

[1999]

3 Jan.--In this wettest of winters, we've suddenly been granted winsome blue weather buttoned by the biggest of silver moons--the full moon y'day the first of two this month. It's 8:15, Sunday morn, as I write, and the moon (just north of Mt. Townsend and maybe an hour of it left in the sky) is gauzy, tendrils of fog across it. The fog is up to the midribs of the mountains, the snow-white peaks in pale early sun. The moon show has dazzled us these past couple of nights and morns: luminiscence like a benign searchlight through the bedrooms glass doors to the deck, shadows of the deck railing there in the night, and the silver lagoons of moonlight on the Sound; y'day morning a little after 4, a full-candlepower ferry (we theorize that ferries have only one lightswitch for the whole boat) crossed the moonwater on its way to the Kingston dock to start the day. In another of the unexpected details that this house keeps surprising us with, the deck's railing is enameled with dots of dew in the moonglow.

It's like living in a resort, we keep saying to each other, particularly when we're looking north to the unexpected mock-Mediterranean view of Richmond Beach, past the 3 great maples of the neighbors. There's still a lot of complicated work ahead--the drainage system this month, the down-the-hill planting of salal etc. in Feb. or early March--but at least the rooms of the house that we've worked on are comfortable and attuned to the view out there. I keep trying to think why it is that we're enchanted with seeing the water, the mountains, the weather, and as of now I believe that we feel the knit of the planet here; the comings and goings of daily weather, the seasons, the tides, the sunsets, that doubloon moon, the cycles of plants (in defiance of the dark rainy stretches and the several days of freeze, there are buds everywhere on this property), even the courses of ships and planes and trains, letting us glimpse the ~~crisscross~~ crisscrosses that are the armature of earth's scene.

And on the scale of how-can-the-shlunky-Doigs-afford-all-this, we can, we can. Did the year-end math on the 1st, and we stand at \$3,090,000. True, though, that my income will drop now, maybe forever; it's one of the casts of mind I have to try on, now, ~~that~~ to put myself in the fiscal category of retired whether or not my work is

3 Jan. cont.--going to amount to that.

Socially, dinner @ Linda Sullivan & Jeff Saeger's last Tues., a good catching-up with them. They've bought a lot in Pt. Townsend, which means that virtually all our friends now have second properties. Tonight, we're to sally forth by ferry to supper @ Linda and Syd's.

9 Jan.--We are trench'd half around. The small Cat from Jim Dandy sewer services has cut WWI-like pits along sections of the south and west sides of the house for the new drainage system which will take rainwater away from the house footings and down over the bluff. Crew of two came y'day, the big kid Gene @ 10:40 to do the handwork, w/ pick and shovel, in the landscaped/railroad tie'd upper section along the garage and basement wall, then the Cat operator Doug showed up about 1 and in the next 2½ hrs moved a hellish amount of dirt, all of which is ~~underground~~ heaped on the southside path or the back lawn. I put in a tense day of hovering, my least favorite way to spend time, but nothing irreparable went wrong, and there looks to be a reasonable chance that this may be over with by Tuesday night. It'll leave quite a mess around the outside of the house, but better to face this now, we figure, than fight downstairs moisture every winter.

Y'day wiped out what had been an orderly march of the week, considerable file-card work done by me and a lot of winnowing of file drawers by C. She's also shopped a tv into the household, toward next week's headache of getting cable tv/FM functioning in here. As to life when we're not whanging away at Bull Market Acres here, we indeed had a fine evening across the Sound w/ Linda and Syd, and on Monday seized the good weather to do the dike hike @ the Skagit wildfowl refuge and then have lunch @ the Calico Cupboard in LaConner.

12 Jan.--The new drainage system is in, and we have survived to tell the tale. The digging and dirt-moving was done with a small Cat, 4½' wide, that had a claw shovel; the tractor cab, with its stepped-in side (like a small boat's pilot house offset to one side and this inset windowed half on the other) closest to the house,

12 Jan. cont.--cleared the eave by only an inch. (The row of big rhodies was the obstacle on the other side, and the Cat scraped along their bark on its squeeze past.) Then the Cat had to be walked down (and more worrisome, back up them) ~~with the~~ the 20' of railroad-tie steps. Even that wasn't the end of close quarters, as the downslope trenching along our south property line had to go past a couple of sets of trees barely Cat's-width apart; I tied trunks back with clothesline rope, and Doug the catskinner took care in minutely maneuvering through. The house itself took two small dings, about the size of 50¢ pieces, from all the close work, and then on the way out--i.e., after the Cat climbed the stairs--Doug put a crinkle in about 6" of the rainutter trying to ease past the eave again. Here, if nowhere else, my all-day hovering paid off, as I called out to him: "Doug, you had the cab turned the other way to get it past, before." He looked sheepish--he'd forgotten about the added clearance of the indented side of the cab--and at once revolved the cab and delicately got the equipment past the house with no more damage. So, with that project unexpectedly out of the way (it was originally scheduled only to start tomorrow), we now have:

--a solid-instead-of-perforated drainline along the weather side of the house (the south) and across the west side where the two main downspouts are, where all the rain runs off the porch, and where the gravel-pocket French drain ~~lay~~ formerly lay right next to the house;

--flexible pipe carrying the runoff water all the way over the bluff, and down, 150 or so feet, to the shelf at the base of the bluff;

--a to-be-gardened area of what was the south half of the scabby lawn, Doug using his Cat blades to scrape down about 4" to skin the lawn sod off.

In the course of all this, it turned out that Doug is not just the catskinner but the owner of Jim Dandy Sewer and Plumbing, following a grandfather's footsteps. He cuts quite a figure, a bit Mephistophelian with his long black hair, goatee, and mischievous eyes; 42 now, he's been in the sewer business since he was 17. On the

12 Jan. cont.--Cat, he is a virtuoso; I got pretty good with the steering lever of the big Cat I farmed for Tony Mozier with, and later with the hydraulic controls of the Farmall forklift when scooping up hay bales at the Higgins ranch, but what he does involves both those skills at once. Formidable.

The weather gave us a break y'day, warm and no rain, when I spent the whole day except for a quick lunch out there watching the project (oh, and pitching in minimally on Carol's project of getting cable TV into the house, w/ the Chambers cable duo of Kendall and Darrell on hand most of the morning), and another one on Saturday when the rain held off long enough just after lunch for C and I to put a coat of emulsion sealant on the exposed foundation along the south side; one more chore that should have been done during the remodel of this house 6 years ago--Dane Butcher must have been dumber than a rock about anything to do with a house and land.

Otherwise, I have been cleaning out file drawers, trying to gain space and order in the new office setup without making paper-sorting into a full-time job. C has similarly been tending to not-so-hot chores, such as shopping for TVs. Our inaugural look at the medium--how many times now have I said that TV is called a medium because it's neither rare nor well-done?--was The Lehrer Report during supper, and we concluded that it added no iota to the information we pick up daily through newspapers and radio, while the show's segment of 4 talking heads giving their 4 predictable opinions merely pisses us off. Screw it, we said promptly, put a TV downstairs and let it go at that, and get some rewiring done to give us FM radio capacity on the cable feed, into the living room.

15 Jan.--Stormy weather is back; remarkably, it laid off last Friday and Monday, giving us a chance to put the drainage system in, and stormed in between and since.

We continue to sort through the technology; now we have a 27" TV in the middle room downstairs (lugged in y'day morn by Eric and Pat of Paul Drollinger's yard crew on their way to work) and C is about to delve to



15 Jan. cont.--Lynnwood for a more compatible VCR. We've had at least one triumph of our own making, hooking the cable (by way of a splitter) to the antenna leads at the back of the big old (25 years?) cabinet radio/hi fi in the living room and getting good reception for the public radio stations and KING's classical music.

As to what fills the airwaves currently, the trial of Clinton takes place in narrow-focus TV, only the House trial managers and the brisket of somebody sitting behind them shuffling papers showing on the tube--no panning the camera around to the silently sitting Senators. Y'day was not a good day ~~for~~ for Clinton, the House mgrs--despite too much iterating and reiterating--making hay with the obstruction of justice scenario. Doubtless Clinton's outlook will wax and wane day by day--we're most likely going to follow it on CNN's 7 p.m. roundup, which was crisp and had the gist, last night--but the undertow of ultimately calling witnesses is strengthening as the Republicans keep mentioning the necessity of it. I still think Clinton has cut this awfully close, having to rely on Democratic Senators he's never really given any reason to love him, and if one of the Republican prosecutors scores a lucky hit on a witness...

On the home front, I've just made an apptmt to have my left knee, the un-operated-on one, looked at by Charlie Jung, probably to start toward surgery on it, sigh and goddamn. It began hurting beyond its usual twinging on Wednesday.

18 Jan.--Blowy day, declension from stormy y'day and all night. Much rain has come down and a bit of it found its way into the south downstairs room again, the obdurately leaky window situation there confirming us in our notion to cut a door in that wall and re-do things. Managed to walk the n'hood y'day morning just ahead of the raindrops, but this morning, until the wind began stripping away the clouds to show some blue the past hour or so, the weather was a silver sheet on the Sound, the far shore only a hint.

Both of us have hunkered in and sorted, sorted,

18 Jan. cont.--sorted. While I don't have everything tucked out of sight yet, I have killed off our moosive 5-drawer file cabinet. Maybe this is somewhat too much a rage for order--Mark Damborg pointed out with a grin the other night that this is a bigger house than we had before--but for better or worse, as we've laid out the office areas there's room for 3 cabinets (and one under-the-desk file drawer for each of us) and that's it. While I've been tussling w/ my files, amazed at the prodigious amount of letter-writing I used to do, G has taken on the files of the Innis Arden clubhouse, her role on the n'hood board which she joined on the 13th.

Sat. night, for the jillionth time the Damborgs saved us from ourselves by having us over to dinner and, to our delight, Linda and Jeff as well. It made for an enormously relaxing evening, old friends we're comfortable with. Talk, of course, of Clinton's trial; we all know he done what he did, but the triumph of the Republicans in forcing him out ~~subofficiance~~ for something less than malfeasance or misfeasance of office (which Reagan absolutely slathered himself in with the Contras, the Legal Services and Human Rights Commission sabotages, etc.) spooks all of us more than he does.

The adventure of this house, and all we're doing to it and the ways we're trying to use it and this site to spiff up our lives, is ever with us, and G at her first board meeting picked up a haunting chapter of the past here. We are only the third set of residents here, before us the attention-deficited Butchers who did manage to throw enough money at an architect to get this singular house, and the original owners, the Slopers (the Butchers bought from their estate in '93). At the annual meeting before the board met to sort out new duties, a woman named Jean Stewart sat by Carol, recognized her name and that we'd bought "the Slopers' old house," and told her the tragedy of Mrs. Sloper and the maple tree. Down at the brink of the slope, in line with the middle of the house, is the colossal stump, of a size with the Kastners' two magnificent old maples next door and Barney Hyde's big one beyond theirs. We've been able to tell that before the thumbs of the Butchers got hold of the place, avid gardening went on

18 Jan. cont.--here: the fruit trees, the rose garden, the set of terraces down to the brink (the bottommost one showing signs of having been a vegetable garden), the now-decrepit little garden tool shed. Amid all this the big central maple must have been a beloved centerpiece, sited as it was so dramatically against the mountains and the water. For reasons C and I still haven't managed to sight out, "the people up at the corner" in Jean Stewart's phrase (I've shot past a main point of all this, that Jean S. ~~was~~ is a Sloper daughter-in-law; we're guessing that her husband was from Mrs. Sloper's 1st marriage) hectored the Slopers about the maple tree being in their view. Probably they'd been thwarted by Hank Kastner's sue-me-and-I'll-litigate-you-to-the-dockets-of-Hell defense of his set of trees, and in any case were still after Mrs. Sloper about the tree when ~~Mrs.~~ Mr. Sloper was in cancer treatment. Came a day when tree trimmers dispatched by the corner neighbors showed up as she was about to go off to the hospital and her husband, and she consented to letting the tree be trimmed. When she came home, the tree was gone. By Jean S's telling, Mrs. Sloper pulled the blinds and never looked out there again; in not much more time, she died of a heart attack before cancer claimed her husband.

25 Jan.--Where do the time go. I'm just in from tromping the lower terrace area where we want salal & snowberry planted, a pleasant enough pastime on a nonrainy afternoon. Came in and told C there's a daunting amount of projects to be done out there, and she told me, choose my battles, a reminder we agreed she'll keep giving me and my tendency to get everything possible done. Here in the house I've cleaned out many old files, approxly 15-20 pounds of paper per week since the 1st of the year. Am not done, but have to start shifting now toward the upcoming speaking trip, the booktour plans and the like.

On the social side, dinner at the Nalders on Sat. and a walk at the grain terminal park w/ David Williams and Marjorie K. y'day morn. David had a piece that day in the S. Times magazine, Eric had an investigative piece front-paged, so we're in journalistic circles.

3 Feb.--Day after day I've flubbed getting at this diary, grinding away instead at the surprisingly recalcitrant set of presentations--classes, book groups, full-blown version of the "Makings" speech revised to bring some Mtn Time into it--for this Oregon-northern California trip we leave on, tomorrow. Finally puffed atop the speech (my 1st try inexplicably came out 15 min. ~~long~~ too long) around noon y'day, doing spatters of phone interviews (Jefferson Public Radio in Ashland, the Bend Bulletin and an alternative paper, KBND radio about an hour ago) along the way. Blessedly, C has handled all the lodging logistics. Today we've packed as if we're going to another planet, and if the winter storm scene doesn't ~~sett~~ settle down, ~~maybe~~ we maybe are.

--"Let's make it go away." That medical declaration from Charlie Jung is the best thing that's happened lately; he jabbed cortisone into my 4-month<sup>1</sup>-aching collarbone joint and indeed the pain has gone away. With one of the three hurting quadrants of my body calmed down, I felt pretty damn good after Charlie's shot on the 28th. The low twins, though, the knees, are a tougher proposition. Charlie's best guess is that the right one, which had the 'scope surgery, is probably achy because of a rough deteriorated place on the bone (rather than any further cartilage problem) and he can't do anything arthroscopically about that. I had been blithely counting on another MRI to see if it could possibly be a cartilage problem--even though neither I nor Jung can account for any way I'd have torn it again--but it turns out an MRI on an operated-on joint registers the surgical disturbance, doesn't differentiate new damage; an arthroscopic investigation, same as the 'scope operation I had, is the only way to look in there. The route I think I'm going to take instead, when we're back from this trip, is to have Charlie inject a new artificial knee fluid and see if that will help. As to the twinging left knee, last night after supper as I sat innocently reading, at ease in my comfortable Ekorness chair and ~~and~~ legs up on the footstool, the knee out of nowhere began giving me the sharpest pain

3 Feb. cont.--it ever has. I was dumbstruck: what the hell have I ever done physically to deserve that? I iced it a while and then dragged off to bed, having to lay very carefully on my right side, with the usual pillow between my knees and the left leg positioned just so, to try to sleep. Today I've worn a knee brace on it all day--on both knees--and the left traitor hasn't been as bad. But this knee misery is getting terribly wearisome (this is the second recent spate on the left one; it needled at me a day or two after I'd been on my feet outside overseeing the drainage tractorwork), and I'm probably going to have to ask Charlie to start us--I suppose with an MRI--toward 'scope surgery on it.

Except for my wretched joints, life ain't bad. The Walkinshaws came for dinner on the 29th. Jean dissented from us and Walt about it being a bad idea to remove Clinton, she believes it wouldn't be particularly harmful to the political process. The other 3 of us still couldn't swallow political victory by Clinton's foes, cad though he be.

Weather: truly droopy. Gray and hanging, all day, rain finally starting ~~in~~ now (3 p.m.), with wind supposedly on the way. Onward to Oregon, sigh, across the Cascades and then down across the Siskiyou's; I'm off now to join C in watching the 3:12 weathercast on NW Cable News.



Feb. 6--Watching it snow in Bend. We're to go to Sisters for a 2 o'clock reading/signing @ Paulina Springs bookstore, and luckily Mary Arnstad and Fred Aebi are to drive us in their big Lexus wagon.

Y'day's chockablock events here in Bend all went well. The crowd was so big at the Central Oregon Community College auditorium that people were sitting on the stage behind me, making for interesting logistics whenever I waded through to use the blackboard. Excellent audience, with good questions.

--Started the day w/ 7 a.m. interview on cable TV, hostess Kristi Miller quite good, even though the station ambience was cluttered garage.

--Then noon KLCC-stringer radio interview by Bing Bingham, okay too.

--Final event was the Broken Top book club group, Rascal Fair the topic.

The drive down from Seattle, in what is looking like the lousiest weather span of this winter, turned out all right; sporadic heavy rain from Seattle to south of Olympia, packed snow on Santiam Pass. (We didn't have to chain up.)

Feb. 8--Still watching and it's still snowing. This storm, the third in quick succession, is supposed to move through the southern Cascades tonight. We're just going to have to weigh the odds in the morning, whether to try Rte 97 south to Klamath Falls and Weed or try to make two sides of the triangle by going back over Santiam Pass to I-5 and then the long drive south from there.

Anything I've been able to do anything about--that is, everything but the SOBing weather--has gone fine. 85 people turned out for the reading/signing at the Paulina Springs bookstore in Sisters, and I got through the final dinner/discussion w/ Mary's Broken Top residents--not my favorite kind of forum--okay. Last night, dinner @ the Pine Tavern w/ Dick Sandvik of Paulina Springs and his old Whitman buddies, Rob and Julie ~~Pine Place~~.

Post

17 Feb.--Home. On Monday (the 15th) we made good time from Portland, by dint of starting from the U. of Portland north of where we ordinarily launch from; were here a little before 6 p.m. Behind us, 1200 miles of travel and successful speaking gigs at all stops. The earnings will (Oregon State U's paperwork is still grinding away to produce my check) total \$11,500, and it maybe was a watershed trip in that I told every inviter, friend and disembodied neutral alike, that their first offer wasn't hefty enough; to a person, they uncomplainingly ponied up more moolah. Confirms to me that if I am going to drag myself around to hard-to-get-to lecterns, I can ~~get~~ decree enough \$ to more or less make it worthwhile.

The best gig of the trip turned out to be Medford, the Ginger Rogers Theatre the site of the "Ashland" Chautauqua (which I've learned to spell, out of this experience) lectures by writers. Had an audience of 600+ the miking and other technical stuff was troublefree, and I found the unhurried and strategically modulated pace I've wanted for the "Making Books" talk. Jan Bateman and clan were there, adding to the moment; at the start of the q-&a, I told the audience C and I go back a long way w/ the Batemans of Central Point.

Chico, the night before: comparatively wan, not a helluva lot of sign that the Chico State public events people put out much word of my coming. Nonetheless, audience of about 250, and some public radio re-broadcast may occur.

Oregon State: really wan audience, about 150, but on the other hand the Oregonian's notable cartoonist, Jack Ohmann, had 44 the night before. People on hand were mostly attendees of Bill Robbins's regionalism conference, so it was a good group for me to have at. I did a mashed-down 10 minutes of "ingredients", then read Lexa's opening scene, Mitch's St. Helens scene, and the admitted show-and-tell scene of Mariah and the rocks and the albatrosses. All 3 of these seem to work fine, separately or together; I asked C how the audience took to the St. Helens stuff, and she confirmed what I'd sensed from the stage, that people were so attentive they barely breathed. Nothing like throwing in a volcano out here to get people's attention.

