

1 Jan. '95--Fine blue dry weather, the past several days, and we've been walking a couple of stints a day in it, Green Lake before dawn--spectacular, almost desert-like light in the sky by a little after 7--and then the 2+ mi. around our "block" after lunch.

This morning, we were the first sit-down customers in the reliably mediocre Urban Bakery across the st. from Green Lake. The place outdid itself--our lemon poppyseed muffins and decaf were actually good.

Other rituals of the season have been going on around us. Next-door neighbor Peris Joyner this afternoon revved up his spluttery little Austin-Healy, which appears only on occasions like the first day of summer etc., and took his young daughters for a tooling around the n'hood. Across the street the Lankfords have lovely little candlelight-like Xmas lights in a couple of bushes at their driveway, and day and night we look out their and enjoy. Last night, New Year's Eve, our own current tradition, determinedly staying home along, eating a good meal (rib roast) and having a glass of wine or two, conking out gently by the fireplace for a while and then going to bed.

2 Jan.--Another blessed blue day, in this unexpected splendid tapestry of year-end weather. This is the kind of crisp dry chilly clarity that C and I remember from our early winters here--memory says we had 10 days of it in a gorgeous row, one start of January--and that we've missed in wetter winters.

I'm just now (9:15) back from walking 4 laps of the park, and will plunge back into ms revise, but thought I'd first use the sumptuous sense of good weather and a new year to jot here. I'm rewriting here and there in Bucking the Sun's big ch. 2, which is what I'm best at, by considerable, and so the days go interestingly; I began dabbling at the chapter on Christmas Day, using the time before we went to dinner at the Rodens'. Meanwhile C went off to today's incongruous start of the quarter--everyone and everything else is on vacation today, to make up for y'day's holiday-on-a-Sunday--in good spirits. We tidied the house and our desks and the property a little during the Xmas break, and creatures of increment that we are, thought that was pretty nice.

6 Jan.--This morning between my departure for the Kinko photocopy shop @ 5:45 and getting back home a little before 8, the clear weather ended. From stars "All present and accounted for" as Stacy Schiff's nifty new bio of St. Ex tells me he'd have said, to raw, gray and grungy. Linda & Syd are coming tonight to go to the Provinces with us, and C and I are looking forward to the lift in spirits they always bring. Both of us are doing fine, but as usual, working harder than ditchdiggers.

The manuscript batch I took to Kinko's this morning stood about five inches high, of glued-together revised pages, and after I hand-fed and gradationed darker or lighter settings for every page--part of the price I pay for being such a technological primitive--I came home with 6 spanking new copies, 289 pp. each (some of those pages partials, added bits done in revise), of the first two chapters of *Bucking the Sun*. This version, which is the one that will go off to NY when I finish tidying the next two ~~xxx~~ chapters (another 3 weeks, probably), are pretty much the work of going-through that I began on Christmas, and finished about 4 o'clock y'day. There's some damnably hard writing in it--the page of description/comparison of Rhonda and Rosellen took all of one day--but other sections needed only isolated word work. How good or not it is I really can't tell yet, as the narrative structure I've chosen for this book is so insanely hard, telling eleven characters' stories simultaneously and eddying their past, such as what's wrong between Hugh and Meg, backward through it as well. Now I wish I had the next 2 ch. revised, so that I could then wish I had the next several ch. written.

An odd flurry of Columbia River galleys lately. First there was Bill Dietrich's, which because it seemed a solid workmanlike job I did a blurb for. Then came Richard White's, which I haven't looked at yet but will need to because of the intellectual fireworks Richard always sets off. Then came Robin Cody's book of canoeing and just as I was saying huh uh, no way, C opened it up and said, this is really written. So, probably I'm giving 3 Columbia blurbs; anybody wants to read about the damn river, they have to get past me on the back cover.

8 Jan.--8:50 Sunday morning, raining, raining. A deliberate day of tinkering, mild desk chores, likely lunch at the waterfront. We are both so calendared and dogged during the week that we periodically vow, as now, to break out of that on weekends. So, y'day afternoon we took off for the Seattle Rep and "Dancing at Lughnasa," first play we'd been to there in a couple of years. Pretty good production, with Marianne Owen really first-rate as Maggie, probably the scene-stealing role in any version; C and I thought if the pace had been set to her quickness, it'd have carried the play more impressively. Weakest role was the scamp boyfriend Gerry, performed by Sean Cullen as music-hally, featherweight--no sense of any allure or danger to that interpretation. Interesting to me how much exposition Brian Friel gets away with in the play, including the point near the end of the second act where the man-boy narrator Michael tells the fate of everybody--including the going-off of Agnes and Rosie, just like that, which Friel chose not to dramatize in the play-action--and then coming back into the real-time of the particular day within the play as the ending, in effect making the scene of when all the characters are last together the coda. The play's famous moment, when the five women dance up a fränzy (interestingly, although I'm not sure rightly, the elder severe sister Kate dances by herself, outside the house and the other four) to the music from the radio, is a knockout.

The night before, we spent with those other two knock-outs, Linda and Sydney. They came up a little after 5, we hit the Provinces for supper at 6 and then back they went to catch their ferry home to Bainbridge. Like the two of us they'd had a giant first week, Linda in particular doing the high-wire in her poetry intermediate class, letting in (on overload! as she herself exclaims) a business-major guy who was a thorn to Rick Kenney's beginner class last quarter, and a woman who started off, "I have to make a confession to you--I'm a real poet."

Meanwhile Sydney has been invited off to Otterbein in Ohio, in April, to be a panelist at a Virginia Woolf conference--an honor that pleases her mightily even as it makes her squirm a little: it turns out the panel is of the senior-scholar sort, people who've been at feminist literary criticism for awhile and are meant to be, umm, mentors or examples to younger scholars. The geezer panel,

8 Jan. cont.--Syd, you're on the geezer panel! the other three of us howled at her, making her grin her little grin.

We vow to try to keep in touch with them, although monthly is probably about the best we can do, given their new geography.

Speaking of lit'ry, I'm reading Stacy Schiff's biog of St. Ex and liking it a lot. Stacy gets a sniffy NYTBR review today for not being lit-critty enough, and not one word of praise for the really quite fine level of writing she's managed (in the comet company of St. Ex, for cripes' sake). I have a particular fondness for the foreword Stacy got me to do for R.G. Vliet's "Scorpio Rising" when Penguin tried (apparently utterly futilely) a paperback re-issue, and am glad to see her with this good biog in hand, the NYTBR sharkwaters notwithstanding.

19 Jan.--I have just about finished the waxing and polishing on the first 4+ ch. of Bucking the Sun; at about 90,000 words, the equivalent of rewriting a fair-sized book since Christmas Day. In celebration ~~turned~~ the weather turned beautiful today, the Olympics stunning in fresh snow, the temperature just warm enough that I could go out into the eyelet of sunshine the garden was getting and plant 6 new blueberry bushes along the verge. And if it holds up on re-read, I solved the Dnieprostroy-Missouri dance of rhetoric this morning while making the daily walk around our $2\frac{1}{4}$ mi. 'block'.

So, there are times when I'm pretty tired from the writing, not to mention of the writing--C asked me amid a recent long day of work, getting up at 4 a.m. and going on through the day of January rain, how I was and I said "Bored stiff"--but this much ms, at last, gives me some relief from the mountain of work this book has always seemed.

In the household, C came down with a cold last Sun.--to her huge disgust, as she had Monday off, M.L. King Day--and although it's been up and down, she seems to be getting it whipped. Last night, the Provinces with Ann and Marshall, the usual world-class kidding and restorative laughing; they are a durable treasure.

Week ago W.d., the 11th, I managed to get myself out to lunch with Chris Bennion, again at La Dolce Vita near his house, a place where we sat and yakked so long after

19 Jan. cont.--finishing eating that we were the only ones left in the place except for the waiter who had slunk off into a corner to read the newspaper. On the strength of his Seattle Rep and other theatrical photography Chris has been hired to do a shoot for the Ashland Shakespeare Festival, so I was able to kid him he's become bi-state, next best thing to bi-coastal.

Otherwise, I pretty much keep hunkered in, trying to cast a cold eye, rather than a hot one, at the new Republican Congress. After the election I thought, well, remember that there'll be a variety of these new GOPers, some worse, some better, so on; then onto the news would come one after another clueless Newtnik. Gingrich himself seems to be a Macy's parade balloon of Dennis the Menace, just always a little bit out of control. Y'day the House session imploded when the Republicans took the Democrats' bait about Speaker Newt's book deal with Murdoch; quite lovely, to mineself, that one of these celebrity-book baskets of money is proving to be a headache.

28 Jan.--90,000+ words of Bucking went off to NY on Thursday, the 26th. After C read thru the ms last weekend, I contemplated the 2 cuts, small ones both, which were the only suggestions she could find to make, and turned them both into moves, meanwhile doing my own re-read and sprucing up during the first 3 days of the week. With this much ms achieved--unless they hate it in NY--I feel I can set a less grueling pace to get a draft of the rest of the book, then polish during the autumn.

Certainly I got pretty grueled at times this week, having come down with a cold on Monday, the absolute last day I figured I could be susceptible to C's cold, but it has gone through me pretty rapidly, down to mild now.

1 Feb.--Springlike, after 2 days of rock 'em sock 'em rain and wind.

I'm taking this week to sort and organize, and after a first 2 glazing days of it, ideas began to percolate a bit this morning. Liz called y'day, to say she'd read the 1st 150 pp. of the chunk of Bucking I sent in, and likes it well enough ("very excited" about it) to send along to Becky Saletan, so that Becky can be reading it too as Liz finishes it up this weekend. So far so good.

Am pretty well over my cold now, some sinus drip left. Mine took about a week, C's about 2 wks.

And since the last entry, we've had an earthquake, a relatively mild 5. here in this cornucopia of fault-lines, but enough that C and I heard it coming--Sat. night after supper, 7:12 p.m., we looked at each other across the living room as the rumble, best I can describe it, came and weren't surprised when the shake immediately followed, rippling under the house; we headed for the study and got under our desks.

6 Feb. -- Thick fog, down to a couple of hundred feet visibility on our daily walk around the n'hood. Still mild, 50ish; my spinach ~~seedlings~~ came up in the garden at the end of last week.

C is about to go back to campus for another pres'l candidate's presentation, # 4 in Shoreline's process, which now has be so excruciatingly nondiscriminatory that the faculty doesn't really have a chance to ask questions of the candidates.

I went back to work on the Bucking 1st draft this morning, somewhat reluctantly, but rough material and file cards and some thinking over the weekend and hell, maybe even some spontaneous creativity, all kicked in and the 3 pp. I want to average for quite a while came OK by lunchtime.

On Saturday, we went up to the Skagit--saw the snow geese only at considerable distance, but figured we've had some wonderful flyovers in our time--and onward to the Rhod'n for lunch; walked @ Shilshole y'day morn, and I got in some yard work in the afternoon.

