

[1997]

1 Jan.--Wind blew the year in, but nothing fell on us. Last night's windstorm mostly went over us, but it whooped enough to wake us up in the middle of the night. We lay there thankful we'd had limbs thinned out of our big trees, "windowing" them for wind to flow through and taking some of the weight off the tops. The power was out, and so I drowsed trying to estimate how many days until it'd come back on, given the pounding the area's taken for a week; damned if the power didn't come back by the time we got up. Meanwhile, across the street in the middle of the night the households along Boeing Creek and what some are now calling "Lake Lankford" were being advised to evacuate. A chain of washouts had happened--the retention basin at 175th and 6th washed out, and then the street at that intersection, leaving a terrific chasm and filling the lake with silt and an overlay of raw sewage.

So, we came through exceptionally well.

6 Jan.--Well, the aftermath. Our sinkhole at 175th and 6th had more than its Warholian 15 minutes of fame, making the local tv news night after night (the chopchopchop of news helicopters calling regularly is surprisingly annoying) and starring in a NY Times photo (which I put in the back of the '96 diary). The sinkhole must have been both the cause of our remarkably short power outage and the reason its duration was short: it must have been utterly obvious to City Light that the askew power poles there were the site of trouble. And the car that the hole famously ate belonged to Jody Scott, "the other writer on the street" as she described herself to Carol during the street-name-change rounds last summer. I didn't hear it, but C said she was utterly charming on the "All Things Considered" interview about her car. Certainly she's a more intriguing story than ATC could have known, living as she does in a decaying house behind a blackberry jungle, writing sci fi.

As to this writer, Becky called today with the Bucking the Sun sales figures I'd requested: 55,400 printed, 38,500 sales at the moment (doubtless some more returns to come off that yet). It's about what I sensed on the bookstore trail, 35-40,000, likely the lower end of that; as I told C, I'm not discouraged, as Bucking may outdo Rascal Fair's 32,500 sold, but I'm not encouraged either,

6 Jan. cont.--inasmuch as S&S and myself ran as hard as we could and still couldn't break this book out beyond the 30,000-some limit on western books (Stegner's were there until Crossing to Safety, I think). So, it fortifies me in the double resolutions I've made, to not near-kill myself in ambition on this current manuscript and to not commit myself to a contract deadline after this ms.

Back to summarizing the odd long weather-ridden holiday; thank God we went to Tucson, and we were lucky too in not getting any real damage to the household.

And as of today, I wrote my 2 pp. on Keeping the Days, and C taught her 2 classes. Onward we go.

15 Jan.--Not an auspicious year for the diary so far, 15 days into '97 and a wan trio of entries. I had the excuse of an excruciating back, last week, after I made what must have been an off-balance stab with the shovel as I was digging the compost into the pile; helluva sharp spasm across the lower left side of the back, different place than my usual tipped disk. 3+ days of Ibuprofen (actually Motrin, over the counter) tamed it down. Then came the Simon & Schuster audio script for Bucking the Sun, which I spent the weekend on, trying to improve it by little dabs; it was what it was, remindful of Hamlet-done-in-10-minutes, and I thought quite well-crafted all in all. This week, C has come down with a cold (and is persevering through it fairly rapidly) while the next mischief from my body was a groin muscle pull: sharp y'day, virtually gone today.

Amid it all I've been plowing along on Keeping the Days none too happily, although there's probably nothing wrong with it or me that a big chunk of manuscript to rewrite from wouldn't cure.

17 Jan.--C just read aloud with disgust, "'Rain, at times'" from the P-I; it's been raining all damned day, in fact close to 24 hours. Before that, several days of raw cold that brought a temperature inversion's murk, and freezing nights. Bastard of a winter this has been, and now I hope it doesn't repeat the Inauguration Day windstorm of 4 years ago, as we go into Clintonia II on Monday.

Sobered me up a bit about ~~the~~ our weather, though, when I called Condon, Montana, to thank outdoorsman Bud Moore for the high-country material he'd sent me, and his wife

17 Jan. cont.--explained to me that Bud was out hauling firewood today with dogteam and snowmobile; he's got to be at least in his late 70's. And they've had 54" of snow, to our sissy 20".

C is outlasting her cold, and in fact propelled us out last night to dinner with Jean and Walt Walkinshaw. They're always a tonic for us, although Walt was looking a little peaked and limping, making us fret about his replaced hip joint; Walkinshaw-like, though, they're about to go to China for a month to visit their daughter.

On the writing front, I've mauled my way to a couple more scene-openers in what looks like the set of 5 scenes (2 apiece for Lexa and Mitch, and the last one more or less together) that'll comprise "The Coast" section of the novel. I will say, it helped considerably when I started re-reading *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* the other night and saw the textures I achieved in that book.

Otherwise, I sit around and say no to the world, 3 blurb requests this week, a heart-tugging library dedication in Eagle Valley, Colorado, a convention of college bookstore managers (a guarded "maybe" on that one), ~~the~~ joining the board for the Red Rock writers' retreat in Utah...so it noes.

Just did the last desk dab of the day, sending to Becky Saletan the Seattle Times page that shows Bucking the #2 fiction best-seller by Pacific Pipeline last year, telling her "I'm sure if Bucking and I had known Primary Colors was written by mere Joe Klein, we'd have whipped his butt, too."

21 Jan.--Finally not raining, although it's suspiciously gray out and no sign yet of the sunbreaks that were forecast for this afternoon. Although the weather guys all cast it as "showers," "some rain," etc., we in effect had a 4-day rain Friday thru Monday, damn little time when moisture wasn't coming down steadily. As a benchmark of this worrisome winter--will the hill hold, behind the house? no sign of problem yet--the precipitation in Jan. so far has been 4.6", and there was another 6.4" between Xmas and New Year's, in the form of 20" of snow and then 3 days' rain on the snow. Who the hell knows, because of climatological change in the Pacific, but we'll hope this is the big winter to measure others against.

Hoowhee, the mail etc. Today brought the Northwestern U.

21 Jan. cont.--invitation to come be black-tie inducted into Medill's Hall of Fame on April 26. I dunno.

On the Keeping the Days front, I geared up today and did a couple of rough pages, but do feel athwart of various necessities for the book, such as getting out and doing research (most of which keeps getting kicked in the head by the weather) and rewriting scenes into fuller continuity and better texture (which needs to draw on the research, natch).

Barbara Harper was with us from Sat. morning until she flew back to LA @ 7 on Monday morn, a quick visit before she goes back to her work with the Uduk tribe in a refugee camp in Ethiopia. She's 72 and going strong, hoping to be over there for the next 3 years.

And y'day was Clinton's second inauguration. Serviceable seemed to be the order of the day, his speech okay but no historical barnburner, the Arkansas poet Miller Williams proved to be a journeyman (for the first time I, no poet, said Hey, I could do better than that), and on down the line into the music, except for Jessye Norman, showing 'em how to own the stage with her voice. Most notable moment: Rehnquist after swearing Clinton in, saying flatly "Good luck"--pointedly? coincidentally? ironically? Anyway, the country saunters on, changing governments ceremonially instead of at the end of a gun barrel; serviceable ain't too bad sometimes.

24 Jan.--Whew. I allotted today, Friday, to see if I could revamp the opening scenes of Keeping for better pace and proportion, and by now, just short of 4 o'clock, I'm closing down with 17 pp. recast, about half of them pretty decent revision on Lexa's 1st scene. Also, yard guy Paul Drollinger pulled in here about a quarter to 8 with a crew of half a dozen, and now our driveway is no longer a morass of tree needles, the ragged salal has been clipped, and we at last (after 22½ years) have a gravel path up the clay bank to the compost pile and woodpile. Progress. I'm tired.

27 Jan.--C-o-l-l-l-d weekend, temp in the 30s, brisk north wind. Some sunshine, though. Friday the new yard guy Paul Drollinger--he's actually a yard CEO, deploying a crew of half a dozen on us--got the driveway etc. cleaned up, making this place look 100% better and giving both C and me a sense of tidying up, so that we spent some of Saturday on the inside of the house and general upkeep such as a dump run. This morning we did go to Shiloh²shole to walk and damn was it cold. The rest of today we've read the Sunday NY Times, I've tinkered on the computer trying to Excel our finances; pretty quiet recuperative day.

28 Jan.--\$72,000 richer, us, as of y'day's mail. Between S&S and Liz a new record of float is achieved each year with these book advances, but here at last came this year's "first week of Jan." money for Keeping the Days.

Whether or not it's celebratory, I've spent y'day and today revising, and perhaps have made some real tracks in the first 3 chapters.

8 Feb.--The weather moderated, went clear and bright the first 3 or 4 days of the week, and so I was able to leap to my garden in the afternoons. The pea patch-to-be is ready, now at the south end of the veg garden directly behind the house, after the last couple of years' mediocre results along the north fenceline. But the real jump on the season was the rejigging of the raspberry patch, changing its alignment--i.e., angling it a bit--to make room to get between it and the pernicious clay bank. For that matter, I managed to begin an attack on the bank itself, shoveling and repiling to start a rough terrace to walk on for access to the berries near the top of the embankment. (One dividend of that sopping January we had: the clay is wet enough to handle easily.) Y'day early afternoon, I used every shred of sunshine there was--the sun still makes a low sharp cut, maybe an hour and a half's worth, between our big front trees and the hill this time of year--and managed to clear out grass and weeds along the raspberry row, level the northern end where the path starts up the hill, thread a soaking hose among the canes, and then mulch the whole row with Sky Nursery's mix of sawdust and manure. And in yet another act in what's

8 Feb. cont.--turning into a raspberry extravaganza, C a few days ago helped me transplant 15 young canes, from the overgrown thicket where the cleaned-up row now is, onto the bench about halfway to the base of the hill.

Here at the eternal Royal, I made my pp. quota this week with a combo of revising at least 2/day and producing one fresh one amid the rewriting, i.e. lacing together 15 pp. for the week. If I can keep this up for this month, I should be damn close to having a serviceable version of Keeping's "Coast" section.

What I haven't done any of is keeping up with the mail etc., the oft-winsome requests and so on. Starved as I was to get outside--a hunger I'm giving some of to Lexa in this current book--I've just let all that stuff slide. In an otherwise unintentionally hilarious snooty/snotty author's interview in this week's PW, Joanna Trollope says "the administration of a writer's life takes much more time than it ought."

Before taking a look at this morning's weather--we want to go someplace if we can dodge morning fog--I should note how actuality has been copying my manuscript lately. Have worked for some time recently on the scene where the publisher of Cascopia tells the staff he's turning the paper into a giveaway, which Mitch recognizes as the beginning of the end, and this week David Brewster told the Weekly readers he's selling the puppy off. And not long ago I recast Mitch's Mount St. Helens angst into an incident where Juanita Trippe died on Coldwater Ridge by taking his turn at volcano-watching; y'day, the release of the St. Helens-ripoff movie "Dante's Peak," and forthcoming another eruption pic that'll have the ad tagline "The Coast is toast."

24 Feb.--And, adding to the foregoing, last week it was the advent of Jamba Juice, the Starbucks-like juice chain that sounds oh-so-very-much like the Juice-Up chain I made up for Mitch's daughter to work for.

This poor languishing Camille of a diary, starved all of last week and I guess the week before as well. In shorthand, at least:

--Mon. the 17th, we met Mark and Lou Damborg, at their suggestion, for dinner at The Broadway (sensational ribs, of which I ate half a ton, appetite sharpened by all the garden work I'd been doing) and then crossed the street

24 Feb. cont.--to the Art Museum to hear Katharine Graham be interviewed, sort of, by Michael Kinsley. Entertaining, and C and I both got a kick out of seeing and hearing la great Graham of the Post, but Kinsley could have done some more substantive questioning: no mention of Pentagon Papers, just for example, nor any of the Post "Style" section or any other of its snotty habits amid its admirable reporting zeal. The 300-seat auditorium was full, not particularly to my surprise, but the youth of much of the audience did puzzle me, until it dawned on me they were there for Kinsley, he of Slate on MSNBC.

--Out of the blue, a phone machine/message from the adopted son of Fern, my one-time stepmother. Don Taskila, he is, and he wants to write about Fern (who died last June); I had known she was much-married, but Don believes she was hyper-married, maybe 13 times, although he seems to be basing that on her ring collection. Anyway, I am trying to be civilly helpful--I actually don't really have anything any more, mental or otherwise, on tap about Fern that I didn't use in Sky--while keeping my distance.

--Saturday, we spent a couple of hours on the mishmash of trails in Discovery Park with John and Jean Roden, our first outing with them in an immensely long time. C and I are agreed that Discovery Park is a medium thrill, hacked up as it's been for various military and other uses, but it was welcome to get out with J&J.

27 Feb.--There goes February, and I have some dread of March--Def Ben Pension Plan annual calculation, income tax figuring, the Santa Fe trip, the Los Angeles trip. Today the Stanford Court in San Francisco came through with our reservation for our last-of-March night there and I told C, I can't wait!

It's been grim output, made more so by a treacherous groin muscle which kept me from walking the n'hood or any other exercise for a couple of days, but I have hacked out progress on the manuscript this week despite not making the arithmetical pp. gains I'd like to see. This first section of Keeping the Days looks as if it will come in at 110-115 pp., and maybe, maybe, I can reach them by a week from tomorrow. Today was one of those that makes me blanch at the page count--I decided not to have the full-dress Alaska pipeline plane flight for Mitch, Lexa and Travis that I'd been writing on the day before--but

27 Feb. cont.--which tautened and livened the storyline considerably. Sometime in '98 or '99 I'll thank myself for today's work, but in the meantime, Jesus would cry out.