17 Feb. cont.--The U. of Portland finale: lunch w/ faculty and students and then my class, catholic congeniality as well as Catholic. Father Art Schoenfeld, whose timbermonied family is the spigot of money to bring writers to campus, is as engaging as the dickens, and Brian Doyle, the public relations guy who wangled w/ me for years to get me into the Schoenfeld series, is a bright book-crazy guy, fan of RL Stevenson. The class I talked to was nominally Lou Masson's on Lit of Nature and the Outdoors, although a creative writing class and a pretty good number of faculty were on hand, too. News of the day came from Father Art during lunch; he's a ~~long~~ buddy of Barry Lopez all the way back to some youthful wrangler summer in, I think, Wyoming (Barry was not a natural at wrangling, he told me with a little smile, but had perseverance), and said he didn't want to bear bad news but figured I ought to know that Barry and Sandra have divorced. Who got Finn Rock, I asked; Barry's to be there, after a couple of months' stint in Antarctica, and Sandra has come to Portland, Father A said.

While we were on the road the trial of Clinton lumbered to a forecast conclusion, the House managers inimitably managing to snatch worse defeat out of the jaws of mere defeat. Henry Hyde must have had his gavel lodged crosswise in his brain, back in the House hearings when he forewent using his subpoena powers to parade witnesses (Like, hi, Monica; yo, Vernon...) to his very own mikes. To then ki-yi to the Senate that witnesses were life and death to his case was just wacko, and gave ~~more~~ Clinton non-lovers such as Byrd and Feingold every excuse to tag along with the Democratic party line and vote against both counts. Now the prognostications, for what they're worth, are that we're all in for some buyer's remorse on Clinton, nearly two more years of putting up with his playing with his zipper any chance he gets. I started thinking, during the last of the trial, how much better off we'd all be if Clinton actually was what he sees himself as in his dreams, a bachelor.

Historical footnote: the trial ended last Friday, Feb. 12, the day we were at Orgeon State, and all

17 Feb. cont.--that day, when we were around history profs for nearly 8 hours straight--suppertime to the end of the reception at Bill and Karla Robbins's place in Philomath--the only mention of the trial of Clinton was a passing one I tucked into my speech intro. ("Every so often, wouldn't you just like to re-weave time and bring forth a writer from his own neighborhood of history to an era where we need his particular eye and skill? Shakespeare, for instance, to write about the massive murderous idiocy of the trench warfare of World War I. Joseph Conrad to be aboard a moon voyage and tell us of the ocean of space. Jonathan Swift, perhaps, to do satiric justice to the impeachment episode that ended today.")

As to the weather of the trip, we ultimately lucked out, after the fretting I did in Bend. Came the day to navigate to Chico, the phone report on the highway south to Klamath Falls--which we'd been warned ~~was~~ has a reputation for black ice--was for snowpack, chains to be carried. We chose that on the basis of its shorter distance, rather than our wavery notion of going back over Santiam Pass to I-5, even though the ~~forecast~~ road reports were about the same then, and the forecast for snow meant there could be snotty roads ahead around Klamath Falls and Mt. Shasta. It turned out that we squeezed through in fine shape--even though we did pass long-haul trucks on their side in the snowbanked ditch, grizzled drivers still sitting in the cab waiting for tow trucks; we wondered if the drivers were of a vintage that didn't want to ~~put~~ do the chore of putting ~~on~~ chains on all those duals--while I-5 shut down in mid-afternoon, when Ashland and the Siskiyou summit got a couple of feet of snow. We passed the held-up line of northbound traffic between Weed and Dunsmuir around 2 or 2:30, I think, so we breezed on into Chico on that waft of weather luck. It ain't a good idea, though, to take on speaking gigs in this clime at this time of year if such travel is involved; I knew that from the start, and decided to gamble on it because Bill Robbins was committed to his Feb. conference date and the Ashland guys ~~wanted~~ do their Ch'qua only from Nov. to March. But given how tough winters have been these past few years, I'm going to have to watch my weather step, where this speaking scheduling is involved.

23 Feb.--At last I have pages, 316 of them, Mtn Time in print. The page proofs alit here last Thursday, the 18th, and C and I settled in with them the next day and I worked them over on through the weekend. Seems to me a perfectly fine book, perhaps my most character-driven one yet, and now we'll see if anybody is still reading such books. With this house and our accumulated financial stake, I find that I'm laid-back about this book's prospect of success or not; whatever I do next is not hostage to this one's sales figures.

So, drawing a breath in this white space:

--The Day of the Pages, the 18th, was almost comically chockfull. We...

...sold off our 1000 shares of Applied Materials for a \$39,000 gain, in less than a year.

...took a flyer on \$6,000 of LightPath stock with some of my IRA money.

...got the vegetable garden rototilled and dirt wheelbarrowed (down makeshift ramps on the damnable rr tie steps) by Paul Drollinger and his crewman Eric Bird.

...took possession at last, at last, of the runner rug we had made (in Nepal! are we living it up or what?) for the bookcase area of the living room.

--The weather has roared on and on, considerable rain and then a high wind y'day morning. Then by supertime it had calmed and cleared enough that there was an astonishing swatch of sunset, enough leftover sunglow up onto the clouds above the southern Olympics to tint them gold and then redder than that, and to reflect down a violet shade over the front of the mountains. One more time, C and I congratulated each other on taking the leap for this place.

--Sunday we actually made our way to a movie, Sh'speare in Love playing at the newly refurbished old charmer, the theater in Edmonds. The pic was done to a T, lots of fine Stoppard touches and acting galore.

--A changing of the guard in the book biz, Walter Carr selling Elliott Bay Books to shopping mall guy Ron Sher. Sher's deeper pockets could help the store, we'll hope.



26 Feb.--Living with eagles. We saw this season's first on the 24th during our n'hood walk, the eagle working the rim of the bluff above our old house. Y'day a pair gyred above Richmond Beach park and one then swept along the bluff to us, ultimately landing in a downslope evergreen below Dave's place, I perch I will now know to watch. Today I caught a glimpse of a soarer out beyond the maple trees. Also hawk-watched, this afternoon, a sizable one attacked by crows and taking shelter in a tree down the Kastners' fenceline. And about a week ago, first noticed hummingbirds, especially one who actually perched a while in the south plum tree, and when it turned a bit, an astonishing red mirror-like flash came from its neckpatch of color.

The water has busied up, too, lots of tows. Y'day morn we watched what looked to be a busted tow, off Blue Ridge, pair of tugs holding a heaped barge in place until the smaller tug could work around get it underway on a very short towline. This afternoon, a southbound tug went past with a triple tow, a little cabined barge first in line behind it, then one stacked with squashed car bodies, trailed by a little barge stacked with two rows of peeled telephone-size logs--like a line of rubber duckies in a tub. Minutes ago one of the little old square-ended ferries went north. So, the Sound keeps on being a minute-by-minute delight to our eyes, and the past two dusks we've had a customary chink in the sky over the south Olympics and sunset light fanning through.

An unexpected bit of good business news, Kristen of Liz's office--who sounds younger than springtime, but pulled off this deal none of the previous assistants ever got on one of my books--calling to say Dove has agreed to buy exclusive abridged audio rights to Mountain Time and nonexclusive unabridged rights, 10-year license, for a \$4000 advance. This is one time I usefully cleared my throat, asking her when she first called y'day if she and

Liz thought it was okay to forfeit any chance of Books on Tape picking up the unabridged rights (Dove at that point was asking for exclusive on both rights); Liz had her hold off until BOT's intentions were checked out. And lo, Dove yielded to taking non-exclusive on the unabridged, the \$ blessedly staying the same. Well done, Kristen! said I.

26 Feb. cont.--On the rest of the book front, I've been working the phone to set up the Montana bookstore tour, and quite remarkably (things are going too well to last, I assured C) was able to work out the date I wanted in each of the 8 or 9 venues. The phone, invention of the devil that it is, has yielded nasty news at least twice today: Mary Jane divorcing Andy DiSanti, and Mark Damborg tearing 2 ligaments skiing @ Whistler. Good stuff, too, Rick Simonson returning my buck-up call about El Bay, saying I'm the only one who calls him "kid" any more.

Here at the desk I've gone back to sorting file cards, seeing how they add up in the 4 book ideas boxes, and so far the one about writing, perhaps to be called either Traveler in White Space or Shelf Life, has drawn into the lead, suggesting itself into several chapter categories y'day. Of the 3 fiction ideas, I haven't yet found the far end of a plot for The Rainbow Rope; have not put in much time on the McCarthyism novel, tentatively known as The Glass Sea, because it would be another big one and I'm shying off ~~that one~~ those for a while; the Susan Duff book, which I'm currently calling Fireflies at the Parthenon, still has its appeals. To be continued, much continued.

5 March--On the 3rd we underwent the strongest windstorm since the Inauguration Day blow of '93. Gusts to 105 mph @ Cannon Beach (and, hmmm, to 85 mph @ Arch Cape where Ann and Marsh intend their house) and supposedly topping out in the mid-50s here along the Sound, although there were some fierce swipes along here and no wind gauge to testify. Once again during this long damp winter (soggiest in about 40 years) we've been thankful to be out of 17021, hunkered as it is in the valley under those big trees.

Marks of the storm:

--lack of usual lights across the Sound on the Kitsap Peninsula when I woke up (got up; the windhowl awakened me around 2:30). The only lights that seemed to be on at Kingston were at the ferry landing.

--no ferries all morning

--joyous windsurfers, off Richmond Beach, cramming in the broadjumps their sailboards made off the big rolling waves.

5 March cont.--Other than the major punctuation by the storm, the week was chore-oriented, C gritting through the sealing, staining, and Varathaning of the small bookshelf that's to go in the downstairs hall (after I gritted through final sanding of the pieces on Monday), me setting up the Montana booktour and doing a memo to the Scribner publicist Robin Tropiano about the rest of the book season, then shopping in tandem in Ballard y'day for another (downstairs) Ekornes chair for me and sunshades for the vast living room windows. I did manage to devote y'day morning to sorting stuff--much of it from old speeches and surprisingly good--toward the possible White Space book, and should be able to do a bit more this morning. Oh, yes, also did the income taxes amid the week's welter.

11 March--Scarf of fog along the Olympics as sunrise blush just passed, @ 6:40, the snowpack still showing some pink hue. This site has turned astounding since last Saturday (the 6th), with the weather moderating: y'day I gardened, putting in strawberry plants, to the sound of sea lions barking somewhere on the sound, and then the screeches of a hawk hunting along the bluff. I am perhaps pushing the gardening season--there seems to be more frost here than there was in the valley at 17021; considerable whiteness last Sun. morn, the 7th, and a light frost again this morn--but the worst that can happen is that I'll have to re-do some planting, so I feel it's worth daring the season. In any case, out there in any available sunshine these past days, with the sounds of the planet around me, I have ~~thought~~ thought: I am a happy guy.

Most days of this past week have been big and various. Saturday the 6th, when the weather turned nice:

--Lee the House Doctor came and installed the p'back bookshelf in the downstairs hallway, completing the more than 85' feet of shelving (not including closet storage shelves) we now have engineered into this downstairs.

--I gardened, planting some early lettuce, in the early afternoon.

--Mid-afternoon, Dave Spangenberg announced he was ready to descend the bluff and rig another section of 4" corrugated flexhose onto our drain system down there.

11 March--I'd been miffed that the Jim Dandy drain-installing crew screwed up down there--I'd inserted into their bid the spec that they were to put the flexhose outlet at least 25' from the base of the bluff--but as it's turned out, the job is better and more responsibly done for Dave having rappelled down there and corrected it. He divvied the 100' coil of flexhose I provided, extending the outlet of our drain system 50' or more away from the bluff into a small stream--i.e., a natural flow course--and his own in a more southerly direction to an underground portion of probably the same stream.

Onward to Tuesday:

--First thing that morning, had an MRI on my petulant left knee. Since I'd been through that with my right knee and knew the procedure and had brought a tape of A River Runs through It to keep my mind occupied, I let myself be slid into the MRI iron lung with no qualms. Imagine my consternation, midway through the 6-minute-long 2nd stint of magnetic resonance (the other 4 stints are about 3 min. long), when along came claustrophobia. I swear it absolutely came from my body rather than my mind. I was peacably stretched there, eyes firmly closed and enjoying my reading of Norman's words, when my breathing roughened and my body wanted out of that MRI tube. Made myself do deep-breathing counting--"one-a thousand...two-a thousand..." and managed to stay just short of panic until the stint was over, when I told Cathy the operator to pull me out of there. I had her do so after each stint, and except for some quivering that showed up on one of the MRI results, made it through OK. Felt drained and shaky afterward, but luckily the day was bright and crisp and bracing as I went up the street for coffee and a bagel to fuel my distressed body.

--That afternoon I slogged through that dreaded annual gauntlet, the financial forms of my Def Ben pension plan.

Meanwhile, around us things are popping into blossom (the earliest, the pair of white-blossomed wild plum trees on the brink of the bluff, fully out now for the past few days), fishing boats and tugs have been putting past, and evenings are producing marvelous sunsets. As C and I

11 March cont.--were standing and gawking one more time at one more new view combination, I said "Will we never cease to be amazed?" We agreed that the prospect is we never will, and that's the glory of having put ourselves onto this site.

12 March--Medical news: Charlie Jung called y'day afternoon to say the MRI shows a tear in the miniscus of my left knee. We'll talk surgery schedule when I see him next Wed.

15 March--Tooth and nail yardwork going on outside the window, Paul Drollinger's guys tearing out an arc of weedy lawn on basis of sudden decision C and I made to try and plant flowers etc. there. The crew actually is here to do the downslope planting of salal, but since they brought a sod-cutting machine with them, we figured why not attack the damnable downslope lawn.

While there are moments when I'm spooked by all the projects (particularly the outside ones) still to be done, we've probably wise to fling into something like this and my spur-of-the-moment decision during the drain-laying work to have the south half of the downslope lawn skinned for a vegetable patch. The most complicated thing ahead is getting the new outside doorway cut and installed in the south room--with any luck, that should be accomplished by the 1st of April--and the rr tie emplacements and landscaping needed around that. Inside, real progress was made on Saturday when I stowed our audio tapes--we have scores of them, another trove of research that astounds me: when did I ever stop to catch my breath, back then?--and made space, also in that hallway "tech" closet, for some storage of artwork.

Speaking of Saturday, it was the second one of sailboats festooned past us. The first race of the season, on the 6th, was from Shilshole to a marker buoy right out in front of us, so we got to watch the spinnakers fluff forth as the boats made their turn around the buoy; as they returned toward Shilshole, they looked like hot-air balloons drifting ever so slowly. The race y'day went onward down the Sound from us, maybe to Whidbey or Point



15 March cont.--No Point, and the return leg of that one brought sailboats tacking directly toward us, presenting their angles to the wind until they were just offshore below our place. We had sailboats in the plum tree, their turns southwestward away from our shore passing them thru the scrim of white plum blossoms, lovely.

Last night we went to Elliott Bay bookstore and showed the flag for Walter Carr, who has showed it for us writing wretches the past couple dozen years. Walter has sold the store to what seems the least objectionable source, the Third Place owner Ron Scher, and so last night's shindig was a bon voyage to Walter.

23 March--Bound galleys of Mtn Time have arrived, after a long detour to the S&S mailroom. The "galley house," which provides these exotic items, is supposed to mail them on to agents and authors, but for whatever reason sent mine back to S&S where they of course sat unrecognized. Nan Graham's nimble assistant, Brant Rumble, tracked them down there and left a phone message saying I shouldn't feel slighted because the mailroom didn't tumble to my name, "they're good guys in the mailroom but they're easily...confused." I called back and kidded Brant--oh, sure, if it'd been Stephen King's galleys the guys wouldn't have said, "Hey, you know, I don't think Stephen King lives here at the publishing house"? Anyway the galleys look quite handsome, and y'day by phone Brant and I dealt with the last of the copy-editing niggles.

On the less winsome side of life, since the last diary entry I've scheduled arthroscopic surgery on my left knee. The notion, the hope, is to get rid of the periodic sharp pain and tame the knee at least to the dull nag that my right one has.

Here at Bull Market Acres we've been on a planting spree, have we ever, C & I putting in strawbs, heather, and periwinkle in the arc of ground cleared by the yard crew, last week; and y'day, we hurled ourselves at the front yard and planted 7 rhodies, 6 azaleas, and a dozen small heathers on the embankment leading down from the

23 March cont.--street. Today is turning nicer than predicted, so we'll try to fertilize the sluggish squad of huge old rhodies that Dave bestowed on this property when he moved them out of the way of his house rebuild, a year ago Jan.

Saturday night, Betty and Roy Mayfield came for dinner, and Tony Angell solo (the babysitter having stood them up and Lee staying home to handle the kids). A good time, good talk. Betty, who as Paul Allen's family librarian now has charge of his archival stuff all the way back to the first Microsoft days, has pretty well concluded that the best way to preserve the material on those early disks is to transfer it to paper.

On the writing front, I sat C down with me to talk over the 4 book possibilities I've been weighing, and Fireflies at the Parthenon emerges to both of us as the most interesting. Now to see how, when--if--I make the start on it.

27 March--10:45, on a chilly essence-of-March day. About an hour ago I shivered out and planted the rest of the peas and lettuce, gritting against the wind and cold for the sake of the gardening principle that nothing will grow if it isn't in the ground. (In vindication, both the lettuce and peas I put in 3 weeks ago, also in rainy chill, are nicely up.) Given the state of my left knee, which hurt so constantly a few days ago--the 25th, I think--that I had to give up and just sit for most of the day with my legs up on a footstool, I'm not walking the n'hood, did only a short outing at Shilshole y'day. Caution, rest, and a regimen of Alleve pills maybe are toning down the problem.

I greatly hope the next surgery will work well enough to take my goddamn knees off my mind. By the time I finish the recuperation and exercises, it will be at least 2 years of one knee or the other plaguing me. I've reluctantly become reconciled to the right one nagging at me, most likely for the remainder of my life--icing doesn't seem to do much for it, pills don't seem to have much affect, the artificial knee fluid doesn't seem to help; incessantly wearing an elastic brace is the only thing that tames it down--

27 March cont.--and I'd be a greatly improved being if I had to put up with only that knee. Across this next episode of patience that I barely have, we shall see.

In the world, ah the world, we're bombing the Serbs, which is inciting them to become more speedily genocidal in Kosovo.

To try to be sprightlier about life, I should try to incise into these pages, across the next days, some of the notebook entries about living in this miraculous house. This likely dates to the good weather at the start of the year, the moonlit nights. ~~For~~ I noted down, of the moon's path on the water, how discontinuous the reflection is: pools of light on the water of the Sound, peninsulas of wave pattern through them--the moonlight wanders, takes tangents. A scrim of cloud also had its effect, dimming the moonpools. One last moonlight detail: enameled dew on the deck railing.