13 Feb.--"Snowbound!" as C let out y'day morning when it was coming down an inch an hour. Not quite that, but under snow, definitely. Much of the 8 or so inches has melted today, although tonight is supposed to be a cold bastard, and last night was cold enough. The snow I don't greatly mind, except for the problem it poses for C in getting to campus, but my heart sinks at the plantings that may be done in by this, including my carefully-wrought three-tier raspberry patch; things simply were budding wildly ahead of season in the very warm winter we'd been having, and then this cold front from the north, ka-chong. Here in this household we actually got off lucky, didn't lose power and didn't get the high winds that were forecast; even so I spent a groggily miserable night, warm enough within my sweat-shirt and flannel pajama bottoms that I'd resorted to, but the bedding chilly whenever any portion of my skin touched it. Tonight is probably down-comforter territory.

Liz called today to say she thinks the Bucking ms so far is "magnificently readable" and she's very pleased with it. Becky Saletan is finishing up her reading of it and lo, intends to come out here next week to meet me and her other Seattle writer, Shaun Wong. Should be a good move, on all sides, for us to meet.

Last Thurs. and Fri. afternoons, Jean Walkinshaw and her Channel 9 photog Tom Speer were here kicking off their hour-long documentary on Western writers, which is supposed to take in me, Kittredge, Hillerman, Terry Tempest Williams, Maxine Hong Kingston, and I think Anaya. Talk about luck: they breezed in here, ahead of this snotty weather--in fact, they filmed me strolling the bluff rims above Puget Sound here against an intensely beautiful sunset, Thursday--and had no interference from chainsaws which had been epidemic around here for a couple of weeks. Videotape being so much cheaper than film--I remember when Jean and Wayne Sourbeer were starting with me on their Winter Bros. show 13 years ago, they were glumly trying to adjust to a budget of shooting 10-to-1 footage of usability from the old standard of 20-to-1--they simply shoot and shoot, probably about 8 hours' worth of me talking and reading

13 Feb. cont.--and chopping wood and walking the n'hood, for what'll likely turn out to be 6-8 min. of me on the air. Jean was visibly very pleased on Friday after having seen the previous day's interview of me, so maybe I've done my part.

20 Feb.--Presidents' Day, end of a wet 4-day holiday. C and I decided against lighting out for Vancouver, or for that matter Tucson, and decided just to prop up here. Friday noon, lunch @ Ray's Boathouse, just in time for the ferry Kaleetan to venture past on its way to the locks and evidently a boatyard. Sat. morn, browsing @ U Book Store, 6 books brought home. Sun. and this morn, early walks of Green Lake. Otherwise, rest & recuperation, which worked pretty well until today, when C opined that she wished the remainder of winter quarter was over, and I guess I'd say the same about the ch. draft I'm working on. I've put in some time today getting my head together for dinner tonight with my new editor Becky Saletan, and a session with her tomorrow on the ms. Becky and her husband, and I think her brother and his wife, have been on the Olympic Peninsula, in this big wet pineapple-express storm, so we'll see how they fared. Been a boisterous damn week of weather, for sure.

21 Feb.--3-hour session this morning with Becky Saletan, the small half of it talking about the Bucking ms and the bigger half about how to sell the book. Becky is black-haired, brown-eyed, compact, energetic, and ambitious for her list of books although she disclaimed any wish to become an editor-in-chief or publisher when I asked her if she was going to come to the same bad end as my previous 3 editors. Describes herself as compulsive, and as we talked over the biz of the book she convinced me she tends to details, all right. The sample of line-editing she did for me looked pretty good, that is, most of it I could see some reason for and the rest I could kibosh to hang onto some nuance I'd tucked into the writing. Interestingly, actually surprisingly, she wants a bit more in some of the scenes in the already immense ch. 2, giving scenes a chance to breathe, develop character to character, more; we're agreed that big setting-up ch. is not as relaxed and flowing as ch. 3.

21 Feb. cont.--So, I think we're off to a good start, with Becky showing a lot of competence which may extend all the way from the pencil on the page through the in-house handling of the book. None of this can be surefire--the Elizabeth Marshall book on cats, which Becky handled, apparently stubbed its toe and didn't come close to the big success of Marshall's dog book; and Becky recounted from her Ransom House days the famous smart scheduling of Peter Matthiessen's novel Killing Mr. Watson, breaking it onto the national best-seller lists by ~~moving~~ bringing it out in June when the competition was less--the book had been scheduled for April, and was simply delayed by M'sen's penchant for rewriting!

Dinner last night, we drove Becky and her husband Marshall Messer, a Long Island high school teacher, to the Provinces in Edmonds, which seemed to go over fine.

1 March--Tall clear weather, evidently blue to the North Pole. Nothing like a brisk north wind, stirring up whitecaps on the Sound, to broom out the weather, and we've had four days of it. I've been in manuscript trudge these mornings, grimly getting three pages somehow, but go out after the commuter traffic is over and walk the 2+ miles around the n'hood, then do it again with C in early afternoon. Have also gone out, afternoons, and cut kindling, from shingles scavenged from a reroofing up the street from us.

13 March--Amid a hard slog, one of the last 2 or 3 (I hope), on Bucking the Sun. The writing has suddenly gone patchy, although I think they're pretty good patches and the notion is that April and (some of) May should give me enough mass of pp. to refine into a full final draft in June & July & likely August.

And the weather has turned tropically wet, the edge of the big storms inundating California. Y'day afternoon unexpectedly cleared, and I did manage to finish transplanting my strawbs.

March 21--About to begin spring break, billowing on the wind. We're getting the upper edge of another big northern Calif. storm, although with steadier wind and less rain than the last big sideswipe.

It was another patchy week of work on the ms, with a couple of days devoted to sorting scenes into better sequence and making notes on what's needed to link them up. Probably time to get away from it for about a week, if the weather will let us. Dungeness and the Juan de Fuca cottage for the next two nights we know, and beyond that we hope the Oregon coast.

The wondrous Carol Hill was in town last night, reading from her novel Henry James' Midnight Song @ Elliott Bay to a corporal's guard of an audience which thanks heaven included us. Carol is thinner and more taut-looking than ever, with her hair now reddish blonde; I remember how ruefully indignant she was ~~in~~ after her promo tour for 11-Million-Mile High Dancer, when one of the major interviews or reviews (by a woman, no less) led with the news that Carol Hill has cheekbones to die for. C and I hadn't met Carol's husband Jerry Albert, and while I'd been told he owns some rollercoasters, C in conversation with him found out it's actually eight acres of Coney Island. He must have pots of pots of money, Hallelujah for Carol, and they travel ambitiously--an eyepopping story from them over dinner (at all of a sudden so-so Umberto's) of spending a night in a tent camp during a safari in Katmandu and their elephant driver evidently getting lost in a veritable forest of grass as night came down--and have had a 45-foot classic boat built on Lake George and moored now at Sag Harbor. The Doigs have long known there's nobody quite like Carol Hill, but there are corners around corners we hadn't even begun to know about.

April 4--Ai-yi-yi, the diary went on vacation and to hell. Took the old Olivetti portable with me to D'ness and Cannon Beach, telling myself well, there'll be some leisurely time when I'll feel like tapping in a diary entry...but the feeling never arrived. C has done a nice reprise of our week out of town, and about all I

April 4 cont.--can come up with in addition is Linda Bierds' new book-of-poems idea, which is old photo's plates used (re-used) as greenhouse glass...Yeah, I said, I think Murray Morgan's Klondike book has--Oh wonderful, she said, off toward that.

When we came home I had to do radical surgery on the vegetable garden, which had been pounded with so much rain in early March that it was a clay desert. Decided to throw money at the problem and so went and bought 3 dozen lettuce seedlings and a bundle of onion starts, and after three afternoon shifts of hauling out clay and wheelbarrowing compost dirt ~~fr~~ down from the hill, the garden looks spiffy. Mornings I labored on the "Plugging the River" chapter and at last, this week, mostly today in fact, it feels as if it's coming together.

C had a rare 2nd week of spring-break last week, and we walked Green Lake every morning we could and the loop around the n'hood every afternoon. Also went to ACT and saw "The Gospel at Colonus," which had its moments--J.D. Steele terrific as the gospel choir leader, Clarence Fountain impressive as the blind Oedipus--but could have used less instrumental backing and more vocal clarity. Encountered Jean and Walt Walkinshaw afterward, and Jean was very upbeat about her interviews and filming of Hillerman and Anaya for the western writers show we're all doing.

16 April--At the Juan de Fuca cottages, in venerable #7, with the Olympic Mtns white and green and gray and blue out this window, and, just outside, daisies unbuttoning to the morning sun. 7:30 now, we'll wait $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour or so before hiking Dungeness Spit yet again--we can still hear, from here, the high tide's waves crashing out there--in this 30th anniversary celebration. 30 years ago last night, we figured, we'd have been at our wedding rehearsal dinner in Winnetka with my folks, Carol's, Doug and Hazel Smith, the Baldwins...far away in a lot of ways, as we sat in the Bushwahcker in Port Angeles, millionaires in old blue jeans, sawing happily into filet and prime rib.

18 April--Anniversary #30, indeed, y'day. A Monday workday for us both, and after the perfect weather at Dungeness Spit on Sunday, a shift back to gray humid overcast (akin to our Evanston wedding day, actually), but a buzz of pleasure underlying in both of us. The Baldwins called a little before 5, from Hilton Head, to do auld lang syne with us, and then Mark and Lou Damborg came for supper at the Provinces, kang pao scallops, Szechuan eggplant, moo shew pork, and kang gai chicken, splendid all, with ice cream cones at Baskin Robbins for dessert. Good show by all.

26 April--Whew and goddamn. This is the first semi-chance I've had to make diary comments on our anniversary week, receding too fast. We both worked on as usual through the week, muttering about how hard we're working --C up to her mental lobes in foreign students who can't handle the language but are motivated and American students who can't handle the language and are unmotivated, me sternum-deep in the Big Muddy of this novel's plot--until we could flee north on Friday afternoon to Camano I. and doings with Linda and Syd. We hit the beach, clamming, by about 3:30, and ~~in~~ in about an hour had the three limits, 40 apiece, that we wanted. Then onward to the Rhododendron and supper celebrating our 30th ann'y and Linda's 50th b'day. The Rhod'n outdid itself, my veal salambocca great, C's pasta w/ smoked salmon great, and miracle of all, Linda's salmon perfectly done, almost unheard of

26 April cont.--in restaurants because 15 seconds too long means it's overdone. More rampage the next morning, back up the Skagit country from Camano to the Bayview dike hike, a fine clear day with cinnamon teal dabbling and dunlin wheeling in the sun. Back to Camano, a beer on the porch overlooking the channel--Linda had impulse^{han}-bought Pyramid Apricot Ale the night before, which to^{han} horror proved to be apricot not in color but in taste, so by now C and I were specifying non-apricotic beer to her--and then massive lunch of steamed clams, and, for us, home with more clams to steam for Sun. supper while Linda and Syd aimed for a gourmet b'day dinner cooked by Syd's chef son Fred. This was all still Saturday, so we got home mid-afternoon and that evening were at Tony and Lee Angell's for dinner, along w/ David and Catherine Skinner. The Skinners, patrons of Tony's art, drew from us the same eh that uppercrust money usually does; dabblers, we always think, in this case a second-marriage couple announcedly on a 5-year plan (mostly good works: David is president of the state Nature Consvcy and on other boards such as ACT, Catherine is a painter) which left us thinking, hey, how about the life you led until now? On the perhaps other hand, among David's projects, right in there with a golf course and a 2-story driving range, is the film biz, with the guys who keep saying they want to make Sea Runners. Fine, say I, sort out the rights with Richard Green in Hollywood. Anyway: the Angells were ~~sumack~~ five kinds of delight, Bryony on hand from the UW and seeming very grownup and brainy and young Hepburnish, Gavia an extraordinarily pretty little girl, Larka--the babe in arms--seeming sweet-natured and not the restless handful Gavia was, Lee looking fine and coping with the youngsters, and Tony, bless him, capping our evening and week by giving us a sensational bronze flatfish, a flounder, with a patina from having survived the fire of Tom Jay's foundry, some years back.