The phone has been bouncing off the hook. I have:

--turned down at least until after this book the National Endowment for the Arts lit're folks' request to be on the literary jury that hands out the fellowships

--told the Wilderness Society no on its wish to send me to Princeton to do a fund-raiser for them.

--nix'd a semi-appealing fee'd speaking gig at Utah State in mid-April, in favor of keeping that month for myself and the writing schedule and going on the Utah mini-Bucking the Sun p'back tour in May instead.

--dredged around in my memory for Paula Bock of the Seattles Times as to what my first appearance at Elliott Bay Book Store, back in '80, was like; she's doing a piece on our impresario Rick Simonson.

--relayed C's travel decisions to the Huntington Library and its travel agency, and the Los Angeles Library/MOCA, for our March trip.

And so on.

3 March--Who would have thought it would be a sheep. The genie of cloning that is now loose, from the Scottish sheep geneticists, I wish Dad was here to marvel at, he who pulled a million lambs.

Plugged away at the Alaska portion of the ms today, which is still sketchy but may make the armature of a pretty good set scene. Can't tell yet whether I can get a version of this entire final section of Part I by Friday, which I'd like to do--the weeks from Hell, in terms of busyness, are coming--but if nothing else I should come damn close.

Spent the weekend mainly choring, churning out the Def Ben Pension Plan report for the actuary, and like that. Weather has been either rainy or showery, so we're not missing much outdoors.

13 March - In flight to Salt Lake, & thence to Albuquerque & Socorro. It's been a helluva busy week:

- Monday night, read w/ Linda Biers @ Bathhouse Theater, my debut of Keeping the Days - the 1st two scenes of Hexa - and Linda's preview of her forthcoming book of poetry, The Profile Makers. Good gig, both of us definitely on, and we announced that due to our tradition - we've now read together 3 times - we'd finish up by reading a bit of each other's stuff. So I plunged into "Light, Steam" & Linda beautifully concluded with my Heart Earth section that ends, "freefalling through the language."

- Tues., speech writing for this Santa Fe award.

- Wed., calculating the quarterly estimated taxes, always exorcising.
- & today, one more go-through of the speech - & some useful loosening-up of it w/ Dick Hugo talks - & then hectic packing.

17 March--Post-Santa Fe and pre-LA; and, hmm, possibly quasi-Becky. Just called NY to check in, report a little on Santa Fe etc., and learned that Becky is having twin girls, around mid-summer. She figures to be away from editing until end of Oct. It'll be interesting to see whether she follows the path of most of my previous editors, hey-there's-another-life-I-want-to-lead-now. Her 1st-rate assistant, Denise Roy, is being promoted to associate editor, so such path ahead as I have with S&S--in deadline terms, only this book--likely lies in some combo of Becky and Denise.

As this diary has said many times in re publishing, onward. The Santa Fe trip:

--Left early afternoon on Thurs., March 13, and were at the Super 8 motel in Socorro by early evening. Supper at the Sombrero, pretty good, and then a day of bird-watching and both of us relaxing and recuperating--C is at the end of a long tough winter quarter--on Friday. The sandhill cranes were gone, but there was a rear-guard of snow geese left--we luckily came across them right away, on our way into Bosque del Apache--and there were plenty of birds to be seen, such as:

--redwing blackbirds flocking and chorusing so thickly in the trees at the door to the visitor center that at first I thought they were starlings.

--avocets, stilts, herons, pied-bill grebes

--shoveler ducks (zillions of them), hooded mergansers, gadwalls, northern pintails, ruddy ducks, and canvasbacks.

--trees full of cormorants at sunset, maybe the most memorable sight of the trip; they truly load the trees, sizable dark forms 2 or 3 to a branch, so much so that when a newcomer alights and jostles the branchload precariously, there's a protesting chorus of GROARK, GROARK!

--a pheasant;

--and a porcupine in a tree.

Walked around Socorro a little this time, an interesting hard-used old town, some good buildings left but the downtown faded from competition of the inevitable highway strip franchises.

Left for Alb'que about 8:15 Sat. morn, got there in time to walk around the UNM campus in sunshine (the sun! the sun! we kept marveling as we went around in our

17 March cont.--shirtsleeves) for 45 min. before picking up Frank Zoretich for lunch. He chose Vijay's, and Steve and Kelly Brewer joined us. Steve's taking the year off from newspapering to write books, Kelly's the assistant managing editor in charge of news coverage @ the Tribune. They seemed thriving.

Then a 12-1:30 reading/signing @ Page One bookstore, very successful--sold a lot of books, visited some w/ Becky's novelist Chris Offutt and w/ Margaret & Frank Szasz. And a Ft. Peck geezer showed up, who'd worked in the Ad Bldg.; he had pics of FDR's 1st visit to show us.

Santa Fe next, the OK-but-not-much-more-than-that Radisson. We napped, I tinkered w/ my speech and read through it as a final rehearsal, and we watched sunset make shadings on Santa Fe, including the cathedral. Then to La Fonda and the doings.

Good crowd, 150-175, @ \$30 a banquet ticket. Pleasant old ballroom of La Fonda, except the air-conditioning was blowing a chilly gale onto our table. After a while I noticed an endurance expression on C, huddled under her sweater, and went to the car and got her my light new raincoat for warmth. Frank Z. had come up for the evening, so we had him for good company, and I visited thru dinner with the Mtns & Plains group's lawyer, Randall Weeks of Denver, a clerkly-looking guy who turned out to know a lot about the Choteau area and the Rocky Mtn. Front. Before dinner, I fended (amiably, I hope) w/ various Santa Feans who had some Montana connection or another.

The speaking, from my point of view, went well; the mike was good and I was able to perform my talk fairly fervently. And I prefaced it w/ a dedication in memory of the Haunted Bookshop in Tucson; Lynn (Cobb, as she was when we met her) had looked me up beforehand and given me the bad news of the closing.

C remarked that she believes the after-dinner talks did say a lot about the speakers--my written and rehearsed stuff; David London's kind of endearing fumbling rookie remarks (he has the size and look of a brand new pro quarterback); and Steve Ambrose's veteran-prof-at-the-rostrum confidence, working from a little list of scrawled topic words; it was a little eyebrow-elevating, but I

17 March cont.--think ultimately useful for people to hear, when he reeled off the 3 quarter-million gifts he's made, from the money that's rolled in from Undaunted Courage.

I told C on the flight home, about the next jackpot he'll hit will be the Pulitzer for history.

So we had a good trip, made a little ragged on the final leg of flight, from Salt Lake, when there was an epidemic of seat-swapping ultimately involving the window seat next to us, and today C is finishing up the qtr's classes and, now at just past 10:30, I've husked the mail and submitted my trip expenses and can go on to a couple of days of tinkering on the ms before we start all this over, in LA-land.

21 March--Damn little got tinkered, though--more like part of a day than the 2 full ones I'd hoped to grab off--in the grind of this March. It took a strenuous Wed. and then $\frac{1}{2}$ of Thursday morning at photocopying, to get the Huntington talk ready, and then considerable of Thurs. on the LA reading preparation, and considerable of today working out the intro remarks for the reading. So, this month--which in terms of ms work dies today--has been as rugged as I foresaw. At least my pay goes up this weekend--\$7,000 for the LA gigs--and then we'll have time off @ Monterey and a finale night in San Francisco.

This week also brought a 3-day rain, $\frac{1}{4}$ " worth, which raised hell with slidey slopes again. We're still unscathed, the only casualty my garden, which turned to clay soup during the big rain; virtually all of the garden, except the very spines of the two-mounded rows I'd built up for lettuce planting, went under water, plus the grass-and-clay patches at either end of the garden. I began to get concerned whether water was going to back up and back up, out there, until it reached the base of the house, the crawl-space foundation at least. What a winter.

22 March - See Tac again, 2nd weekend in a row. LA - Monterey - SF ahead. It seems to take an inordinate amount of time & detail-tending to get ready for these travels, but 3 different climates/venues are involved this time (as were Socoma birdwatching & Santa Fe ceremony last time) - among other logistics, I have my hiking boots in my briefcase.

Will be interesting to see how these LA gigs go; reading @ MOCA is long since sold out, while Monday's Huntington speech goes head-to-head w/ the Academy Awards telecast.

Weather has finally moderated, & y'day afternoon I went out to the swamplike veg. garden & sowed (re-sowed) lettuce. A few peas are coming up, but most likely will fall victim to slugs while we're away.

29 March - San Francisco airport now.

Sunny end to a fine week. Weather so good today that we sat in Huntington Park (across from Grace Cathedral) after b'fst, watching varieties of Asian exercise; then walked to the cable car barn & down thru a bit of Chinatown; then drove to Ft. Mason for lunch @ Greens (supper there night before, too) and walked over hill to the historic ships; & finally, a short walk thru

29 March con/. - eucalyptus & towering Monterey pines in the Presidio. Came down Highway 1 & I-280 to airport, 40 min. from Presidio to . Hertz return lot, although a lot of traffic lights before I hit 280.

So, we were sunned, rested, relaxed, & going home to the rain. More anon about the LA speaking gigs, but the basic is that I was on . marks for both events, & took home \$7,000. The LA departure was a bit fraught as our town-car service did not show up, after 20 min. late, so we grabbed a cab, a \$50 ride from Pasadena. Once we got on our own-Pacific Grove & St- things went fine. Our promptness to Pt. Lobos earned us a terrific walk from Whalers Cove to the Whalers Hill outlook, before anyone else was on . trail. Saw whales & humming birds!

April 7--At this point of the day (4:30) I don't have enough steam for much more than a lament that the diary is languishing so. I am finally tussling my way atop the first part of Keeping, I think, but there go the days, the time, the energy. Also, we've at last had a spell of good weather, and so C and I spent some afternoons and part of the weekend pickaxing and digging out the mat of blackberries on the bench behind the

April 7 cont.--house. Even this afternoon stayed clear and warm, in defiance of the forecast, and we broadcast wildflower seeds, watered, and covered with plastic for a few days, to see if we can get something else going on the perpetual blackberry jungle. I also made a start on filling my woodhouse. On the bad news side, the Joyners have acquired Arnie, a young spaniel who barks plenty.

April 14--Ye gods. The suicide of Michael Dorris.

"Doctorow, Doig, Dorris, Dostoevsky," he used to chortle of the shelf lineup in bookstores. Michael's brash beauty and zest for being an operator, in a world which he plainly figured would operate him if he didn't do it first, makes it all the more startling that he ended this way, but I suppose that's always said in self-deaths. The news came here from Craig Lesley, whose sister told him there was a story in The Oreg'ian this morning, and while we were talking Kathy laid hands on a neighbor's copy of the newspaper and Craig read it to me. That first story did not say suicide, but had an odd time lapse and roundabout attribution, which made me tell the Lesleys there'd be more to the story ultimately, the "died last Thurs. or Fri."--this is now Monday--just didn't add up. Carol brought home an early edition of the Seattle Times when she went foodshopping at the end of the morning, and there indeed was the suicide elucidation. I've swallowed hard and made myself peck away at ms revision most of the day, but when I thought I could get hold of people I made a couple of calls into the publishing world at large and found out that the rumors we'd heard of Michael & Louise splitting up were long since true--"8 months ago" she left him, "you know how Michael wore his heart on his sleeve," he was "devastated," "the kids were with him, then they were with her," and so on, sounding as if he had dropped away and dropped away from writer friends, while Louise had another flame and then yet another. Early on when we were closer to them and seeing them, I remember thinking,

April 14 cont.--kidding in my head really, what an astounding everything-going-for-them couple they seemed, turning out books and kids, going over each other's written stuff without flinching or flailing, Michael negotiating very sizable money in contracts, Louise beautiful and writing like a dream, writing writing writing. Came the catastrophes attendant with all 3 of Michael's adopted fetal-alcohol kids and it became apparent life knew how to give them hell, too. But nothing like this.

16 April--The first sizable piece of the manuscript, the 25,000-word section called "The Coast," seems to be done. C read it y'day and found almost nothing to comment on, and this morning I ph'copied it to send to Becky and Liz. And C got up this morning with the thought that the better title might be Mountain Time; I like it, and am trying it on the version I'm sending in to NY.

A warm, cozy, blowy, mostly sunny afternoon, in the teeth of the forecast for showers etc. I just now put on overshoes and wandered the backyard a bit, soaking up the pleasure of the staghorned old cherry tree (which predates us on this property) in blossom, the row of azaleas I inserted into the clay bank above the raspberry terrace now blooming, even my beleaguered pea patch and lettuce rows showing some green hope.