Will pretty quick quit this for the day, go have a shower and get ready for supper (crab, that blessed favorite) and then our initial venture into our VCR, w/ the Blockbuster rental video of "Days of Heaven" that I resignedly trooped in--desert rat prospector into Vegas Casino looking for a cup of coffee--and got. But want to put down that I've been looking back at Wright Morris's work, leapfrogging through Cloak of Light and finally reading all the way through The Field of Vision, trying to figure out why his work doesn't penetrate the heart. Too laced with irony? Too photographically detailed? Wright could do great sentences, but it may be that his characters aren't approachable, his storylines not bone-defined enough. Too technique-driven, idea-driven? I am fascinated with Wright and Loren Eiseley having been neighbors and writing colleagues: Wright traveled everywhere, remembered (and used) it all, Eiseley lived in his office and his head and his commuter train--and damned if I don't keep concluding that Eiseley was the better writer.

2 April--9:30 a.m., and right now:

--the proprietorial robin is making his rounds of the downslope lawn and new area of periwinkle/heather plantings;

--chickadees are hopping and hanging in the color patch that seems to intrigue them, the forsythia-cherry tree-magnolia area along the middle of the n. fence;

--tugboats are tugging, up and down the Sound; a log boom slowly passing southward, taking a couple of hours to journey through our line of sight from Richmond Beach toward Shilshole; a triple tow of barges is centered in my middle office window, going north, its one orange-sided sawdust barge like a military ribbon on the blue chest of the Sound, the blue shoulders and white epaulets of the Olympics above;

--another tug and the Edmonds ferry just went out of sight into ~~the~~ our northern boundary of blossoms, in their maritime version of dosie-doe around each other;

--and in the south room, periodic hammersounds as Mike Guenther frames in the new door, in this blessed second day of bright day weather.

This is the first morning of the past week when I've felt like what I think I ought to feel like, able to move without being aware of pain. The left knee inexplicably had eased up when I got out of bed this morning, and while I can feel some of the knifing sensation coming back, it's not nearly as bad as it was. Who the hell can tell, what it's going to do from day to day. ~~The~~

The weather is starting to fade toward promised showers on the weekend, but y'day was so clear and blue, and we accomplished so much--the living room ~~shades~~ shades came and were scrupulously installed by Todd and Dave of Atrium ~~Shade~~ Co.; Mike Guenther and his helper Curt took out the old south room window, the concrete cutter came more or less on time and made ~~suck~~ the cut through the foundation for the new doorway, and by damn if Mike didn't have the new door and window in place by about 3 p.m.--that we felt these are gem times. These views continue to knock our socks off. Full moon coursing over like the brightest balloon ever. The other morn, a thick hawser of clouds over the middle of the Sound,

2 April cont.—dawnlit on top, brocaded in peach and pink. We are doing nicely.



19 April--@ Dungeness, where we've had anniversary #34. Hiked on the Spit 3 times--good weather the first two, some wind but not bad y'day--and will wait out the sprinkly weather a little bit this morn before we go to the bluff above the sand route and gauge the day. Another fine stay here in the back cabin, where hawks hunt and hunt in the 5-acre field Sheila keeps unmowed. Birding has been good, an eagle family of 4 @ the channel signal pilings a mile or so out along the Spit y'day; also oystercatchers and eared grebes, this trip. Our celebration dinner on the 17th was our favorite eating venue over here, the bar at the Bushwhacker in Pt. Angeles--slablike prime rib dip sandwiches w/ potato salad, and Pyramid Hefeweizen. Y'day afternoon, a welcome get-together w/ Linda Bierds & Sydney Kaplan in Pt. Townsend, where Linda read in the little jewel-box theater, the Rose, for Nat'l Poetry Month. Linda's colleague in poetry and teaching, Rick Kenney, was there, and we went to up to Rick's new old Pt. T house afterward--charming as all get out, with a great amount of fixing up yet to be done: Port Townsend to the essence--then the 4 of us went to Ft. Worden and did a small hike from the boat landing to the lighthouse. Linda and Syd then took us to supper for our anniversary, and we gave them cards celebrating (a) their purchase of the acreage around their place from Ralph Munro and (b) Linda's soon-to-be birthday. Gave her a galley of Mtn Time as a wee gift. Her new poems @ the reading were as mighty as ever--"The Magic Mountain" was snapped up by Alice Quinn at The New Yorker, and "Mercator" is also very strong. So we gossiped, laughed, leaned back and enjoyed the bull ~~xxx xxx xxxxxx~~ market together...

23 April--Ol' diary lay down in the ditch and died, 'bout. Except for the brief recovery @ Dungeness, the coma of these pages the past 3 weeks has missed mention of:

--further transformation of the south side of the house.

Paul Drollinger's crew, on the weekend of the 10th & 11th, installed the rr-tie retaining wall needed around the new outside door there, and across the path along the s. property line. Invaluable help from Paul's carpenter buddy Brad, who impressed me enough that I promptly hired him to do the workbench for the s. room. The unevenly placed wide steps down through the retainers to the lower yard are now killed off, a ramp of 5/8" crushed rock barrowed and shoveled into place by Paul, Eric and helper Dave. My knees like it immensely better. While the yard guys were here we also had some transplanting done, 3 quince (1 of which looks as if it won't pull through the move) and a new forsythia seried into the quince-forsythia blaze of color we've had along that south line. More, more!

--We were visited by C's cousin Barbara Harper the 8th thru the 12th. Back from Ethiopia but probably trending toward returning there for one more year before taking up her new retirement home in Florida, Barbara was both a generally quiet presence (she disappeared into reading The Sea Runners with the life of the house going on around her, our distractions nothing compared to Uduk village life she's long been in) and a reminder to us of the dimensions of the world.

--I spent much of the week of the 5th carpentering new shelves into the s. room's wacky trapezoidal closet (it tapers from 38" @ the north end to 6" @ the south), determined to munge through that task myself rather than have, say, Lee Holden in there finessing it for a week at \$35/hour. My result ain't perfect, but it's pretty good. In that room, we're still sleuthing the leak from the master bathroom's shower into the middle of the downstairs room's ceiling; Lee H., troubleshooting it for us @ \$100, figured he had it solved with the caulking he did along n. seams of the shower stall and around the drain. When the leak recurred as usual after our showers, C and I further caulked the bejesus out of the door-side seams of the stall, and now we'll see.

23 April cont.--In the trench warfare with my knees and other protesting parts, y'day I spent  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hrs @ Gp Health on Capitol Hill in pre-op exam, anesthesia runthru, and phys therapy advice from Barb Berry. Tuesday I was up there to have the dermatologist, Dr. Stephen Green, look at the blotches on my nose. One's stretched blood vessels i.e. age, and the other a karectosis, which he hit w/ liquid nitrogen, and I now have an astounding scab on the bridge of my nose.

--Social scene: while Barbara was here, we took Peter Atwood, longtime book biz neighbor from down the street, along when we went to supper @ the Provinces, and Mark and Lou Damborg came for supper on Sunday the 11th, a fine graceful evening for Barbara (and us!) with those convivial friends. Last night, Cinerama rediviva! Paul Allen bought and refurbished the old Cinerama theater on 4th, his people evidently dragged out the cruise ship list for invites, and so there we were in the balcony w/ Betty & Roy Mayfield, watching "Entrapment," a quite nifty Topkapi-like caper film w/ Sean Connery.

--And on one more front: this week I got a crewcut, my first buzz job in, oh, 30 or so years. My hair--thin, lanky, standing up everywhere after a night's sleep or when I put a hat on--was becoming a nuisance beyond what it's worth.

Now we have beautiful weather, today and tomorrow if the forecast holds. Onward and outward.

26 April--By god, victory! On Saturday the mail brought a "no change" letter from the IRS, meaning we have survived the audit that began in mid-December. Of the IRS's two challenges to our '95-6-7 tax returns, one was ludicrous--an IRS computer or minion misreading Seattle U's 1099 form for my \$2,000 speech as \$29,000, i.e. the inky comma construed as a 9--and I think downright embarrassing to the auditor, Ev Stone, who let us off the hook for the one error she did find in the going-over she gave our returns. (I'd been taking our real estate tax as an itemized deduction without thinking to subtract the portion of it in my home office expenses.) The other IRS challenge, though, was aimed at one of our financial guts, my Defined Benefit Pension Plan. It took me a

26 April cont.--couple of days to assemble my documentation, even though there wasn't anything behind the IRS challenge except my pension plan contribution burgeoning with my income. The firewall I've been paying for all these years--the actuary Jack Kaleas, and the Davis Wright law firm's schlepping of my specially written "manuscript" plan" through past IRS hoops--finally paid off.

Freed of the IRS, I spent y'day looking over our finances and planning some money moves, which I'm not likely to be in a mood for after my knee surgery on Thurs.

The weather held nice, yea verily perfect, Friday and Saturday. Dave and Dale came over for a drink on our deck Fri. eve, already some cheerful beer in them in evident celebration of getting stuff out of their garage and into their newly built shed. Sat. end of afternoon John and Jean came for drinks-on-the-deck, of which, if we live right, there are a lot in our future.

And meanwhile Carol has glorified the south room with a paint job. I looked in there a bit ago when there was some sunshine and it has a fine, warm tone to it now. Progress, sundry kinds.

28 April, 10 a.m.--Arnie Vogel's carpet-laying team, Ed and Scott, are putting down the new carpet in the south room, whistling through the job. The transformation of that room is clicking along, w/ carpenter Brad Hembree's plumber buddy Steve Taylor to come by @ 2 today and tell us if a sink is feasible in there.

And tomorrow is surgery. Weirdly enough, I seem to be more apprehensive this time--or at least apprehensive in new frets: stairs to contend with this time, and the left knee still snarky--even though I now know what the medical routines will be like. Am spending today stockpiling books, Walkman and audio tapes, and portable typewriter upstairs. Ultimately, crutch rehearsal.

While my knees are giving me fits, the book biz perks along: Salt Lake City book festival asks me to do keynote talk or reading, I'm citing them \$4500 fee I've had from Idaho Humanities Council, and just now Portland State wants me for Alumni Day talk, am quoting back to them the \$7500 they mentioned to me last year before they

28 April cont.--decided to choose a screenwriter instead, having had Hegi and Guterson the previous years. Thus far, although I'm not much looking forward to this booktour, there's a potential \$15,000 total in these speaking gigs.

So, that's the status as I head for 'scope #2: the house, the biz, all prospering, and I'll try again to get my own underpinnings less painful.

3 May--The knee report: had the 'scope 7:30 the morn of the 29th and was off crutches by the end of the second day after. No real pain, some discomfort (the body letting me know something has happened in that precinct) in the outside of the knee and the inside lower of the three incisions where Charlie Jung inserted his arthroscopic equipment, and miraculous flexibility; can bend the knee back, in the phys therapy exercises, as far as ever and its straight-out extension seems fine, too. So far, this knee feels cleaner in there than the right knee did afterward. I can't discern any semblance of the intermedial pain or the top-of-the-kneecap twinges that the knee was having. Have been exercising scrupulously 3 times a day, and am thinking I may try the exercycle on Thursday or Friday, the minimum week after surgery that Charlie J. suggested. Also, blessedly, the malingering right knee has felt better during my enforced sitting around with both legs up, giving me some hope I can maybe baby it better than I'd been doing. And I'm sleeping better, no longer waking up every hour or two and having to shift 2 snarky knees away from each other.

Surgery notes: it helped immensely to be first on the list instead of late-morning as I was with the other knee--we signed in at 6 and were home a little after noon.

--Anesthesiologist, a big-black-bearded doctor named Bob, was better this time. Even though he gave me the spinal in the operating room instead of the pre-op holding pen, it wore off sooner and I was able to pee and go home much sooner. He said my blood pressure was remarkably steady during the operation--"boring. Boring is good."



3 May cont.--This time I chose to ask for some tranquilizer in the intravenous feed, and it seemed to mellow me down nicely. I again watched the whole operation on the monitor, Charlie J. providing a running commenatary as he worked. This time the miniscus cartilage was torn at both edges, Charlie trimming off the frayed tendrils he calls "chicken feathers." The outside of the miniscus looked pretty good to him, and despite some roughness of the bones in there he thinks I have quite a lot of mileage left on that knee.

--The operating room procedure: a low blue barrier sheet is put up so I can't see the leg (and of course the gore) as it's operated on. Conversation rattles on, not necessarily medical: Charlie at some point said he had actually voted for a Republican before he got in with this Group Health bunch, and I pointed out to him he'd had a chance to vote Socialist back there in Burlington, VT. He was careful to give me a tour of the inside of the knee with his 'scope, and again he was first-rate in pre-op and post-op, going out to the waiting room to report to Carol.

--Despite having gone through arthroscopy before, I was not in a great mood on the drive down to Gp H, apprehensive about how I was going to get along on the still-troublesome right knee during recuperation of this one, etc. I settled down (although my blood pressure was up; 141/80, which went back down to its usual 110-120/80 in post-op) pretty well in pre-op, on the basis that I was first on the list and it would be over before long. This time the holding-pen nursing crew was so-so, while the recovery area nurses were terrific--exact reverse of last time, and the way I prefer to have it.

Since the operation I've spent a lot of time in my invaluable Ekorness recliner in the living room, feet up, reading (LeCarre's "Single & Single" from Nan Graham, and quite a lot of Max Frankel's autobiog) and watching the weather and the Sound traffic. It's turned chilly and showery, actual rain sometime the past couple of nights. Even so C has sneaked in some marathon gardening stints. The springtime of this property knocks us out: now it's lilacs, their dark purple clusters transforming to lavender. We must have 8 or 10 lilacs, garnishing this place beautifully.

11 May--These famines in the diary evidently indicate the time and energy that goes into recuperating a knee. Anyway, by now the left knee is flexible, if still achy in some of its perimeters, and ahead lies increased exercycling (I began it on the 6th, one week after surgery) and walking.

Story of the day: during this morn's knee checkup, I asked Charlie Jung if Embrel might help the cranky right knee, Charlie said no, it's for rheumatoid arthritis, not the bone stuff I've got. But Immunex is a hot company, he added, and would be a good buy because of Embrel etc. Already did it, I said, and we laughed. Got home, phone message from Steve Charlston @ Piper Jaffray saying by the way, Merrill Lynch and Donaldson Lufkin Jenrette decided to start covering Immunex and recommending it, and it went up 34 points today (107 to 141). Our 500 shares, we bought at 11.

Also on the knee front: the band of hot-pink irritation an inch+ above and below the bottom pair of 'scope incisions perturbed me enough on Friday to call Charlie J., and when he got out of surgery late in the afternoon he called and offered to take a look at it. It was 3:15 on a Friday, I told him I'd hate to be crying wolf. He said if it's pink, I'm probably not crying wolf. I'll be there at 4, I said. Good thing I did, as it was erysipelas, requiring a 10-day blitzkrieg of antibiotics.

Will try catch up in these pages somewhat tomorrow; for now, to note that C and I went out to the veg garden first thing this morning, thinned the lettuce and planted another row of arugula, on basis of storm forecast. By 11 it indeed was raining heavily. Soupy now.

13 May--Y'day was monumentally logey, and by mid-morn I simply gave up ~~bat~~ and let my body have the day off. Stirred myself a little in the afternoon, going out to buy an early anniversary card for Ann and Marshall Nelson before their Taos trip and walking the Sh'line track (4 rounds=1 mile, my best since the knee operation), and slogging through notifications to Piper and mutual funds of my pension plan changeover. Supper @ the Provinces w/ Ann and Marsh, highly restorative.

13 May cont.--Before long I am going to have to commit to the next book, and it still looks as if it'll be Fireflies at the Parthenon. Had some flutters about it at the start of this week, what kind of ending to aim such a book toward, but talked over possible scenarios w/ C and brought myself around to using the voices of the three main characters somewhere in the book. So I think I can go ahead, whenever I can get these knees and other barriers to a writing schedule (the booktour! the book-tour!) ameliorated. I could sure as hell spend full-time being non-productive: y'day turned down Fairbanks Arts Association's request to send me to Pt. Barrow, Bethel, etc. this fall, and today I'll turn down Diana Josephy Peavy's request that I officiate at the sheep drive through Ketchum.

On the home front, I have wanted to put down here how wonderfully this property is flooded with flowers. The two plum trees on the brink of the bank were the first to blossom, I think in early March; forsythia and quince next, lasting several weeks; the magnolia, the pear trees, and the apple trees, in that order; the past week or two, lilacs, which are ravishingly spotted around the north and west sides, and what C and I think is the prettiest single item on the property, a pink dogwood in the NE corner of the front yard. Unusually for a Northwest gardened place, this one has no mother lode of rhododendrons--a few pale gawky ones in the back yard that likely get too much sun, and only one big thriving one on the north side of the front yard, then the struggling old transplants between us and Spangenberg's; but the north side rockery, somewhat shaded, looks like a spot where we can concentrate some rhodies, and the small ones we've put out on the front embankment and near the front door look promising. C has slaved on weeds, horsetail, etc. the past couple of weeks and has mightily improved the planted areas. Anyway, it has been a splendid season, this first spring here--we've been knocked out daily by the strategic freshets of color planted by the original owners, the Slopers.

18 May--Onward, I reckon, to Fireflies. Have just done a cover letter to Liz about the book proposal, and after C gets back from Aurora Ave. chores and casts an eye over it, will Express Mail it. Am feeling better about doing that book--any book--now that the decks are somewhat cleared around ~~xxx~~ here, finances decided upon, the knee doing okay...

The knee is not quite 3 weeks beyond its 'scope, and its condition is:

--slight twinge, but not enough to hold my attention all the time, from stairs and walking. Did  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mi. at the Shoreline track y'day; still not ready for lengthy up-and-down.

--some latent soreness on inside of knee where that side of the surgery was done if I press my thumb on it just right; normally it doesn't make itself known now of its own accord.

--the lima-bean-sized knot around the upper incision, which is going down as I massage it dutifully, but is slow to go.

--the surprising lingering ache in ~~xxx~~ thigh muscle, from the knee to quite high along outside of thigh; evidently still the bruised muscle from the operating table clamp.

--the erysipilis is scarecely seeable; took my last pill this morn, of the 10 days' antibiotic.

What else. Weather is still chilly and rainy; I have a pair of towering tomato plants on the windowsill of the TV room I can't put outside, yet. On Saturday the carpenter Brad Hembree installed the basics--set of drawers and shelves--for the work counter in the south room. I spent much of the weekend wallowing through financial strategies(?) for my pension plan, which as of the 15th is a Profit Sharing Plan, rolled over from the Defined Benefit Plan which served so well: \$817,000 accumulated in 13 years.

26 May--So much for the book title Fireflies at the Parthenon. Liz ~~Joim~~ liked the book proposal okay, but really did not want to present it with that title, which she thinks is confusing, children's-booky. Advice like that is what I pay her for, so after a little brainstorming by C and me we came up with Prairie Nocturne. Now to see what Nan and Susan think of any of it.

Back there in Scribneria, the latest turn is that the ideal senior publicist assigned to Mtn Time, Robin Tropiano, decided at the last minute not to come back from maternity leave, alas and alack. Her fill-in, Martin Barabas, is staying on for awhile, but he's busy handling the tours for Annie Proulx and the Olmstead biographer, and so, in what is getting ~~lax~~ as unnervingly intricate as a double reverse in football, he's handed me off to another part-timer--maybe a part-part-timer, since she seems to work at home--Sarah Moser. She's been out of town on a family matter the first 2 days of this week; I left her a phone message this morn at 10:30 NY time, and now to see how this plays out. Neither Martin nor Sarah knew of the ground rules Robin and I had established, way back, that we'd mutually sort through the regional bookstore requests, and so now they're probably going to have to unpromise me to Sequim, Olympia, etc. Preparatory to talking to Sarah, I started this morning by doing a count of stores/appearances that are already intended, and it's 30.