Amid this week, I've hashed together the short talk I'm to give at the Stegner shindig in San Francisco tomorrow night. More when I'm back from that.

7 May--Sunday morning, gray, to be watched for a break in the weather so we can go for a walk at Shilshole or somewhere. But if it doesn't clear we can probably putter here to satisfaction--I'll perhaps work on filling the woodhouse, from the big woodpile of what I've split on the backhill. Y'day was a drowsy, evidently recuperative day (although when the weather cleared a bit in afternoon I put up the little bigtop of netting over our 3 rows of strawberries, against the kamikaze towhees), and last night I finally had a long full night's sleep, waking this morning at 5 to robins instead of at 3:30 or 4 to the thought-flocks in my own head.

Last week made some pretty good inroads to Bucking's big "Plugging the River" chapter, but I was grim on Friday to estimate the rest and find there's probably another 3 weeks' worth of tough work on plugging "Plugging." Then 2 tricky chapters on the slide, and explanation of the truck in the river, which could well take me to Labor Day. I keep desperately hoping for a hot streak, say 3 days' worth which would pull together a hell of a bunch of pages, but probably it's going to be as usual one long lukewarm streak. Anyway, I feel a little more sanguine about it today, I suppose less allergy-ridden and tired, and Monday begins yet another go-for-broke session of technique, Bourke-White's camera and FDR's 2nd election and Hugh Duff's last bender all swirling together.

Now a reprise of April 27-28, my San Francisco trip for the Stegner "Geography of Hope" shindig. Made some notebook jots during the trip, but to try flesh them out:

--City Arts & Lectures, aka Sydney Goldstein and Steve Barclay, ran the logistics for the Stegner/Friends of the Library group putting this on, and so I had lobbied just to take a cab in from the airport, not be met by some rookie-in-traffic volunteer, but was told no, Sydney herself would come fetch me. Walk off the airplane and barely inches from the chute is a limo driver with a sign in letters 6" high IVAN DOIG. So, like a bemused drifter who's caught a ride on several tons of Detroit iron, in I was limo'ed. To quick reality, in this case aka The new Abigail Hotel (as the sign had it), which had seen many better days.

7 May cont.--The Ab, as Gretel Ehrlich started calling it (I kept razzing the Stegner/Friends organizers about their A-list and B-list of writers, but apparently Gretel and I drew the Abigail because we were one-nighters instead of the longer more stately stays at The Inn at the Opera), at least was convenient to the Herbst Theater, about 3 blocks away. So, after I walked around the n'hood enough to spot a breakfast place (warily; the 'hood there starts bordering into The Tenderloin) and rehearsed my talk a couple of times, to the backdrop of a rock concert outside at the Hastings Law School half a block away, at 5 the escort Elissa walked Gretel and me over to the Herbst, Gretel in a black blouse and black slacks and eating a banana, me in my white ice-cream blazer and chocolate slacks--we must have looked like Mr. Chips and Eloise Come to The Tenderloin. Backstage, when Gretel and I more than our purported guide Elissa found it, were several stagecrew members, and Bill Kittredge, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams and Terry's husband Brook. Considerable re-unioning, fueled by a welcoming glass of wine. I hadn't seen Bill since at least last Sept., so asked him about his winter in Europe, and got an aw-shucks mutter that it was just the usual ^{that} people do, Italy and Germany and so on. Soon the Stegners showed up, Mary and Page. It seems to me Page is doing nobly with a tough role, family ambassador to the posthumous honors of his father. Came time for the sound check, out we troop onto the stage, Kittredge pulling a tie out of his pocket and ultimately having his knot tinkered toward respectability by, successively, Gretel, Terry and then me; Bill's is not a neck that welcomes a tie. Barry Lopez was in a gray herringbone sport jacket, white shirt, tie, blue jeans and boots; Terry wore a floor-length but informal dark-gray dress. I was standing next to Terry when Gretel said, "Terry, you're getting gray," and then fingered out her own long hair and said something about the blonde coloring covering up her own gray, and I gave her a mock horrified No-say-it-ain't-so! In the soundcheck, I did my usual Farewell to Arms opening riff, "In the late spring of that year we lived in a house in the village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains," for its great cadence, ~~and~~

7 May cont.--and was promptly okayed and Bill and Barry fairly quickly were too, but evidently the women's voices were a problem. Terry began her soundcheck with "Let me tell you about the Mormon Church," which was funny, but then she found she had to go on and on with it, ad-libbing madly, until the sound person was satisfied. Gretel followed and did some other crack about the Mormons, and then she had to ad-lib twice as long, ending up on root canal she'd recently had, the dozen crew members and the writers and the Stegners standing around with heads cocked listening: Ionescu, thou mayst been living in this hour. Anyway, that was the soundcheck, and then there was about an hour and a half to kill backstage, which we did grazing at a buffet and visiting. Gretel was flying to western China the next morning; Barry was just back from going around and around the world on a cargo plane for a Harper's piece he's doing; Bill had had the European winter; Terry is working on some kind of book with Spain in it and had been there 4 times so far; I felt like the infantry dogface of the bunch, and probably am.

Performance time, the Herbst did fill up--900-some, I think--and down we go to the front row to await our stage turns. Next to me was one of the Stegner/Friends, in his mid-30's or so; this event seemed to be one of the sets of training-wheels for people who are going to run San Francisco, at least culturally and socially, for the next 40 or so years. He nervously asked me, "Are you ready for this?" I looked at him and told him, yeah, it's written down and rehearsed. Afterwards, at the Pacific Heights shake-the-money-tree soiree for a mere 150 upper-crusters, he looked ecstatically relieved at how the Herbst hour and a half went, ~~and~~ as did many others of the Stegner/Friends corps (many of whom were 30ish women, short, slender, and civic). And well he might have, as everyone rose to the occasion for Wally. Bill began by dedicating ~~the~~ his portion to his mother, who died two weeks before, and was of Stegner's persevering generation. Gretel said she'd never known Stegner personally but then did a nice job with his little memoir section about feeling like such a hick kid in Great Falls. I spoke in the middle, 3rd of the 5, and

hered-
itarily

7 May cont.--was exceedingly, and perhaps excessively, pleased with how it went. I was the only one who had done a retrospective piece about Wally--grumping all the while, I pieced it together one night, after a long hard day on Bucking, from the couple of remembrances I wrote after Wally's death--and the mike system was perfect and I hit both the pace and modulation I wanted, always the devilish pair to put together, and I felt like I sailed high. Truly, perfect miking is such a wonder. On my line about the NY Times Magazine chucking Wally under the chin as "William Stegner," I was able to do a back-of-the-throat baritone impersonation, and have it perfectly heard and bring the house down; on Wally's own great line, answering Etulain's ponderous question as to what Western writers need to do to produce a great literature, I could do the dry telegraphic "Write good books"; and in my section about Reagan having seen fit to bestow the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Frank Sinatra and Whittaker Chambers but not on Stegner, as the crowd murmur of realization grew on "Chambers," I was able to ride up on "but NOT" atop the crowd's contribution. All in all, it was as good as I can do with what I've got thus far. I was followed by Terry, who spoke about Stegner's book on race relations, One Land; then Barry, who had wanted to be last, talked about the dangers in commodifying nature. So, although we hadn't talked it out at all, a good spectrum of different stuff from the 5 of us. Afterward, at the Pacific Heights shindig, I met flocks of people, including Phoebe Adams, who's to be the librarian (as she'd previously been at the Sierra Club) for the Stegner Environmental Wing of the new SF library; George Frampton, formerly head of the Wilderness Society and now Under Secretary of the Interior; Mark Riesner of Cadillac Desert; and ~~John~~ Pessanen. Pessanen brought about Stegner's famous environmental trumpet call, the wilderness letter; he told me he'd been a 24-year-old Forest Service employee, assigned to come up with some kind of statement on behalf of wilderness areas, and when he couldn't frame anything satisfactory to himself, he thought he'd just write to Stegner, whom he didn't know at all; as he said, the rest is history. And interestingly, Pessanen, who went on to become an

7 May cont.--environmental lawyer and leader in the successful fight against the Bodega nuke power plant, now would like to philosophically dissect Stegner's wilderness letter, I guess on the basis that it's the white-guy-European view of things; which it is, but it served when it had to, say I.

Quick note on my airporter ride, which included 2 tries by the (as best I could tell) Chicano-Asian driver to fetch one passenger who seemed to be something like Mongolian, without a word of English; when the driver finally had us all aboard and was headed like a bat out of hell to the freeway, he picked up his mike and reported in: "Rolling south to the 'port."

29 May--Memorial Day, and the luscious weather that began 10 days ago. We've lolled on the patio, afternoons, in chaise lounges just as if it were mid-summer. And an hour from now we're meeting Linda Sullivan and Jeff Sager at the Locks, for traditional hike together, not the circumnavigation of Lake Union this year but up to Discovery Park and back.

As the diary void indicates, I've been elsewhere--corralling the big 7th chapter of *Bucking the Sun*, another 200+ pager, one of three brute chapters that carry the chronology of the book, 1933-34, '35, and '36-7. Some of this chapter is still pretty crude--I've taken to using stick-its in the margins, a la copy-editor's technique, for spots I want to look at again; fuss with a word or whatever, and there's a blizzard of them along the outer edge of the 3-ring binder for this ch., "Plugging the River"--and I still have one gap where Bruce Duff is to get spooked by the river and his diving--but at least I have the armature to work with now. On the less good hand, I still have possibly another 100 pp. of drafting to reach a full draft of *Bucking* by the end of the summer, and that's going to mean a lot of work this summer.

And now off to Memorial Day, with the note that Lee Goerner died weekend before last, heart attack in his sleep, age 48, victim one way or another of the publishing wars. More anon.

5 June--The premature-summer idyll ended with a bang this past Sat. noon, when the big patio window blew a hole in itself and crystallized. Why the hell, we don't know; the hole is on the inside pane, about a foot up from the floor--at first we thought a big bird had hit the glass, then wondered if it was a gunshot; but it's plainly the pane simply exploding itself, not even any afternoon sun on it to cause a temperature stress. Trying to get it replaced is, as I figured it would be, like pulling teeth; I started on Centennial Glass, the installer, an hour and a half ago and am still waiting to hear what they can come up with in quick replacement--no news, of course, is not good news in this case.

