montana: A History of Two and One-Tenth Centuries—there's going to be the Malone era of MSU to be written about, isn't there.
But maybe Thomas Jefferson is the pertinent spiritual kin there, too. When
he chose his own epitaph, Jefferson didn't bother to include that he had ever been
President of the United States—but he was proud enough to put it down in stone
that he had founded a university.
(intro to Elliott Bay bookstore reading, 11/26/91)

The only problem with being one of Rick's Golden Oldies and showing up here just about annually is to have fresh stuff to read. You people can listen faster than I can write. Rick and I decided that maybe I might as well read a shortish section from Ride with Me, Mariah Montana--definitely one I did not read here last year--to justify our existence to my paperback publisher, Penguin, and then move on to a piece from manuscript, a short test flight of the book I'm working on now. That should still leave a little time for questions afterward, in case anybody wants to know whether I think Norman Mailer's new novel should have a gray cover or a red one.
Dear J & J—

I thought I'd write you on a cloudy Tucson day, just so you don't think we're pampered beyond repair. On the other hand, we've seen rain only once since leaving Seattle.

Didn't see snow in Montana, either, to our considerable relief; the Governor's Arts Award a couple of years ago coincided with both the Alaskan Express blizzard and a runaway train blowing up in Helena. Nothing of either sort scathed us, we just leaned back and had fun in balmy 40-degree weather. The guy, who in political terms I wouldn't be able to agree with on the time of day, proved to be surprisingly good at handling a ceremony; must have been his background in broadcasting, albeit that was in Havre! All 5 of us recipients properly got a little emotional but nobody too much, and then at the reception afterward were tons of people we knew, including Jay and Linda Doig (the Ringling ones). That same weekend, the local librarians piggybacked MontanaAt launch of the Center for the Book onto all the guy's art stuff that was going on and we met the Library of Congress guy who thought up the Center for the Book idea, though damned if I can remember his name; so as usual, we were neckdeep in librarians.

Speaking of which, the U. of Arizona library has been a delight. Logically laid out, still using a card catalogue (the Arizona State U. Library I used in Tempe lack both those virtues), and unfussy. The guy in charge of borrowers' cards asked Carol whether she had a letter from Showeliee attesting to her sabbatical, and when she said she didn't have it with her right then, he shrugged and tapped her out a rare's card anyway. Our first day here we went to a lumber yard and got the makings of a door desk, and it now groans under the weight of Carol's readings in Southwest lit and my WWII-in-Arizona research stuff.

As to life here in the old retirement home, it's been just deadly so far but our cover of anonymity got pretty badly blown this morning with the enclosed article. We left before dawn to watch the start of a hot air balloon race at the edge of town, and by the time we got back around 8 a.m. a copy of the clipping was already up on the bulletin board here. We'll keep on trying to dodge the calendar activities—actually we're busy enough that it should be no problem—and we adamantly are NOT undergoing any two-hour Madison-House-like mealtimes down in the dining room, so "winter visitor" status here in The Forum is really serving us well. The view of the Santa Catalina Mts. from here at the typewriter, in this top-floor apt., is the best in Tucson, the building is handsomely done in Southwesty pink and turquoise-tile trim and Spanish red-tile roof, it's quiet, and where the hell else can we be the youngest folks on the premises any more, huh?

Politics down here would confirm all John's diatribes, or, observations. You've maybe noticed that the Phoenix cops ran a sting on a bunch of state legislators. It looks like utter entrapment, on utter silliness who went for the hook, line and sinker. The weekly arts paper here in Tucson says, "The bad news is that the outside world shuns us and our state government is virtually powerless to act. The good news is that the outside world shuns us and our state government is virtually powerless to act."

Oh, yeah: Warthogs and other fighters practice all day long, overhead down here, and the whole damn state has a yellow ribbon around it.
Feb. 16, '91

Dear Ann and March—

Cloudy today—see, Tucson isn't utter paradise after all. It is pretty pleasant, after our slightly shaky start here (we drove down from Phoenix in a howling dust storm, with scads of tumbleweeds rolling across the freeway, and it took us three tries at motels here to find anyplace quiet; the Ghost Ranch Best Western where I cooked this stationery), and we've been working mornings and going out for mild desert hiking in the afternoons. This must have been a terrific place when Tucson was, say, 75,000; now that it's ten times that, a lot of strain is showing, in the road system, the water supply (which almost unbelievably is a municipal system drawing on wells; in this desert?), a near-bankrupt and therefore pricey power system, etc. On the other hand, Phoenix is probably 20 times bigger than it has any right to be, so Tucson by comparison looks like the pickoff Arizona.

The really good news of our sojourn has been how pleasant and usable the U. of Arizona has proved to be. The librarian in charge of borrowers' cards asked Carol whether she had any letter attesting to her sabbatical, and when she said she didn't but could get one, he shrugged and tapped her out a borrower's card. And these "retirement" digs are working out fine. This place, The Forum, has a terrific view of the Santa Catalina mountains I get to look at from here at the typewriter, it's nicely done in Southwesty pink and turquoise-tile trim, it's quiet, and where the hell else can we be the youngest people around any more?

The, umm, slight side trip to Helena was a marvelous three days, beginning with the fact that it didn't snow; in fact, Helena's annual sled-dog race had to be ceremonially started on bare pavement and then everything packed up and re-started up near the Continental Divide where there at least was an iced-over slalom trail to run on. The guy, who in political terms I wouldn't be able to agree with on the time of day, proved to be capable of handling a ceremony pretty damn well—has some background in broadcasting. All 5 of us recipients properly got a little emotional but nobody too much, and then at the reception afterward were people from every phase of my life since the first grade. There also were Center for the Book doings that weekend which I pitched in on, and we met an ex-Montanian named Peter Koch who now does classy hand-set printing in Berkeley (in the exchange of business cards, he was blown away by your design of mine, March) and for fully 24 hours afterward I dreamed of the Doigs and Nelsons going in together on a hand press and crafting exquisite little editions which we'd then sell for a bazillion dollars each...

You've maybe noticed the latest in what seems epidemic political sleaze here, the sting that the Phoenix cops ran (can you imagine the Olympia cops running a?) on the state legislators. It looks like utter entrapment, on utter slimeballs who fall for it hook, line and sinker. The Tucson arts weekly summed it up: "The bad news is that the outside world shuns us and our state government is virtually powerless to act. The good news is that the outside world shuns us and our state government is virtually powerless to act."

Bit of business, Ann: please note for the checking account (besides the 2 checks-for-deposit you sent) $300, Feb. 11, MT Gov's Award. Hope you're not buried yet under our Vesuvian mail. love all around,
BLAZING: Members of the Black Eagle Volunteer Fire Department extinguish a fire Tuesday afternoon that destroyed the sedan belonging to John Hemminger of Chester. Hemminger, who said he was moving from Chester to Dillon to work, said the car motor caught fire as he was driving about three miles north of Great Falls. Initial attempts by Hemminger and passing motorists to put out the fire appeared successful, but the fire reignited in dry grass beneath the vehicle, spread to the gas line and destroyed the car and its contents within minutes. Hemminger said all he had left after the fire were the clothes he was wearing.