The knees, the knees: the past week wasn't as encouraging on the left one as I'd like. Went shopping w/ C for Rhod'ns and azaleas @ Home Depot and Eagle, and the concrete floors there raised such hell in the knee that I took things very easy the next few days. The most disheartening--I desperately hope it's a matter of healing going on, in there where Charlie trimmed the miniscus and perforated it a little to encourage scarring-over--is some stress in the inner side of the knee, akin to the nagging that has never gone away in the right one. The incision bump, going down some under dutiful massaging, is still sizable and evidently deep. So, I will keep up the exercises, and increase



26 May cont.--the time spent pedaling the exercise bike (15 min. now), and see how the knee feels ~~my~~ when I see Charlie Jung on June 21.

We had a glorious 3-day set of weather, the 21st-23rd, and spent a lot of time outside and evenings on the deck. George and Karen Baker came up from Steilacoom for supper on the 22nd, Karen now a senior editor at the News Tribune.

7 June--What may be a seismic shift in my so-called career, last Friday, the 4th, when Liz called w/ news that Nan Graham offered only \$200,000--i.e., a \$60,000 cut from the advances I've had--for the Prairie Nocturne idea. Nan cites the 34,000 sales of Bucking the Sun, the "unearned" sum there in the royalty statements... while in my phone call back to Liz this morning I cited the points that I had about killed myself writing that book for them and then hand-sold it for them for 2½ months, plus the rebuttal to Nan's mentioning that it's also sold "only" 34,000 in paperback that they've managed to sell only half as many copies of RFair annually as HarperCollins did on automatic pilot... Anyway, out of this ~~is~~ is to come a 3-way call later this week when Nan has assembled some answers to my concerns abt Mtn Time. And Liz has agreed to my point that I want to wait until after Mtn Time's season in the stores before dealing w/Scribner on a book proposal again. Over the weekend, I came up w/ a South Fork school idea which I think would be greatly easier to write than Prairie Nocturne and which I could present to them this fall; the next complication is likely to be that Scribner prefers the Prairie Nocturne idea but won't appreciably budge on its offer... In which case, I'm currently in favor of walking away from them. To be continued, mucho.

Later: Liz called back, she and Nan and I are to have a 3-way conversation later this week after Nan gathers some answers to my qns on what's being done or not for Mtn Time.

Otherwise, in this limping diary: C put together

7 June cont.--a Memorial Day gathering here, in the face of turning weather. She, Linda Sullivan, and Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist gathered at Linda's on 60th and walked down and around Green Lake. Later, here, Eric and Jan Nalder came, and bless them, Mark and Lou Damborg re-inviting themselves when they got back from the San Juans unexpectedly early; Ann and Marshall Nelson came briefly at mid-afternoon. A good bunch: ~~xxxxxx~~ C and I lending Ann McC an ear about the last days of her father, and Eric, that virtuoso of investigation, got Mark to talking about the power grid.

No walking for me, as the knee's medical history goes on: I was trying to take it easy and bring the knee's aggravation under control w/ pills Charlie Jung prescribed when he called me in on May 27 for him to look at the nagging knee. \*The Naproxen pills didn't do any good, and the sterner stuff, ~~the~~ a narcotic, seemed to help a little. The knee distress remained bad enough, though, that I called Charlie again, I think on Wed. the 2nd, and he prescribed an anti-inflammatory (indomethacin) and a non-narcotic pain pill (aceta-hydrocod). Began taking them that supertime, and determinedly did as little as possible on the knee, spending most of the time propped up in my living room chair, the 3rd, 4th, and most of the 5th...by y'day, the 6th, the knee was measurably better. Today, it's bothering some by now--3:30--after most of a morning at the desk and about an hour of desk-sitting this afternoon; will now exercise it and ice it. (I have been getting through the nights, which were the problem I ~~primarily~~ primarily called Charlie about, by icing @ bedtime.)

15 June--This afternoon there's supposed to be a conference call w/ Liz & Nan to hash out Mtn Time promo and, at least from my point of view, call a timeout on negotiations on the next book until this fall. None of this is pretty, nor where I nor evidently Liz expected we'd be (or I would sure as hell not put in the book proposal at this point). But it will buy me some time to make up my mind on a writing schedule to pursue from here on...

On the household side, Sat. morn we got the plumbing

\* nor did Sulindac, Charlie's  
next step up from Napxn  
\*\*acetamin oxyco

15 June cont.--done in the revamped "garden room" @ the sound end of the house, by plumber Steve Taylor. When Brad the carpenter redoes the tool pegboard in clear fir and 1/8" pegholes, we'll lack only a lighting scheme there. Outside, it turns out that we are a bit beset by not having hurriedly installed a watering system. C is doing truly heroic work by handling the front area and the north and south sides of the house, while I'm finally able to pitch in a bit on the veg garden and the rest of the downhill terrace here. We're both knocked for a loop though, by the jungle downslope from the hedge to the edge of the bluff; not sure we can even maintain the new little dogwoods we planted to help stabilize the bluff edge. We know we've got to choose our targets, on this glorious but complicated property.

17 June--The roar of the weedwhip is in the background, Eric Bird slicing away at the downslope jungle I cited. And this morning has been the pocketa-pocketa of the desk, me chugging away at correspondence, booktour details, stuff that makes me wonder if, when, and how I'm ever going to get anything written. I did tinker some y'day with the S. Fork schoolkids idea, and will try to get gack to it this afternoon (if the guy who's to put lock-screens over the gutters doesn't sop up the time).

On the 15th I did indeed have a conference call with Nan Graham and Liz Darhansoff, Nan simultaneously telling me how much she likes the Praire Nocturne book idea and why (because of Bucking the Sun's unearned total) she can't offer more than \$200,000, Liz and I simply saying we want to talk about it again in the fall. We traipsed through what-can-we-do-for-Mtn Time, and that's that, until I look at the situation again in Oct. It is confounding to be a cultural icon one day, a la the SF Chronicle poll that presents me, by way of Sky, as the premier living writer in the West, and the next, to be futilely arguing that I don't deserve a \$60,000 pay cut. Stegner and Wright Morris no doubt went through their own versions of this, but I find no guidance in that.

23 June--A spate of rainy weather, which brought relief from dragging hoses hither and yon on this complicated little principality of 17277. Carol had been doing so much of the watering, during my knee recuperation, that I thought we'd better investigate a sprinkler system. Glenn Barrett's \$4300 estimate y'day included trenching, trenching, trenching, and the next estimator, due any minute, is likely to have the same digging scenario. With the lawn nurtured into good shape and our spring plantings of rhodies and azaleas prospering, we may blanch away from a fully installed system to something we jury-rig ourselves.

As to the knee, Charlie Jung's final estimation on the 21st was that it now is what it is, likely a touch of arthritis in there where it's still a little awry (about 1 on a scale of 10, when it pains at all) but otherwise I should try to use it. I asked, and he said I'd be doing it no harm, if activity ~~xxx~~ makes it pang some. So I'll try to feel my way, maybe with some walking yet today. And on another of my questions, Charlie told me it's not a good idea to wear elastic braces on the knees when I'm sitting at the desk (or, say, in the car) because they constrict the vascular system at the back of the knee; so, in a sense that frees me from a lot of messing with the braces and simply directs me to shift the knees, prop them, etc. (fidget, the phys therapist Barb Berry advised me).

We've been social creatures: a dinner party at David and Kate Laskin's last Saturday, and a fine French succession of dishes last night at Peter and Margaret Atwood's, newly back as they are from the Dardogne.

On the house front, the Edmonds Gutter guys on the 17th screened over the entire set of raingutters, so that we'll have a chance of keeping the drainage system unclogged, and y'day Brad Hembree installed the clear-fir pegboard in the renovated south room, the final pretty touch there.

Here at the desk, I spent y'day and this morn testing the opening voice (of Susan Duff) for the possible S. Fork book. Still mulling, there.

24 June--An honest rain, from about midnight until after breakfast--drilling down onto the deck, gurgling in the drainpipes. C and I laughed to each other at our regard for genuine rainfall of this sort, as compared to the drifty, misty kind ~~of~~ that came earlier in the week.

I continued to sort and think toward The Whistling Season book today, which is feeling a bit more comfortable the more I tinker toward it.

As to the knee, I did a mile on the Shoreline track this morn, up from  $\frac{1}{2}$  mi. y'day. (Today I wore Ace braces on both knees while walking, and for the first time wore the New Balance shoes I just bought; both seemed to help. Also went down to the ledge brinking onto the bluff a while at the start of this afternoon, pulling a few weeds in the iffy salal plantation and generally inspecting. A few knee twinges by this time of day (3:30), but not bad.

28 June--A very fine 60th birthday y'day. C's gift to me was a flat little package which I said felt like a CD but as far as I knew we had no CD player...thereupon, the big box she'd managed to sneak into the hall closet, a Panasonic AKL7 CD/radio/tape stereo set. It seems terrific, just the music source we've wanted to add to our lives.

And last night, b'day dinner at the Damborgs, and the surprise there, Linda and Sydney emerging from either side of the hallway. A magnificent evening.

Besides all that, a pre-b'day dinner at the Rodens the night of the 26th.

So, I have had a kind of birthday festival, and maybe in some lingering of the mood I haven't done much this morning except read (just now finished the title story of "Ship Fever"). It has been gently raining since we woke up, sparing us from watering the property for another 3 days or so. This afternoon I'll do some walking, and maybe not a helluva lot else.



29 June--Walked the neighborhood! For the first time since probably mid-April, went the full  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mi. loop w/ Carol this morning, the knees taking it okay.

Spent the morning before that thinking toward the Whistling Season plot.

30 June--A milestone day, this, when we can no longer say (as we so often have), "A year ago we didn't know this place existed." We're going to treat this blessed day when we first laid eyes on this house and began marshalling our purchase money as the anniversary of the house--celebratory dinner tonight at The Provinces.

We continue to have La Nina weather, cloudy, sprinkly. Sitting on the sofa after supper last night, watching the peaks of the Olympics saw up through lids of cloud, we minded the gray-streaked weather not at all. The thrust living room brings in views of one thing or another--y'day was a parade of van ships--and we were sitting there in utter comfort where the sun could have been blazing in on us. And the plantings on the property continue to delight us, as they have since March when the ghost-white plum trees in full blossom were there in the night against the Sound. The featured tree at the moment is the graceful one in the middle of the front lawn, with sleeves of white blossoms under every branch. It practically thrums with bees (who make nearly drunken rounds in the front yards, from there to ~~the~~ ratcheting up and down on the lanky sage blossoms to tumbling into the poppies), and shedding the white flower petals into a circlet <sup>under</sup> it, it stands there looking magically bridal.

On the desk front, I'm plugging away at Whistling Season ideas, today going to ransack the letters files I have from people who grew up on homesteads and went to one-room schools. The mother lode--diligence of research--is maybe going to pay off again. Oh yes, and y'day I had an entirely social call from my agent, Liz phoning from Maine purely to say, "My desk calendar for Sunday said, 'Ivan is 60!'"

7 July--Been paying the price of a pleasant long weekend of the Fourth, having to scoop a couple of pounds of mail off the coffee table to begin the day. Before getting back to that plaint, the good news is:

--Mtn Time arrived on Friday, the cover and blue dust-jacket looking very handsome. It's really a very pretty book, inside and out.

In the weird world of the book biz, this is one of those ready-or-not days. Supposedly, Nan and the other Scribnerians meet today to decide marketing plans etc. for Mtn Time. I'll need to be ready to respond to that, when she calls (which is often a day or so late). And @ 5:30 I meet Dave Nelson, sales director at Harcourt, for a drink at the Alexis and to pass the word to Dan Farley, the Harcourt publisher, that I'm not signed to Scribner (yet) for the next book.

Meanwhile the promo schedule keeps building, Martin Barabas of Scribner publicity calling y'day w/ PNBA b'fast slot, today w/ Microsoft On-Line chat, and meantime in the mail had come NW Bookfest invit'n. I head into all this with a mood that's not really dispirited but not very spirited either, the early signs (PW ~~interview~~ review and Scribner print run) being that this book will truck along to about the same sales level as my others, with the risk this time that it may fall between my core readerships because of its Seattle/Montana split plot and its contemporary tone. I'll move what minor mountains I can, but miracles aren't buzzing along the horizon yet.

Which doesn't lessen the perplexity of how to find a way of life, writing schedule, and publishing contract conducive to one another. A year when a book comes out is always hectic enough to jangle me, particularly the part of me full of hair-trigger alarms which say "Jesus Christ, I'm not getting any writing done, while I'm working my tail off for a book that's already out of my everyday life," and Scribner's \$60,000 downgrade of my writing worth doesn't help inspire good-soldiering. I'm also not very far<sup>from</sup> getting into the situation--giving the continuing career of life, requests, and house projects--where I'm not going to have a Whistling Season synopsis/sample ready by the time Liz and I should tackle the contract impasse again this fall.

13 July--Perfect weather so far (2 p.m.) today, in the pleasant 70s, the air good. This morning I finished jackknifing old caulk out of the living room window frame and caulking anew; still some work to do around the window glass, but at least those enormous frames are done.

Warmer weather is supposed to be on the way, likely into the 80's for Sat. night when Tom and Carrie Jones are coming for dinner for the first time in this house, natch.

Carol and I are enjoying the place fantastically. Sitting on the deck, looking out over the blue palette of water and mountains, we're never tired of it.

On the social side, Sat. night we went next door for a drink w/ Dale's cousin Carter, a writer for Disney video, who yearned to talk to me about bookwriting, and Sun. morn we walked the Arboretum w/ David Williams and Marjorie.

On the book front, Nan's phone call after the Scribner marketing meeting had some surprisingly good news: Borders "aggressive" on behalf of the book, Barnes & Noble ordering 6200 and Scribner buying it a 2-week spot on the B&N "featured" table, sales rep Michael Carley's 2400 orders by stores in this area, and Ingrams already reordering 800. Blockbusterdom still nowhere in sight, but at least some stuff is happening. Along the promo line, I just got off the phone with the fact checker(!) at Metropolitan Living magazine here in town, going over quotes in a piece which I'm told describes me as "resolutely analog in a digital world." I granted that was fair, but took the chance later in correcting the "trap of poetry in every sentence" line I'd given the interviewer, Andrew Ingleson, to say "Maybe Andrew thinks I don't use the computer enough, but Andrew doesn't even use a goddamn tape recorder." (He indeed uses a school composition notebook, writing something down only occasionally!) Anyway, if my "vintage Royal typewriter" is going to become the lead factoid of every interviewer who wanders in here, I'd maybe better ~~think~~ think about clearing the typewriter out of sight before letting 'em in.

26 July--The last week of July, and then the bookstore season will be truly upon us.

It's been pleasant lately, however, the days cool and the clouds over the Olympics ever dramatic--last evening there were backlit clouds climbing out of the valleys behind the easternmost ridgelines, outlining those mountains in golden ruffs--and the ship traffic always intriguing. (Since my last entry, we've seen the immense Maersk van ship, said to be the world's largest, steam out, and on an evening with the wind stiff from the north we watched a troubled tow creep along the shore and warp its pair of barges into shelter at Richmond Beach.) Up there on our deck, taking it all in, we constantly congratulate ourselves on putting up our money and buying this place.

Right now C is enameling the outside window sills, last touch in our caulking and painting of the trio of living room windows. It all looks spruce up there, and more to the point, tight and momentarily weatherproof. Last Thursday I finished the caulking of the windows at last, at last, and went on to the south side of the house and the fascia along the bottom of the deck while C started painting. Friday, I scraped and patched and she painted the entire length of the fascia, which must be something like 65 feet.

Blessedly, we were going to the Angells' for Copper River salmon that night, and the four of us had a fine time, catching up on conversation. The afternoon before, C and I went over to Margaret Svec's, taking her a Mtn Time and having a luscious piece of the sour cherry pie she makes annually from a favorite ~~xx~~ old tree of Pat's. At 86, Margaret is feeling the body's toll--she says it's a lot harder than being 85. C remarked on the way home that Margaret is maybe the most remarkable person she's ever known, given how she stays tuned in to the world, has managed friendships with all generations, and for that matter, split herself between her two households, a long married life with Jerry and the shared life with Pat.

Here on the home front, the main event recently was C's birthday on Saturday. We marked it with our

26 July cont.--now-weekly trip to the Edmonds farmers' market, then went to the U Book Store to buy CDs for our new sound system--the \$100+ we merrily blew there was C's b'day gift--and onward to lunch in the bar @ Ivar's Salmon House. It was a chilly day, making us speculate whether it was the coldest birthday of her life, but we had a fine time being out in the world, and the day was capped by Bob Spangler's delivery of our triangular hallway table. That part of the house, the entry from the garage and doorway to our bedroom, is now spectacularly classy, with two Tony Angell prints and the bench and now the table built of matching Oregon walnut. C said, that evening, we are surrounding ourselves with beautiful things, and isn't that great?

About this house and the continuing wonder of living here: One of the thoughts I've managed to put together is our enhanced sense of the web of life up here on this bluff, on our splendid prospect. The birds, the weather, the tides and tones of the water, the mountains; even the traceries of routes, as we watch floatplanes, Victoria Clippers, ferries, and van ships go their accustomed schedules. In Cather's *My Antonia* I came across this, which I think now applies to us: "That is happiness: to be dissolved into something complete and great."

29 July--Y'day afternoon went this way:

--12:50, left for the U District, allowing plenty of time before interview appointment @ KUOW. Sure enough, freeway clotted up just south of Northgate, and I bailed out @ 85th; then, in UW underground garage, circled unsuccessfully in the portion under Kane Hall, before giving up and parking near the entry ramp, farthest possible from where I was going on campus.

--reviewed my interview notes a few minutes in the library, then went to KUOW, as ever in 325 Comctns, where Doug Patterson set me up in a studio and then went to his control booth to engineer the hookup w/ Lenny Holliman @ KEMC in Billings. The rigamarole involved: I could hear Lenny, by crackly phone, in my earphones; my responses to her questions were then recorded by Doug, but Lenny's voice is not recorded;



29 July cont.--he then FedExes that tape to Lenny, who edits her questions and my answers together into a show which sounds as if the two of us are in the same studio. Just to spice things up, Lenny called earlier to tell me all the phone lines @ KEMC but one were down, offering me the chance to reschedule (I decided to chance it, given other U District chores I had in mind); and of course it was "job shadow" day there in Billings, so Lenny had a teacher named Janet sitting in the studio with her, trekking through the phone-fraught day. The interview actually went fine, w/ Lenny concentrating on my creation of characters.

--3:10, @ U Book Store, signing up stock of Mtn Time and some p'backs, Kim Ricketts opening the books for me and Mark Mauser slapping the "autographed" stickers on. When I asked if there were any hot sellers currently they said the Harry Potter books, period. I told Mark he had the same look on his face when he said "Harry Potter" that Lee Soper used to get when uttering "Jonathon Livingston Seagull."