The fabulous weather went, too, on Saturday, although y'day's dingy cloud cover finally did yield a good soaking rain in the night. I think the count on the streak of wonderful blue dry weather was 15 straight days.

Both C and I face a gargantuan week here, as she closes down the quarter and reads term papers and I try to jink my way onward to the final 100 or so pp. of *Bucking the Sun*, with this window mess and a guy available to finally gravel the driveway for us and 3 spots of social life all thrown in. Thank god, afternoons of diligence the past couple of weeks whipped some of the projects around here--I've spread new bark on the path at the back and side of the house, and finished filling the woodhouse on Sat., 24 hours ahead of the rain; also, the veg garden is in pretty decent shape. And I made hay y'day on the *Bucking ms*, despite it's being Sunday, by revising 5 or so pp. of FDR's '37 visit to Fort Peck; did about the same this morning and now have 681 numbered ms pp., with not many gaps or major changes back there to be dealt with before I start giving the total ms its set of final run-throughs.

14 June--Diary has fallen into disrepair and I'm not far from that myself, tired but slugging away at Bucking the Sun. I do want to put down, although it may take a couple of stints, the evening of Tim Winton, June 8. Had a note from Tim, thanking me for my puff on his new novel, The Riders, and hoping we could get together when he read at Elliott Bay. I had to try pretty hard to muster myself, as Tim's gig was amid what was for us a week of crammed socializing, but naturally was glad I got myself down there to the bookstore. I began jotting down phrases as Tim talked and read and juggled questions and am simply going to make them a page in my Lingo notebook, but I want to get down here his hilarious tale/impersonation of Tom Keneally at work. Tim said he likes Tom, "little Irish bugger," and once traveled with him on a train, I suppose the trainload of writers that the Aussies sometimes send rolling across the continent. Anyway, says Tim, all of Australia is going past and he looks across the aisle and there's Tom, hunched up, microphone in his hand, dictating: "She said--open quotes--Not now!--close quotes." Tim thinks it was To Asmara he was writing, or at least his secretary was, and as Tim says, it's quite a thing if you can do it.

I'd gone up to Tim before his reading and said I'd buy him a glass after if he was interested, and he said "Definitely!", so around we went to the brewhouse a block southeast of the bookstore. Damn near empty, which suited me, so we sat at the bar and had a dark ale, talking for half an hour. I hugely admire Tim--he seems to be able to write the way a whale can swim--and like his turns of mind, his smarts that have no evident origin except genius. Told him I liked, in Cloudstreet, his showing of Perth losing its town-innocence when its urban sniper starts up--it and some of Murray Bail's novel Holden's Performance are the best fictional renderings of urban history I can think of--and Tim laughed and said Yih, that's when people stopped sleeping on their verandahs.

20 June--3:50, squeaky rubbing noises from the living room where the installer is replacing the patio window that exploded itself 2½ weeks ago. Progress, which in this case amounts to getting back to level with where we were.

I am trying to coax the last sizable chapter of Bucking--there'll be a final short tricky one--to happen without taking the hide off me. Monday was an absolutely bum day, gray and humid, and I simply leaned myself into the writing at exhausting and miserable angles until, by mid-afternoon, a day's work began to wallow out. Y'day was pretty good, the necessary gained pp. coming from rewrite, and today, when I felt I absolutely had to organize and start some filecard sorting, I've unexpectedly come out with 2 done pp. of ms and a few bits to start with in the morning. And, last night and this morning C read the "Plugging the River" ch. and really found very little to suggest to do to it, less than on any of the big chs. so far. I don't know whether it's in celebration or just to get ourselves out of the house, on this longest day of summer, but we've decided to go to the Provinces for supper.

29 June--Hot. Thermometer at 90, at three minutes past three. A somewhat heavy heat, too, more so than y'day's fine bright hot day, so I'm feeling it more. Resumed work on the ms this morning, and after lunch went to Group Health where Steve Taplin squirted liquid nitrogen on a couple of skin Karitoses, especially the one at my hairline which now looks like a sizable bloody scrape.

But the birthday portion of this week, Bellingham and Vancouver, were very fine. Went up to Bellyburg, as Norm Lindquist calls it, on Sunday to stay overnight with Norm and Ann McCartney; they got to show off their house to us, we got fed a terrific cioppino they made, and all 4 of us went down to Village Books to help Chuck and Dee --and a goodly portion of the B'ham population--mark the store's 15th anniversary. Next morning, C and I headed on to Vancouver, staying again at the Coast Plaza, not in a room as exalted as the 31st-floor one

29 June cont.--we had for our 29th anniversary but pretty damn good on the the 26th floor. Ate 3 fine meals at RainCity Grill, admired the new Vancouver Public Library and ~~saw~~ re-admired the UBC Museum of Anthropology and Bill Reid's beyond-genius carvings, savored the Denman Street atmosphere of little sidewalk cafes and small shops and lovers both gay and hetero and rollerbladers and sunbathers and strollers and Asians and retired Brit Empire types; ultimately even went to a movie, The Englishman Who Went up a Hill etc. ~~this~~ A good break from the chores of home for us, and I painlessly enough became 56 years old.

10 July--4 in the afternoon, the onslaught of the appliances nearly over. We hope. No sooner was the new washer installed (along with the new dryer and the new dishwasher) than the drainpipe was refusing to take the new pressure of water discharge and began backing up. The plumber is still here at work wrestling the dishwasher, so when he's done with that, C will tackle him on our drainpipe situation.

I've worked full-tilt on Bucking today, until the appliance installers got here at 3 (1½ hrs late, but they performed okay when they were finally here), and am about midway through the Munichtime argument between Darius and Owen; I still don't have the political logic, or at least passion, of each of them threaded through it, but at least it's looking manageable, finally.

Meanwhile at Simon & Schuster, last week's Publishers Weekly had, as Owen Duff says in the ch. I'm writing, a horseshit turn of events. Michael Jacobs has gone over to be publisher at the Free Press imprint, and thereby, my godfather is gone at S&S proper. Not that I've had to invoke him, but he was there if necessary. Now, back to the dice table that is publishing.

26 July--Wild woolly weather, blustery and humid both. This began with wind and rain at midnight, and provided a pretty good soaking by breakfasttime, and quite a buffeting of gusts ever since--C and I heard one semi-loud crack from the forest on the hill.

Wood is on the mind because, here at minutes to 3, the treecutter who was to come at 1 and saw up last

month's fallen 120' bittercherry that angles across onto Lee Cochran's yard next door, of course has not shown up.

Have been back at work, in reliable utility infielder mode, on the last big ch. of the novel these past 2 days and may indeed have the draft done by this time tomorrow. Took off the weekend and Monday for C's birthday and the visit of Pat and Len DePew, and sat down to the ms y'day morning with lament at having to bang out this near-finale of the book under a mini-deadline (this is a 3-day workweek because of socializing), but the pieces have gone together not too badly. The next imminent lament ~~is~~ will be at having to conure the climactic little final ch., which sorts out the whole book, in the first couple of weeks of August; I don't really have any malleable draft material for that ch. except a possible 1st sentence and a possible last one, but that's why you have fingers on your hands, eh, Doig?

I thought we did a surprisingly suave job of showing the DePews the city, since we rarely show it to ourselves. Some was accustomed stuff that they'd done before, do every time they're here, such as going to the Locks and strolling along Shilshole to look at the boats. But my inspiration to take them up onto Highland on Queen Anne Hill for the not-much-known but spectacular view of the Seattle skyline from there, and the big old dozy mansions along that street, seemed to be a great hit with them, as was C's choice of Pike Place Market for her birthday lunch--the para-gliding, and replica of Capt. Gray's ship, and all the rest that was going on in Elliott Bay made for terrific viewing during lunch at Maximilien's. And as C noted, my half-desperate choice of Duke's Chowderhouse @ Green Lake for Sunday night dinner seemed to be a favorite--it was a place where Len could try to outsmart the menu, which he likes to do. Our favorites, such as Maximilien's and the Provinces, I think he'd have liked better if he'd found them! Anyway, the 4 of us get along quite well under one roof for 3 days, and Len's somewhat seesaw view of himself as a Republican business enthusiast with Democratic social concerns notwithstanding, he and Pat are funky enough that they may be the only San Diegans who'll be showing their friends snapshots of the Lenin statue in Fremont we took 'em to.

It should be noted too that last Sunday produced,

26 July cont.-- through some cosmic jest, a sheriff's badge for me as I write the first sheriff of my life, mean little Carl Kimmick. While C toured Pat and Len to our suburban wine country, I took up the invitation to Judine and Terry Brooks' afternoon shindig in West Seattle. Quite evidently Terry's Shannara, the fantasy-land of his best-sellers, has been good golden territory; the house is a big lavender several-tiered job, with a knockout view across to Seattle from the Duwamish waterway to Magnolia Bluff. Mostly Waldenbooks folk there, Judine's clan--when I first met her, a day when she drove me around town to sign up stock, she was a bedraggled regional semi-manager who'd just been sent to Alaska to barehandedly create Walden stores up there, and her grown daughter had just moved back into her apt. with her; soon after, I heard that she'd met Terry B., maybe at a Pipeline party or a Walden's signing, and then they were an item and then married and I thought, well, good, things are looking up for Judine; then Terry's books broke ~~a~~ through and became NY Times bestsellers and up really became UP. So I shmoozed, w/ Abby of the Brentano's store and her friend Barbara McKillip, who I knew from here Eugene home turf of book biz, and Jennifer McCord, Butte-born and ex-Walden's and now a honcha of romance writing conferences etc., and her funky-cowboylike husband Murray whom I prize--Murray casts a ~~stinkling~~ eye on Butte and the book biz--and most of all w/ Judine, finding out what I wanted to know, that Brentano's (where she works) is down 20%, i.e. suffering. And, ah, the badge: ~~like~~ everybody got one as a nametag and to go w/ our cowboy hats (I had the only Akubra there): genuine tin star Made in China.

3 Aug.--And so I am down to the final chapter of Bucking the Sun, having ground my way through the one scene I hadn't finished in the Slippage ch.--Owen teetering on the spillway bridge after the slide--on Monday, and then on Tuesday going through the solution to the book with C, and Wed. and today roughing away at that finale. It's a tricky ch. to write, intricate, and while I've liked, say, Richard Russo's novels with a lot of characters to be sorted out, I've also chuckled at the wrapup (particularly Mohawk's) where this-&-this-&-this happens

3 Aug. cont.-- and then that-that-&-that, the end. So I'll try get done a nondisgraceful rough of the finale, then give it atmosphere and polish across the months until the end of this year. There's considerable backwriting, building up characters and fitting in details I need by the end of the book, to be done, but that's usual enough. It's going to be interesting, about Sept. 18-19-20, to begin reading through and thinking about fixes in this heap of ms which will be well over 4" high by then. Some of this book I think will look snappy and magical, some will need trimming and tweaking.