Before I lose track of this--and before I turn away from this, for the Michael Dorris story turns messier with each day's news,--~~the~~ moments from our knowing of Michael and for that matter Louise, in what now are plainly the old days:

--In '89, we linked up with them in Montana (where they were starting the househunt that ultimately led to the Flathead Valley) not only @ the Billings cent'l conference but a week or so later in Lewistown, where we all fetched up in the sprawly motel. Had some wine with them, in their room--encumbered as they were with 3 little kids--which I remember opening with my brand-new birthday gift from C, my Swiss army knife, and then dinner together, and as we're such early risers, C and I made our goodbyes that night. But for whatever reason

16 April cont.--the next morn, whether we were a little later than our usual selves or Michael was up early, there C and I were sitting in the main street cafe, starting on breakfast and atmosphere, when Michael came in. He sat down and joined us and we jawed onward, but I remember the flicker of expression--not annoyance at all, but more like surprised yearning at a chance lost--~~when~~ on him when he walked in and there we were: he had wanted that opportunity to soak up the cafe for his-and-Louise's writing stuff.

--Michael had the estimable knack of telling stories on himself. One was of the time he encountered Harriet Doerr again, after meeting her earlier (I think at the Washington ABA), and she began to introduce Michael to the big earringed young guy who was talking to her, obviously some fan--"This is Michael Dorr." Michael, kindly correcting her: "Michael Dorris." Harriet, again, "Yes, that's what I was saying, I'd like you to meet Michael Dorr, he's--" Michael, more loudly, figuring she was hard of hearing: "No, it's Michael Dorris." Harriet in a miff: "I'm trying to introduce you to MY SON, MICHAEL DOERR!" The other tale I particularly remember is maybe reflective of the dislike that journalists sometimes registered about Michael--especially before his own prizes for Broken Cord--when they wanted to be interviewing Louise and found they were getting Louise and Michael as a package. "This time they were on the book tour in Great Britain, I think they had reached the Irish part of it, in fact, likely Dublin, when Louise noticed what a great day it was and suggested they just take off and spend it on themselves. No, no, said Michael, we have this interview obligation, we can't just blow people off. Comes the literary writer from the Irish Times, a'interfiewing, and Louise sits and steams and says very little, so Michael in good fellow fashion picks up the questions, elucidates, gives the interviewer something to write about. Which she indeed did, telling the world what a beautiful composed creature Louise was and what a pushy egomaniac was that husband of hers. I'll remember Michael's chortle in telling us that; his memory is going to need whatever grace can be had.

April 17--This is the day the Doigs hath made, all parts glitter and no part shade: wedding day, the 32nd anniversary thereof. Of all unprecedented modes of celebration, we are going to the ballet, a makeup of our snowed-out Nutcracker intention last Xmas.

And I sent in the first portion of the Mountain Time ms, as it's now known around here, to Becky, who claims she's "big as a house" as she tries to tuck editor's projects into cubbyholes as she goes off to have twins, circa mid-July arrival.

Until clouding up @ mid-afternoon the weather was quite gorgeous, so after a morning of not doing a helluva lot--the cover letter to Becky, and packaging the ms for FedExing--I went to my garden with serious motive for the first time in a while. Managed to shape up the lettuce rows, which took an awful flooding during the March rains, and to put protective netting over the pea row-and-lattice for a week or so--I am close and yet so far (read: slugs, towhees, robins and raccoons) from getting those beleaguered peas truly up 3 or 4 inches and in multitude.

April 19--A rainy Saturday, which we've spent a considerable portion of in trying to look ahead, to travel, to what to do if we can't handle the n'hood noise (Cochrans' house rebuilding, if they do it; Joyners' dog, if we can't reason/fight them away from letting it bark through afternoons) and I hope not least, the plotline of Mtn Time. C listened to the Mtn Time--Mtn T, I guess it'll become here--synopsis I thought up and took notes on y'day, and pitched in a few suggestions; we agreed it seems a workable story. We also had one of those been-married-so-long-we're-returning-into-twins moments, when I told her I'm seeing our new dr. on Monday about the stiffening in my left hand and asked what the dr's apptmt I'd noticed on her calendar was about--it's C's right hand, an oblong callous-like rise in her palm.

Shall see how our hands shape up, and meantime to report here: we indeed went to the Pacific NW Ballet the night of the 17th, saw "Mozartiana" (eh), "Voluntaries" (really pretty riveting, with all the physicality of the men handling the women aloft all the time), and the showpiece "Lambarena," with Bach

19 April cont.--and African melodies mixed; ravishing costumes and flows of dancing, although the music probably could have stood more Bach, and memorable lead dancing by Ariana Lallone, who has (or makes it seem that she has) immensely long arms that she used to sinuous effect in the African rhythms. Her dancing may have been more style than heart-of-the-art (with her eyetaking physical appearance, you couldn't help but watch and admire) until the finale of the piece, when she turned it all loose and plainly reigned over the material. Interesting, if very elongated evening-- 2 intermissions, much clapping at the end of solos, slow traffic disgorgement down the parking garage ramps. What we really got a kick out of, in celebrating #32, was taking ourselves out to dinner @ the Provinces last night and eating Hunan beef and herbed pressed duck, w/ the staff ponying up green-tea ice cream for our congratulatory dessert.

25 April--All right, this is more damn like it, on Mtn T. 15 pp. roughed this week, compared w/ the 10, on average, I'd struggled to get in earlier stints. Now that the 1st piece of ms was semi-respectable enough to send in to Becky for a look, I decided the rest of the ms--at least to the "critical mass" point--ought to be done quick and dirty, in bits and pieces and stray scenes and experimental riffs, but remorselessly at a pile-it-up-pace. So far so good.

Phone call just now from Group Health, our new Dr. Madwed's nurse Verona reporting that the X-ray of my achy stiff left hand is normal, no arthritis showing up, unexpected good news there. I have been on an aspirin regimen, 2 pills 3 times/day, since seeing Dr. M on Monday, and have managed to type reasonably full days--and do some shoveling etc. in the veg garden y'day--without real trouble. C's hand situation ~~now~~ got the same advice as mine, avoid percussion on it.

Social notes: the monthly Provinces dinner-and-laughs with the Nelsons on Wed., the 4 of us shaking our heads, among other merriment, that Laird is now making 50 thou a year at his land-of-Internet job. And last Sunday, John and Jean came for meatloaf, bringing w/ them clippings sent by Lisa from the Twin Cities

25 April cont.--newspapers, about Michael Dorris and a syndicate piece from the Ft. Worth Star-Telegram which lists me as a possible "literary lion" who'll be remembered in the future, then an almost hilariously cruel list of the "almost forgotten" that includes, Updike, Doctorow, Atwood, et al! Popular culture, she is one funny beast.

30 April--Remorseless rain, showers so-called, these days; they add up to enough to make my slug-bait containers constantly snotty to handle, and the veg garden a swamp of goo. Lettuce seedlings are up but stalled for lack of sun; peas are inching upward.

The weather doesn't do our mood any good either, C and I both dimmed by allergies, and cooped in by the rain, though we dart out and do our daily $2\frac{1}{4}$ mi. around the n'hood at least chance.

Social notes: Sat. night we were taken to Saleh el Lago by Sarah & Nile Norton, very good place without being overfancy at all. Sun. night, Tony Angell & Lee Rolfe were here for a crab feed, a good and rare chance to talk with them a bit sans kids and other guests.

9 May--It's a great life if you don't weaken, or some such semi-wisdom. 10:45 now, and when C gets home @ about 1 we head toward Bellingham, where I read 'n sign at Village Books tonight, dinner w/ Chuck & Dee Robinson beforehand. Overnight in LaConner @ Channel Lodge, hike the Skagit flats tomorrow, dinner with the Damborgs (the best kind, at their place). I've kept grinding out pp. on Mtn T, wherever they happen to fall in the wouldbe book--approximately, the weekly goals are working out to 3 pp. roughed per day and 2 pp. put into the computer, w/ some fiddling and improving done to them. It's a hard enough pace, what with the pollen that drags at both of us in this house, and all else that comes up--I found myself having to squirm out of a day w/ an Australian film crew in Victoria, BC, for example, as they do a doc'y on Tim Winton next week; it'd be keen to see Tim and participate, but they put a mid-week day on me after I'd explicitly said I couldn't break up next week, the only one of this ~~whole~~ entire month without some interruption on the schedule.

12 May--Summer weather, 80ish, cloudless. First charcoal grill supper of the year last night, lime/thyme chicken, baked spuds, chopped carrots and onions in foil, scrumptious. Great food the night before, too, at the Damborgs, Mark and Lou cheffing up a mussel-shrimp-halibut-rockfish b'basse out of the old Judy Giese cookbook. And pretty good the night before that, @ Dirty Dan's in Bellingham, across the street from Village Books before my reading/signing. That meal was with Chuck & Dee Robinson and Chuck's visiting-from-Galva, Illinois-mother Marge. The good news from the Robinsons was that their business has come back up and stablilized after the initial hit of a Barnes & Noble going in across town. I drew a capacity crowd for them, 125-35, and read a bit from Bucking and longer pieces from the first 2 scenes of Lexa in Mtn Time, people seeming to like it. Another nicety of the evening was the almost-published pic book Whatcom Places, which I did the foreword for--the book's profits go to the Whatcom Land Reliance, sounded to me like a good cause--and so in mentioning that, and @ Chuck's request reading my short foreword at the start of the q-&a session, an elderly woman in the front row was inspired to ask what I could tell them about Bob Keller, the WWU history prof behind the book. I riffed and kidded with that a ~~book~~ bit, then asked if Bob was there--as he indeed was, a row or two behind the woman and blushing the color of ~~an~~ a shiny red apple. He told me afterwards that in 30 years in Bellingham he'd never been in the local paper, and was in 2 or 3 times this past week with the book; the curse and blessing of celeb'hood, I hooted to him. Anyway, a good reading, not a bad signing, and a gorgeous evening, the San Juans picturesquely humped against the setting sun as we drove Chuckanut Drive on our way up and still some slight rose and peach coloration in the sky as we drove it again afterward, on our way to our room @ the Channel Lodge in LaConner.

That room and that stay and a couple of walks of the Skagit wildfowl refuge were hugely restorative--we both felt our heads clear up considerably from the tree pollen we constantly live under. And y'day with its glorious weather was good too, even though Brad down

12 May cont.--the street has his backyard machine shop going at full noise (compressor and grinder) again; y'day was Mother's Day, and as C and I sat on the patio for a drink and another reaming whine came from Brad's endeavors, we laughed and said Brad was giving her the gift of himself, sure as hell. Next door, the dog situation, was there one brief spate of barking when the Joyner girls--Kaela the usual culprit--tired of the dog and put him in his pen, but Peris fairly soon appeared and put him inside; C speculated that Peris did not want to be embarrassed by being braced about the barking on the most beautiful day of the year.

19 May--This Monday, a sorting manuscript day in a chore week; Wed.-Thurs. is my Salt Lake City booktrip. Today, or a day of this sort every so often, is probably useful, giving parts of the book some seedspace to grow in, although it always makes me nervous that the page count doesn't grow on a day like this.

To pick up on the final portion of my last entry, we had our first major dog fight with Peris last Thursday night, when we were sitting in the living room talking ~~and then~~ after supper and the barking kept erupting. I no sooner propounded "How long do we let this go on, do you think?" than C said "Not all that long" and marched over to the Joyners'. A minute later I went over to lend support, as I could see Peris was not rushing out to get his dog, and we did some arguing on his customary trying-to-balance-my-right-to-have-a-dog against our maintained it's-the-barking-of-the-dog-in-the-dog-pen-thirty-feet-from-us-that's-the-point. Peris, whose background is in, you bet, marketing, started off saying he's trying for a win-win situation with the dog, which about made me gag but Carol deals with jargon all the time at the college and was able to keep maintaining our point and praising his parenting results at the same time. She's discerned that there is a pattern to this, Peris gives us some bluster, then some confessional (the dog nips, too!), and ultimately we maybe get some improvement out of it; the dog was out most of y'day, for instance, but not in the evening, i.e. he was loose and sometimes yappy while out with the family but not in-the-pen-on-principle as on Thurs.

Onward to better things. Our floatplane trip to

19 May cont.--Victoria on Saturday, to be filmed with Tim Winton in the Australian documentary being made ~~on~~ about him. The flight was terrific, nice weather and the Kenmore Aviation's de Havilland Beavers, to and fro, taking about 45 min. to do the 60 miles. Met up with Tim and the docu crew on the steps of the Victoria Regent Hotel on Wharf St., where Tim--there for a literary festival--was awarded a waterside room above where all the floatplanes taxi to the docks and thus, he said, there's a constant smell of "av gas--reminds you of The Dambusters." We spent the next three hours with him and the crew of 2 Aussies and 3 Canadians from Vancouver, the filming done in Mount Douglas Park, Winton & Doig incessantly walking a forest trail and talking about the surroundings in our work. (I also did a sit-on-a-log solo session talking into the camera about why I so value Tim's writing; I tended toward his language, while the Aussie director rather wanted me to go toward the spirituality in Tim's work. The cutting-room floor, anyone?) So it was a hoot, the top of an afternoon with Tim, a very funny man:

--after much waiting at the hotel, the box lunches that he and the crew were to eat in the van on the way to the park (C and I earlier had a dandy lunch in the Bombay Lounge of the Empress Hotel, thank you very much) at last arrived, and there was some cultural mystification about the sandwich choices until it became clear, say, that the young woman doing the soundwork wanted a chicken salad sandwich and nothing to do with meat, while the Aussies pretty much wanted nothing but ~~the~~ meat. Tim munched away at his lettuce-tomato-and-otherwise-laden ham sandwich until he finally shucked about half the vegs into the sandwich box and half the sandwich bread too--holding up the nearly inch thick piece of bread that was left, he said "Look at the thickness of this--you could paddle between the islands on it."

Tim
--telling of travails on the road, said his three kids finally are getting old enough to be a little interesting in his trans-hemispheric phone calls home--"at least I get something besides heavy breathing now."

Seoff

19 May cont.--The docu director, ~~Jeff~~ Bennett, was semi-enigmatic, not telling Tim and me much what to do, and sometimes standing on the trail saying nothing at all.

In one of those moments, as he stood a foot away from the two of us in black opaque wraparound sunglasses, Tim in matey-but-meaning-it fashion said, "Take those off" and pushed them up on Jeff's forehead. That indeed seemed to bring Jeff to life a bit.

--The longest bit of filming, and from we writers' point of view the best piece of conversation, came as we talked about the part environment plays in our books and about Tim's next novel in which a man will try to disappear into nature in the spooky part of Western Australia called The Kimberlies, while cameraman Paul Ree walked backwards in front of us, sometimes scuttling with the camera held at ground level, the young van driver/gofer (and handler of, aye, the clapboard! "Tim and Ivan, take three!") behind Paul steering him with hands on P's waist. We got quite a batch in before Paul at last tripped over a tree root, bringing hilarious predictions that there'll be a scene of Tim pontificating about his plot suddenly interrupted by "aiyee!"

On the serious front, the writing, Tim told C and me he had got flowing (literally: he's been writing with a fountain pen) a while back on a piece which was too long and grown-up to be a children's book and too short and playful--it's about a friendship between a boy and a dolphin--and wrote the whole thing in about a week but didn't know how it would be published. Turns out, it went as a children's book in Australia, and here Scribner is going to push it hard as an elegant little book for adults. They see it as an eco-fable, Tim says; "Hope I'm not entering my Jonathan Livingston Seagull phase."

So that was the unsinkable Tim, producing great stuff by the ream. One of the pleasures of a lifetime to be on speaking terms with a talent like him.

Back to the details of the floatplane flight, which was the 11 a.m. takeoff (theoretically) from Lake Union, and back on the 5:30 from the Inner Harbor @ Victoria. There was considerable crissing and crossing by pilots at the terminal desk, and the periodic snarling sputter of floatplanes wallowing to the dock (what turned out to be our five-passenger Beaver and two larger planes were

19 May cont.--tethered there by the time takeoffs got underway at about 11:15), before the youngest pilot called out our names and told us his was Kevin. Any more, most males under thirty-five seem to be named that, but he proved to be a perfectly fine pilot. Handed out orange earplugs, cast off, and with a flock of Canada geese in the water to our right, he taxied out for takeoff, starting to rev the plane hard as it was even with the restaurant (the old Horatio's) and getting airborne as we passed the old steamplant, Zymogenetics or whatever it is now. Kayakers everywhere, that pretty day on the lake. The plane followed the ship canal out to the Sound--sailboats by the horde on Elliott Bay and north of Shilshole, like white-winged water insects. We flew over a tug and barge of gravel, then across the Kitsap Peninsula, coming out just south of the Hood Canal Bridge and parallel to it, then over Port Ludlow. Port Townsend was distant to the right, then we went over Discovery Bay into the Strait. Flew over Protection Island, vacant and a bit eerie. Dungeness Light was ahead, and ~~the~~ our beloved wishbone, the Spit. We passed the Light on our left and then it was some minutes of the Strait until the Inner Harbor, crazy with traffic on the water. Memorable colors: the yellow of Scotch broom in blossom blazing many places on the Kitsap and Oly Peninsulas, and the snow of the Olympic Mtns above the patchy clouds.

21 May, SeaTac - Whee. This is a trip I'm even starting tired. Fairly simple overnight to Salt Lake, gig tonight @ King's English, but I woke up groggy and had a sneezing fit while driving down 99 to the airport. Allergy/humidity must have hold of me.

As to the first couple days of the week, I put a bunch of rough pp. into the computer, I did a little re-writing, but I'm not managing to add to the page total this week.

Friday, I have to devote to plot thoughts - i.e., what's up with Marsh in this book.

27 May--Quick report, @ end of a heavy and humid day (one where I was dull for the first hour or so at the desk, but fortunately woke up, gradually):

--called Jim Scott to tell him we want to look at Skagit property possibilities. Will this be a pivot of our lives?

--we walked around Lake Union, the 7-mile tradition, y'day, Memorial Day, with Linda Sullivan and Jeff Saeger and their dog Jack. Thoroughly decent weather (this morning it rained like billy bejesus, for a while) and long sustained conversations, about Linda and Jeff's working lives among the public bureaucracies. Both of them were sorely feeling the 7 mi., on gimped-up knees or wherever, by the time we were done, while C and I felt great.

--excellent booktrip to Salt Lake and The King's English. Capacity audience of 100 seated, and another 30 standing outside in the street listening to my reading and the q-and-a. And a very strong booksigning afterward. All of this in head-to-head competition w/ the Utah Jazz's NBA playoff game across town.

4 June--Quick entry while waiting for a goosedrowner to pass over so I can go to the garden for lettuce (huzzah!) and to empty the slug traps (ugh). Am concentrating, this week, on slinging as much of the Mtn T ms into the computer as possible, hoping (probably against hope) that the rough pp. will bring the total out to 100 pp. this spring--virtually half the length of the book--by the time we head for Oregon.

The weather has been mostly murky and humid, except for a break on Monday when C and I managed to dab in a couple of hours of yardwork and make a real difference in the shagginess of this place.

12 June--On the brink of a new car. Not many minutes from now we go to the wilds of Lynnwood and bring home our fresh-off-the-boat Honda CRV. Carol shopped copiously and diligently for it, and I hope it's going to be nifty for us.

Otherwise, this has been an allergy-ridden raggedy set of days; I've had my worst sneezing spells and nosefuls ever, and C is maybe no better. As to the work,

12 June cont.--she right now is plowing through grading final exams, and this morning I ground away at the computer until I hit the page total I think I needed to make the halfway-there goal, in rough ms. It has not been tidy. My desk is strewn w/ pages, and the financial affairs desk has books and magazines deep on it, floods of paper I never like to see happen.

On the social side, last night we went to the Provinces along, Ann Nelson having failed for once to put down the date w/ us, and last Fri. Eric Nalder & Jan Christianson were here for crab supper, in celebration of Eric's 2nd Pulitzer for investigative reporting. Anecdote of the evening: Eric recently was on the radio talk show of the button-down right-winger John Carlson, ex-Op Ed page columnist of the Seattle Times, who'd been having on-air glee about the Times' publisher Frank Blethen being charged for shooting a trespassing dog with a pellet gun. Carlson after the show asked Eric what the Times was doing in celebration of its two Pulitzers, and Eric said there's a party at thus-and-such, why don't you come on over. After some hemming and hawing Carlson did, only to be spotted by Frank Blethen, who wanted to know what the hell he was doing there. Eric Nalder invited me, says Carlson. I don't care who invited you, you're out of here, says Blethen. As Carol remarked, the fearlessness of the investigative reporter!

Eric's other notable story of the evening: Alex Tizon and Byron Akahido were the first Filipinos ever to win Pulitzers, and the Filipino community here threw a party for them and put them on thrones.

25 June--Quite some activity, including a thousand miles in our new Honda rig, since last I limped to this page. Among the events was a pulled muscle on the inside of my right knee, next to the knee cap, which I must have done during yard work or a woodpile stint on Sunday, June 15. As tends to happen with my pulls, I didn't feel it when it happened but began to midway into our daily walk around the n'hood, i.e. with ~~about~~ about a mile and a quarter of walking ahead of me. It was sensitive by the time I got home, and on Monday I did little except deskwork--and by that evening I could barely stand to put any weight on it. So, swallowing hard,

25 June cont.--with the Central Oregon trip just ahead and the 3 days of Dungeness hiking we intend for my birthday, I went into the regimen of a couple of aspirins every 4 hours, icing the knee when it hurt (Gp Health's main contrib'n), and sitting in a recliner w/ the leg supported, as much of the day as I could; and no bending etc. It started to improve a little by Wed., I think; then the 7 hr.+ drive to Oregon, just sitting there not exerting it, possibly helped; it got better day by day during the 3 days we stayed on the Metolius River, and was pretty much okay, though tender, by day before y'day; in sum, it took a week of being aggravatingly scrupulous about babying it.

The better bodily news is that our spandy-new Honda CR-V, born not quite 2 wks ago, June 12 delivery, worked fine for our achy backs on the Oregon trip, handled spiffily in freeway traffic, and just generally excelled at what we wanted it for, extended road travel--another tribute to C's shopping skill. The rig is silver, and chock-a-block with Honda engineering tchotkes--a slide-out compartment under the passenger seat which holds C's camera, 2 sets of cup-holders, several nooks and crannies to store things away in the back, including a hook to hang my leather gloves on, and a picnic table tucked away in the wheel well.

That was the mode of transportation, and the venture to the Paulina Springs bookstore in Sisters, Oregon, went splendidly: 200 people at my reading, and others who couldn't get in, then a very long and patient line ~~at~~ at the signing. The bookstore couple, Diane Campbell and husband Dick Sandvik, took us for eats (in our case, soup and bread, roughly our 4th meal of the day) at Black Butte ranch afterward, and Diane had made good lodging arrangements for us in the "Little House" at Metolius River Lodges at Camp Sherman on the river. Both C and I spent a lot of time simply resting up, and in fact the weather wasn't great--showery--which lessened my regret at missing the area's hiking chances because of my knee. We did the loop drive over McKenzie Pass on Sunday, through some huge lava fields and the big typical forests of each slope of the Cascades--Ponderosa on the east, Douglas fir and the understory of vine maple and ferns and wild rhodies (which we helplessly prefer) on the wet west. On Monday, it was llama time, Linda and Dick Patterson showing us

25 June cont.--around their large, intricate and obviously expensive outfit on the edge of Sisters. Baby llamas (called "crias", which Dick scorns as a term in favor of, yes, "baby llamas") are being born all the time, and the place also has 125 head of elk and more being bought for breeding, and there's a "baby" two-hump camel about the size of our Honda, and the place was in the middle of haying--C just now said that visiting a llama ranch and the commuting-the-Columbia-Gorge-in-both-directions life of Bill Lang and Marianne Keddington at Corbett is a good reminder that our life isn't as chaotic as we sometimes think.

Took time out from this entry to gas up the CR-V and lovingly run it through the carwash, while C in the meantime welcomed Roto-Rooter to fix the toilet, which while we were away came down with wheezing and whistling and damn little water in the bowl; mere \$94 later, it functions as it's supposed to. Should note, too, that this day has a little aura of Waiting for the Big One (which we hope would not be the Really Big One)--earthquake weather, as they call it in the San Francisco Bay area, and the aftermath of 3 regional quakes here while we were away. Have gone down the preparedness list, turned the emergency power system back on, etc.

Back to the more pleasant, in this case llamas. While Linda Patterson was fetching a hayhand to the field, we went with Dick as he did the necessities on a 5-hour-old baby llama--a shot for selenium, which the Sisters soil is deficient in, and an enema, which every babe gets, to bring out a yellow pluggy substance which can cause intestinal cramps in them. Then he examined mama's afterbirth--she was a handsome creature nearly as big as a small horse, warm-brown-eyed, with long upright ears comically cocked at the tips; with their attentive calm and the habit of humming concernedly to their babies, they really are a winsome species--to make sure she had passed it all, bagged it up and set it along the road for a hired man (one of ten full-time on the place) to bury.

So, after the rapid taste of llama life by the Pattersons we went into Sisters to the Depot Deli for our third meal of the trip there (dinners were at the excellent Kokanee across the river from where we lodged), then headed toward the Columbia and the Langs by way of Redmond, the

25 June cont.--Warm Springs rez, and the back roads, a lot more plural than we'd counted on, from Sandy to Corbett. After overnighing w/ Bill and Marianne, we headed home but with a terrific sidetrip to Mt. St. Helens, which I'll recite after lunch.

It's about a 50-mile drive in from Castle Rock on I-5 to the newest visitor center, the nearest to the volcano, Johnston Ridge. We went there and the Coldwater Ridge one, 7 miles back on the road, as well. The mountain had a wreath of cloud around it at about the bottom of the crater and the blown-out north side, so we could see the broken crown of the mountain and occasionally the snowy inside of the crater. What takes the eye, though, are the lava flows and mudslides and pick-up-sticks downed forests, the hummocks of detritus on the valley floor, the little ribbon of the Toutle River in the breadth of all the soil that oozed downstream.

26 June--Nearly lunchtime, after a morn of watering the berry patches before we hie to Dungeness tomorrow for my birthday--3+ days' worth--but I wanted to get down a couple of bits of writing details before I lose them:

--The first is the Mt. St. Helens trip, a hundred miles worth, which produced a half a sentence but I think a pretty good one. It's in the airplane scene, of Mitch's environmental nervous breakdown, and without having been to St. H, I'd written: "The lateral blast of the eruption had leveled forests for seventeen miles, sandblasted the soil off Coldwater Ridge six miles away, put up an ash cloud that blotted the sun all the way to Idaho, and churned millions of tons of rock debris and lava out over the blast area." After going and taking a look for myself, the sentence now changed at "churned" to: "churned out rock, mud, and lava in a gray delta of debris that now fanned out from the ladle of the mountain like molten lead gone cold and ended in those distant ridgefuls of flattened silvered trees like metal splinters."

--The second bit was something that had been nagging at me without quite defining itself, particularly in the scene where Mitch realizes how much obligation he's saddled with now that his father is dying. I'd had, ~~what~~

26 June cont.--out of the blue, so to speak, the phrase that is one of my favorites in the whole ms so far: the one about Baby Boomers on these kinds of missions in airport concourses, "like the flyways of rattled birds." The rest of that graf, I'd been getting by on rhythm and telling detail, but in sorting file cards I came across a Technique card where I'd quoted Edna O'Brien some years ago, chiding Toni Morrison for lack of "emotional nexus... a predicament that is both physical and metaphysical, and which in certain fictions, by an eerie transmission, becomes our very own experience." She cites Anna Karanina's awareness of the bolts of the train in her death moment, and Faulkner's knockout line about Joe Christmas's fugitive route running on forever "between the savage and spurious board fronts of oil towns." Got a point there, Edna, I figured, and so into Mitch's scene I worked out the line that he and the other Baby Boomers on these missions of parental obligation are now "targeted from here on, in featureless waiting rooms the color of antiseptic gloves." Trying, at least, to bring the emotional and the physical detail together.

--Belated social note: backyard party @ the Angells on the 14th, good evening of visiting w/ Marty Hills, pic editor of the hallowed old Audubon magazine, and Erin Mahan, some kind of street-gang nurse-practitioner who was Lee's college roommate, and Elliot Marks of the Conservancy, about to head for "sabbatical" in New Guinea, I think it was.

5 July--On Camano, at the basement table where Linda Bierds has produced inspired poetry; now to see if there are any left-over words in the ambience for me.

Starting our third day here in this loaner arrangement, getting used to this cabin's quirks and it to ours. Y'day, the 4th, did not get as hot here as forecast, thank goodness, as this place heats up by the end of the day from the sun pouring through the west-facing windows. Anyway, we did supper on the vast old clunky barbecue grill--herbed chicken and corn in the husk--then watched the spurts of fireworks, as far north as Penn Cove on Whidbey Island, not to mention the starburst launchings from the beach below us, until going to bed to the sound of the booming and zooming.

8 July--Seattle, as distinct from Camano. We came home y'day midafternoon with intentions of taking Pete & Gail Steen to dinner @ the Provinces (they had to call from the airport motel and cancel--pasta sauce in Gig Harbor the night before laid them low!), got moved back in and eyed the sky and the drying-out property, went to the Provinces for a contented dinner by ourselves, and there's been a beneficent rain through the night and still falling lightly but steadily. So, we're making this split summer pan out the way we wanted, at least in this first short stint and with this help from the weather (and, you never know, one from Peris Joyner, a propitiating phone call on the machine from last Friday when he'd put the dog out, it was barking, and he called to see if we're here or not, to be bothered by it). I've set to work this morning on Mariah's arrival @ SeaTac and into the plot of Mountain Time, and Carol is marshalling mountains of laundry and other stuff, bless her.

News today, phone call from Denise Roy, that Becky's babes arrived, Anna Penny and Simone Dianne, @ 2 a.m. We chortled at Becky's undentable efficiency--after telling Denise the tale of the twin births, she asked Denise, "So how are your projects going?"

A portion of this unexpectedly peripatetic summer I haven't managed to get down yet was our stay at the Juan de Fuca Cottages, starting on my birthday (#58, so

8 July--far so good), 3 dandy nights in our favorite cabin which faces the Olympic Mountains and a field of tall grass, and 4 hikes of Dungeness Spit. Ate crab in the cabin one night, Kentucky fried chicken another, and had a good meal--prime rib sandwiches--in the bar of the Bushwhacker, an entertaining but otherwise culinarily challenged favorite stop of ours.

29 July--This has been the month of part-time islanding, which accounts for the laxity in these pages. Camano is our kind of island, i.e., it isn't one, connected to the mainland by the General Mark Clark Bridge, ~~and~~ across only the Stillaguamish River and a sort of slough. We've had 4 stints at Linda B's cabin there now, and this last one, 3 days and 2 nights, for C's birthday, caused us to particularly mellow out, to our considerable surprise. The weather was lovely, clear and a bit of breeze and not too much temperature--the cabin with its couple of dozen windowpanes facing west can be a real hotbox by late afternoon, though C and I pried open a couple of long-painted-shut windows, most vitally the one over the kitchen sink, to gain some air circulation. We mostly barbecue for supper, Bristol Bay sockeye salmon or chicken, spend a lot of time flaked out on the lounge chairs on the deck overlooking Saratoga Passage, Whidbey Island, and the Olympic Mountains, reading, doing mild chores for the house, and so on. I also did a highly useful re-read of the ms of part 2, The Springs, and saw some good major moves of material to be made, and tabbed in a lot of stickits with word choices to be pondered.

Here at home today, we've had maybe the warmest day (that we've been around here instead of Camano, at least) @ 82. I began rejigging the ms on the computer this morn and lo, have actually produced a couple of fresh pp. as well. And had a lovely evening last night, the Damborgs calling up in the afternoon and saying come have supper in their Capitol Hill backyard with them--I joked, but half-meant it, when we got there that it had been 365 days to the minute since that same omigod-we-don't-get-many-evenings-like-this inspiration last struck them.

7 Aug., Camano, 3:10 on a warm afternoon--Here in the coolness of the basement of Linda Bierds' cabin, the yellow stickit awaiting me on the little pile of work-paper I'd left reads: "Hi, I! Love, L." Indeed, we've put in writing shifts this past week at this big orange-brown table with its four-inch-square legs, substantiality under our words. My not many stints down here this summer ~~haven't~~ haven't produced much fresh progress on Mtn Time--these cabin stays have been best for re-reading ms sections and making notes on how to revise 'em--but Linda this past weekend was working in longhand on image associations for another of her astonishing poem premises: that children with a certain kind of cancer of the eye reflect back the telltale signs of the disease when a flashbulb pic of them is taken. So, this is a place where writing grows, and I feel privileged to have some innings here.

This particular stay, which began y'day as we bailed out of our n'hood as the sewer-digging equipment--a kind of fleet of it--advanced down the street toward us, has been ~~particularly~~ splendid for the rare chance to watch the weather all day and do not much else. Thunderstorms kept crossing the Olympics y'day, then might or might not come along Whidbey I. and Saratoga Passage, and then by evening there was a sunset ~~of~~ with just enough clouds over Penn Cove, like crisscrossed red feathers. All that, and coho salmon and corn in the husk cooked on the barbecue grill, and lounge chairs and a shade-providing umbrella on the deck. Today was mildly more ambitious, the morning nice enough for what's become our customary walk in the state park 3 miles south of here, then the quick drive to the Elger Bay grocery for newspapers and a quart of milk, then I read over my section of ms where Mitch comes home to try to deal with his father, and C read it for me this afternoon (she says to put in here that it's reading very well, and the uppity neighbor's new lacquered jackstay fence is hilarious). Tonight's menu, chicken on the barbecue, and tomorrow's, clams from our triumphant digging, on a marginal +.7 low tide, y'day.

Last Friday night we came up and overnighted with Linda and Sydney during their turn of several days here. Took them to the Rhododendron for supper as a mite of rent for

7 Aug. cont.--all this cabin cornucopia, then we all went with our little folding chairs to the parade for the Stanwood Fair. Emergency vehicles without end snaked past, and at least 3 little girls' drill teams, but also the very funny Warm Beach lawnmower drill team, with their synchronized legswings over their mower handles, their dress-right-dress formations, their cross-rank marching which after much poker-faced intricacy ended each one of them back where he'd started. Then lunch at Haggan's foodstore, another new gem for us from this Camano-ized summer, and on home.

We then had, on Sunday and Monday, two quiet days in the n'hood that are becoming truly rare. The Joyners on one side of us are gone on a 2-week trip and more vitally, their yapping dog is gone too, and the Cochrans' carpentry project on our other side was calm for those days. Out of the menage of now all too customary noise has come these Camano interludes, and C and I have been surprised at how we mellow out here in cabin life; not like us workaholics--and it's been nice.

Aug. 20, Juan de Fuca Cottage #7--Rainy afternoon, with clouds brewing up from the valleys of the Olympics and sumptuous long naps behind us. Ultimately we'll go into Port Angeles to shop at Swain's and then have supper in the bar at The Bushwhacker, traditions, traditions. This morning we got out snappily to hike Dungeness Spit and were rewarded with a fine hike that was barely sprinkled on while the weather moved in on the Olympics from the south, and particularly good ~~was~~ birdwatching--rare sighting that probably a murrelet, possibly an auklet; common loons, dowitchers, turnstones, the reliable surf scoters... Been here at Sheila's cabins 3 days now (we calculated y'day that this particular cabin is maybe our oldest NW habitation; been coming to the Spit 30 years, and likely almost that long here) and the 3 hikes have been wonderfully different, sunny and verging on hot y'day, high clouds and comfy the first day when we flopped down in the sand behind the driftwood. The wondrous Spit has become too popular for its own good, people streaming on to it y'day at noon as we were coming off, but few of them go beyond the $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile mark; we customarily go at least to the 2-mile post, and today went about a half-mile beyond that, giving us at least a six-mile total with the path down to the Spit counted in. ~~4~~ The pattern of meals here, June and this time (and knowing us, probably other times in the past) is a crab, Col. Sanders coleslaw and sourdough bread heated in the perverse oven of this cabin's temperamental little cookstove one night; Col. Sanders chicken, the 8-piece meal which includes slaw and baked beans and biscuits, another night; and one night ~~4~~ at The Bushwhacker's bar, where we've finally discovered that the food is pretty good at reasonable prices, versus the B'whacker dining room where it's ~~usually~~ reliably mediocre at unreasonable prices. Living off the land, Doig vacation style; y'day the truly unreliable mediocre Three Crabs didn't have its little store open--closed M-T--and on we went into Sequim in spite of the townlong traffic jams it gets this time of the summer, only to find that the Safeway was sold out of crabs; onward to the other end of town,

Aug. 20 cont.--to the QFC, where we got one of the two crabs buried in its shaved-ice display bin. Persevere.

Speaking of which, I think it is now very nearly 25 years of this diary, begun sometime around this point of the year in '72 when we went to Britain on Carol's sabbatical year. The typewriter then was a tinnier version (the mail-order portable Dad and Grandma got for me to go to college with) of ~~the~~ this nicely designed but I suppose technologically mortal Olivetti Lettera 22 I'm using at this moment, and I was unbearded then. A hallmark of sorts, last week, when after 25 years of this Civil War beard and the longer-than-article-length writing that I sat down to in the basement of Egerton Crescent in London (and within that year found what would become This House of Sky), literary photog Marion Ettlinger did pics of me for over 2 hours.

Sept. 2--8:10 a.m., and within the hour we head out to Montana and Jackson Hole. I'm beginning the trip as I think I've begun every other one this summer, gritting against my goddamn right knee, which turned sore the day before y'day after I did a modified exercise because the prescribed exercise was bothering it. Anyway, 3-4 days of gobbling aspirin and treating the knee like glass will likely bring it around again.

Meanwhile last week, as is our wont we kicked this house into great shape before leaving it. I managed to put together the 5 min. acceptance speech I need for the Gov's Writers Award, my 5th, the day after we get back. And Sat. night we entertained, the Maloofs and Rodens here for rib roast, everybody mellow.

Sept. 6, Missoula--We are Saturdaying, tending to chores such as buying tire chains and we hope getting the now-filthy Honda CRV washed, here beside the Clark Fork. Behind us by now, the Silver Dollar ~~Motel~~ Motel @ Haugan, the Duck Inn @ Whitefish, and visits to Bud and Janet Moore near Condon and Rebecca and Joe Brewster on the Bandy Ranch near Ovanado. Rte 83 thru the Swan Valley, which we had to drive twice in 2 days because of my not-great planning on the Moore and Brewster visits, had long stretches of construction, and we were glad to pull in here to the reliably aggravating but splendidly sited Edgewater, now to be known as the Doubletree.

As ever during these forays of ours, Montana life spins in front of us like a catherine wheel, sparks flying. When we pulled in at the Moores' place 3 mi. into the woods, Bud, who will be 80 next month, was pulling on his green chain of lumber at his one-man sawmill. At the Bandy ranch, Joe Brewster and his one hired man and John Maata, of whom more later, were out fixing a fence a massive ponderosa pine had fallen on, while Rebecca, thoroughly eight months pregnant and gimpy from having fallen out of a chokecherry tree the day before, bounced us across the field to them in her pickup.

And last night, another link in a tradition now of almost 20 years, dinner at the Welches', along with Kittredge and Annick, and Bevis and Juliette. As usual too, an encyclopedic evening, Kittredge touting such books as Achilles in Vietnam, and telling us his likes in his reading as one of the NBA fiction judges (Roth yes, Updike no, Cold Mountain a strong yes), Lois citing Agamemnon to us, Bevis interested now in the Hmong colony here, Juliette in Asian dance...

9 Sept., Choteau--Many dusty miles behind us since Missoula and our subsequent overnight in Helena with Marcella and Dave Walter. Y'day after leaving Helena we came up through Augusta, then drove 13 mi. into the Sun River Game Range, collecting mountain scenery (the reefs!) for the Bob hike in the novel, then went back into the mountains to Gibson Reservoir for more pics

9 Sept. cont.--and notes. Onward to Choteau, where we noticed our old standard stop, the Hensley 287 Motel, (I wrote some of English Creek in a room there) had been nudged to its death by this new Best Western and waist-high weeds are growing out of the cracks in its curbs. After getting established in the motel and napping, we drove out the Egg Mountain road about 15 mi. (to Pine Butte) before calling it a day. Weather has been perfect, cloudless and just right for shirtsleeves, and the mountains of the Front have been stunning, even though we've been gawking at them for books for 20 years

19 Sept.--A sweet spot of time, today fine and blue and crisp, the two of us spending the morning whacking down chores, mail and phone calls that had accumulated during our Montana-Wyoming trip and then lunching deliciously on tandoori chicken etc. at Sahib in Edmonds and then a tasty long nap--and I got up to a phone call from Liz saying, "You've lost another editor," natch. Becky is going off to Farrar Straus to run Northpoint for them, and I am likely on my way to Scribner, which may not be too bad a fate. More anon. For now, I've rehearsed my 5 min. for tonight's Gov's Writers Award, and away we go in a couple of hours.

22 Sept.--The delicious taste of Indian summer continues today, the sunlight just now--at 8 a.m.--igniting all the shades of green on the back hill. ~~We~~ Over the weekend we gardened gamely--gameness is what it takes on this shaggy property--and got some runaway tall-grass invasions cut back, half of the path up the little benchland behind the house rescued from blackberries and grass edging in on it, and some mild pruning done, including the venerable cherry tree on the hill. By and large the n'hood was quiet, blessed surprise.

C cheerily went off this morn toward her last teaching quarter, the kickoff as usual the union breakfast. Meanwhile I'm trying to turn my life toward manuscript work again, about like an aging freighter, its waterline plates groaning, making the bend around Cape Horn. I've just now walked the 'hood and then iced my tendinitisy knee, and put in a phone call to Susan Moldow @ Scribner to begin the beguine there. She's of course in a meeting--"Why am I not surprised?" I asked her phone-answerer. There's a ton of sorting and thinking to be done from our trip,

22 Sept. cont.--but for right now I'm going to play hooky from Mtn Time and dwell in the diary a little, get a few bits of the trip down.

The finale of our Choteau stay was a 2-hr. drive to Chester, where we linked up w/ county agent John Maata and he drove us a circumnavigation of the Sweetgrass Hills, west to east. When I told him the unlikely thing I was most interested in on the route, rocks in farmed fields, he said, "Oh, then I have one to show you." Maybe a mile sidetrip south of the little butte called Haystack, to my amazement there it was, newly broken original sod, thickly freckled with rocks from the size of grapefruit to suitcases, much like the just-broken field where I picked rock for a weekend in probably 1956. (The sod-breaking had amazed and appalled Maata, too; it obviously was land that should have been left to grass, but for whatever dim-sighted urge had been taken out of the soil-bank program, CRP, and skinned.) I am oddly excited about the possibilities within Mitch's Sweetgrass Hills scene, so we'll see how rocks translate into print. The rest of the trip around the hills was about 80 miles total, some of the country very pretty, timbered draws above small ranches; it helped that everything was unnaturally green after Montana's wet summer. On the north side of the Hills, off Blackjack Road (which started off looking so scant we likely wouldn't have taken it ourselves, but it's the best route to circle the Hills' scenery up close), John drove ~~wxxx~~ off-road up a ridge a few hundred yards for a fine viewpoint to have lunch, saying that in spring that bluff is carpeted with Indian paintbrush, lupine, and Queen Ann's Lace, just as he expects heaven to be; he was a minister before he turned county agent, and still serves the little Presbyterian church @ Whitlash, the only speck of village in the Hills. He later said with rueful self-consciousness that on his last evaluation it had been commented that he had to be careful to keep state and church separate in his job--"So somebody must have said something"--but he was low-key around us, a really pleasant man who seems fitted for the jack-of-all-trades life he leads in Chester.

And it should be noted, also thanks to John Maata, this room now has the pleasant vaguely vanilla smell of sweet-grass, from the ~~little~~ bouquet of it that John gave me from his office sample--it arches like a little golden rainbow out of the bookend I tucked it behind, on the fin'c'l affairs desk.

22 Sept. cont.--After the Sweetgrass Hills day it was onward to Bozeman, overnight w/ Mike & Kate Malone in the MSU presidential big house. C has noted in her diary the deluge etc. that marked that stay, and the subsequent

Jackson Hole days of cheering/kidding Nancy Effinger thru her 50th birthday (we gave her an Opus the penguin card that said birthdays are like bellybuttons, who needs 'em any more; Opus is shown opining that he thinks his bellybutton keeps his butt screwed on), good eating (took home ribs etc. from Bubba's one night; on Nancy's actual b'day we took her to the pricey Snake River Grill and got out for \$55 (\$20 a tip to the perfectly attuned waiter), thanks to a \$75 gift certificate her library staff lavished on her and Warren Adler (writer, The War of the Roses, who's on ~~his~~ her library board, picking up the tab for our bottle of wine. Nancy went out elking with us the last morning and of course the weather was lousy, squally and some ~~hail~~ hail, and the elk slow and loathe to leave the Snake River bottomland, but at last on our way home, at Windy Point we cross@d paths with a herd of a couple dozen, including a big bull and 3-4 younger ones. The Jackson stay as ever was dandy @ Nancy's place--we both relax hugely there--and appalling in downtown Jackson, where tourists are about as dumb as the elk-antler arches on the square park.

25 Sept.--The weather changeth, even as I watch from the window by the desk: a curl of fog just swooped down past the cedar and across the big rhodie on the hill. The sunlight of the past week is gone now, at 10 to 11.

And I am into the season of writing, the hundred daily fogs it will take to make the rest of this manuscript.

2 Oct.--My aching right knee is back, as of Sunday, the day I'd targeted as the start of the full exercise stint I'm going to try on the tendinitis sonofabitch for the next 3 weeks. A little better today, and I managed a walk of the n'hood; but aggravating.

Have churned out the couple pp/day, dialogue seeming to go better than the modulation of getting characters in and out of rooms; bored with traffic direction after 8 books, I guess. Y'day I set off downtown on the one-errand-per-week I'm trying to get done on the book beyond the page-making, this one to talk w/ Tim Appello, veteran of several publications now, for turns of phrase to give

2 Oct. cont.--Mitch @ Cascopia. We were to meet for lunch @ the Crummet Shop in Pike Place Market @ noon, and by a quarter after I realized I'd been stood up. The overage slacker bastard, as I told Carol when I got home. What'd happened, as might be expected, was a technological glitch, Tim--who is new @ Amazon.com, putting his date with me into the electronic daybook that begins w/ Monday rather than Sunday, i.e. the slot he thought was Wed. is Thurs. and in ~~his~~ I went for that day. Anyway, we talked by phone after I got home, and all's more or less well. I also took the chance--mm, more like made myself--shop for socks while I was downtown, and then did have something I was looking forward to and worked out as it should, an hour of gab with Dick Brown in his Warwick Hotel room, Dick passing through as pinch-hitting prof leading a Harvard alumni tour of the Pac NW. He had the news that Ken Kesey had a stroke.

And y'day, another new era, Carol handed in her retirement letter at the college, calling it quits at the end of this quarter.

3 Oct.--Yow, most dismal day in quite a while. My left eyelid is itching and hot, and managed health care being what it now is, I have an appointment with the one stray doctor @ Group Health with any opening at all today, this afternoon @ 4:40. No writing or much of anything else, except a dump & recycling run I did just so the day wouldn't be a total washout.

Two social notes I missed in the last entry: the Walkinshaws called us up last Friday to see if they could feed us dinner and we said sure. Like us, they were just back from Jackson Hole; a good gabby evening with them, concluded by watching their video of the PBS Stegner show, which as Jean pointed out has all one pace, plodding. And Wednesday night, we were @ the Rodens to watch the 1st game of the Mariners-Orioles playoff, on Jean's inspiration that we ought to sit around and have hot dogs and popcorn for supper; much fun, although the game was a laugher, 9-1 against the Mariners at the top of the 7th, we all gave it up and we came home.

9 Oct.--The eye report. Last Friday's available Grp H practitioner, Dr. Kato, like all of the non-eye specialist docs except the sainted Mike Stewart, wasn't much acquainted with chelazions, but she went down the hall and got the optometrist, Liz Fauslich, who forthrightly plucked my eyelid up and confirmed that there seemed to be a forming chelayzion under there. Hotpack it, they chorused. Ten minutes an hour, said Dr. F, and I did so, that evening, and afternoons that weekend (after a couple of times each morning), a regimen I find tedious almost beyond endurance. By y'day I still wasn't convinced the hotpacking was making the eye better (holding about the same, maybe), so I resorted to the Capitol Hill ophthalmologists, of incisions and medications past. It turned out that Dr. Gorman, who ultimately got me over the couple of years of these sonofabitching eyelid bumps in the late 80's, is still there, his nurse Sharon is still there, but apptmt schedules being what they are (i.e., from here to eternity) I had to settle for Dr. Diehl for this morning. A dry little Canadian pip who must be the dismay of any Grp H rankers of people skills, he nonetheless made me feel better by telling me there's not a chelayzion there (plainly he'd have thought I was making it up if I hadn't invoked Fauslich's opinion; the hotpacking evidently did take it down more than it's felt like), that I can get by w/ soaking the eye a couple of times a day for one more week, and giving me some eyedrops. So, a close call, ~~xx~~ those eyelid episodes of the past dismal enough to really depress me.

It made for a droopy week. I thrashed around and mostly got my couple of pp. a day done, at least in rough-beast version, and C y'day put some pp. into the computer for me--the goddamn thing of course freezing up on her as she tried to print out the pp. The upshot is that I'm going to have to be hyper-wary (I've already been wary) of looking at the computer screen. Have just now called Grp H for an eye exam by Dr. Fauslich--a mere 19 days from now, sigh--to see if she can set me up with a pair of mid-range glasses, focus 30-36" away, so that I'll be farther from the screen ~~xxx~~ but seeing its stuff more strongly.

Oct. 1' --These are long hard achy days at the book. Now that I missed the bullet of eye problem, the purportedly tendinitised right knee is touchy. Among what it doesn't like is sitting at the desk. So, I'm putting on a knee brace, persevering with the physical therapy set of exercises, dosing aspirin into me, and next Tuesday we'll see, when I check in with the physical therapist again.

Meanwhile, either partly or mainly because I can't blithely go for walks or work outside, the ms is lurching on, C just now finishing putting a couple of new pp. into the computer for me. The weather for about 3 days' worth now has been an El Nino special, warm, virtually spring-like; whatever accounts for it, C today pointed out to me red bell-like berries on our ornamental yew bush outside the dining room peninsula, first blossoming we can ever remember on it, across a good 20 or so years.

Speaking of years, it dawned on me as I looked back through the diaries, searching out the last treatment for the eye mess, how many aches and pains and unmajor ailments show up in these pages. It may be writing-related--years in chairs and postures at desks can't help a body any--but it ain't psychomatic; every new twinge surprises me every time.

Oct. 17--Quick addendum before I go up to Sh'line and talk to the Western Lit class that Jeff Shaefer inherited from Carol. Last weekend's househunting: we took a look at Eve and Ed Shaw's place, down at the start of the dogleg street near the Sound, which proved to be a terrific piece of ground and a somewhat problematic house--all the bedrooms upstairs, for instance, said he with achy knees, and a dining room/living room that architect Ralph Anderson quite screwed up, making the staircase--a somewhat spooky hey-who-needs-real railings affair that ascends to an inside landing/hallway--dominate it all; think about it, Ralph, people don't want to spend their evenings on your goddamn staircase. Then the next day as C perused the Sunday paper's house ads, the truly problematic house, up on the cul-de-sac @ the south end of 13th: a perfect view, from the Shoreline Park around to Vashon Island and then the full sweep of the Sound to Whidbey; and an earth slump, right there where the foundation meets the bluff, which makes it too precarious to consider.

25 Oct., @ Camano Island--Calligraphy of birds on the gray slate of water out this cabin's bay of windows--flock of surf scoters, with white-winged scoters and a few buffleheads and what we think are Barrow's goldeneyes mixed in, their lines and clusters continually reforming as they feed and mingle. Farther out into Saratoga Passage have been a little bunch of western grebes keeping to themselves; last evening just offshore that unmissable individualist the common loon, its profile bigger and brawnier than all the others. Herons flap by, and as we were having breakfast this morning a hawk shot past, hunting along the bank 20 feet from the window. One other pattern to ~~xxx~~ note in this little weekend extravaganza of birdwatching, the white skid-sprays of water as the scoters run atop it like children taking a run at a patch of slush and then sliding exuberantly, riding the curl of cascade in front of them.

Carol and I look at each other here and say this must be good for us; we slept until 7 this morning, incredibly lazy by our standards. On the way here y'day afternoon we hiked, dawdling mostly, for an hour on the Big Ditch dike a few miles north of Stanwood and had great birding there too, a merlin or sharp-shinned hawk (making definite identification on a hawk unless its a kestrel with those Elvis sideburns is one of our lost causes) perched high in a tree with a couple of flickers hunkered into shelter in the fork of the tree--either birdly coexistence or a standoff between hunter and hunted, it didn't resolve itself while we were there. And there were flights of dunlin out over the Stillaguamish-Skagit delta there, their flash-of-white pattern as they reverse course. This is our first time to borrow Linda Bierds' cabin this time of year, and so far we've tucked in very comfortably--supper of BBQed ribs bought at Haggin's store, a fire in the fireplace, and dabs of sunset light through chinks in the clouds over the Olympics last night. Now we're about to head out north to walk the Padilla Bay park path and have lunch at the Rhododendron.

31 Oct.--Halloween, which we are fleeing (although only coincidentally) by heading for the Channel Lodge in LaConner as soon as Carol gets home from Jean's Shoreline-gang lunch. Been a goblin week already, the stock market losing its Monday lunch to the tune of 550 points, all it could lose; then the first wind/rainstorm of the winter whooped through, mid-week. I have sat here nicely and et my peas, managing to string together the long episode of Lexa and Mariah arriving to Mitch's hometown into what seems to be a readable continuity.

5 Nov. - Day of diary in Gp Health waiting area, it has come to this. Afternoons this week have been hectic, phys therapy on my achy right knee y'day, Dr. Kato to take a look at its persistence today. Mixed in with these trips are veers to the Green Lake n'hood as I try to get the 1st section of the M.M. Time mis put on computer disk. Could be incompatible, the typist warned me. Boy, I guess.

The week's writing has been hard & draggy, Lyle's WWII experience that I'm not so hot about doing, but I counted pp. today and there's a good chance I'll meet the week's 10-page quota.

Both Carol & I have been lousy with allergy, & the springlike weather - today it's into the high 60's.

12 Nov. -- A regrouping day, after deadline-driven stints. I indeed achieved the WWII flashback section last week, and looking it over, both C and I think it's pretty good. And y'day and Monday I banged out "Ivan's book club" for the San Jose Mercury News, which if everything gets cosmically aligned in the world of newspapering (hah) will also move on the Knight-Ridder wire, mayhap even

12 Nov. cont.--to such outposts as the Seattle Times. Y'day in particular was also an eruption of phone calls and distracting details to be fielded, such as what music would I suggest for the public radio show on This House of Sky ("Goodnight, Irene," The Weavers incongruous jukebox hit when I was a kid with Dad in the WSS bars) and where we gonna stay when I do a gig for the Utah Nature Conservancy next spring. Amid it all, Carol has been soldiering on with the house search, and at her summons I looked at one on 16th which at least would be possible, although needing considerable fix-up money thrown at it.

Sarah Norton came for crab supper last night, straight from another marathon day at Microsoft. The world of the 'Softies is hard for us to savvy, but Sarah is in charge of documentation, something like a managing editor, on the TV Viewer feature for Word 98, which will bring television more readily to the computer screen, the oceans of interactivity ahead, and so on. One sweet hell of a job, her plunge into all this at around age 50, and we're all admiration.

Last weekend was probably our requiem for Camano for this year, pulling out of here Saturday morning just as unexpected jackhammers (another inning of the sewer project, evidently) cut loose, and coming back early afternoon on Sunday. Weather was exquisite, blue, blue, blue, the Olympics over Saratoga Passage looking high and lordly, and the birdwatching was delicious again, with a dozen harlequin ducks at close range near the boat launch in Camano State Park.

18 Nov.--After a dreary start to the week y'day--the ms sludgy, the Joyners' sonofabitching dog taking a noonhour barking fit, the Cochrans' house construction in full song of the saw--today came around more winsome. I think I'm getting out of the hole I wrote myself into--the death-watch on Lyle by the other three characters--and a couple of things have gone quite right, to wit:

--I cashed in nearly \$35,000 in our T. Rowe Price Spectrum Growth Fund y'day on a day when the stock market went up 125 pts instead of staggering down. The mutual fund had been one that was slow to rise in the runaway market earlier this year (a laggard or two in the "basket" of funds the spectrum offered; we'll now lay off these,

18 Nov. cont.--inasmuch as they don't seem to produce the opposite effect we'd been hoping for, a rocketing sector that would pull up the rest of the bunch) and then, once having risen, began dropping at about twice the pace of our other mutual funds in the dipsy-down market.

--Carol Muller, or as she calls herself "the other..." called from the San Jose Merc News to say she's "one happy camper" over the Ivan's-book-club piece of reading recommends I did for her, the first two days of last week.

Other stuff: was on the NPR "Storylines" radio show, on This House of Sky, Sunday night, along with Dick Etulain and Margaret Kingsland. And Sat. night we were at Linda Sullivan & Jeff Saeger's for supper, along w/ Richard White and Beverly Purrington, and David Shaeffer of the Seattle Times and his wife Pat.

30 Nov.--The gala of Thanksgiving is behind us, the gauntlet of early December is almost upon. This coming week I have to deal with Simon & Schuster, Group Health, and the pension plan actuary, besides trying to get some writing done. It will all sort out, I keep telling myself. Until then, warm memories of Thanksgiving:

Considerable powers of mind in our living room last Thursday, it occurred to me as I looked around. Carol remarked beforehand that she especially hoped Mark Demborg would bring his camera this year to record the bunch as he's done for several years, and he reliably did. (This year's assembling of the 17 or so adults and the two littlest Angells was, Mark noted as he focused, a vertical problem: "Norm?"--i.e., Norm Lindquist's 6'5" at the back of the bunch and the Angell girls and a few others at the front, many feet below.) Linda Bierds had her just-published book of poems, The Profile Makers in hand, maybe her most astounding threading of character and incident onto narrative imagination yet. Richard White has his book about his mother's version of her Irish past, Remembering Arneheggin (sp), coming out this spring, and I ragged him about his wearing his Oprah-show sweater, an Aran heavy stitch knitted by his mother! Tony Angell was about to cast a big pair of bronze ravens called "The Greeters." And so it went, through a list of these accumulated friends who somehow pick up where they left off last year or even some

*A hanagram, it turned out to be.

30 Nov. cont.--years into the past; Carol has annotated people and their pot-luck dishes (the food seems to get better every year, we all swear) into her diary, but for separate insurance here are the names: Tony Angell and Lee Rolfe and small daughters Larka and Gavia, the former a blonde charmer and the latter into 5-year-old shyness and quicksilver changes of mood; Peter Rockas, gray-bearded much in my manner, now adding study of psychoanalysis to his counseling (his partner Cathy Ackert couldn't make it to the gathering this year because of a death in the family); Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist, Norm's recent diagnosis of hepatitis C the worst news of the otherwise shining day; Mark and Lou Damborg, who truly seem to prize the gathering (C points out it's like having family without the hangups) and pitch in not only with the champagne supply etc. but will likely take turns with us in holding these dinners, having already put in their bid for next year in their redone kitchen; Tom Orton, of Beck's bookstore and the U. of Montana writing program long ago, who has an ailing mother he had to spend the rest of the day with but seemed glad to come by for an hour or so, and fit right back in after a few years' absence; John and Kathrin Malloof, lending us all a sense of the larger world, IBM and Germany; Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan, our Camano dears; Richard White and Beverly Purrington, who have "decided to decide" on the offers being made to Richard (C and I are betting on Stanford) and thus likely have made their last Thanksgiving appearance here; and Bryony Angell, now of Amazon.com, bright and funny and at 25 holding her own perfectly fine in this crowd all twice her age.

There were two fine toasts: Tony, movingly to all of us getting together again this way; and Mark, nobly, to Carol on her retirement.

1 Dec.--First day of this maelstrom month not too bad, Liz and I working out how to approach S&S about shifting me over to Scribner, in the wake of my being underwhelmed by David Rosenthal in his phone call to me last Wednesday. She suggested I do her a letter that she

1 Dec. cont.--can then cite to Carolyn Reidy, and so I spent much of the morning on that, setting forth what I sense is inherited-book syndrome ahead on Rosenthal's part. From here on, we'll see.

C and I walked the n'hood before lunch, nice blue day, and managed respectable naps, neither neighbor making noise today. I got back to the ms this afternoon, trimming and shaping the Sweetgrass Hills scene.

3 Dec.--In this its 58th year my body made its first visit to major medical machinery yesterday, the Magnetic Resonance Imaging of my cranky right knee. Through the 2001-like basement corridors of Group Health Central, you ultimately come to a quiet waiting room, and then a changing room where you shed down to your underwear (and definitely take off everything metallic) and put on blue hospital scrubs and cute little slipper socks, and then it's the MRI itself. Carol came along as driver, inasmuch as the orthopedic doctor, Jung, offered to prescribe a tranquilizer for me if I'm claustrophobic, and while I'm not quite that, it sounded as if it might help me lie still during the process; to our astonishment, by dint of having arrived about 20 min. early through light traffic, we were out of there by the time the MRI was officially scheduled to only begin, 5:15. The woman running things was first-class, explaining to me the steps of putting myself inside this gigantic magnet. The machine and carriage you're slid in on resemble a sleek white torpedo tube; the knee meanwhile is immobilized with a cover clamp perhaps 18" long over it. I had less trouble lying on my back than I'd expected, even though my tranquilizer was hastily taken when she started me on the exam ahead of schedule, and it probably didn't kick in much until the MRI was almost over. The operator offered me earplugs or soft-rock music in earphones, suggesting the latter, and I agreed (although the edgiest part of all this was having to listen to Engelbert Humperdinck moan through "Home for the Holidays"). I was inserted into the machine to the point where my head was not quite into the torpedo-tube part (people of any real plumpness must not fit into the thing), with an intercom speaker in the big angled-in cone section over my head; I could talk to the operator through that, and

3 Dec. cont.--her voice overrode the earphone music. She was good about telling me how long each noisy stint of the exam was going to be; I think the segments were a $5\frac{1}{2}$ min., a 2 min., and three of 3 or $3\frac{1}{2}$ min. The MRI made sounds, during each accordingly, ranging from jackhammerlike to a noise like a washing machine stuck on high. It'll likely be Monday before I hear the result, and learn whether the knee is to get arthroscopic surgery, as I pretty much suspect it will.

The drive down to Capitol Hill, C and I kept exclaiming, was positively gorgeous, golden sunset reflection off the downtown glass, a purple rose hue on the Cascades.

8 Dec.--Certainly y'day was a day in the life: I got new editors and a ~~simon~~ doctor's opinion that I need a knee operation.

The good news first: Liz called to say I'm "officially a Scribner author," Carolyn Reidy having honored my written request via Liz. Soon Nan Graham left a phone message saying she and Susan Moldow are "so, so, so thrilled," "it couldn't be better news," "incredibly happy"--an electric phoneful such as I have maybe not had from an editor since Carol Hill. When I called back, I let her know Mtn Time is the working title and she can see the first $2/3$ of the ms by end of Jan., she imparted that Sarah Baker had asked to stay on as my p'back editor. (I said that was fine, and later called Sarah to reiterate.) Then it was chat, when am I coming East etc. Nan noted that she's seeing Michael Jacobs today; they go back a long way, her first day at Viking was his first day after being promoted to NY.

This afternoon Susan Moldow called, mainly to say with exquisite grace that they'll be cutting me a check after New Year's, a little \$60,000 welcome to the house of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Wolfe there. She thanks me for pitching in with a statement for reading at Michael Dorris's memorial; apparently it's been an uphill battle to stick up for Michael. Told her I'd noted the NYTBR chose Micahel's last book as one of the worthy ones of the ~~year~~ year, which pleased her. So far so good, it seems to me--a publisher (Susan) who's pleasant and savvy, and an editor (Nan) who's bright and wired and veteran.

Now the knee. The MRI exam indicated a tear in the

8 Dec. cont.--miniscus, and so Dr. Charles Jung, who does a couple of hundred of these arthroscopic surgeries a year, thinks it'd help the knee's "arc of motion" if he went in there and "trimmed up irritating rough edges." Will try set that up for early Jan. and move on with life.

Dec. 10--This day started off damp and dark, but turned lambent for Carol. By 1 this afternoon, when the hallway party at Shoreline for her retirement was getting underway, the sun was coming out. The friendships and affection for her were immensely moving. She's done it well on every level at Shoreline, up to and including the last minute before she left the house for the party when I watched her in the hallway arranging her classy dress-raincoat and the scarf at her throat just so.

As soon as she was out of sight I dressed to the nines myself, and went up and consorted happily--the McVeighs, Judy Sanderman, our taliswoman Margaret Svec, Trudy Forbes, among others. I made it a point to go into the power office where division ~~chairman~~ chair Sarah Hart and the prez himself Gary Oertli were talking and thanked them for getting Carol through to her graduation.

This has been something of a cyclone of a week--I'm astonished it's still only Wednesday--but much has shaken into place. Mtn Time has looked remarkably good upon re-read, and unless I'm forgetting a potholed section I can about feel the solving of tomorrow's work--sprucing up Mariah's opening role in the book. Bits of lines keep coming to me, a little snowy freshet of notepad slips with them jotted on, awaiting tomorrow. Amid all else of this week, I've dealt with (knock wood hard) the actuary on my pension plan, galloping this way and that as outrider on him as he swung from such intense pessimism that he wanted me to shut down the plan and roll it all over into an IRA, to his final mauling of the research until it told him pretty much what he'd told me a year ago, that the funding and year's contribution that I'd been planning on are fine.

16 Dec.--Blustery rainy weather, which we are cheerfully enough taking as an escort out of town to Tucson in 48 hours.

Carol has been finishing up her Shoreline career, cleaning out her office and for that matter throwing out considerable file-cabinet stuff here at home as well. She's been on a high about retiring now, greatly relieved not to have to face the enrollment problem in the mass media class, or the swamp of despond that the UW Omcs dept. has turned into, or the thickening web of voicemail and entering grades into the computer and so on.

As for me, I tinkered at the Mtn Time ms until Monday noon and feel I have it far enough along to give a looking-over (by C as well as me) at year's end, do any other minor tuning up, and then ship it in to Scribner. Anent Scribner, there are a handful of details to that not-easy lateral move within the Simon & Schuster confederation of provinces that I want to get down here.

The first is the one that needlessly complicated it all, my conversation with S&S sales rep Michael Carley, longtime buddy in the Pac NW book biz, the night of the Gov's Awards as I tried to do my homework on Liz's suggestion that we think Scribner-ward; I asked Michael if it'd hurt my stuff to be offered to bookstores under the more literary Scribner imprint rather than the bigger more commercial S&S imprimatur, etc. The SOB must have E-mailed off the gossip that I was thinking of switching, because Monday morning Liz was on the phone to me saying, "You're making my job harder." ME? Michael's gossip had reached Carolyn Reidy, Carolyn not unnaturally hit the roof (I'm not the first case of a writer wanting the more tender literary mercies of Scribner; evidently), and it all devolved--mostly through Carolyn's subsequent phone call to me--to Waiting For David, the new S&S publisher David Rosenthal, to indicate whether I fit into his

supposedly go-go plans for S&S. Of all colossal drawbacks that a person in publishing can have, R'al is famous for not returning phone calls! That sin of his drives Liz crazy--"You can probably hear it in my voice," she growled over the phone--but in this case, it likely

which in turn she sent along to,
lo, Carolyn Reidy

16 Dec.--gave us a needed break, because it took him two months to call us (a fact I elaborately-casually dropped into my letter to Liz requesting her to seek my transfer to Scribner*. And when he did, his call to me turned me off in several ways. He made a less than wan mention of S&S editor Bob McCoy, whom everyone else--Liz, Becky, Carolyn--had all cited as ~~the~~ probably the best choice for me at S&S, among not all that many handlers-of-literary-folk. But offered to handle my book himself and "be there for me." ("No," was all Liz said when I recounted that to her.) Amid it all, he did something which made me realize we don't even talk the same lingo. I'd just mentioned that I met his latest best-selling author (back at Villard), Jon Krakauer, at the Gov's Awards. R'al: "Did he tell you what a bad Jew I am?" And what was I supposed to do with that--did he mean inobservant Jew, stereotypically scapegoatish scheming Jew, ineptly scheming Jew? What in, so to speak, God's name did that mean? I have no idea whether Krakauer is Jewish, and R'al's crack came out of that, or what. Anyway, if I can't break the code of a phone conversation after it takes the guy months to call, I didn't figure we ought to be trying to do a book together. There was also the added little goad out the S&S door when R'al went on to say of Krakauer, whom C and I both liked on sight and quite enjoyed his unpretentious pleasure in having arrived big-time with Into Thin Air, "Nothing makes Jon feel more shitty than having a #1 best-seller." Whocee. Anyway, at the moment I am out of his purview, doubtless at the cost of having made an enemy, but so be it. I know there are drawbacks of taking my line of western goods to a hot-lit house such as Scribner has been, but I'll gladly enough chance it rather than be afflicted with what I'm pretty sure would be inherited-book syndrome from the new S&S regime.

It has since occurred to me, in classic wish-I'd-thought-of-it-at-the-time fashion, that the most interesting response I could have made to his "bad Jew" question would have been to just say, "Yeah," and change the topic.

26 Dec.--After Tucson. We snowbirded to there on the 18th, and Jean Roden picked us up at SeaTac ~~xxx~~ y'day mid-afternoon, Christmas. This time we got El-Nino'ed there in the Southwest, a day, day and a half of really good weather out of the week. Even so, we managed to hike every day without getting rained on (sprinkled, once), and had exquisite bird-watching in Catalina State Park--cardinals, phinopeplia, cactus wrens, thrashers, flickers, Gila woodpeckers...the trailhead area north out of the parking log, toward the Sutherland trail, is rich with birdlife in the wooded area leading to the first creek ford, with birds feeding under the trees and then popping up to branches or treetops, and the woodpeckers and flickers and thrashers and wrens, at least, advancing up to the crowns of saguaros on the ridgeline as the morning warms up. The mountains--the Catalinas are quite a classic blocky basin-and-range set, big blunt rockfaces arising out of canyons and alluvial-fan foothills--were minute-by-minute dramatic in the stormy weather, lights and shadows playing tag, the wintry sun, low, arcing just in or out of the cloudcap on the summits.

The weather, which included a downpour on Christmas Eve and thick fog on Christmas morn, made this a middling trip, as did the continuing decay of the Miracle Mile/Oracle Rd n'hood where we've liked to stay. The eating remained very good, Poca Cosa unbeatable both nights we were there, Terra Cotta ~~excellent~~ coming through mostly (which seems to be its story, and what it does come through on is excellent) on its two nights, the meat its menu strong-point, and the old standbys El Minuto and Parilla Suiza reliably good enough again. Our morning at the Desert Museum was great, highlighted by flight-and-feeding demonstration of 2 Harris hawks; the hawks swoop back to their ~~handler~~ handler so fast and low that a wingtip brushed my hatbrim. We went on to Saguaro West nat'l park in the best weather of the trip--terrifically wasn't boardy loop-road there which the rental Taurus wallowed and jounced on, but we found a viewpoint trail, half a mile or so to an outlook over the Avra

26 Dec. cont.--Valley and as far north as Picacho Peak, which was just the right amount for my so-so knee. (Should note that on our Catalina St.Park outings, we liked the nature trail loop, with its good variety of vegetation and fine views of the mountains and arroyo, and also a little less susceptible to the showers along the mountains. We hiked that 2-3 times, and some of the Sutherland Trail twice.)

So, Tucson '97: distressing to us in a number of ways, the lack of civic vision or even minimal sense of responsibility a palpable sin. Right next to Xmas, the city gov't chose to get in a fight with the Salvation Army over its feed-the-homeless kitchen in a public facility--the city wanted the Sally Army to register and keep track of the recipients!--and threw the Salvies out, turning 250 homeless cases into 250 hungry homeless cases! Real estate, retail, and military are the local industries--as C points out, Alb'que went and got itself an Intel plant and supported it with educational chances--and they chew the middle-class guts out of the city, leaving the hard-luckers (estimated 2,300 homeless in Pima County) downtown and the salaried or retired circling the condo-wagons farther and farther out into the desert, west and north. It's a valley we love, with the Catalinas over it and the remnants of saguaro forests and birdlife showing what a vigorous desert ecological community it was, but the urban sink is getting tougher for us to visit.

As to Christmas celebrating, we had dinner with the Rodens, who were sans children or grandchildren this year--Jerry and Lisa Clemens have done heroically in past years in trekking from the Twin Cities, but Lisa's run-faster-to-stay-in-place job at Cargill kept them home this ~~year~~ time around. The four of us made a good evening of it, conversational zigzags as usual.

31 Dec.--Here goes the year, hammerstrokes just now dying down on the Cochrans' house-rebuild next door, the day winter-gray when it wasn't aggressively foggy. Carol has spent mornings this week being tutored in how to be a tutor, for her volunteer work in the college's

31 Dec. cont.--writing lab next quarter, and I've hunkered in at re-reading and spiffing up the Mtn Time ms, preparatory to sending in the first two-thirds of the book in January. This has~~be~~been an aggravating year in a lot of ways, particularly the neighborhood epidemic of noise, but Carol has thestnoble last year of teaching to show for it, and I have this two-thirds of a book.



S C R I B N E R

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New York, NY 10020
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Fax: 212-632-4926

Susan Moldow
Vice President & Publisher

June 2, 1997

Ivan and Carol Doig
17021 10th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan and Carol:

Since I know that you were both fond of Michael Dorris, I am writing to let you know that a memorial is being held for his friends from the writing and publishing communities in New York on Tuesday, June 24, 1997, from 5-7 p.m. in the auditorium at the Donnell Library, 20 West 53rd Street.

Having had the privilege of attending and participating in the beautiful service for Michael that the Native American Studies program mounted at Dartmouth, I can say that it was helpful to be there. If your schedule should place you in New York City at that time, I hope you can come. If you wish to send a statement I will certainly arrange for it to be read.

Since this is an open event, I hope you will feel free to mention it to anyone else you deem appropriate about whom I might not know or think to include.

Sincerely,

Susan Moldow
Vice President & Publisher

12 June '97

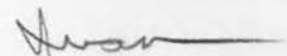
1 p. fax to Susan Moldow, Vice President & Publisher, Scribner:

Dear Susan--

Appreciated your letting me know about the memorial occasion for Michael Dorris. Neither Carol nor I can make it east, sorry to say, but it would please us if you would read the following short remark in my name:

"Michael Dorris was the best of shelfmates. 'Doctorow, Doerr, Doig, Dorris, Dostoevsky,' he would recite the bookstore rank we stood in, with his gliding upward chuckle. My experience of Michael, across several years and books, was that he was passionate to learn stories and how best to tell them. The necessary risks of plot, the insides of sentences--he cared with a visible love about those, and he also had the healthy and admirable trait of being obstinately curious as to the inner workings of book contracts. Crossing paths with Michael on the bookstore trail or in hotcakes-for-breakfast cafes of Montana towns was always an instant session on the ways of words, of how-do-you-think-thus-and-such-could-be-done, and of what-have-you-been-reading-that's-really-good? And now he is gone but his books will last, a standing reminder of his own estimable spine."

Many thanks, Susan, hi to Bill,
and we hope you're both thriving.



I suppose by now you know me too well
for me to get by with saying I'm speechless,
huh?

At the very least, I'd never be noteless,
would I.

It's a particular pleasure for me, this
time around, to be at this occasion when it's
graced by my great friend Ruth Kirk, the
heart and soul of professional wordworking
at this corner of the country.

And speaking of heart and soul, along
with the usual fidelity of the Washington
State Library, the Washington Commision

for the Humanities has become the life force and the wallet, too, for these awards, and I'd like to say a minute's worth about that. During the years that we were all writing these books that are honored here tonight, the National Endowment for the Humanities--and the National Endowment for the Arts, and National Public Radio, and just about the national anything that isn't a military base in a Sunbelt state--have been under attack, budgetary and otherwise, by 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 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 humanities.

On this night of collective affection for the written word, the quick section I'll read from **Bucking the Sun** is about the delicious hunger that makes us write and

read. Rosellen Duff, young and in over her head at Fort Peck Dam in the 1930's, is sitting there/trying to write:

/ She wished she knew how much the names mattered. It was a harder part than she had thought, making those up. But if she were to call the woman "Blondina" and him...

// Call them Ishmael, Heathcliff, Hester Prynne, Swann and the Duchess de Guermantes, Huck and Tom, Antonia Shimerda, Molly Bloom, Puck, Hamlet, Goneril, Regan, Cordelia, Flem Snopes,

Lord Jim, Anna Karenina, Eugene Gant,
Mrs. Dalloway: they answer, faultlessly,
each time by making us a gift of all their
wordly possessions.

(FLO-BEAR)

Flaubert sends notes tinkling from
Emma Bovary's piano and at the other end
of the village the bailiff's clerk, "passing
along the highroad, bareheaded and in list
slippers, stopped to listen, his sheet of paper
in his hand" and we listen there with him
ever after.

Cather prompts an anxious young Santa
Fe seminarian to say, "One does not die of a
cold," and the Archbishop in the winter of

age responds, "I shall not die of a cold, my son. I shall die of having lived," and we accept that as true for us, too.

Mayakovsky, Russia's cloud in trousers,
jots to Lili Brik from his Crimean tour,
"Lilik, I go off in all the directions there
are!" and from London she postcards to
him, "Volosik, I kiss you right in the
Parliament!" and we believe with them,
there in those everlasting fevers of
correspondence, their creed that love is the
heart of everything.

Writers and the written, they haunt us as
we most want to be haunted, in fogs of ink.

Again, I thank the state of Washington
for counting me into its cosmos of writers.

Ivan and Carol
Montana and the Tetons
September 1997

Tuesday, September 2	10,000 Silver \$ Motel, Haugen. 1-800-531-1968
W/Th, September 3-4	The Duck Inn, Whitefish. 1-800-344-2377.
F/Sat, September 5-6	Doubletree Edgewater, Missoula. 1-406-728-3100
Sunday, September 7	Home of Dave and Marcella Walter, Helena. 1-406-442-0306
M/T/W, September 8-10	Best Western Stage Stop Inn, Choteau. 1-888-466-5900
Thursday, September 11	Home of Mike and Kate Malone, Bozeman. 1-406-587-2982
F/Sat, September 12-13	Buckrail Lodge, Jackson, WY 1-307-733-2079
Sun/T, September 14-16	Home of Nancy Effinger, Jackson, WY 1-307-733-1365
Wednesday, September 17	en route home
Thursday, September 18	arrive home