--Then to Bartells, to buy glucosamine sulphate tablets to try for my knees;

--Then down the Ave to a photocopy shop to get copies of the Scribner "news release" about Mtn Time publication;

--North toward home, Eagle Hardware on the way, to pick up a couple of doorstops we need to install, given how much we're coaxing breezes into this house during this warmest weather.

--@ home, C told me there was a short sweet phone message I should hear. It was Liz: "Ivan Doig, you devil! You dedicated your book to me!"

And scenes from the Sound, the past few days. A tugboat tug-of-war, the newish-looking Jeffrey Foss at one end of a cable, right out here off our deck, and a more veteran Foss tug at the other, evidently testing the pulling power of the Jeffrey. Also, the trio-on-a-string we call the Gypsy Tow--probably Alaskan in origin, which usually has one barge of scrap metal, often flattened car bodies, and one of logs, and a final rusty hulk of a barge with a couple of cabins on it. It went south, in full work-stained trudge on Tuesday, then passed back north on Wed. with the scrap metal gone but still dragging its load of wood.

3 Aug.--Thunderstorms the past couple of hours, and even a genuine lightning display to the south when they started, about 2, 2:30. I went out on our deck, under the roofed-over portion, to enjoy the experience of looking out into the storm. Dave, next door, came out on his patio, similarly ~~him~~ spectating, and called over, Hey, I just read a great book. Oh? I say. This House of Sky, he says.

Along those lines, Sunday was good news; a good, quite excerptable, and even perceptive review of Mtn Time by Tim McMulty in the Seattle Times. ~~Always nice~~ Always nice not to get chewed up in your hometown.

We've been choring, choring, trying to stay ahead of the house. Y'day, put an exceedingly careful screw in the little rail around the kitchen butcher-block, after it popped loose from the glue Lee Holden had used. Then tried to fight a loose toilet seat with caulk; we'll see. Today I caulked  $\frac{1}{2}$  the deck posts. C meanwhile was at Grp H phys therapy, for what turns out to be tendinitis in her r. thumb from all the yardwork (and probably using the weedwhip as she did) she's been at.

5 Aug.--Y'day was Amazon.com day for Mtn Time, with the featured "bug" or end-cap or whatever the right term is, greeting the customer first thing when he logs on. We'd arranged to go next door to Dave and Dale's to see this wonder, got over there, and of course Amazon was down. Back in existence half an hour or so later, though. Nice little phone message this afternoon from Liz reporting that Mtn T is #114 on the Amazon list, and Scribner has gone back to press for a small reprint.

Meanwhile my occupation is being interviewed, Voice of America (Nancy Beardsley, same as in '91) this morn, Spokane Spokesman-Review tomorrow morn, more stuff next week.

Phantasmagoria of lightning last night, beginning across the Sound--great vibrant bolts all along the mtns from behind Kingston to the southern end of Olympics, canvases of cloud lit up one after the other--and then passing over us, with brief hard rain. I was drowsing comfortably through it, thinking it could do its worst, no harm to us, when I suddenly thought, "The Kastners'

5 Aug. cont.--big trees!" Those landmark maples are a prized part of our view, and while we think we've calculated that a windstorm isn't likely to send any downed portion in our direction, that isn't necessarily true of a treetrunk torqued by lightning. So it was a relief to get up this morn and there the canopies of maples still stood.

12 Aug.--Waitin' for the Microsoft On-Line. And waitin', and waitin'...This 6-7 session is shaping up as if they may call sometime between 6 & 7, alas.

Ups and downs, the book biz is. Excellent USA Today review this morn, crummy NYTBR one comming Sunday. Actually quite weirdly crummy, from Bruce Barcott, who evidently is going to review every book I write by whether I use "merchant" in a phrase--"scissor merchant" in Bucking, "word merchant" in this one. It's even worse than the lazy pencilneck thinks, because I've done it deliberately--Lexa linguistically echoing Jick who first calls Riley a word merchant in Ride with Me, and all of my merchantry deriving from its rich slang heritage, "b.s. merchant" as I heard ~~when I was~~ back in Montana, "feather merchant" as I heard both there and in the AF. Barcott's lucky that ignorance isn't painful, I guess. C figured out today that there probably is going to be a generational split among reviewers, younger ones such as BB clueless about Mitch's 50ish obligations.

On the more substantial side of the biz, phone call last Fri. from Troy Juliar of Highbridge Audio, which handles the Joseph Campbell and Garrison Keillor audios. They're buying the comatose backlist of Audio Press/Northword/Cowles/Creative/whatever the hell, and so are interested in extending the contract on A River Runs through It and possibly This House of Sky.

Amid the last graf, at about 6:35, phone rang, Steve Brock of the Microsoft On-Line chat room (as it turned out to be, to my not ~~unsurprising~~ incosiderable surprise; I'd thought he was simply going to interview me and post it).. He'd had some problem w/ my phone number, and as a last resort had tried Directory Assistance! He still wanted to go an hour--"the room

12 Aug. cont.--is full of people anxiously waiting"--but at that supperless point I said, um, how about 45 min. So on we went, Steve saying he had 2 requests of me, speak s-l-o-w-l-y and say "GA" (Go Ahead?) ~~at~~ whenever I was done with an answer. Carol, listening in the other room, rolled her eyes and said it reminded her of Morse code, but there I was, parsing sentences at robot pace while Steve, in Boulder CO, wrote 'em on-line for me. Questions mostly turned out to be about the current book, so I suppose I was preaching to people who'd already bought. Cumbersome as I thought it was, and thick and slow-thinking as I seem to myself, Steve at one point told me with pleasure he was getting a lot of LOLs and ROFLs (Laughing Out Loud and Rolling On Floor Laughing), and at another, he confided--I think without feigning it, if I'm any judge at all of human voice--that the room was hushed and expectant, hanging on my every word. Intriguingly, it was evident that the on-line room" possessed a kind of physicality for Steve and I suppose the participants.

Anyway, so go the days. Couple of hours before ~~ix~~ I went on-line ("people all over the world waiting to talk to you," Steve cheerily assured me), I was on the phone to a ~~Ravalli~~ reporter at the weekly Ravalli Republic in Montana, wanting to know with pressing sweetness if I'd be moving back to Montana.

19 Aug.--Missoula, rm 336 of the Doubletree, fishermen outside our window in the purling Clark Fork: a traditional venue. The Mtn Time tour has gone well until a glitch this morning, Barnes & Noble's, not ours--no copies of Mtn T in the store here when I was supposed to sign up stock. The indie stores have come through nobly--125 people, about half of them standing thru my reading, at little Chapter One in Hamilton, and about 100 last night @ Fact and Fiction here in Missou. Books sold, 110 in Hamilton, 87 here. The people in the signing line are, as ever, ~~saxpe~~ chapters of my heart. Hamilton:

--George Glasser of White Sulphur Springs origins, telling me his mother cooked for my dad's haying crew and took care of me the summer after my mother's death.

--George Holmes, son~~x~~ of my first-grade teacher, Lena, still alive @ 99 in the nursing home in WSS.

--Bob Brophy, who I went to high school with, now a veterinarian in the Bitterroot.

Missoula:

--Mike Hardy, Forest Service veteran who helped me with fire camp research for English Creek, white-haired and hawkfaced there in the audience as I looked out over them.

--Gail Engler, daughter of another of my old ranger sources, George Engler of Gt Falls;

--Andy and Beth Hammer, of my Valier high school days.

--And a fine happy reunion beforehand w/ Margaret Kingsland, who headed the Montana Commission for the Humanities, and Ginny Merrian, livewire writer for the Missoulian. Ginny later came through the line with an almost mirror image and said, "Ivan, I want you to meet my sister Paige," and I kidded, "Oh, surely she's not--have sufficient DNA tests been done," the two of them there w/ identical red hair and freckles.

We also had another classic dinner at Jim and Lois Welches' our first night in town, the old beloved usual suspects: Bill Kittredge and Annick Smith, Bill Bevis and Juliette Crump. A nice bit of seasoning added in the presence of Annick's 93-year-old mother Helen.



19 Aug. cont.--Helen was born in Hungary, the family moved on to Paris where she went to the Sorbonne and I think met Annick's father Steve; relatives in the U.S. persuaded them to leave France, with Annick as a babe in arms (which Helen thinks helped them get a scarce visa relatively quickly in '37), ahead of the Hitler nightmare that was coming for the Jews. She's tiny and alert, and had the best line of the night as we were all talking about the Marseilles setting of Jim's next book. Helen had been there on her honeymoon, she told us, and can still recall the ladies of the night, clustered on the streets around barrels with fires--they would, she told us ~~with~~ slyly, occasionally stretch their legs over the fire, "keeping it warm." We all roared and directed Jim that he has to have that line for the book; he happily said it was better than anything he's ever written. So it went, a mellow evening, everyone at a pretty good spot in life--Bill and Juliette newly retired from UM and working on their place in the Big Hole, Bill and Annick traveling and writing.

30 Aug.--Home, as of just before noon y'day. 1,020 Mtn Times sold @ the Montana and Spokane signings, and the public appearances more bountiful than I could have dreamed--500 people in various watching venues @ Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, 600 at the Bair Theater in Billings, 300+ at the reading @ Auntie's in Spokane, 200 in Miles City...

Sept. 7 - See Tac, writing for #1 #344 to San Francisco. We've been home 8 days from Montana, and the time has gone everywhere except into the diary. Of the Mont. trip, should note:

- the surreal mix of people met & re-met. In Billings, Mike McCullough, who I was in grade school with, & Becky Doyle, ex-Sec. of Agriculture of Illinois. At the reception before the MSU speech, Joe Hoefel, congressman for from Philadelphia suburban district, who'd driven up from Jackson Hole to hear me; doing the intro to that speech, Tom Watkins, of the long-ago Am Heritage piece of losing my historic photos, more than making amends by saying that when This House of Say came out, it was apparent that I didn't need Am H. An G. T. Ellis, Pat Bears, whom I'd known in grade school in WSS, who hung around gabbing and at last asked, "What's this book about?" - prompting his wife to say, "Why don't you buy one and find out?"

- Fine weather throughout the trip, warm & bright without being hot. Went thru Glacier Park on a brilliant day; the next day ~~was~~ was all smudge from a fire along the N. Fork.

13 Sept.--Fire on the mountain. About a quarter to six this morning, I noticed a furnace-like glow along the south shoulder of The Brothers, where we'd spotted a forest-fire plume of smoke early y'day afternoon. I went and woke Carol to be sure she'd see the sight. The fire obviously was making a run, flaring enough that we seemed to be seeing the top of the flamestorm; remarkable time of day for that kind of eruption, which must have been fed by wind.

Other than the smudge on the southwestern horizon, which could last until wet weather comes along to quench it, y'day was exquisite summer, cloudless and mid-70's and a breeze. We came home to this weather from San Francisco's capricious mix of fog, wind, partly cloudy and lightning storm. Had ourselves a fine time in the Bay Area nonetheless, another classy room @ the Stanford Court, a good walking outing thru Chinatown to North Beach and exemplary lunch @ Rose Pistola's, then a reliably enjoyable visit the next day to the Maritime Park, with its welcoming old vessels, and lunch @ the Buene Vista. The book biz, with possible exception of Examiner interview by an old-fangled old general assignment reporter who had his own (evidently old-line Catholic) view of how my characters ought to behave, went wonderfully: 150 people--i.e., double their seating capacity--at Black Oak, a capacity 60 at A Clean Well-Lighted Place, 113 at Kepler's; and what seemed a good bouncy interview by Barbara Lane on KRON's Bay TV cable show. Through it all we were flawlessly escorted by Fawnee of Kathi Goldmark's group. This, after being met in style by Kathi's veteran right-hand man David Golia, who led us to his freight car-sized elderly Cadillac, which he said had inspired Ernest Gaines to settle into the back seat and sigh, "Now this is a car." David diverted along China Basin and the Embarcadero renovation on our way to the hotel, a boggling transformation of that n'hood since we were last there, and regaled us with tales of escort stunts he'd done, once donning the Michelin Man suit for an author doing a Costco gig and being punched by intrigued little boys, another time putting on a cow suit for the author of "Cows With Guns."

13 Sept. cont.-- The cow gig was in Berkeley, and Kathi Goldmark told David she's take him to dinner at Chez Panisse if he'd go in the cow costume. He did, strolling in with her and asking the maitre 'd, "Do you serve beef?"

\*\*\*BULLETIN\*\*\*

"It's 260,000," Liz's voice said. The offer was on her desk this morning, Scribner caving in, \$60,000 worth from their previous offer, and up \$110,000 from Nan's original bid of \$150,000.

Sept. 17 - #L 2803, shuttle to Salt Lake. Denver & Boulder readings/signings were right on the beam, 50 or so Mtn Ts sold @ Tattered Cover, approx. 40 @ Boulder Book Co.

The high percentage of my audience that stays after the reading to buy books kept constant - bookstore people & escorts alike comment on it. I was schlepped around again by Carlene Berches, 3rd or 4th time, & since the media stuff was light - only a KHOW interview, another hang-up job by Irene Rawlings, who looks like a young Betty Friedan but has an air voice ~~like~~ that's utterly voluptuous - I managed to have lunch w/ Bill & Kay Pride @ the Brown Palace and dinner w/ Bill & Clarice Tidyman @ Alleykatz in Boulder. Much whatever-happened-to, college first and then high school. Most astounding to me: Hugh Fullerton IV, who I figured would sail out of journalism school to big success just on the expense of



Sept. ~~16~~ 17, cont. - first name & I think  
a father @ AP, has ended up tracking @  
Sam Houston State. Ernest Stanton is  
enduring time to retirement @ Detroit Free  
Press, as for that mother one Bill Priels  
(a 74 weeks!) @ Denver Post and Jerry  
Aberman @ Boston Globe. Whether or not  
I should, I feel a little sad for all of them,  
the job we all thought we were aiming for  
proving to be squeezed by the free  
constructors who tore over newspapers.  
As to high school, it's a reverse story;  
some of us making it out of the prime  
ghetto of Valien High to larger lives than  
we could have imagined - Bill Tidgman  
in the FBI, Wayne Sand from a family  
who lived @ a junkyard to a PhD. In  
atmospheric science.

At both stores, I used the excuse of  
the nearby Tarkins to read the piece  
about the hike into the Bots, where  
Marshall makes a spectral appearance -  
it seems to go over with some drama.

Tonight, the challenge is going to be to  
stay fresh enough to punch my speech  
across; it'll help hugely if the Hotel  
Monaco indeed lets me into a room  
this morning -

Sept. 18, Delta 1947 out of Salt Lake -  
100 + Mtn Times sold y'day by the noble  
King's English - 55 at store, another 50 or so  
after my Bk Festival speech. The speech was  
rapturously received, right up to the edge  
of embarrassingly so; I have the sense,  
which many people don't seem to, that a  
"good" speech is always going to sound  
better than it adds up on paper. Anyway,  
the long day of y'day progressed  
satisfactorily, this way:

- Hotel Monaco, full of various kinds  
of pizzazz (wallpaper w/ 3" stripes! a  
daff table-style sink higher than my  
belly button), never flinched about letting  
me into a room at about 9:30 AM.

- As soon as I was installed, I started  
handling phone calls, the most significant  
one w/ Liz, to the effect that I'll now  
swallow Scribner's \$50,000 on signing/  
\$50,000 in fee. instead of my preferred  
\$70,000/\$70,000, and - sigh - some of the  
last money will come upon paperback pub'n.

- Then went to the trusted reliable Baci  
for lunch, inviting my inviter - to - the -  
festival, Jean Cheney, and to my surprise  
she got free from last-minute details to

Sept. 18 cont. - come. She turned out to be an English prof - environmental literature - doubling as Humanities bureaucrat, & quite a western story herself - newly returned to the West after her marriage broke up, & now involved w/ a Lake Tahoe tour boat captain, Chuck.

- I sacked out in hotel room until about 2:30, then got myself into my suit of light for the evening talk, and was picked up by Betsy Burton @ 3. Signed requests & box upon box of Mtn T's for her in the backroom of King's E - they're going to be offering signed ltr's on their Website - & then we did signing on patio behind store, smallish crowd but vigorous buyers.

- @ 5, Betsy & I went across street to Einstein's Bagels for a quick, & dopey, supper - long series of map quizzes on kind of dressing, baguette or bagel, etc., after all of which I ended up with a turkey pastrami sandwich when I thought I was zeroing in on good old non-foul pastrami as a safe choice. (I did, with a couple of stern NO's, keep sprouts off the sandwich.) Betsy & I talked about the book biz for a while - not merely the linchpin of an indie bookstore, she's now trying to place a mystery novel she's written -

Sept. 18 cont. - & lo, when we got up from the table @ 6 to go to the Festival reception, we were locked in and the staff had vanished. Betsy dug a teenage swamper out of the back room & we went out laughing wildly about having escaped a night in a chain bagel bakery.

- @ the reception @ Westminster College, as soon as I checked in w/ Jean Cheney & the Humanities head, Cynthia Buckingham, I insisted on looking over the podium & mike setup - last Monday's Third Place lightless experience fresh in mind - & lo goddamn again, no working reading light in the otherwise top-of-the-line auditorium. Couple of tries by the house manager to rig a goose-neck lamp so that I could see my script but not be blinded by glare instantly went for naught, @ speech time, when Cynthia went up for opening remarks, touched the goose-neck, & it sagged forward onto the ~~reading~~ podium well. The hell with it, I decided, I told her, when she came back down, to just have house lights left on. Which worked fairly decently, although the podium was still awkward enough that I couldn't perform at quite my best. Nobody except me seemed to know that, though.

Sept. 18 cont. - Back to reception scene: on hand, Kittredge & Annick; Clyde Milner & Carol Connor; members of Evans family who financed that tasty \$10,000 living award I won for Heart Earth; Dave Livermore of Utah Nature Conserv; slews of civic & academic types; writer Ellen Meloy, & a touted new memoirist/screen-play writer named Mark Spragg, who lo yet a-goddamn-gain, proved to be the younger half of that pair of scriptwriters sent to talk to C & me in Bozeman about Eng Creek many years ago. "So where's goddamn movie?" I asked him, drawing an alarmed look until he figured out I was kidding. A/ I was.

- Speech went fine, at least from the audience's pt of view, then in q-&a came the phenomenon I'm encountering steadily now, audience shyness at popping questions to me as freely as they used to: some kind of reverence factor? It surprises hell out of me, but something is going on.