Socialized tooth and nail y'day, usual monthly Provinces dinner w/ the Nelsons (including Sarah, lifeguarding in The Highlands, antsy to get back to school at Williams Sept. 2), plus lunch @ Ray's Boathouse with Jim & Lois Welch and Tom Orton. All three of them seemed dandy--Tom saying he's doing his "annual rewrite" of the novel he's worked on for so long; I suggested he try people at Sasquatch Press for the editing he wants on the ms, and that seemed to strike a chord with him; Lois has a sabbatical and looks sunny, sunny about it; Jim is working on a novel about an Indian in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show who gets ill on a European tour--in Marseilles, I guess--and stays on to live there. The Welches did a USIA reading tour of Italy, and visited Jim's French editor, and were out here for the PNW Writer's Conference--looking good, living good.

7 Aug.--At last, at last, hurree hurrah, the damned fallen tree on the hill--and across the property line into a bit of Lee Cochran's back yard--is being dealt with, on I believe my 4th try: the first treecutter ignored my tries at getting him for a couple of weeks and then stood me up, and there've been 2 delays, last Th. & Fri., here w/ Arborists Alliance scheduling. But as I write, their guy Todd is yarding limbs down from the hill, and I'll pronto go out and make clean-up amends in Lee's back corner and that, at last, will be that.

Am surrounding the finale scene of Bucking the Sun by about 2 pp. a day, not far now--this week?--from having the draft done. Not before time, as our New Zealand buddies say.

11 Aug. '95--2 p.m., this day, I bucked the sun to the end. R.I.P., the couple in the truck.

27 Aug.--The last 2 wks have been polish-on-the-ms, including a marathon useful day (the 16th, I think) of looking up stuff, refined details, at UW library. Main work of the 10 polishing days was on Rosellen (who got fuller, sharper scenes in 2 or 3 places) and Rhonda, who got 2 new scenes (@ the movie, watching the archy & mehitabel cartoon; and the Janus/January 2-faced scene) because she was getting scanted as a character. Darius, mainly his politics, needs a bit of work, I know, when I start back on the 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ms after our Sept. trip. C has been reading my reworking of the 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$, and out of that and my own mulling on it, I think tomorrow's last dab of polishing will be to grind down the FDR ch. some more, make that more of a lens on the plot, by cutting some of the details of his visit to Glasgow/Ft. Peck.

Meanwhile, Becky, my editor, has been trapped in the Hillary Rodham Clinton book-on-behalf-of children, w/ the First Lady in Jackson Hole and stuff being done back and forth on CompuServe, and evidently the S&S brass and prod'n staff howling Where's the book? (slated for Nov. pub date)--as Becky's ass't Denise moaned down the phone to me, with their 2nd or 3rd postponement on sending me Becky's line-edited 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ of Bucking, "We're not having any fun here."

Social notes: dinner w/ Nat'l Parks director Roger Kennedy and wife Frances, I think it was on the 18th. Call came that morning, from Roger in a car on the way to Mt. Rainier and a service for the 2 young summer rangers who died on the mtn. trying to rescue a climber, asking if Doigs could meet Kennedys for a meal that night. Told him his timing was magical, I'd just finished my ms draft and we were ready to celebrate, and so the 4 of us ended up in a booth in the Pike St. Cafe at their hotel, the Sheraton (not even Roger could wedge us into the zingy eatery there, Fuller's, although he gave it a good try), meeting for the first time and talking writing, the Southwest, the \$ of publishing--Roger professed himself astounded and pleased that I can make a living out of

27 Aug. cont.--books. As a guy with a whole satchel of careers--lawyering, banking, NBC News, Smithsonian, now the Park Service (when he got Frances to decide what she wanted to eat and declared himself now done administering for the evening, I said after all he'd had more experience at that than the rest of us put together and he said, "Never could hold a job")--he's something like a genial general, good tall somewhat craggy presence, with a ~~questioning~~ knack for asking questions that are good, interesting and not quite predictable. He told us he sees his job, vis-a-vis the suddenly rightwing congressional delebation from this state--Linda Smith, Doc Hastings, that sharpening hatchet Slade Gorton--as finding the 2% they can agree with him on, ignoring the 98% difference between. (Can't reconstruct his quote exactly on them, but Roger used either "loathe" or "loathesome" about our very own new righties.) He said specifically of Gorton, seeming to think it out carefully in response to some plaint from Frances about Gorton's rightward turn, that Gorton is an example of a politician selling out "on the second bounce": not for money, but for the power of the moment, for the chance to wield himself--which means moving himself into the Dole wing of the party. Roger seemed surprisingly philosophical--maybe you have to be, to serve in govt any more--about Republican right-wingism, saying it has to be looked at as something like the Republican Congress in late 19th century, intent on transferring wealth from one segment of society to another (w/ Grover Cleveland analogous to Clinton, then?). The Kennedys are a fine lively pair, Frances probably the best-seller of all of us, w/ 150,000 copies of the Civil War battlefields guidebook she conceived; she told us that Roger in the '80's had finally forbidden her to bring up Ronald Reagan's name at breakfast.

Closer to home, there was the trio of nights out w/ Craig Lesley & Elena & Kira (Craig is trying mightily to lift the sales of Sky Fisherman by hand @ bookstores), then @ Linda and Jeff's niftily renovated house, then @ Thai Heaven w/ Linda B. and Sydney; and last night,

27 Aug. cont.--@ the Santa Fe Cafe near the zoo (still not as good as the mother cafe on 65th, after all these years!) w/ Ann and Norm.

4 Sept.--Labor Day, and we're readying to head east to the West. Gray dark day, so far, with showers that don't add up to the watering the property needs. But we're about packed, in a mood to go and see things for a couple of weeks. By now I have Becky's line-edited version of the first $\frac{2}{3}$ of my manuscript, and I've made notes of my own on things to do to the ms when we get back in mid-Oct., so all seems well. The weather held nicely until today; ~~there~~ 3 or so days of fine blue weather with dry air, when we could stretch out on lounge chairs---still the ancient ones from Evanston, and Green Stamps!--in the afternoons. Also made use of the weather by going down and walking Green Lake at dawn, and y'day mid-morning we went to Edmonds to meet Tony Angell, Lee, Bryony, Gavia and Larka--the whole mob, as we told them.

Sept. 7, Stanley, Idaho--Fine clear frosty morning, with the Sawtooths outside our Creek Side Motel window like a condensed version of the Tetons. Drove y'day, 360 mi., from Moscow, shortcutting to here on the road from Banks to Lowman which C had spotted on the map as a route that looked*x* intriguing but iffy, with an unpaved section shown; now it's all (freshly) paved, and is a handsome drive, much of it along the Middle Fork of the Payette River. The variety of geography in one day is stunning, from the Palouse rolling grainhills to the big booming bald mountains and deep valleys around Whitebird Hill, then the highway copying the rivers, first the Salmon and the Little Salmon and then, flowing the other direction (toward Boise) the Payette in long chutes of white water, about as much ~~fast~~ froth as a river can have without being all foam. Lovely moment just past dawn, south of Moscow--coyote in a stubblefield, and when we stopped to watch him, he quit traveling parallel along the stubble rows and began bounding away from us over them, like a deer jumping.

We left Seattle @ 6:45 the morning of the 5th, just beating the traffic buildup, and were in Moscow, after a good lunch @ Swilly's in Pullman, around 1. Had dinner that night w/ Mary Blew at Cafe Spudnik, 1st time we'd seen her since the U. of Idaho speech I gave a year ago, and she seems very pleased and content w/ UI and Moscow. She's teaching Shakespeare, Lit of Western Civ (said she'd spent the day on Book of Job, which she'd never even read before) and a writing class. UI is one approval away from starting an MFA in writing, so Mary looks to be sitting pretty, though I semi-kidded her about watching out or she'll find herself directing the MFA program. She'd been to ~~Finland~~ Finland this summer, and taught a workshop @ U. of Alaska last April, and is underway on a novel, set, she ~~says~~ says, in the paved-over West. C & I think it's terrific to see her making her way so well after some of the tough turns her life's had.

12 Sept., Jackson, Wyoming--How to consort with elk at dawn. We get up, here at Nancy Effinger's cozy log house about 3 mi. south of town, at 5 or a few minutes after; put on our longjohn bottoms and our Powell Bookstore sweatshirts; I go to the kitchen and flummox around at the coffee (when you're on the road every coffee pot in the world is different) and when that's underway I get us a big cereal breakfast--our own mix of Honey Bunches and Raisin Bran plus Toasted Oatmeal from Nancy's assortment--with a banana sliced on it; when fed, we both go out and deal with the car, which y'day was drenched in dew from a heavy fog and this morning was drastically frosted over. We're on our way north toward the Tetons by about 5:45, and around ~~at~~ 6:15 we're pulling in to the Windy Point parking area, the first one up on top of the long flat bar after the nat'l park entrance at Moose. This morning we first saw ears, big and out at attention, in profile against the sky with dawn just beginning to come. Y'day morn, it was rumps, showing up against the timber on the other side of the road. As to the bugling, which seems to be different with each bull elk but basically sounds like a high strained whinny--eeeeEEEEee--that goes on for several seconds, it's best heard about the half-hour before dawn ~~xxx~~ begins--i.e., ~~starting~~ by being on hand at Windy Point by 5:45, as I fortuitously did on our first of these three mornings by misremembering the time of dawn (on the early side, ~~xxxx~~ naturally). After working our way along the road watching for more elk--every morning we've seen at least two bunches of a couple dozen each, and twos and threes sometimes standing in the road in front of the Honda; the first morning we saw the biggest ~~xxx~~ sets of antlers, including one bull with a rack so huge and wide he seemed to be standing under a square ~~frame~~ of antlers--we turn onto the String Lake picnic area road and go to the Leigh Lake ~~xxxx~~ trailhead. That trail takes us a mile along String Lake, where the wildlife-watching is sensational at the start of light, about 7 a.m. This time we've seen osprey, including one diving in

12 Sept., Jackson cont.--a try at a fish right in front of us; a cow elk and her calf wading across String Lake (it's not too much deeper than elks' shins!) with Grand Teton in the background; a doe and twin fawns; a resident covey of diving ducks, which I'm still trying to identify; and a terrific treat our 1st morning, a school of five otters swimming the length of the lake. That morning and today, we had the luck to coincide with a canoeist, a gray-bearded geezer who looked like an older bulkier version of me, who would noiselessly paddle and steer along watching for wildlife at the same pace as we walked the trail. The otters saw him coming, that initial morning, and poked their heads up very far, periscope-like, and then took off in a kind of bouncing eruption through the water, until they were far enough away from the canoe to swim a wide wary circle around it.

Besides the dawns under the Tetons, we've also done morning hikes after we get back from the String Lake route--a beautiful hour's worth this morning on the trail around the north end of Jenny Lake, and shorter stints at the south end of Jenny the other morns--plus a walk along the ~~Sawake~~ Snake River south of Nancy's house maybe 3-4 mi., and a drive along the east side of the elk refuge this morning. Evenings we go out with Nancy--who spends her days administering the Teton County library staff of 16 tooth and nail--and eat, wonderfully well last night at the Cadillac Grill.

To fill in, briefly--the last shot at writing postcards is still lurking--~~xx~~ between Idaho and here: last Thursday ~~h~~ my throat began to be so sore it was getting very hard to swallow, and I felt a little feverish. Nurse-practitioner Marie Osborn at Stanley's little clinic said it's pharyngitis, put me on antibiotics, and as of y'day, I'm fine.

6 Oct.--A breathless near-month it's been, the past 3 weeks full-tilt on polishing and revising *Bucking the Sun*. We got home from Missoula the night of Sept. 16, and at the start of the next workweek I began going through the ms making my own notes, on the big and small to be done, while waiting on Becky Saletan's line-edited copy. Becky has been consumed, just about literally, by the Hillary Clinton book project on children's issues,

6 Oct.--and so a daily ritual after we got home was a woeful apologetic phone call--"We're not having any fun here," ran the general tenor--from Becky's assistant Denise Roy, telling me the latest postponement on my stuff. For all that, Becky got it to me (i.e., the 2nd half of the Bucking ms) by about the end of Sept., and then the development that gave me pause but I think is going to work out spiffily, her letter suggesting plot points to work on, including the McGuffin--she calls it a screen, but anyway a decoy--of hinting at Bruce and Charlene's antagonism turning around, so ~~th~~ that they become the (slightly) most obvious candidates to be the bodies in the truck. This past Wed., I think it was, I went through the ms with Becky's points in mind and several of my own, and totted up an alarming 40 places where the storyline should/could be worked on. Since then I've whipped maybe 8 of those, and some of the others look less in need of tinkering now that those other adjustments've been made. So, mucho work yet ahead, but not impossible, I think, I think.

What else. Marketing and publicity matters are rearing their heads, months ahead of when I'd like to think about them; on the other hand, I signed with Simon and Schuster because it has other gears than low. Today, really on the spur of a moment in a phone call with Becky about my San Francisco speaking date next April, I mentioned NorthWord's coma and shipped her A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT and my other 3 audio cassettes, to see what might happen if S&S gets interested.

Will try soon to catch up on the Montana portion of our Sept. trip; for now, should note down the socializing of last weekend, a showery Sat. spent with Mark and Lou Damborg. Rained out of our Mt. Baker intentions, we gathered here for coffee and gab, headed (on Mark's good suggestion) to W. Seattle for the walk along the shore promenade there, had pastry while waiting out a shower, drove around Phinney Ridge (M&L are house-hunting, and didn't know that funky n'hood at all), had lunch at the 74th St. Alehouse (nice), went to the zoo to see Tony's sculptures and the Northern Trail critters, came up here and walked the n'hood in finally good weather.

12 Oct.--Zow! The very peaks of the Olympics were out, in a chink in the clouds along the entire western sky, the crags pink and gold in the dawn, as I walked the n'hood just now. (7:30ish, the scene would've been.)

30 Oct.--Ah, this poor damned diary, orphaned by the ms work. It's 25 to 4, next to last afternoon of the month that I think has made the difference on Bucking the Sun. I worked myself black and blue on the revising until the end of last Thursday, when my own estimate of how hard I was working got joined by C's askance looks at me and asking if I was as tired as I appeared to be, and so I took Friday and the weekend off. The weather has cooperated, decent on Sat. for us to go to the Skagit and do the Padilla Bay dike hike again and eat at the Rhod'n, then even nicer on Sunday for us to take an early walk around Green Lake and then walk the waterfront to Ivar's for lunch with Craig Lesley (in town for the NW Book Festival at Pier 48 which I ducked this year; how is it, I asked; cold, he said), and today is quite beautiful, sunny and crisp. I resumed on the ms this morning, then after lunch went to the garden and finished moving blueberry ~~plants~~ bushes ~~there~~ to their new home--always chancy--along the north fence and mulching them with peat moss, and came back to the desk for the past hour or so.

20 Nov.--The near-death experience of Dear Diary may be over, now that the Bucking the Sun revised ms is ~~ready~~ boxed and awaiting Fed Exing to Simon & Schuster this morning. I'd hoped to keep track a bit as the final touches were put on Bucking, but all words and energy went to that, not to here. Roughly, the sequence was that I did my revising, doctoring the plot etc., by about Nov. 6 or 7--mostly working thru that previous weekend--and Carol read the whole ms again for me on the 3-day Veterans' Day weekend. Out of her responses and our mutual mulling on pace, I scalpeled right back into the ms and any place where I'd been mildly bothered by something slowing up, I cut or at least trimmed. Took out 10 or 12 pp. that way, from Owen's 1st scene, Owen and Charlene at the dam Xmas Day, Darius's political

20 Nov. cont.--background etc. Then spent last week on fact-checking, Flannery O'G's "gettin' the ticks off the dawg," which I overwork probably for my own sake; I'll be goddamned if I let somebody in Glasgow or Ft. Peck say, "That kind of flower doesn't grow here"; so I phoned Jo Solem in the Lake Mgr's office to make sure what does. Perhaps especially on a book as big as this one, where I've had to keep levitating things to make the ms pp. pile up, I ~~zoom~~ had miscues that flabbergast me; Grand Coulee Dam damn near to the Cascades, for instance, and Seminary Ridge instead of Cemetery Ridge in a Gettysburg battle reference. Besides phone calls and going back thru my Ft. Peck research files (about a file drawer full) I went to the UW library last Wed. and tracked down everything that was still loose, from what songs are in the Wobblies' Little Red Songbook ("Joe Hill" is in ~~fact~~ editions that would have been around in the 1930's) to Frank Little's fate in Butte (hanged from a trestle, not a bridge. The bits of foreign phrasing that I checked on particularly show how errors persist once they get in print; I use the Plentywood story of the Red sheriff deriding a lawyer by punning the Norwegian word--advokat--into the word for monkey; probably as far back as the Producers News in the 1930's, that pun made its way into print as abekat and is in articles etc. ever since, though when I looked in the Norsk Englsk dictionary the word is spekat. So it goes, picking nits that virtually no one else would know were there.

As to the book as novel, I won't know how it hangs together from the one end to the other until I see it in type. Some good writing and arresting scenes in it, ** I know; on the other hand, it has 355 separate scenes, and whether that turns out to be cinema-on-the-page or too much jumping around, readership will tell.

Today is auspicious in another way besides Bucking going to New York; the tv documentary WestWords is on tonight, and we're going to the Walkinshaws' for dinner and then to see the show for the 1st time.

**Later: The Nov. 27 issue of The New Yorker has a piece about the cutting-room editing of Martin Scorses's new movie "Casino," which is thought to be intricate; it has 269 scenes.

23 Nov.--Thanksgiving morn, quiet and rainy. 9:30 now, with the turkey in the oven at 8 for its 6 hrs of cooking, and the house pretty much in order, result of the hired housecleaning by Terry and Jennifer and the yardwork by Andy, all of it Tues. afternoon, plus the weekend work C and I did on the place. There's to be 15 of us this year.

After the Bucking ms went off to NY on Monday, I started thinking ahead on book biz matters, checking w/ DeWitt Daggett about his intentions for the languishing Audio Press tapes (he's going to try them on S&S, which I think fits my situation well), checking with S&S sales rep whether Scribner is listing RFair as a spring p'back as promised (no; immediately called Liz, she said she'd give them hell), mulling through the status of various rights on all 8 books (caught S&S paying us 50% instead of contractual 60% on last HarperC RFair p'back royalty; sicced Liz onto that, too), and generally trying to think ahead. Also did a massive amount of ~~work~~ office cleanup, garbage sacks full of Bucking xeroxes (kept the pp. that show ms evolution) and three shopping bags of books to Shoreline College library. C remarked this morning how energetically I've kept going, and indeed I haven't had--yet--the kind of collapse my body sometimes goes thru for a day or two at the end of a big stint of work.

Monday night, to the Walkinshaws' for buffet dinner for 20 or so KCTS-9ers who were involved, one way or another, in Jean's WestWords show. Good pleasant group, and then we all watched the show when it came on at 9, a good deft job, some wonderful videography by Tom Speer. Among the supper group was Larry Wheeler, fishing buddy of Walt's, who does virtuoso whistling for the show, as he did for WBros; he and wife Martha are also Gary Luke's parents-in-law!

27 Nov.--Thanksgiving behind, the new year coming. A good congenial Th'giving, enlivened more than we wanted by Ann McCartney's knockover of her glass of red wine onto our whitish couch and, fortuitously from our point of view, mainly onto Norm's pants. Lou Damborg saved the couch, by knowing that seltzer water was the thing to use and industriously scrubbing at the wine stains; a bonus blessing of the Damborgs pitching in as they have on

27 Nov. cont.--the big day--Mark now customarily brings an ice chest full of champagne (Australian, this year), and finds that our crowd regularly goes through 8 bottles. This year's lineup: Ann and Norm, Linda and Jeff, Peter Rockas and Cathy Acker, Jack Gordon, Margaret Svec, John and Katharina Maloof and grown daughter Carla just in from her Philadelphia-commute-to-NY=bank-job life, and, pre-eminently as I say, Mark and Lou. We ate at about 2:30. The QFC has changed turkey suppliers this year, and while C and I thought the new brand wasn't quite as flavorful, it was wonderfully moist. The hot dishes, we all chorused, seemed better than ever: Katharina's red cabbage, Peter's simplified sweet potatoes, Mark and Lou's "chrysanthemum-cut" onions, Jack's spaghetti-like yellow squash with cheese. And at least as glorious as ever, Cathy's green-Golden Delicious apple pies. A mark of the times, and our generation, is that after about half the folks left at 6 or so (forgot to mention, we got in a walk of the neighborhood between rains), Ann and Norm and Mark and Lou and Peter and Cathy and C and I sat around for another glass or 2 of champagne and the talk turned to pension plans.

While I was writing the above, Tal called from Liz D's office saying Liz is having lunch today with Chip McGrath of NYTBR and wants to lay it on him how scant they've been on my past books; Liz had record of only Sea Runners and Rascal Fair reviews, I told Tal to tell her Sky and WBros also had "full" reviews but the last 3 books have been in-brief; also told him to tell her of McGrath's remark in recent NY Times Magazine piece about television as the Dickens novel of today, that nobody writes about anybody doing real work--whatever else Bucking the Sun does or doesn't have, it has people working

C and I took the 3 days after Thanksgiving comparatively easy, the weather on and off, not as rainy as forecast but highly changeable. I read Jim Crace's Signals of Distress and mostly liked it. And kept pecking away at office clean-up, among other things getting C's pics of the West sorted, identified and ~~and then~~ boxed away, before the next batch begins in New Mexico in the new year. Also,

27 Nov. cont.--I don't know whether I've noted here that we now have a fax machine in the house, although I have to make another stab--today--at programming it to let phone calls through. I decided the fax was necessary for schedule dealings with S&S as the book tour comes up, but I really have nil interest in technological gear; one of the projects ahead, and sooner than I'd like, is making myself start to adapt to some of it.

Also should note, out of the Than^Ksgiving holiday, that, as my practice has been, I made first steps toward organizing for the next book, the Susan Duff novel to be titled *Fireflies at the Parthenon*.

29 Nov.--Rain is sheeting down, 9:30 a.m. Second day of a big Pineapple Express storm, which brought gusts of winds, y'day, just short of the big scary ones that threaten to bring down trees. I'm hunkered in--had been a little disgruntled about Chris Bennion putting off our semi-annual lunch until tomorrow, but now I'm glad he did--and did some more thinking, note-taking and organizing about *Fireflies at the Parthenon*, which I put in a good morning on y'day. C said, as she left for the college, she could see the wheels turning in me.