22 Sept.--All is going well, but I am feeling beleaguered by chores (a mood not helped by evident bacterial infection at the back of my throat; Pat Kato put me on an antibiotic y'day). Spent Monday and Tuesday fending with the buildup on my desk, and there's still a raft of phone calls etc. to be tended to--and the resumption of the book tour tomorrow night @ Elliott Bay and Fri/Sat. @ the PNBA in Spokane. I'm telling myself to shut up and grind through it all, but the grinding has to radically ease off sometime this fall. Have been trying ever since I got home from Salt Lake to make this diary entry, and here at last is a semblance:

--Wanted to get down the latest mysterious chapter of trying to buy a drink in Salt Lake. The prologue came at lunch @ Baci, when Jean Cheney and I each ordered a beer with our meal, the young waiter cheerfully went off to fetch them, and was immediately back with the crest-fallen news that "Utah has these really weird liquor laws" and we'd have to wait until high noon for our beers. But the real episode occurred after my speech and booksigning at the kickoff of the Salt Lake Book Festival, when Jean Ch. and her guy Chuck dropped me off at my hotel, the Monaco. Tired but wired when I reached my room, I decided a scotch from the mini-bar would help conk me off to sleep. Opened the mini-bar, then, in incredulity, the refrig--peanuts, cookies, chips, ppp, bottled water: not a drop of alcohol. Uh oh, I thought, but remembered seeing a bar and restaurant downstairs and had the vague memory that staying in a hotel bestowed the "club membership" or whatever the hell Utahns call this particular lap in the gauntlet of hypocrisies about booze. Downstairs I go, and find that the bar-restaurant setup is odd, strung along the street-facing side of a long corridor that runs the length of the hotel. I see into the bar from a windowed portion but no door there, so I go in through the next set of doors. It's a back room of some kind, with a quartet or so of people talking at one table and, right inside the door, a woman and a lounge-lizard kind of guy. The Liz seems startled to see me come in that way, and says something about it. He has on some sort of uniform and, a bit muzzy from my day and thinking he might be hotel staff,

22 Sept. cont.--I ask if I can get a drink back here. "Sure," he says. "This is a private room. You might even meet somebody." I give him a furrowed look and sit facing half-away from The Liz, so I can keep track of the bastard from the corner of my eye but not invite any more conversation. Minutes pass, no server appears, noise pours through the doorway from the bar--like other Salt Lake bars I've encountered, it's incredibly raucous. Finally I get up and go into the bar, and there stands a waitress. I semi-shout over the din, "Can I get a drink?" She tells me sure, she'll send What's-her-name in to take my order--"That's the private room. You might even get a date in there." "All I want is a drink!" She gives me an oh, sure grin, I stomp back in, sit down, more minutes pass, no drink comes, and I decide the hell with it. I go out, ignoring The Liz's questioning protestation, "You're not leaving, are you?" and tromp down the street to the Shiloh Hotel that I know is just north of Baci. In I go, find a nice quiet bar but a somewhat startled bartender. I ask, Can I get a drink, even though I'm not staying at this hotel? He shakes his head, dolefully informs me there's a \$6 membership fee. As I'm mulling this and about to pony it up, he adds: "Besides, I'm closing up." I trudge back to the Monaco, go to the front desk, ask: Can-I-get--a-drink-from-room-service? Yes, the clerk brightly says, that's under an entirely different set of liquor laws. I order from her, scotch and some ice, and she says she'll send somebody right up. Up in my room, minutes pass, I pack my suitcase, more time passes, the phone rings? It's room service, did I order a scotch? I most certainly did, I grit out. "We don't have scotch. We have gin, rum, vodka, whiskey..." "Bring-me-a-whiskey." It shortly arrives, along with the tab for the little airline bottle of Jim Beam: \$11.

Here on the saner home front, we all neighbored vigorously Sunday evening when Hugh & Lois Hoff threw a block party, inviting all the households along 15th from 17001 to 17503 (where it turns into 14th) for a chili supper. Damn near everyone came--we walked

22 Sept. cont.--down w/ Hank & Dorothy Kastner, and Dave and Dale from the others side of us were just ahead-- and so we either met for the first time or mingled with this pleasant collection of neighbors:

--Christopher & Mary Diorio, young couple who last year bought the first bluff-perched house along 15th, @ 17001; and Janet Munger, very veteran in the n'hood, who lives on the cul-de-sac below them.

--Ed & Amy Stay; Ed was raised here, and ultimately bought back his folks' house, so he's maybe the longest-standing resident of the bunch.

--Midge & Ron Hartz, who've just moved down from 12 th into the wacko place that the never-present Piggott heirs owned for years; C surmises that the Hartzes' arrival occasioned the party, the Hoffs wanting to welcome them.

--Juliet Beard, with her guy whose name neither C nor I can remember, from the place that has a boat hulk etc. scattered in its sideyard.

--Gary & Chris Kocher, 30ish w/ a 3- and 4-year-old. Gary is a lawyer w/ Preston Gates Ellis, does stuff for a developer @ Whistler Mtn. Chris has a Northwestern master's in communications--worked for Chicago Bulls in marketing--and does some freelancing when she's not morming.

--the Walkers: Mary Jo is Montana stock, her relatives still owning a ranch @ Highwood, and she went to grade school in Shelby; George is retired from US West, and a UW communications school grad.

--Guy & Joyce Michelson; didn't learn what they do, but their house, beautifully landscaped next to Hoffs, looks to be in the same million-dollar league as the Hoffs.

--The Hoffs, Hugh and Lois, Windermere real estate money. C said of their place, it shows money everywhere, though not in a braggy way. They go away to the desert, renting a different condo each time, couple months of the winter.

--Barney Hyde, former Safeco exec, seems a character--barbershop quartet singer, jokey.

--Gary & Judy Shirley; he turns out to be a forester-turned-IRS-forestry-taxation-guy.

22 Sept. cont.--Lastly, Mrs. Kim from the ick-brick house at the end of this street that they've been resuscitating, and Mary Jo, whose last name we didn't get, from the "peninsula" house down the ravine; she's a Providence doctor.

29 Sept.--Maintenance, all is maintenance. Have been tending to the sinus infection for more than a week--antibiotics, extra-large Kleenex, cough drops, cough syrup, 2 kinds of Sudafed, hankies, hankies, hankies. For all that, the sinus condition probably has pretty much gone its own way, although C assures me I'm shaking it comparatively fast. Toughest inning for my voice was in Spokane last weekend, when my voice frayed and frayed during the PNBA indoors picnic-schmoozing at Aunties, and then the next morning when it took me about an hour and a half to thaw the voice into anything approaching respectability. My breakfast talk to the booksellers went perfectly okay--told them maybe they hadn't previously associated me with Lauren Bacall huskiness of voice, but use their imaginations--and it was a good session, Eric Larson doing a nice light presentation about ~~kix~~ Isaac's Storm that ended with a powerful kicker about which of your kids would you save in such a nightmare, Jim Whittaker going on a bit long w/ tales from his Life on the Edge but since he was the final speaker we all knew we wouldn't be disastrously messed up. Jim, at 70, looks as hale as 50. When the PNBA exec director wanted us to pose for a pic he'll send in to PW, I said I'd do it only if Jim--6'5"--and Erik--6'--would slunch down with their knees bent. Actually we did stairsteps, me on one end, Jim looming on the other.

Socialized to the extend I could in Spokane, but the main endeavor, besides the b'fast talk, was signing up Mtn Time stock:

--200 for the PNBA, which they gave away at the breakfast.

--250 for Mary Jane DiSanti, placidly selling the book by the hundreds at her Country Bookshelf.

--a further 50 for Aunties. Did all 500 of these Friday afternoon.

When I wasn't doing what I do (and thus can somewhat

29 Sept. cont.--control), Spokane was weird:

--distracted by sinuses and general busyness, I didn't notice that Sarah Mosher had let S&S's none too swift travel agency, Ultramar, book me on United Express, i.e. the dreaded commuter airline. The plane was tiny and turned out to be the feared Embraer Brasilia, crash-prone, which I try never to fly on. Grimacing, I went aboard and discovered that my seat sssignment was next to a 300-pound woman who was overflowing into about a third of my seat. Thankfully the flight had a good veteran stewardess, who blandly announced there was an untaken seat if any of us wanted more elbow room, and I bolted for it.

--The Spokane airport had no cabs! It took 25 min., and a not very productive phone call, to bring a cab, which a woman and I then shared.

--At Cavanaugh's Inn at the Park, I had a suite bestowed on me. Gobs of space, and a useless glass table that seat<sub>ed</sub> 6--and a locked door in the bedroom, connecting to the room next door. That's the hotel room equivalent of a Brasilia waiting to crash, and sure enough, when I turned in early to try to catch up on sinus-deprived sleep, a party spawned on the other side of the door and the noise built and built. When I called the front desk about it, I was told 11 p.m. is when rooms are supposed to quiet down and they'd send a security guy up then. By god, @ 11, there was a series of door-banging departures and then utter silence!

--Sat. morning, I looked out and thought it was raining, the wind whooping along with it. Right about the wind, but the murk out there was...murk. Comprised of dust (on the flight home, could see the duststorms lifting from the first fields w. of <sup>W</sup>enatchee--150 mi. of dust between there and Spokane), forest fire smoke, stubble smoke. It was nasty. Erik Larson remarked, at the start of his talk, that if he was in Galveston and looked out into this strange sky and ghostly sun, he'd be bailing out of town.

--Bailing out of town was done for me in real style, the Alaska Airlines gate agent saying "Oh, are you the author? How about first-class." That upgrade was immensely welcome, giving me a chance to stretch out and rest my plaguey body on the way home.



29 Sept. cont.--Since Spokane, I took it very easy on Sunday, trying to recuperate. Fought the desk stuff Monday and the morn of Tuesday, before going up to the Aurora Costco to do a surprisingly strong signing, 40-50 Mtn Times sold, the AMS honcha Karyn Larko on hand with 2 of her staff to run the signing. Either from being impressed or not knowing any better, the Costco store set us up royally: told it'd be nice for us to have some kind of a platform, that morning they built about a 10x10 elevated version, likely 18" high, then installed a desk and regal chair for me, with hundreds of books stacked along one side. Helluva setup!

5 Oct.--Did the Skagit/Bellingham booktour Fri/Sat, to mostly good results; the little Snow Goose, alas, did not produce, only 10-12 people on hand, whether the store simply didn't have its act together (no pre-sale inscription requests, always a bad sign) or people can't be got out to a noonhour event. But the rest:

--230 people @ Bellingham, at Food Bank benefit held at Fairhaven Middle School. Sold about 50 Mtn Times, probably more than we would have in the store. Dinner w/ Ann & Norm beforehand @ Dirty Dan's. Only off-note was the Herald review, sniffily pretentious, accusing the book of too much decorum!

--audience of 40 @ Scott's, but then sold about that # of Mtn Times, thanks to pre-orders.

--Anacortes, ah Anacortes: 400+ whooping it up in the Port Dock Bldg (i.e., a funky warehouse) as kickoff of fund-raising for new library. Sold 100+, making the total for the 4 stores a respectable couple of hundred, plus much stock signed. Patti Pattee, facing all this the day after the memorial service for her longtime partner and deathbed husband, Norman Sturdevant, did an astounding job in her intro of me, working in the SF Chronicle review and reminding people to start their Xmas shopping by buying a book...She performed nobly in another way, sneaking G and me outside for nips of Chivas she was packing in a Cutty pint. God bless, Patti. I did a brief tribute to Norman before my reading, citing the "Here lies all of him that could die" graf from

5 Oct. cont.--Mariah Montana. Then read, to terrifically good attention in that barn-y warehouse, and happily signed books like crazy.

We stayed @ Channel Lodge in LaConner, the most central and convenient lodging, and New York pricey--damn near \$180 a night for a pleasant but goofy room w/ king bed. Had to scramble for dinner Sat. night, when the Rhodie proved to be full w/  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr wait, but C remembered Patti & Norman had recommended the Bella Isola across from their bookstore, and it was first-class. Lunch @ the Rhodie on Sunday, and we did the Indian Slough dike hike Sat. & Sun. Herons were everywhere, on the low tide. Also saw many hawks as we drove around.

Last night, U Bk Store reading on UW campus, Kane 220. About 100 in audience, 32 Mtn Times sold, not bad. Knowing it was a sitdown audience in reasonably comfortable seats I did a longer reading than usual, pairing Mariah's NZ scene w/ the Bob hike; worked fine.

Today, I've been grinding away at the desk again--expenses to Scribner, working up schedule for the rest of the fall events so I can tell what the hell is going on, dribs and drabs of correspondence--in the eternal hope of clearing away enough crap to get at thinking and writing.

7 Oct.--Change in the weather: the wind blustering from the south, clouds plentiful. Not a drop of rain here yet, though.

8 Oct.--The rains are here, arrived in the night, their trotting in the drainpipe oddly welcome in waking me. It has been a long dry spell.

The other drought--of pages--is cracking, too, with the slowing of the booktour, at last, at last. Spent the past couple of days determinedly organizing for Prairie Nocturne, and this morning I actually had time to play with its language a bit, maybe producing a more mellifluous opening sentence.

Now I'm off to Gp Health, for a steroid shot in the old sterno-clavicular joint.

Oct. 11--Columbus Day, gray and chilly. Found time again this morning to think and plan toward Prairie Nocturne; the week will clutter up from here, toward the trip to Portland St.

Overnight guest on Sat., Midge McGillivray from Spokane, out of C's past as NU counselor in '60. Also across the weekend, I worked up an investment plan--stocks to buy if they go down between now and year's end, T-note amounts to invest if they don't--with the money that is suddenly on hand and forthcoming as well from the Portland St. speech, dividends, the next 2 chunks of book advance...

Oct. 18--The Portland State U. Alumni Weekend gig, and all the rest of Fri/Sat's Portland trip, couldn't have been better. Sell-out audience of 550 for my speech, a good booksigning, and first-rate interviews at KXL and KBOO into the bargain. C even got to buy fresh corn at the Farmers' Market outside the PSU building where everything was happening. And we came home w/ \$7500 from PSU, to find a \$3600 check in the mail, the Dove audio rights on Mtn Time.

Oct. 19--First disgusted drone of a foghorn broke in from the dark just now, @ 6:45. Likely a ferry, all at once swaddled in the long low wrap that C and I can just make out, from off Edmonds to Pt. Jefferson; when C went to the window to see what the foghorn was about, Kingston blanked away as she looked.

So we are in this glorious house, in what has been a run of fine clear weather (the early-rising fog today notwithstanding), feeling good about life. Certainly we have had a fine run of events, these past several days:

--Thursday evening, the 14th, Eric Nalder and I did a benefit for the Washington Commission for the Humanities. 40 contributors, in Jean Gardner's penthouse apartment above Elliott Bay (the concierge's directions: "Take the elevator to 33"--the top floor--"and turn right." Apparently she has half of the top of the bldg), a perch that little ol' acrophobic me didn't find quite comfortable. Eric and I questioned each other for about 20 min. apiece, then took audience questions. He truly is a digger, calling me earlier that day and asking me

Oct. 19 cont.--about each of my books, so he'd have the info lined out in his head for the real questioning of me that night. No wonder he has a couple of Pulitzers and I figure is likely to investigate his way to a couple more.

--Then it was to Portland, to be met at the airport by the efficient Portland State U. alum director Pat Squire, and onward to lunch with her at the Heathman Pub, an improved version of the old B. Moloch's. C then happily went shopping--just as happily not buying anything--and I went under the wing of the literary escort, Elizabeth Tangney-Taylor. Exceptionally good interviewers, Diana Jordan @ KXL--and syndicated across the country by AP, if I heard right--and then Jim Schumock for KBOO, an hour-long and carefully prepared for by Jim, pages of his legal pad with nicely crafted questions. He was the first to ask me about Vietnam, <sup>2</sup> (not going) and I got to tell him about the Montana military history, my draft board after me 5 minutes after I got my Master's, teetering on Vietnam when I was trying to finish up grad school, and so on.

Next, the PSU reception in the newly renovated City Hall, where I was ultimately taken up to a balcony above the assemblage and introduced along with PSU Prez Dan Bernstine. B'stine is an energetic cannonball of a guy, given to fine funny little black riffs as occasional punctuation to his presidential duties; on our way to the balcony, he said "Time we do this" and gave a quick little baby wave with his hand. C and I liked him, and for that matter the whole PSU gang that we met.

--We made a new writing buddy at dinner, Susan Hauser, whose stuff we've always liked in the WSJ. She's quick and funny, and we had a hilarious dinner at the Heathman (although soberly put a period to by the waiter spilling coffee on Carol, thank god not hot enough to scald her hand) in the company of Ann Gardner, chair of the alum weekend doings; John Warner, a sweet-seeming landscape architect working w/ Ann on a big Willamette riverbank reclamation and, we gradually put together, her ex-husband!; Paddy Tillet, a Scots-born architect

Oct. 19 cont.--also on that riverbank project; his English wife Bryony, who when I asked her where she'd met Paddy said on a ski trip in Andorra--"Oh, your usual skiing-in-Andorra romance," say I--and Susan H. ~~Ann said of her~~ The next day Ann said of her PSU contingent, "We did all the talking!" As C analyzed, none of them were out to score ego points during the evening, and when they saw that we weren't out to score any either, they wildly relaxed.

--Came Saturday, and I started the day by doing my homework, getting up @ 5:45, marching us across to the Hilton when the increasingly shaggy Heathman didn't open for breakfast until 7 after having told us when we checked in that it'd be at 6:30, then planting myself at the desk in the room and rehearsing my speech. We went to PSU in time to take in Terrence O'Donnell's delightfully deft tale of his Tualatin Valley summer or two of boyhood, then the next hour sat in on Steve Amen's impressive TV stuff for Oregon Field Guide. Then went off to inspect the mike system and the rest of the lunch speech setup, with Pat Squire; when that looked okay, we had a little time to wander the Farmers' Market outside the PSU building we were in, and C nabbed ears of fresh sweet corn for our next night's supper. Pat then took us into the ballroom about 20 min. before the doors were to open, we dug into the buffet line, and I was contentedly done eating by the time the doors opened and the rest of our table showed up. The PSU troops--Ann Gardner again, then Dan B'stine, then Susan Hauser introducing me--went through their parts bang on time, and I got up and did my talk in what I'm told was fine style. Sold 50+ Mtn Times in the signing afterward, then Pat Squire walked us to the towncar she had waiting to take us to the airport, and off we went in the gorgeous Portland weather, home by supertime.

--And last night, the night of Keneally. I did the intro of Tom (copy at the back of diary), then got to sit and enjoy while somebody else worked at this booktour biz. As C said, Tom is like a mischievous little Santa Claus, and at his best in hilarious asides and musings. The Kane Hall lecture-room venue isn't the best for him--



Oct. 19--he was much more at home in Elliott Bay's cozier circumstances during the "Schindler's List" tour--but an audience question about the green ~~xxx~~ "Wallabies" cap he had with him set him off wonderfully. He explained that the World Cup rugby matches are on, and with any luck, the Australian team, his beloved Wallabies, will beat New Zealand. Australians and New Zealanders, he explained, have a mutual "genial contempt. They think that they're Scotch yeomen, and we're all Irish and Cockney white trash. Which is pretty true." So it was a pleasant evening to visit briefly with Tom, sing his praises, watch him twinkle. Good-oh.

21 Oct.--Season of foghorns. I get up between 4:30 and 5 these mornings, and within the hour the fog-groan of ships is beginning. Y'day the lid of fog on the Sound lasted until 2 PM or so. When C and I walked the n'hood at 1, the bridge and masts of a big ship were showing above the thick white fog of cloud, the only visible thing on the whole Sound.

These have been glorious days, warm and sunny here on the property by each afternoon. The past 2 days, among other gardening, C and I have worked over the old rose bushes (to our amazement, by the time we gardened them all we found we have a couple of dozen), cutting them back sharply--some had grown up into the fruit trees--and C digging out the weeds and crabgrass around them, then I'd mulch them 6"-8" deep with a little pyramid of Whitney Farms planting compost. Have also been in a wrestle-to-the-death with morning glory vines, our ~~amphicautic~~ spritzes of Roundup and dogged digging out finally showing some results along the row of big old rhodies, which were being strangled when we bought this place.

Weather was so nice y'day that we sat out on the deck to have a drink, before sunset at (alas) 6.

23 Oct.--Change of weather is arriving--today is misty, breezy, clouds building in, showers forecast. The past few days we have had whimsies of fog, the superstructures of ships sometimes plowing just above the white cloud covering the Sound. Late y'day afternoon, amazing geometry hinted out of the fog, a 45 degree angle out of a low perpendicular, radiant lines running out--an immense crane on a barge, when it finally clarified itself.

I have been pecking away at Prairie Nocturne, to some decent effect, and elsewhere on the book front, y'day brought prototypes of new covers for This House of Sky and Winter Bros--the Sky one pretty good, warm and welcoming, the WBros one really top-notch.

The turn of weather today marks the end of a week+ of glorious days, particularly afternoons, when we've been able to get outside and pat the property into place. We:

--pruned and bedded the 2 doz. rose bushes, evidently for the first time in several years (some were up into the fruit trees).

--bought an electric trimmer and the past couple of afternoons I managed to give the damnable laurel hedge a respectable haircut.

--weeded, weeded, weeded, front and back. It sobered us both that it took this lovely set of days, which can never be counted on this time of year, to get the yardwork done.

Oct. 27--The streak of exquisite afternoons outside snapped on Monday, w/ some rain; then cleared y'day into a fine after-lunch walk we took around the n'hood; and now this morning's blustery wind (from the east, unusual; leaves from the front yard trees were flying over the house and then descending from nowhere) has ushered in a sharp rain, all afternoon so far. NY Times piece says La Nina conditions are in place again, for a wet NW winter.

At the end of Mon. afternoon we headed for the waterfront, managed to get in 10 or 15 min. walking, then paraded in to the bar at Ivar's to meet Carlene Cross  
join

Oct. 27 cont.--and Jack Nisbet for drinks and talk. Lo, at the bar w/ Carlene was not Jack but Tom Orton, altho Jack soon arrived. This trio of published-writers-this-year are all somewhere out of our past--Carlene having gone back to school @ Shoreline after a busted marriage and, on shaking legs, been welcomed into her first class by C; Jack and Tom we've been buddies with for years, and I've done them both what seems to me a modicum of writing-biz favors but which they seem to appreciate. A fine round of talk, which led on to supper; C remarked on the way home how pleasant it was to be around three such self-directed people.

On the work front, both Mon. and Tues. morns went to p'back covers, Monday's on Sky and WBros perfectly heartening because the new covers look good, Tuesday's that familiar slippery slope of the art dept (Scribner's) wanting to try out a stylized artist, for the Mtn Time p'back. I tugged and pulled where I could there, and now to wait and see.

With the week starting off choppy, I gravitated into sorting a 4"-high miscellaneous pile--letters, scraps of writing, clippings--and by god have usefully winnowed it and consigned its contents to various archival fates, here and at UW. While I'm dealing w/ shards, here's one that's been in a pocket notebook since Feb. but which has mighty meaning for me. When I was doing the Feb. signing in the OSU bookstore in Corvallis, in came Jim Furness, supervisor of the Siuslaw Nat'l Forest, bought some books, stood and talked about my work. And told me that when Dale Gorman was supervisor of the Lewis & Clark Nat'l Forest in Gt. Falls, he kept a copy of English Creek on his desk and made it required reading for every new arrival to his staff.

28 Oct.--Blades in the water, this windy morning: wind-surfers skittering at terrific speeds, offshore from us, under the higher voyages of gulls.

Continued to winnow accumulated material today. After having groaned over the chore the past few days, disliking the expenditure of time on old heaps, this morn it occurred to me, Hey, this is a mother lode; some of the bits from old poems that never coalesced are fine

28 Oct. cont--lines in themselves, there are some ideas in the notebook jottings that have held up pretty well, and all in all, I feel like I'm gaining--or regaining--quite a lot ~~from~~ by gleaming this stuff onto file cards or into the ring-binder topic notebooks, one more time.

Oct. 29--What must be a TGIF sailboat race made itself known after lunch, eventually 40+ boats large and small, the white slants of their sails into the storm-tinted Sound. The weather is staying blustery, C and I eyeing our chance each day to dart out for our n'hood walk.

We entertained last night, C cooking a fine beef stew for Trudy Forbes and her buddy, Father Tim.

And I have made my second fin de siecle list, first the SF Chronicle 100 best books compilation and now--this one ~~is~~ I find quite touching--the 100 most influential Montanans, as discerned by the Missoulian. In the paper's utterly arbitrary ranking, it nonetheless gives me a kick to finish ahead of that old bastard Wellington Rankin.

1 Nov. ~~00~~ Gorgeous morning light, this morn and y'day, with the first sunshine on the first snow on the Olympic peaks. (That snowfall came on the night of the 30th.) We got in another yard inning y'day, C working on weeds in the rhodie plantation on the front bank while I pulled up our bravely productive bean and lettuce plants to end that season. Also, inspired by the sunshine here, we went down and walked the grain terminal park--the entire walk under a big sun-blotting cloud.

Nov. 8--Another week gone already, here in the shank of the year when time seems to flit away and yet it's hard to get things accomplished. (Example of today: coming onto 3 in the afternoon now and no sign of Mike Lampers to do our treecutting and the Kastners'. Sigh.) Last week was a spate of nights of socializing or events--Wed., Linda and Jeff here for supper, Linda freshly back from the Peruvian Amazon; Thurs., Tony Angell's

Nov. 8 cont.--sculpture show at Foster White, his usual marvelous stuff, including a wonderful little turtle we may hit him up for if it doesn't sell at the show; Friday night, one of the Nov. events that I've been gritting over, the talk to UW Friends of the Library--it went well, and now that's that; and Sat. night, we took meatloaf supper to the Rodens', Jean having had her knee 'scoped on Wed. Along the way, much of Sat. morn went to messing w/ the water heater in the garage, Ted Mager coming to our rescue again to install a new lower thermostat.

Meanwhile the Prairie Nocturne contract arrived, C & I parsed thru it y'day and Marsh today went over my couple of concerns; I've queried Liz on them, and will fire it in to Scribner once I've heard from her, to start the meter running.

So, things are pretty much a trudge at the moment.

Nov. 11--Finally managed to round the last dreaded corner of speechwriting y'day, when I finished composing the talk to the UW forestry alums (that one last speech to write, after I'd made myself do all the others due this fall well ahead of time, just about drudged me under), and perhaps as my reward I last night got called a "national treasure." It was the History Makers awards ceremony-and-fund-raising-auction, at the Rainier Club of all clubby sites, and there C and I were at a center table, luckily with John and Linda Findley whom we'd had the foresight to invite as our designated guests; Rae Tufts, the mover and shaker on the board of the Museum of History and Industry who was behind all of this, and her significant other, David Skellenger, were our other tablemates, and one of Rae's fellow architects, Arne Brynvoid (although that's not quite the right name) and his wife. Bill Gerberding, ex-UW prez, was the MC and did an effective job of reading off what someone else--I suspect Rae--had written. So, we came home with a crystal pylon trophy and during the course of the evening met:

--Jim and John Ellis, award winners along w/ me; from their pics down through the years I expected them to be tall patrician types, but they're little Irish



Nov. 11 cont.--guys, a couple of approximations of Jimmy Cagney.

--the Schells, Pam also an award recipient w/ me and the Mayor on anight off when he didn't have to stand up in public and talk. The Schells, we learned pretty promptly in the course of the conversation, have early committed to Bill Bradley in the prez'l race, which seems quite gutsy, with Gore still fingering the federal purse strings for the next year and more.

--Out of the past, Clint Miller and Elizabeth! I got a bit of a kick out of being around Clint again--it's been many years--seeing that everlasting boyish charm under a graying beard. Elizabeth, I'm sorry to say, we still can't seem to connect with.

--Steve Hamilton, formerly of Alaska Airlines, and his wife from Broadus; Steve wanted to check his mother's story that she was perambulating him thru the streets of White Sulphur Springs while my mother was doing the same w/ me, and his Aug. '39 birthdate validates it.

As to life in general, I now feel I'm turning the corner from the public season toward the private hours of the next book. Also am feeling lucky and grateful, having dodged the near-death contract experience at Scribner and come out with a quarter of a million dollars ahead and an extra year to do this book.

And as to weather, this last Vet's Day of this martial century: shroud of rain.

Nov. 15--4:15, end of the first real writing day in a long while. Managed some improvement in the impetus of the opening scene, I think, and fixed some language.

Y'day was Bookfest, another of my November grumbles, but here came 600 people to hear me read, so I take it all back. Late lunch w/ Linda and Syd afterwards, fun. During the day I crossed paths with Jim Whitaker and his wife Diane Roberts, Eric Larson and Gary Kinder, Blake Williams, and sundry booksellers who are old buddies by now.

Nov. 18--7:10 a.m., our beautiful place is even lovelier to us now, Mike Lampers pruning away the overgrown foliage along our north and south property lines y'day. His usual work for us has been tree-topping or -thinning so as he said, he got a kick out of a chance to be artistic for a change, and he has a very good eye indeed for bringing a fruit tree or a lilac back to good elemental lines. Before Mike showed up about 1, in fine sunny weather that had just made us ~~not~~ put on our yard clothes, C and I hosed and brushed off the deck, in preparation for the Thanksgiving crowd. So, the day was our idea of a good time, getting things done. And now, with the Kastners' tree-trimming to the north of us that we power-of-suggestioned into tandem with ours, we live in ~~and~~ a view property with dramatic crisp edges. Just now, ahead of the turn of the weather that is forecast, radiating pink-blye-gray streamers of clouds are over the Olympics, which show just the whitest of their summits, while a wall of fog is forming over Hood Canal and behind Kingston.

Bonus to y'day's neatening accomplishments, dinner @ the Provinces w/ Ann and Marsh.

22 Nov.--Chilly showery weather has come, and the office feels particularly snug. We're happily hunkered in, aiming into the Thanksgiving extravaganza here.

As to events outside the house: yow, talk about ending on an anticlimax. My talk to the UW forestry alums last Fri. night was the toughest all year: the foresters were, well, wooden. I couldn't really detect hostility to, say, my Bob Marshall reading, even though plenty of those codgers are out there in industry. It more seemed that they just didn't get it, or didn't want to get it, or didn't recognize that it was there to be got, or something. Anyway, for all my efforts to show them they have a pretty interesting lineage in people like Pinchot and Major Kelley and Marshall, the one part of my talk that seemed to tickle them was a brief mention of the old ranger Nevan McCullough; several of them knew him!

On the weekend, we did some money managing, and on Fri. night went to the 'Lageshueltes' to see and hear about their trip to Turkey.

24 Nov.--Rain moving in for Thanksgiving, drat. We're having the gang all here tomorrow, 19 of us at last count. C and I have kicked the place into pretty damn good shape, and onward to merry traffic management, come the morrow.

I seem to be mostly taking the week off. Did some financial moves on Monday (as did C, picking a good up day of the markets to move \$50,000 CREF funds into TIAA @ 7.25%), cleaned my desk some, fended with light phone and fax traffic, and that's been about it.

The treecutting saga: should note down here that Mike Lampers was back y'day to do Dave's treework next door and today to do the Flocks'. Now a total of 5 houses in a row, instigated by us, have trimmed away for better view. Flocks, Spangenburg, us, Kastners, and Barney's place have all been involved, in a kind of 3-D chess. Our place didn't actually need much trimming, but we figured we might be able to get Kastners to trim at the same time if we got Mike in here on the job. Hank and Dorothy not only had him trim their stuff that we had our eye on, but paid for him to go over to Barney's and whack off the apple trees that were bothering them. And for Dave Spangenburg's portion y'day, he had Mike go farther downslope on the Kastners and trim down a big limby maple that blocked his and the Flocks' view of Richmond Beach. With all this barbering of foliage, the views are now crisp and dramatic; several times a day I simply stand upstairs and look out.

27 Nov.--The Saturday after Thanksgiving, the Sound muzzy with light rain. Van ship with 20-foot white letters ABU DHABI went upsound this morning, but not much else has been moving. We're in a low-key day, after kicking the house back into shape y'day morning, post-Thanksgiving. The feast day was more ragged than usual in terms of when people showed up. Luckily Peter, Ann and Norm, and Linda and Sydney all were prompt, a good core group to launch the day. But C and I right away figured something was awry when Mark and Lou, always reliably on time and usually the first to arrive, didn't show--and Mark was bringing the champagne. When he did arrive he was solo, Lou laid low with a debilitating headache. Tony and Lee and Gavia and Larka

27 Nov. cont.--made it about as expected, around 1:30. But the Maloufs were held up I think by Carla's late plane, and the final couple, Ray and Priscilla Bowen, had mis-heard or misinterpreted the time passed to them by Mark and Lou, and made their way here not much before we started to eat at 3, well beyond the intended 2. Blessings be, the turkey held up fine even though it had been done for a couple of hours, and we squeezed in a shortened n'hood walk--up 175th and looping back along 12th--before dark. Everybody was convivial as hell, the new card table we'd bought and Ann McCartney's inherited TV trays added enough surfaces for people to put plates on, the food was splendid as usual and, also as customary, had a few fresh surprises: Mark's bread pudding! Priscilla Bowen's celeriac! So, all was ultimately mellow, although C vows to lay down more definite times to people next time around, which, if the world holds steady, for us will be 2001, Mark and Lou's turn coming again next year.

2 Dec.--Unsettled weather, appropriate I suppose to the Battle of Seattle, as the media ganglia has transmitted the WTO street scenes. The window-breaking, trashing, and dumpster fires of the 30th actually amounted to specks on a downtown mosaic of peaceful marching and parade-rest cops. The small anarchist pack--Black Clad Messengers, one of the reporters picked up from them--set off amazement in the press, 3 columnists' worth in the Seattle Times alone; not a clue among the scribblers that the anarchists were following the theory and practice of anarchy. Disruption ~~in their~~ is their game. So far, for all the media shivers--local TV has actually been saner than the papers, having to concentrate on what's happening in their faces rather than rendering essays on the theme of tsk tsk--there's been no blood gushing into the street; there've been no bombings. In the history of crowds, this chapter is atame one so far. Got up this morning to whooping wind, which I not entirely joked to Carol ought to confirm any WTO visitor against ever coming to Seattle again, thanks be. Now at

2 Dec. cont.--a few minutes past eight, the wind has slacked off but a wall of rain is slanting across the Sound from Point Jefferson to Richmond Beach and north. November, even without a customary really big storm of some kind, was wet, 9+ inches of rain versus the average of 5+ inches, and these first several days of December are supposed to be spongy ones. C and I did find openings in the weather to do the last dabs of pruning, and mowing down--with our new devil's-bargain of a gift to ourselves, an electric trimmer--the lavender fringe along the west parapet and the ground asters out front. We'll watch for a chance to nip up to Vancouver, if we can discern a non-stormy space of a couple days.

On the work front: Prairie Nocturne is piling up into some pages, although in a dab here and a splotch there as seems usual for me any more. I'm now at a point where I can spend some time smoothing, and probably deepening, the opening scene between Susan and Wes, ever a tricky spot.

8 Dec.--How the time do go. Basically took Monday off, after the working weekend in Portland, and y'day went to some desk and phone chores and to unplugging--with the power nozzle on a garden hose--the tricky drain that carries water through the deck to the west downspout outside this office. Uh oh, I thought as C and I happened to glance out during one of Monday's spates of rainshower and brief hail and saw water burbling out of that downspout passage and out over the deck; the drainpipe under there is somewhere between the decking and the ceiling of the tv room, not a great place for standing water. But the hose did blast the plug of roof detritus, leaves and maple seeds out of there--pretty surely, that drainpipe had never been cleaned since it was installed during the remodel of this house--and as best I can tell, the piping seems to be sturdy solid plastic.

On the chore end of things, C last night put in what may be her last stint on the Innis Arden board, getting to vote in favor of the Isabels' remodel on 13th Ave. after the 12th Ave. neighbors had wrangled that not very serious view issue all of the year she's been on the board.



8 Dec. cont.--As to the Portland weekend, it was a fine finale to the bookstore trail that began in Hamilton, MT, back there in mid-August. At the well-nigh ideal Borders in Tigard, Carol Hickman generated a crowd that kept me signing steadily for an hour, 93 books sold, 54 of them Mtn Times. Similar success the next day at the venerable Oregon Historical Society literary cattle-call, where I sold 84 books total. Portland continues to treat me wonderfully; some highlights:

--in the Tigard bookline, a woman told me with considerable emotion about reading *This House of Sky* with her mother just before her mother's death from cancer, then using that experience to induce a similar sharing of the book with her father, not much of a reader before that, and, she said, reclaiming him into her life.

--Sat. night, we had dinner at the Heathman with Craig and Kathy Lesley, the first long visit with them in quite a time, and I also made the Oregon His'l Society put me next to Craig at the long booksigning the next day. C and I have our fingers crossed that Craig's about-to-be-published novel, *Storm Riders*, will break through in sizable numbers for him, and at the same time we're a bit worried for him because of the close parallels between this book and Craig's first marriage and voluntary kinship with that wife's disturbed young relative. Far as we know, the wife is still out there and the now-grown boy definitely is, in some kind of supervised existence in Springfield. Here's hoping the book proves charmed, as Craig is due some luck of the better sort. Got a kick as always out of neighboring with him the OHS afternoon. A potential customer came by inquiring about him while Craig was getting a cup of coffee, and I made sure he'd come back shortly when Craig would be there; lo, I soon was pointing out to Craig, here he comes!--and naturally he was a guy who wanted advice on "shortcuts" to getting published and never did buy a book. For his part, Craig got in a good one-liner as C and I and the literary escort, Sonda Rafelik, were conferring about the run to the airport. Craig: "I feel like one of those guys who has to drive to the next rodeo while you're all going in your own plane."

--Also at the OHS: for the first time in my

8 Dec. cont.--formidable autographing career, I signed an earring. A woman who said she was a middle-school teacher was wearing book earrings, about the size of the end of a thumb and with maybe half a dozen ~~par~~ tiny pp. inside the tiny covers. Writing as wee as I could, I just managed to get my name in--then turned to the previous page and thought what a wimp am I: Kathleen Dean Moore had managed to sign there.

--and, unlike previous OHS shindigs when writers could barely turn around without knocking over eagerly helpful volunteer staffers, they were nowhere to be found this time as my stock of books dwindled and dwindled. I was looking around in perplexity, next thing to agitation as customers eddied in and the books vanished, when I heard from down around my elbow: "Do you need more books?" It was a girl about ten years old, in a green ribbed sweater and a Santa cap, who with perfect efficiency went off and brought me an armload of books, leading a big young man with another armload.

--Sat. morning at the Heathman, Bill Lang and Marianne Keddington came in for breakfast w/ us, ~~first~~ an overdue chance to visit with them and first time we'd seen Marianne since she ascended to editorship of the Oregon Historical Quarterly. She reported, with all due umbrage, that when the OHS tried to line up Stephen Ambrose to speak at its annual dinner, the Ambrosian One told 'em it'd cost them ~~\$5,000~~ \$45,000, plus a private plane to fetch him. Ambrose's runaway success with his Macy's-parade-balloon version of Meriwether Lewis, which in fairness to A'brose seems to have surprised him and S&S as much as anybody, brings the hackles right up on these western historians who truly know the territory. Clyde Milner let drop to me ~~that~~ during my Salt Lake gig that as a judge for the History Book Club he'd been given a manuscript copy of Undaunted Courage, and there on the typescript was the joint byline of Ambrose and his wife. Lang's particular emission of steam was that the book mostly swipes Jim Ronda's I&C work. After we had tromped around thoroughly around Ambrose's Potemkin-village-on-the-Missouri, Lang turned to what I'm up to in Prairie Nocturne and with his knowledge of Helena history gave me a helluva good idea with about every second word.

12 Dec.--Steel-curtain rain, the first robust storm of the season. White lumps on the Sound, the scattered but steady breakers I remember from Qn Charlotte Sound on the Alpha Helix voyage--the ship would hit them as if plowing into a ditch bank, then after that shudder would lurch off to one side. Today's combers are all adding up on the Richmond Beach shoreline, a true winter surf boiling white there. In this wondrous house like a distended lighthouse tower I have the habit of poking my head outside every so often, out one door or another, to feel the weather and take in the mid-air sensation that the deck and the thrust living-room give. C has been saying of me and this house that I've fallen in love, and I told her yeah, this makes twice.

Y'day morning, I caught sight of an eagle flapping up through the trees from the shore to Kastners' big down-slope maple, where it lit on the favorite roosting spot there, the third big limb up from the bottom on the south side of the trunk. Something in its claws, and soon ripped up and down its gullet, although we couldn't make out what the tidbit was.

Weathered-in y'day, just in blah showers, we ground our way through the Xmas card proposition: send or ye shall not be sent. We're heading toward 150 on our combo of his, hers, and biz lists, which I find a helluva lot but can't seem to manage to simplify beyond the Xmas letter I put together. Anyway, out they go into the mail tomorrow, and let the return missives roll in.

18 Dec.--Sizable wind late y'day and into the night, of the 35+ m.p.h. sort that we sometimes get as early as mid-Nov.

After the wind's howling, this morning dawned splendidly, the light picking the peaks of the Olympics out of a low backdrop of clouds, and we decided to walk at Shilshole while it wasn't raining. We were there soon after 8 and, feeling good about being out, decided to walk on north of the boat ramp where we usually turn back. We were angling along the sandy beach at Golden Gardens when we heard someone shout, "Orca!" The

18 Dec. cont.--pod of whales was in at least four groups, as many as four of the big fins and arched black backs breaking the water at once, a couple elsewhere, two of three trailing, and on from the marker buoys off Golden Gardens until they went out of sight toward West Point several minutes later. We got to see some wonderful leaps up out of the water, and one pair from the pod came in closer to our shore to make a try at surf scoters swimming there. We watched some roiling in the water, where the orcas were, the scoters bobbing and then the fuffle-fuffle-fuffle of their takeoff across the surface of the water as the birds figured out something was up.

So, another treat of this shoreline life. This was a week when we fairly contentedly played off the weather, walking the n'hood during dry breaks, going about our ~~life~~ inside life when the clouds cut loose again. I kept at the opening scene of Prairie and made notes on later stuff for the book. C honchaed the smoothing of the rippled bedroom carpet (success, although it took two tries by Arnie Vogel's guy, when the ripple migrated into the closet after his first stretch ~~long~~ of it) and the downstairs toilet (better, but slow, s-l-o-w) by a n'hood ~~mayne~~ handyman, Roger Day. On the social front, Wed. night we took David and Kate Laskin to the Provinces to celebrate his book Partisans; they're interesting and entertaining people, so a good time was had. And, oh yes, C's cold: it started late last week, sapped her energy for some days, and by now seems to have gone, without alighting in me.

22 Dec.--Mike Malone's heart gave out yesterday. Strange to think he did not outlive the 20th century. We knew he'd had enormous damage from his first heart attack, and I think a subsequent one. He seems to have gone out of life keeping at what he wanted to do. I've just mailed a note to Kate, and we'll wait to hear if she summons us, now or later, for some sort of ceremony on behalf of Mike. We knew him twenty years, and always after seeing him, experiencing that jackrabbit energy of his and the quick veers of conversation, I'd reflect that he was a friend I was only ever going to know so far, and no deeper. Probably the same went for me, from his view of things.

22 Dec. cont.--But he was one of those Montana bright lights whose generosity gave our life a touch, an angle, it wouldn't otherwise have. He drew us into MSU and Bozeman, and almost certainly that won't be the same from here on.

On a brighter note--literally, because today is as dense with fog as y'day was blissfully sunny: we grabbed the chance y'day to go up to the Skagit, do the dike hike at Indian Slough, then meet Linda and Sydney for lunch at the Calico Cupboard in Scott's bookstore. Those two are flying high, Syd having won an NEH fellowship to do her Middleton Murray book. Linda, with her keen eye for the foibles of academia, had hilarious tales of the UW powers-that-be trying to cope with--i.e. wrest--the \$2 million gift a smitten techie named Rahvi want to lavish on the creative writing program.

And on Monday, we met Mark and Lou Damborg for supper ~~about~~ at the Wild Ginger--which we liked much better than the time we were there w/ Linda and Syd--and then walked up to Benaroya Hall for the Christmas concert of the Seattle Men's Chorus. As C said, the singing was good rather than great, but the production was terrific, from the sheer presence of 150 men massed on risers on the stage to the campy skits. At intermission Lou said what had been going through my mind throughout, how amazing it is, in our lifetimes, to see the change in society where this openly gay event is a civic adornment.

29 Dec.--The week since the last entry has skipped and veered, full of pleasures and damnable chores as well. Among the oddments: this is the year C and I reached the acme of thinking alike, and gave each other identical Christmas cards. The cards ~~ex~~ derived from shops in different towns, even, and were bought 10 days apart, but lo, on Christmas when I opened mine I started to say, "Darling, I've got yours," but then saw C's handwriting and just chuckled myself into shutting up while she opened hers.

Weather note: just now, 3:15 p.m., a lone fishing boat is sidling across my window scene, water and sky pretty much the same smudged color, so that it seems the boat can nose around in whichever elements it wants.



29 Dec. cont.--Christmas Eve and the day, we had family visitations: the Nelsons, ~~the~~ Massachusetts branch, and Marsh came over so Laird and Sarah A. could see our house. Xmas Day, C did a roast beef dinner for the Rodens and Jerry and Lisa Clemens. The next day, Sunday, we went downtown to see the assembled Norton clan, including Gray's new fiancée Stephanie. (For the record on that one: at Sarah's suggestion, we got there after the Seahawks game had started, she met us our front, and we dodged past bus phalanxes to put our car in their indoor set of parking cubbyholes.) The Nortons are keen to help me set up blazingbrands.com on the Web site they gave us last Xmas, and tomorrow I can actually start thinking toward that. It's noteworthy that Laird N. and both Norton sons, Gray and Andrew, are all in Internet biz, and as Laird more or less said about his, much of this is based on solutions looking for problems. Laird's outfit does software for wholesalers that will tell inquiring customers which retail outlets handle their wares; Gray's start-up outfit in North Carolina is doing software which will let small businesses stream music and graphics onto Web pp.; Andrew has 2 'Net lives, workaday at setting up Internet stuff for a car dealer but in his own area he buys and sells parts and paraphernalia for Baja Broncos.

Let's see, what else: C noted our evening appearance at the Rusts, where we met a nice old-line Democratic couple named the Bisnets. I introduced myself to Bob first, then, since he'd said his wife was a fan of my work, he took me over to her and said, "Esther, this is Ivan Doig." "Oh, Bob, it is not," she chided him. "You're not Ivan Doig, are you," she sought confirmation from me. Instead she got my wallet ~~identification~~ identification cards, and we all got a good laugh.

Here on the home front, there's been a lot of wrestling of finances, and this very day we moved around about \$28,000. We remain happily amazed that we've got it to tinker with.

31 Dec., century's end--The Doigs came into this century on the homestead in the Sixteen country, my dad to be born within those chinked log walls sixteen months from then, and this particular sprout of that line watches the last dusk of the 1900s going from silver-gray to blue-gray out there over Puget Sound. Tonight Carol and I will spend some time watching television, the pictures bringing midnight toward us across the time zones (the power grid and other computer-susceptible systems willing). We perch here in amazing comfort, at the end of a decade that gave us and the world a break--the Cold War crumbling away, people like us able to work our way into a reasonable share of the prosperity (I calculate we're at least \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$  million better off than we were ten years ago), only minor repairs on our health needed so far. Surely I am not much better fitted to the century to come than I was to this one where I did my share of scrambling and fending; even now here I sit, with my Civil War beard and mid-century crew cut, wearing my daily dairy-barn chic of denim shirt and bluejeans here in affluent suburbia, a self-portrait of my own stubborn making. But I can sort out three thoughts about how things have been and may come to be, and there's some comfort in all of them. My enduring sorrow about Dad and Grandma is that they never got to taste much of the prosperous life, but at least C and I were able to provide them, there at the last, what amounted to a decent village life rather than the shadow-of-the-poorhouse one they'd have been afflicted with, without our aid. The pair of thoughts beyond that are of Carol and me and this perch we have reached. Simply walking around in this wonderful house, seeing what we have accomplished, reassures me about what the two of us are capable of, together; and looking out from here, into all that water and sky, I happily feel we are more attuned to the rhythms of earthlife than anywhere else we've ever been. From the homestead start, I'll take that.

## History Maker:

(thanks at Museum of History and Industry "History Maker" awards ceremony, Rainier Club, Nov. 10 '99)

I'm living proof that a museum can have a sense of humor--choosing a person who sits around making things up, as a "History Maker." I know poets were once said to be "the unacknowledged legislators of the world," but we novelists never thought we'd ~~get~~ <sup>BE HANDED</sup> control of the official record.

I do have to admit that it crossed my mind when I was told of this award--do they **know** what I was up to, burrowing around down in the <sup>MUSEUM</sup> library ~~here~~ for material for one book or another? When I was working on, say, **Winter Brothers** and trying to recreate the 19th Century world of pioneer diarist James G. Swan, all right, that's semi-respectable research, history of a sort. But for my six works of fiction, can they possibly know that I've been down ~~here~~ <sup>IN THERE</sup> swiping faces--that my file folder of "faces and character information" is full of

photocopies of people I came across in old photo files  
~~IN THE MUSEUM LIBRARY?~~

~~here?~~ That the hair, say, of Miss Nellie Russell, a  
Seattle schoolteacher and eventual treasurer of the  
Daughters of the Pioneers, fit very nicely on my  
character Adair Barclay in **Dancing at the Rascal  
Fair?**

/I like to think that the time and effort I've spent in  
pockets of the past add up to more than compiling a  
novelistic rogues' gallery. History, from such sources  
as ~~this~~ <sup>THE</sup> museum, provide<sup>s</sup> me and my books with what  
I've never known what to call except "the slow poetry of  
fact." The arithmetic of particulars, of beguiling but  
valid historical detail, which creatively gets added up  
into story. At least from this novelist's point of view,  
it's no coincidence that the wonderfully beckoning word  
"story" is contained within that most generous other  
word, "history."

Thank you very much, for this honor.

The last time I saw Thomas Keneally, we were crossing paths in the studio of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Melbourne, where I was on a transcontinental authorial tour--much as he is here tonight--and Tom was there ~~to be~~ on his home airwaves, as he cheerfully enlightened me, "for seditious purposes."

"Here, Ivan, have one of these," he says, pressing on me a bumper sticker for the Australian Republican <sup>PARTY</sup> ~~Movement~~. (For any of you who may have tuned in late, politically, that is the Australian movement to have <sup>THAT</sup> ~~the~~ country declare itself a republic--not necessarily a movement for the wholesale importation of our Republican officeholders.) And so while Tom took to the air, for the cause of the Republic, out I wandered,



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bearing my brave little bumper sticker, to help him set the streets of Australia steaming with sedition.

Great numbers of us have <sup>LONG</sup> marched to the banner of Thomas Keneally. His books are many, and splendid in their variety. He is a writer without fear, who has given readers such a powerfully indigenous novel as **The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith** and the astounding fresh angle of vision into the horror of the Holocaust, **Schindler's List**. He has written of Joan of Arc, and of the American Civil War, and in one of my favorites among his fictional legion, **Passenger**, the narrator is an unborn baby. The Keneally imagination is gloriously stateless, knowing no bounds, seeking always what I have called, when I dedicated a book

to Tom and a handful of other daring writers, “the eloquence of the edge of the world.”

Tonight he brings with him an astonishing historical tapestry-- stories he has searched out of the Irish diaspora, the 19th Century political prisoners who left Ireland in chains and made their mark on Australia and America. **The Great Shame**--subtitled “and the triumph of the Irish in the English-speaking world”--is history told boldly by one of the world’s great craftsmen of narrative. Not the least of ~~this book’s~~ <sup>THE</sup> OF THIS CAPACIOUS BOOK charms is that it at last will bring fame to my home county in Montana-- Meagher County, named for the Irish rebel and American Civil War general, Thomas Francis Meagher. Here now to share with us the epic

he calls **The Great Shame** is one of our <sup>4</sup> great citizens in the republic of words--Thomas Keneally.

Reading here tonight, within a dissertation's throw of Suzzallo Library and the archives over there, all this brings around in me one of those circumferences of life that clasp together the way Yeats said a poem ought to end--with the click of a well-made box. It was in 1966 that I came to this campus, and within minutes of that, to the University Book Store, as a graduate student in history. In one of the very first seminars I took from Vernon Carstensen, in his field of history of the American West, Vernon sized me up--with my knockabout past of growing up as the offspring of ranch hands and ranch cooks in the sagebrush of

Montana--and strongly advised me to take a look at a book written<sup>2</sup> by his old college roommate--the title was **Wolf Willow**, and of course that roommate of his was Wallace Stegner. Ultimately, with some hauling and tugging and gritted teeth by both of us, Vernon Carstensen did manage to turn the restless young journalist that was me into a Ph.D.--only to see me promptly fall off the wagon again, to the writing life. Eventually, when I reached the stage of books, Vernon came to savor my doings, and ended up with one of my novels dedicated to him. But just recently came that cosmic click that I think would have particularly delighted Vernon. The San Francisco Chronicle, this



spring, took notice of that Modern Library list of 100 “best books” written in English this century, and pointed out that the list looks as if America “ran westward from New York to the Rockies and then stopped, like a dog at the end of a leash.” That East Coast-centric list would have been raw intellectual meat for Vernon Carstensen, as an example of--in one of those great antique words he so loved--”mumpsimus”: an idea firmly and wrongly held. The San Francisco Chronicle, perhaps goaded by the ghost of Vernon, got up its own list of the 100 best books by writers in the western United States--and there among the top four vote-getters is the old Carstensen roommate, Stegner, and the old Carstensen student,

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yours truly. In all the echoes this campus holds for me, I now hear Vernon chortling that the San Francisco Chronicle produced a temporary cure for Eastern mumpsimus.

Well, now to the current word output of yours truly, and tonight I want to read you a pair of selections from **Mountain Time**. These two selections are held together by rocks. One of the angles of wordplay in the title of this novel is meant to invoke geological time, the clock of earth, and its manifestations to us in its most lasting forms of mountains and stone. In these two scenes, as you'll hear, the rocks take a particular familiar and evocative form to me and my characters--they stand in cairns,

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along the grazing-land shoulders of the Rockies, and on up into those mountains. They are sheepherders' monuments--and this first short scene I think will show what they are and how they came to be.

A few words about the characters:

This little scene involves Mariah McCaskill, a highly intense photographer for a Montana newspaper. Mariah is newly back in the West, having won a Fuji Fellowship to travel the world and take pictures for a year. Mariah is also licking her wounds from a failed love affair, with a New Zealand glacier guide named Colin. Colin, much younger than her, wore his total philosophy of life on

his Mount Cook Guide Service <sup>6</sup>sweatshirt--"Glaciers are a kick in the ice."

We meet Mariah here as she is trying to shoot a feature photo--up along the Rocky Mountain Front in northern Montana--for her Sunday paper. She's been trying to get an artistic shot of glacier leavings called "erratic boulders," which sometimes are wonderfully rouged with orange lichens--but so far, she has not found the right rock:

I'm honored to be part of this event tonight--any friends of libraries and books are, of course, friends of mine.

One of the best friends that books and book people had, here in town, sadly is no longer with us. As I'm sure many of you know, Norman Sturdevant, co-owner of the Watermark bookstore, died last week, far short of his expected years. Norman and Patti and I came into the book business at roughly the same time together, and from my end of it, I always did readings and signings for them and their loyal legions of customers, all the way back when they had their Wind-and-Tide store in Oak Harbor, as well as the hallowed Watermark store here. From their

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end of it, Norman and Patti always provided classy doings--fun and food and good talk, and big supplies of customers who bought books. What I will particularly miss about Norman is the grace and care he brought to those afternoons and evenings--for instance, when he would write out his introduction of me before a reading, it was *written*. Norman had a lovely feel for good language.

For just a minute before we get to tonight's reading, I'd like to give back, in memory of Norman, a paragraph of my own. It's from my novel **Ride with Me, Mariah Montana**, the section where the narrator, Jick McCaskill, realizes that his grown daughter, Mariah, intense and brassy as she is, is haunted by the thought--as she blurts it to him--"I won't always have you." Here is Jick's response:

“I’ll tell you what, Mariah. When the time comes for me to go to the marble farm, you and Lexa just give me the Scotch epitaph, how about. They used it there in the old country when somebody special to them went out of the picture ahead of time, so to speak. What they’d do was put on the stone: ‘Here lies all of him that could die.’”

I don’t write on stone, but if I did, Norman too would have the Scotch epitaph.

Ivan and Carol Doig  
Itinerary, Oregon trip  
February 4 - 15, 1999

February 4-8

Bend.

Broken Top community. 1-800-382-7690 or (503) 383-7600.  
Within community, staying at Courtyards Townhomes.

Friday, Feb. 5

7 a.m. Cable tv appearance.

1:30-3:30. Central Oregon CC class. Sally to drive.

4 p.m. Broken Top book club. Rascal Fair.

Saturday, Feb. 6

2-3:30. Reading/signing at Paulina Springs bookstore. 45  
minute drive.

6 p.m. Broken Top club. Cocktails.

7 p.m. Dinner & discussion about writing.

Sunday, Feb. 7

Dinner w/ Dick Sandvik of Paulina Springs books. 6:30

February 9-10

Chico CA.

Oxford Suites. 1-800-870-7848.

Feb. 10: 3-4 class of 50, frosh to grads.

7:30 lecture.

February 11

Medford.

Comfort Inn, Medford North. (541) 772-9500.

Ashland: 2-3 class at SOU.

Medford: 7:30 lecture.

February 12

Corvallis.

Salbasgeon Inn. (541) 753-4320.

2-3 booksigning.

5:30 dinner at Gables w/ Bill Robbins et al.

7:30 reading w/ reception at Bill's in Philomath afterward.

February 13

McMinnville.

Steiger Haus. (503) 472-0821.

February 14

Portland.

Governor Hotel. 1-800-554-3456

February 15

10:50 a.m. lv. hotel.

11:15 to 11:30. arrive U Portland.

Noon lunch w/ faculty and students.

1:30 p.m. class presentation.

Return to Seattle.