Another landmark, I suppose, is that the first fax message has just arrived into this house, the "jacket" material for the readers' copies of *Bucking*.

A little before, I called Becky to see where we stand with the ms; she's halfway through her reading of my revise, says it's "fantastic," "fun to read." She's to call me by "week's end," although that usually means next week, and hopes to turn it over to copy-editor Zoe on Monday; we agreed it'd be best if I can get the copy-edited version from Zoe by Xmas, and I told Becky I can handle that version in 5 days, maybe as little as 3.

Back to the weather; C and I agreed, by about the hundredth howl of the wind y'day afternoon, that this much storm is wearing on a person, and so we decided to get out of the house for the evening rather than sitting around listening to rain pock the windows and wind roaring among the trees. Went to the Crest to see the movie *The Postman*, which was good, charming,

29 Nov. cont.--beautifully acted, but slowed down drastically after Neruda left the scene. Anyway, a good outing for us; tomorrow night it's to the Provinces with the Nelsons.

12 Dec.--Not a day with a lot to recommend it; the biggest windstorm in 10 years is forecast for this afternoon and tonight. C is up at Shoreline and right now--just past 10 a.m.--has given her last exam and is holding her ~~ifant~~ last office hour; she had the good idea to leave the old Skyhawk on campus so we'll have some wheels available if fallen trees close the three vulnerable streets out of this valley, so I'll go up and fetch her when she calls and then we start hunkering in. Rain has just started again, heavy but not nearly what is supposed to be coming; I did get in a walk around the n'hood in the calm before the storm, a couple of hrs ago, and have been trying to think through worst scenarios, a treefall etc. (we think the main thing is to sleep in sleeping bags in the study, under protection of desks and filing cabinets), and tend to what details I can, new batteries in portable radio and so on. I greatly wish it was 24 hours from now.

Other than the fret about big wind, things have been going quite okay. We socialized on Sat. afternoon at Erick Nalder's and Jan Christiansen's, the other guests Bill and Holly Dietrich. Both Eric and Bill, Pulitzer-winning reporters, have made some kind of start on novels--Eric's out of his adolescence in Afghanistan, Bill's about Nazi designs on the Antarctic in the late 1930's!--and so we did some book talk. The next night, John and Jean Roden were here for supper, last social chance before Jean goes off to South Carolina for a month ~~for~~ to be on hand when Cindy's 2nd baby comes. As John and I talked in the living room while Carol and Jean were in the kitchen, John went into a low mood. I've known him for nearly 30 years, and it dumbly took me about 20 of those years before I realized his tendency to depression is severe, probably clinical if he weren't too much Marine and Texan and sheer John to admit it. Several kinds of tough stuff are all happening to him at once--the IRS taking a hard line in whatever dispute he's in with them, a back-tax penalty on his Oregon

12 Dec. cont.--treeland looming if he doesn't proceed with replanting pronto--but the one that very nearly put him in tears the other nights was his short-selling, being savaged by the roaring bull market. I figured he was simply in for ^{sum} he could well afford to lose, and so was asking him why he put up with the risk of short-selling, which he's tried a lot of in recent years. I meant it, financially, philosophically and every other way--I just cannot see why he runs that risk, although I think there's a strong factor of his contempt of the stocks, such as casinos, that he bets against--but unlike our usual debate on this, he suddenly ~~choked up~~ choked up and couldn't say anything. We were called to supper then, and by the other three of us elaborately pretending things were normal, he worked his way out of it and back into the conversation after a few minutes. I've since thought it might've been better if he had outright cried, and we listened to his situation and let him talk it out. But it didn't go that way and likely never will, and I look at the man who pulled me out of the surf at Ellen Creek and back to life, and don't know how to reach him.

11 Dec.--The big windstorm by and large went over us, the night of the 12th; maximum roars, and some creaking of the roof (and full-body flinches by both of us, in the study to be farthest away from our big trees), at 7:20 and 7:30, then another scary gust around 8:30. Supposedly the windspeeds through the Seattle area were 35-55 mph, with higher gusts (59 mph was the highest @ SeaTac); the stronger force of the storm slanted across the Sound just north of us, Mukilteo getting an 86 mph wind. I went to Edmonds for a haircut, seafood etc. y'day afternoon and it was noticeable that more evergreen branches were in the streets, and a few trees had come down across streets, beginning on the hill above us. I did clean up about 10 garbage cans of small branches from our driveway and patio (and there's a couple more cans' worth on the roof, to be got eventually but nothing of threatening size. One of the precautions we took was to leave the old Skyhawk on the Shoreline campus on the south side of the PUB, away from trees, so we'd have wheels if fallen trees shut off all three streets out of this valley, and that also let us park

14 Dec. cont.--the Honda entirely under the carport, parallel to the house. Another note for future reference; the Seattle Times storm story says SeaTac recorded an all-time barometer low of 28.65; I'm pretty sure our little version here in the study read lower than that, I think 28.6 when I checked it one of the times during the wind's arrival.

In the wider world, I've called Becky Saletan to tell her we're jaunting off to Death Valley, and discussed with her Scribner's notion of waiting until Sept. to do their paperback of Rascal Fair; my point is, I want somebody to have copies in the bookstores, whether it's Scribner's or the last of the HarperCollins stock of the book, when I'm on the Bucking tour. Becky sounds a bit hoarse--she picked up a flu bug when she took her niece to see the Rockettes; said thank god ~~that~~ her office is in Rockefeller Center, so ~~that~~ the two of them had a place to go to the bathroom!--but also greatly relaxed, with the First Lady book going out of her life. Said she reached a point recently where, when someone at the White House had a question about Hillary's forthcoming promo tour and said "We'll ask Becky," she was able to say, "Actually I'm not the person to ask about that." Also, I've been on the phone with the copy-editor Zoe Kharpertian, settling with her on a policy of as few hyphens and capitalizations (except Corps when referring to the Army Corps of Engineers and so on) as possible; also had a brief debate, and a bit of phone tag, over "civvie"--Webster's says it has to be "civie" or "civvy", neither of which looks right to my eye--before I found it in my Am Heritage dictionary and told her to keep as is.

Dec. 17 - Death Valley days, two of them at least. Instead of 3, because just as we drove ~~into~~ up to the Nat'l Park booth at the north end of DV, to go in to Scotty's Castle, the Park Service began a phase I shutdown because of the budget impasse. We came here for the weather, a 4-night 5-day trip such as we've done just before Xmas various times - San Francisco last year, Palm Springs the year before - and so while we think the political meanness of these shutdowns is lousy, neither of us was disheartened about being here. We went down the valley to Badwater, 282 ft. below sea level, in the afternoon, and found both the Artist Canyon loop drive & the Golden Canyon trail still open, so we did those. And this morning, dawn at Zabriskie Point! In a ripping wind. The play of light has been astounding ever since we drove in at about 4:15 Fri. afternoon - some clouds then, letting stunning pinto-patches of warm light onto stark mountain slopes; and the land/forms here are all so eroded that everything carries shadows of dramatic emphasis - and Carol has been happily working her camera. We agree this isn't a place we'll necessarily get back to, but it is memorable, living up to our notion that it ought to be experienced.

Until we head back to Las Vegas later today, we're in room 629 of the Furnace Creek

Dec. 17 - Death Valley cont. -

Ranch complex; this is a motel-like unit, one of 4 or 5 amid an oasis-like swatch of cacti, date palms, and, O America, a golf course. Our room looks northwest, some view of the mountain skyline, & it has been inexplicably & blessedly quiet at night; Fri. night, after the Seattle-Las Vegas flight & the surprisingly tough little drive to here (147 mi., $3\frac{1}{2}$ hrs!) we both slept solidly for almost 10 hrs. In contrast, trying for a nap y'day we were thwarted by (a) the big white barking dog on a balcony of the 700 unit across the way - that's evidently the "doggy" unit, an elderly big-hair woman coming out of the room below the white dog this morning in her black-velvet dressing gown to take her poodle around the corner; & told Carol I couldn't possibly make up such people - and (b) the California guy below us drumming on his patio table or something, in tune with whatever music he was listening to.

& this morning, evidently a movie crew is on hand.

Meals? 50-50; chicken teriyaki the 1st night was OK, stir-fry last night was remarkably mediocre. There are 3 eateries, of various price levels, under one roof here, & we've eaten cereal break/pots in our room & snack-lunched on cream cheese & crackers & fruit, so only dinner has to be contended

Dec. 17 - Death Valley cont. -

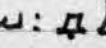
with, & we've done so in the coffee shop. Watched last night as veteran waitresses had to cope with a new computer setup, whereby they now have to both write orders on their pad & then go to wall terminal, push in an activating card they carry on a coil-stretch cord & then touch-in all orders on the screen - besides dealing with customers such as Japanese tourists trying to order Bud or Miller beer, "by the glass or bottle?"

Later: ~~10:20 a.m.~~ 10:20 a.m., & after lunch & packing the car we head to Las Vegas. Just did a walk around the Furnace Creek grounds, on the golfcart paths - views of bare contorted mountains through avenues of date palms. Hadn't seen date palms before; the dates grow out in impressive clusters, but seem to be ossified by the time they fall to the ground. Ravens seem to eat them nonetheless. Should note the other premost wildlife - 2 coyotes we've sighted, one crossing the highway in front of us y'day out in the barrenness of the valley, & one just now at the ~~golf~~ golf course, alertly trotting in past the "19th hole" coffee pavilion to a pond at one of the greens, & then on through the course along one of the lines of palm trees.

Also notable, if less estimable: the huge loony Furnace Creek Dam, a great pile of stone & masonry which, when we went in last dusk / or

Dec. 17 - Death Valley cont. -

a look, was stuffy. They maybe built to keep the heat out, but evidently forgot circulation.

& at the little museum here, mostly devoted to borax history: 20-mule team (lead-team) bells were different (3 sizable & 2 smaller at each end, like this: ) from stagecoach bells, a set of 3 all same size.

Exquisite weather here during our walk this morning: absolutely blue sky, & perfect comfort in our Powells sweatshirts.

Dec. 19 - St. George, Utah - looking out the motel window near intersection of Skyline Drive & St. George Blvd, we've been watching the story of the West: a magnificent sunrise, with cloud streaks going from pinkish purple to molten gold, while every manner of building truck trundles past, cement-walkers, low-buoys of lumber & sheet rock, jackleg carpenters' pickups with sundry equipment piling in. We took Chas & Betty Peterson to dinner at the new

Chili's franchise bar (although they're not allowed to have a sign saying so, in Utah!) and grill, & they said none of the strip-mall area crammed with chainstores of one kind or another were here when they moved here 6 years ago. Enjoyed seeing the Petersons, whom we called up out of the blue after we checked into our motel about 4 y'day afternoon. I cost Chas \$5, a bet he made with his teen-age son

Dec. 19 cont. - when the phone rang, that it'd be the girl who's been calling him & his new driver's license every day about that time. & a good line from Betty, as Chas gave us a quick driving tour of St. George's historic district, pointing out a Mormon patriarch's home that's now called the Seven Wives Inn. Not having seen its sign, Chas said he thought it was the Five Wives; Betty gave him a look & corrected, "Seven. How many days are in a week?" During supper, Chas said he & Betty alit in the Moab-Canyonlands country about the same time as Barre Totken & Edward Abbey, the early 1950s. She taught a year ~~at~~ⁱⁿ the one-room school at LaSalle, near the Colo. border, while Chas worked for Charlie Redd on a ranch on the way in to Canyonlands. Redd, Chas tells, got hold of the Lone Cone ranch after David Lavender's family lost it, & was a sharp operator; Chas worked for him on some sort of contract, & at paying-up time Redd said, "You can't expect me to meet these terms!"

The gov't shutdown is stinging us today, keeping us out of Zion Nat'l Park. &/ we had one more day in this area & I'd try calling Roger Kennedy & finagling our way in unofficially, but we're going to Snow Canyon St. Park instead & then look around St. George's historic district - Zion another time.

24 Dec.--Christmas Eve gift of weather, clear frosty day with dawn-pink light on the Olympics' white peaks and low fog flowing out of the Peninsula valleys across the Sound like wide waterfalls, when C and I walked the n'hood just before 8. The grass and ferns of the bank of the hill out back are almost snowy with the frost, yet, at 20 min. to 10, and it's 34 degrees. We're having a leisurely Sunday morning which, as ever with us, has bits of doing things mixed in, C at the laundry and looking over our Jan. travel itinerary, me at this and making notes of things to be done. We're going to treat ourselves to lunch at Ray's Boathouse, likely with a walk of Shilshole marina included, and tomorrow we cross the water for Christmas with Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan at their Bainbridge farmhouse.

No sooner did we get back from our 5-day tropistic turn to the sun than the book biz began jumping, as C has summed in her diary. Good vital signs are clear at some points for Bucking--S&S's decision for a 12-book floor dump in stores, the methodical way the ~~book~~ booktour is being thought out, the possibility that Annie Proulx may deliver a blurb--while the book-cover question keeps bedeviling us all. The original one, daring and unconventional with its black ball of eclipse in the middle and the green solar flare around the letters of the title, has always had color problems from the start--if you're going to smack such an impact into the center of your cover, what do you put around it?--and the S&S art dept. has been "trying different registers" for the past some months; at the S&S sales conference, the sales reps got their first look at it and didn't like it. They said they wanted a big-book look, by which they mean the Wendell Minor landscape on the current McMurtry, and while those of us on the writing, editing and art end don't want to agree utterly that repetition is the sincerest form of success, we take their point when they say a dour ball of eclipse is a problem commercially. By Thurs. ~~morning~~ afternoon, when Becky had seen the art dept's latest efforts to change the color register and put a flare of light into the design, and after I'd told her to invoke my contract clause to reject the cover if she thought it had come to that, she said she

24 Dec. cont.--"gently suggested this wasn't working" and got the art dept. turned toward thinking of cover artists who can do a landscape-with-sun. (She told me the art dept. had a hard time letting the eclipse version go, liking the literary and daring aspect of it, and I can see that; on the other hand, they couldn't get it to work right.) Carolyn Reidy, the publisher and the person who herself did the Bucking the Sun presentation at the sales conference, had told them all she didn't want the entire Xmas holiday time lost in this cover bogdown, so likely something will be come up with by soon in the new year; Bucking isn't likely to get a great cover out of such belated rejigging, but the hope is we're at least saving it from what the sales reps tell us is a case of the uglies.

I said something to Becky on the phone about how hectic something like this must make her life--although probably nothing compared to recent life-with-Hillary-and-her-book--and she said this isn't bad, the sales conference shot down both the cover and title of one of her other books and she really hates having to try to fix a title.

In another smidgin of the book biz, y'day morn I did a considerable blurb for an anthology of John Graves' work. He's a splendid sentence-maker, not as well known as he should be and quite possibly not as productive as he should have been, and I was glad to do the blurb even though I see some problems with John's estimable pieces. His work often has a kind of "things ain't what they used to be" tone and while I think that kind of lament is usually horseshit, with him it's good rich horseshit, you can see the bright barley pods golden amid even the objectionable crap. Too, I hadn't seen any of his short fiction (he notes in his intro he's always failed at long fiction) and while the ones in the anthology include a couple that were in Best Short Stories of the Year in the 50s and 60s, they do show that he had the Hemingwayesque affliction of believing that old Spanish men are silkier inside than the rest of us. When John looks at nature instead of human nature, though, as I tried to say in the blurb, he's a helluva essay-smith.

27 Dec.--We Christmased at Linda & Sydney's, on Bainbridge Island, a fine sunny day. The 11:25 a.m. ferry was quite full of folks, like us, with shopping bags of packages (or in other cases, plates of cookies or brownies and even one big Coleman cooler full of some kind of Xmas materiel). We likely were in a more blithe mood than most, though, doing the day on the basis of friendship rather than family; as Carol overheard in the ladies' room, "You can't choose your in-laws..."

Syd's son Fred came on the same ferry we did, sleepy from partying to 4 a.m. with his high school friends; he had an after-dinner nap while the other 4 of us and Oliver the clumber spaniel (I've warned Linda and Syd that every time they have to answer people's incessant "What kind of dog is that?" it takes a point off their IQs) went for a walk at Fort Ward, watching the Bremerton ferries pass by against backdrop of snowy peaks of the Olympics. Then three-berry pie and ice cream, and exchange of gifts--Fred retreated to the kitchen to write out cards and dinner

IOUs for his mom and Linda, Linda kidding when he came in and presented the envelopes by blowing on the ink--and we headed home on the 5:25 ferry. Pottery has been the gift motif for us this year, nice pieces from both L & S and the Nelsons.

As to our own modest back-and-forth, I got C a new umbrella, some good notepaper, and surprised her with a framed version of her WWII collection of military insignias from relatives and others, a dozen or more sets of wings etc. ranked around a "Remember Pearl Harbor" pin! She outfitted me with a new wallet and a try at new socks, both damnably hard to find in the style I'm used to, and a good new checked shirt and the "Common Thread: Songs of the Eagles" cassette I'd asked for. Pretty good haul, all around.

Some change in the weather today, quilted clouds, temperature 45+, after the lovely clear chilly days, 5 or 6 of them, that lasted until y'day afternoon. Good timing on the weather, as I now will have to hunker in with the copy-edited ms when it arrives by express mail sometime today. On that score, Becky called a bit ago to say she and Denise can't come up with the 30 or so edited pp.

27 Dec. cont.--which she'd thought were sent to me, 2-3 weeks ago, for my mulling, and so will reconstruct as best she can in a letter and fax it to me tonight. She was able to chuckle and say in the hectic last week before Xmas they maybe sent those pp. to some other writer; said she did, in fact, slip when she was working on Hillary's ms--bored with feeding pp. of H's into the fax, she was also looking over some other ms and, natch, managed to send a page of the other writer down the line to the White House.

Becky's other bit of news, which surprised me, is that Liz already managed to drop word to her that there's a synopsis for my next book. Inasmuch as I dropped that on Liz almost as she was going out the door for the holidays, she must have thought it worthwhile to pause in the doorway and tantalize Becky with word of it. I told Becky, okay, now that everybody along the line has had that tickle in the ribs with the synopsis, I'd better think about it.

31 Dec.--Vaya con dios, '95 going out in springlike weather; the year Carol's TIAA/CREF pension \$ went up \$61,000, and I finished Bucking the Sun. Took today to rest, but the past 3 days and the next 3, all Bucking even yet, reading the copy-edited ms, making my last changes. Social break--or at least drastic change of pace --last night when we went for supper @ Tom & Carrie Jones', somewhere beyond Snohomish; 45 min. each way of dark rainy backroads. Today, as I say, ease. And in 2 wks, we head down the coast and eventually toward Albuquerque.

Thank you, Governor, and members
of the Committee.

(ceremony remarks & intro to reading @ Montana
Governor's Humanities Award, 15 Sept. '95)

①

I suppose you know me too well for me to get by with saying

→ huh?
I'm speechless?

~~{I was afraid so.}~~ At the very least, I'd never be noteless,
would I.

This award/I particularly cherish/because it honors not only
me, but all those ^{note} ~~file~~ cards of mine. As a writer of fiction and
memoir about Montana and the West, I work from the belief that
every life, everyone's story, has vital content--that Tony Hunolt,

(2)

old ranch hand living above the Grand Central Saloon in White Sulphur Springs, reduced to a ^{job}~~life~~ of sweeping out a grocery store, was exactly a witness I needed to my mother and father when he worked with them on the Dogie ranch; ~~that~~ Proxy Shannon, the taxi-dancer and occasional prostitute ^{whom}~~that~~ I've invented in my next book, to help tell what it was like on the Fort Peck Dam project when there were ten thousand damworkers and about the same number of camp ^{that Proxy Shannon} followers, is as complex and intriguing in her life as Burton K.

③

Wheeler and Franklin D. Roosevelt were in theirs. In our details

/are the maps of our lives,/and I'm pleased/[↑]almost beyond any saying
of it, to have my craft of research singled out here tonight.

I need to say a little, too, about being in such good company
here. Much of the past year, the National Endowment for the
Humanities--and the National Endowment for the Arts, and National
a military base
Public Radio, and just about the national anything that isn't ~~the~~
in a Sunbelt state
Pentagon--have been under attack, budgetary and otherwise, by

4
certain members of Congress.

They're lucky ignorance isn't painful.

The one/big/thing utterly evident on this blue marble of a planet, is that the human mind has been something like a nuclear event amid the evolution of earth's living things; how can we possibly ~~judge~~ ^{chart} our proper place in what the writer William Kennedy has reminded us is "the only cosmos in town,"/except by humanity's collective intellectual conscience, the values that we call the

~~history, literature & philosophy.~~

(5)

humanities. If the current crowd running Congress think they are going to be better at trying to mend the human condition than the Montana Committee for the Humanities under Margaret Kingsland has been, they've got a hell of a ways to go.

Well, I've been asked to do a reading on this conference's topic of Montanans and the search for a workable future--which seems to be what a majority of my work is about--and so I have *that'll be out next year*
~~about~~ twenty minutes ^{or so} ~~worth~~ of my ~~next~~ novel, *Bucking the Sun*.

6

Bucking the Sun

This bit of ~~it~~ takes place the day the money began at Fort Peck--

the next-to-the-last Monday in October, 1933. A Depression-hit

family, ~~named~~ the Duffs, are starting work, courtesy of FDR and

the New Deal, on what will be the five years of building the

Fort Peck Dam. The younger brothers, Neil and Bruce, and their

father Hugh are put to work at clearing the bottomland along the

Missouri River where the biggest earthen dam in the world will

—a dam, not incidentally, which has taken
the Duffs' farm, where Fort Peck Lake
will stand.

be installed, The older brother, Owen, is an engineer on ~~the~~ ^{that}

dam. The mother of this family, Meg, has been hired as a cook's

helper as the dam workforce begins to descend on Glasgow. We

begin with Meg Duff: