

[2002]

1 Jan.--Ought Two begins in rain, steady now by mid-afternoon. We scooted into yardwork ahead of it this morn, going to the north patio right after our n'hood walk and pruning the venerable apple tree there. Fore and aft of that it's been finances, the annual year-end counting-up which shows last year was a flat one in our worth, good enough considering what a slide the stock market took. Last night, the Eve, was less gaudy with fireworks than usual (not that we stayed up any length of time to monitor). We had a terrific supper of crab and a stunningly good bottle of French champagne left from the Paul Allen gifties of the St. P trip, so we're happy campers at the brink of this annum.

3 Jan.--I've been chockablock busy, without even getting anywhere near the research or writing regimen of the ms yet. Trying to line up the doing of projects--my chronic ticktock of trying to make things happen, insure that they'll get done--I put in a phone message to Pat Chester of the yard guys we hire, and damned if he didn't come out in the afternoon to look over our list of chores and scheduled 'em for tomorrow. So, sigh, progress there wipes out anything else for that day, such as my intention to get to the UW library for research before the holiday break ends. Also am still spending time on finances, which in spite of our inclinations get more and more complex; with my new Roth IRAs, which make good financial sense--\$33,000 to work with, the total tax on it forever about \$750--I have one more stock portfolio to set up, for instance. But we're supremely fortunate to have so much wherewithal, and tending it is a helluva lot better than scrabbling through life without it.

Y'day I caught up on correspondence a bit, w/ letters to Dick Brown and Mike Olsen, and some other desk chores. C took Margaret Svec to the Capitol Hill gathering for Diane Gould, who is back in chemo after considerable years, and came home to the luscious crockpot split-pea soup remnant that was a bonus of the hambone from Thanksgiving. My lower body--knees and the groin pull--both began feeling better, naturally right after I made a Gp Health apptmt w/ Dr. Kato on the 11th to talk about doing something for the groin pull.

7 Jan.--Now to begin again, but at least the work is on a finale. The ms has to carry Susan, Monty, Wes to the ending I have in mind--"the conclusion I base my facts on." It's a dark wild morning, the rest of a sizable storm that moved in y'day afternoon. We had a fine restorative weekend, Saturday spent mostly reading (Iridescent Light, about the NW school of artists, which I'm finding perspective and stimulation in), and y'day morning I sneaked in a revamping of the strawb row ahead of the rain. And with some pang, we took down Xmas--C had done a lovely display atop the bookcases, candles and cards and kudas atop a set of nifty runners that made it look festive.

Later: this is a persistent storm, and perhaps a significant one, tearing away the snowpack. Mid-morning here, the temp was 56, and the freezing level in the Cascades is 8,000', i.e. everything below that susceptible to melt.

8 Jan.--The weather blew itself out by early afternoon today; broken clouds and blue now, @ 2:50. This morn was still a series of showers, after at least 28-30 hours of straight heavy rain from afternoon of the 6th all thru y'day. Have just walked the garden area, and everything prospers, basking in this 50ish warmth. C and I were both taken w/ article in Sunday NYT magazine about the ornithologist studying black guillemots' migration and feeding patterns on Cooper I. north of Barrow; his 27 summers there, deep elegant observation like the lake-thaw-date work of the U of Wisconsin limnologist, utterly shows warming, warming, warming.

So, in our crevice of time on this abused planet, we're trying to achieve. I spent the morning gearing into the ms again, making some plot decisions, still circling warily around others. Managed to add a couple pp. to the ms total, but it's going to be a slog to get these final 75 or so pp.

10 Jan.--I'm battering onward w/ the ms, y'day a bleak grindstone day to get the word allotment but today better. Weather has gone iffy, though we sneaked in a yardwork afternoon y'day. Met the Nelsons @ the Provinces last night, they are bravely making the ferry loop--home by way of Kingston--to continue this tradition. Here on the homefront, C scored a remarkable triumph today by getting the plumber Aaron Schuster, recommended by the Atwoods,

10 Jan. cont.--in here this morning and in $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours fixing every damn one of the chronic nagging plumbing problems.

14 Jan.--These mornings I look into the face of the day as soon as there is any light at all. The first fade of dark, really, when the white of the mountains comes just visible. Am up and around by usually 4:30, retrieving the bribed-to-the-front-steps NY Times and the Wall St Journal, languidly dropped at the head of the driveway--the new deliverer must barely manage to nudge it out his car window--and having them with my mug of coffee. The pivot to work, which I look forward to when it's rewriting, is hard in this first-drafting stint. Today is going to be doubly tough, the new tree pruner Chris coming with his crew @ 9. Anybody can write on a good day, right?

Had a calm weekend, yardwork Sat. afternoon. Y'day was chillier, and while C bundled up and went out for an hour of clipping stuff in 46 degree gray, I hung inside and cleaned out some financial files. Also began, alas, one more regimen: stretching, as prescribed by Dr. Kato after looking me over on the 11th in regard to the damnable catch, chronic susceptible spot, in my right groin which bothers 2-3 times a year and this last time kept at it nearly a week instead of the usual couple of days. No hernia, she says; try yoga or stretching.

Later: 3:35 p.m. now, a band of clouds just above the Olympics but the sun slanting down a very clear light onto the peaks, giving them great dimension and cutout depths. The weather has been fickle all day, chilly, then enough sun to be enticing, then a spatter of shower... luckily it provided a non-rainy morning for the 3-hour spate of pruning we had done by Mike Lampers' successor, Chris of Precision Treeworks, his partner Kevin and their helper John. They were keen to please, on this first job from us, and so the pair of downslope plum trees now stand noble in their bones, the obtrusive umbrellas of little straight-up branches lopped away. I was in and out--mostly out--hovering over the work, and C did similarly on the front-yard trees. So, the place is now greatly shaped up, extremely early in the year, and to top off the day of diligence, Sigrunn Ness brought over probably \$150 of frozen fish filets and king crab legs, as thanks for our tending their mail when they go away, as they are about to do again--once more unto Norway.

15 Jan.--These are great mornings. @ 5 min. to 8 now, the peaks of Constance and Warrior are in peach and pastel light within a crevice in the clouds, magical light.

20 Jan.--Hefty wind this afternoon, mocking us in out of the sunshine we'd love to be working in. Before the bluster set in, in the hour before lunch we dug out (again) the yucca plants at the head of the driveway. We're good at these guerrilla gardening forays, getting some chore or another done in 45-degree weather, and as a result the place really looks pretty damned good--pruned, tidied.

On the word front, I had another not easy week but I think shaped the opening of the "Strivers' Row" section, and I hope, o god I hope, winkled out of the folds of my brain the needed turns of plot.

Socially, Judy & Gary Shirley came for drinks at the end of the afternoon y'day; pleasant folks from up the street. C and I did a dab of calendaring today, lining up a possible trip to the rainforest, seeing a few folks here.

22 Jan.--Weather lately has been a cross-section of grindstone, gray, clammy, wearing. Temp is finally up from 40ish to 45 or so this afternoon, but I'm about to go have my teeth cleaned, yecch. C has been doing the household some good by polishing off some shopping chores, and this morn she found a place to re-do the bedroom chair. On the ms, I'm gambling that I have a handle on the remainder of the plot and enough roughed pp. to advance to sorting filecards for bits and pieces to chink into the structuring now.

24 Jan.--The weather is still coarse, stout wind for 2nd day in a row, showers, solid cloud cover, whitecaps traveling over and over on the Sound. Hunkered in hard on making pp. today, after couple of days of necessary file-card sorting, and mauled out 3 pp. So, pretty close to on schedule.

28 Jan.--Penned in by the weather. Weekend's inch or so of snow, and periodic squalls, caused us to scrap the Nature Conservancy fieldtrip @ Port Susan we'd intended on Sunday, and freezing nights and another forecast of snow for tomorrow stalls us on our intention to go to the rainforest. Having said that, we're both dazzled by the lightshow on the south end of the mountains this morning, fresh snow and shadows on north slopes from the low-on-the-horizon angle of the sun giving a scene of Ansel Adams-like contrasts and depths. And during the weekend's squalls I made some notes on the touches the light snow put on the landscape and house:

- tatty sleeves of slush on the deck railing
- white heightenings of tree limbs, particularly on the old apple and the downslope plums
- the changing textures of the veg garden dirt and the barked areas as snow waxed and waned
- the heather plants, their blossom colors giddy against the snow, also formed some visible clumps of snow in their crowns: like fat little kids making snowballs
- with the water of the Sound blotting out the snow flakes, and the clouds above the same color as the water, the illusion was that the snow seemed to be falling from below us, i.e. from the point where the water is beneath our line of sight from the living room windows.

Weather aside, not that it is at this time of year, I put in probably too much of the weekend on finances. Have also had some funk about morass of chores there always seems to be, despite diligence at clipping articles, filing, sorting; am starting to come out of it now, but the clerkly stuff has been getting to me.

Visitor for supper last night, Midge McGilvray over from Spokane to visit her music-playing son.

5 Feb.--Between making pages and rebuilding vegetable beds, it's been hard to get to the diary. Need to note, though, that I'm intending to turn a corner in the ms and load up on whatever Harlem research seems propitious, in a raid on the UW library this afternoon. Have been working my imagination, good and hard, on how Monty would have seen things when vaulted from Montana to New York, and am now at the point where crystallizing details would help. The weather is supportive of a library run,

5 Feb. cont.--showers moving in from across the Sound at mid-morn. The past 2 afternoons were 50ish and dry, the Doigs' idea of a good time this season of the year, and I shaped up the SE veg bed and the long one for lettuce, adding compost, mixing in organic fertilizer. It intrigues me what a thing of beauty a freshly built-up and tamped garden mound is to me; the soil is brought out of its slump, its shoulders are squared, and I somehow find that something lovely to achieve.

Speaking of lovely, great treat during our n'hood walk y'day: @ intersection of 10th & Innis Arden Way there by the little viaduct, a pileated woodpecker that had been up in the trees yakking suddenly burst down and went to work on ~~the~~ a sawcut bole of a big madrona, practically beside us. It pretty well ignored us as we stood no more than 20 feet away watching it hammer and pry.

I took a three-day weekend, the writing pace through January suggesting such a breather, and on Friday we went to the Frye Museum to see their exhibit of Ryechin and two other Russian-American artists, neither up to his level. The Ryechin stuff is just great, though, kind of miraculous how he caught on to New Mexico and ignited its colors in his work. Also had a good bout of socializing on Sunday night when C, inspired by QFC sale on rib roast, got the Damborgs over here for dinner with us, just in time for 5 o'clock sunset, Mark bearing a terrific claret he had in his cellar stash, all fine.

The outer world? Enron-beset, murky on the terrorist front, the Bushniks ready to spend the military hog-fat again. Stockwise, I've sold 4 or 5 ahead of the Enron avalanche, getting us out of Elan with a bare profit, out of Tyco with a sturdy one.

12 Feb.--Am fiddling pretty damn hard trying to keep the dance going. Have rummaged my way thru the pile of UW books I gathered a week ago, now must do selective ph' copying, return 'em and get another batch. The research has been useful, although the library experience again is depressing: how fractured the holdings are, how much scavenge-hunting across 4 floors and 2-3 buildings to get books together for a look.

Here on the home front, the brightest achievement has been the veg garden, Jan. spinach newly up, the coldframe out there perking lettuce for us, the place really in

12 Feb. cont.--tiptop shape for this time of year. Good piece of socializing when Linda and Jeff came for soup supper on the 8th. Here at the desk I'm flailing away at sundry biz/prof'l matters that surfaced in the past few days like a school of sea monsters, along these lines:
--"recharacterizing" my hard-calculated Roth IRA conversion back to ordinary IRA, when taxwork shot it down;
--sicking Jack Kaleas on recasting my Prof Sharing plan because of GUST amendments, whatever the fuck they are; probably about \$1500 of IRS-inspired housekeeping there;
--responding to request from Greg Johnson of MT Rep abt them having a playwright do a version of This House of Sky; will tell them to go ahead if they can swallow the permission process, give me a final sign-off, and not inflict big paperwork on me
--being phone-interviewed (in about an hour) by Tyrone Beason of S. Times about Linda Bierds' poetry; that'll be worthwhile, but I do have to get a few specific examples in mind.

Atop it all, we're going to try again to get to the coast and the rainforest, at start of next week. So: doing okay, but pecked to death by seasonal onset of ducks once more.

Feb. 19--In room 333 of the Port Angeles Inn, née the ~~Hill Haus~~ Hill Haus of earlier staves, here above the harbor. The immense tanker Overseas Washington, at least 2 city blocks long, overnighed in the bay, and just now is being approached by the big red Crowley tug to help belay it out into the Strait. The old workhorse ferry Coho just left for Victoria. And in the pattern we began out here in probably '66, we'll head for Dungeness Spit when the tide has turned enough toward low, likely about lunchtime.

We caught the 10:10 ferry on Sunday the 17th, hiked the Spit, then headed to Forks. Y'day we managed both a wondrous Hoh rainforest walk of about an hour (some snow on the trail, and ultimately what looked like unremitting mud ahead) and a quick sample of Rialto Beach, where the wind was strong. Have had some terrific bird viewings on this trip:

--on the Spit, a constant scattering of loons in the westside water, a little group of scoters ²motoring at each other and evidently displaying and courting, some *mergansers and grebes. Then 2/3 of the way up the trail to the parking lot on our way back, loud cries of groark, a raven summoning his mate to ~~a~~ a treetop about 60 feet ~~a~~ away; watched ~~a~~ them courting and preening each other, Tony Angell's wonderful raven prints of ours to the very life.

--after the Hoh hike, yogurt lunch at the pond/swamp just west of the visitor center, watching hooded mergansers and ringneck ducks. Earlier, on the trail, a hairy woodpecker flew onto a trail beside us and *pecked away without paying us any attention.

*--Also saw, quite a ways out in water, a pigeon guillemot.

--Nearly forgot the elk! Herd of about 25, just off the road across from the Hard Rain cafe; pair of young bulls sparred with their horns a little, the big females either grazing or folded down in the grass.

Nights on this trip, and for that matter before we left home, we've enjoyed CBC coverage of the Olympics (the commercials are at least fresh to us, and the events seem less chopped up than on NBC²), particularly the surprise Australian gold winners Bradbury in speed skating and Alisa Camplin in women's aerial skiing. Goodoh!

24 Feb.--Eagle weather, the winged beasties gliding north into the teeth of the north-northwest wind that's made this one of the chilliest but brightest days of the winter. Just before lunch we watched 3 eagles and a hawk all aloft at the same time.

To catch up very briefly, the trip to the coast went well, the 2nd hike on Dungeness Spit producing a sighting of oldsquaw ducks to add to the first hike's aviary. We came back on the 19th, and on 20th did a grand day of gardening, planting peas, couple varieties of lettuce, C feeding the front hedge its annual Ironite, all dandy. Thursday and Friday I whaled back into the ms research, inserting myself into Harlem of the mid-1920s a little. Friday night we met Mark & Lou Damborg for dinner @ Tulio, then went to Act for the one-hander starring R. Hamilton Wright, Fully Committed; it's a virtuoso piece, Wright as a restaurant booker doing all the voices on the phone as well as his, and about ten min. from the end he "jumped," i.e. skipped ahead in the complicated self-dialogue, as his consultation w/ the prompter proved; "You're in for the 2-hour version instead of the hour and a half," he ~~said~~ told the audience, drew a breath, and plunged in where he'd erred--it actually was quite a treat for C and me, to see the craft of that. Other than that downtown viewing, we've been sampling considerably into the Salt Lake Olympics, saying adios tonight.

28 Feb.--Earthquake anniversary, a year since the big-enough one. Unlike that 60ish abnormally summerlike day, today is bright and brisk, wind out of the north. We've been having splendid moon mornings, the full deal up there turning coppery over Kingston sometimes, or this morning something entirely new--the moon in back of a low cloud, casting light onto the water behind Point Jefferson, as if there was a stupendous set of searchlights sending illumination out from the Suquamish shore.

) Have been whaling away at the ms, all this week and the end of last, and am too weary to do the main news much justice, but I had another good report with Dr. Ginsberg y'day. My blood warning signs are staying stable. And in

28 Feb. cont.--what I suppose is mordantly reassuring news, he passed along to me a current New England Journal of Medicine piece giving the statistics that indicate something else is likely to kill me before MGUS=myeloma gets to it.

The Provincines with the Nelsons last night, a fine time; with great gameness they are so far looping in from their Bainbridge life to carry on with these monthly fests.

7 March--The Skagit Chief is damn near cutting through our backyard with its log boom, angling inward to this shore for whatever nautical reason. C just called down that there are seals on the forward part of the boom, and indeed the binocs show 35-40 of them sacked out there. This afternoon has been one spectacle on the Sound after another, squalls making a show on headland after headland. The weather turned blowy and cold y'day or the day before, but we haven't had any moisture to show for it.

I'm working my brains out trying to get the ms draft done, and even at the end of the next couple of weeks, the stamina limit of this stint, I'll probably have a month or two of this same pace. It stays astounding to me the level of exertion the sentences take.

**8 March--We've had our snowstorm, a 3" soaker last night. Just now--3:45, tired shank of the day and week--the veg garden has come bare again.

Am about to go for a massage, doubly welcome after tremulous emphasis to the week that came in the mail: jury summons. But by damn, managed to dig out Dr. Taplin '90 letter laying out my back woes, and will see if it staves this off again.

As to the week's work, good enough: made my goal of finishing draft versions of Wes in mansion and Susan back from S. Fork teaching year, except for a dangling graf I'll try to use as a fuse on Monday.

**see 27 April catchup entry from notebook

11 March--Have just quit the manuscript for the day, @ 2:45, having started @ 6, and while this was quite a good day for a Monday there's still a feeling of only glacial accumulation of the needed page total. I'll stick at this pace this week and next, which should give me a total of 10,000 words since the holidays, and around 90,000 all together, then we intend a break with our first Vancouver trip in damn-all years.

The day is a howler, a big rain much of the night and all morning, and this afternoon what we think are the strongest winds of the winter. (C says March is winter, this year.) Managed to plant a row of spinach y'day and lay out the slightly smaller configuration of the lawn that C wants, to fight ragged edges and weeds. And Saturday was highly social, a morning walk of Carkeek Park w/ David Williams and Marjorie, then tamale-pie supper at the Rodens. John was in a good mood--lord, what a difference that makes--despite what seems to be rocky finances up and down the family, Jerry Clemens @ age 50 laid off from his techie job, David Goodloe hanging on at his company on one big continuing project, and if we've heard right from John a while back, he's taken out a home loan to meet something due on short-selling or a land deal, it wasn't clear which. Yikes. We're huddling in from the uncertainties of the stock market and beyond, taking great care to stay even, and just that gives us some whimwhams.

It's six months now since the terrorists mutilated the future with the Twin Towers plot, and we're both somewhat pessimistic regarding further attacks. I think there's an outside chance Al Qaeda are actually tinhorn operators who shot their wad on Sept. 11--the strew they seem to have left behind them in Afghanistan could point to that--but the bigger likelihood is further sleeper cells in wait for another multiple attack, of course gorier and more panic-inducing if they can possibly do it. Can't say it doesn't concern us; it's hard to believe Bush and his bunch are up ~~to stifling~~ to stifling it all.

17 March--The Olympic mtns were white down to the hem of their skirts this morn. Stiff cold wind from N-NW y'day and today, with snow squalls but no lasting accumulation y'day morn.

Have done nothing substantive this weekend--at least compared with last weekend, when I tweaked the ms's opening scene a lot further toward what I think is the way I want it--and by now, probably won't. The week's writing went reasonably well, the scene of Wes and Susan on the cattle drive substantiating itself maybe better than any of the others since the holidays. Another week of grinding as hard as I can, then we intend a Vancouver trip.

Batch of The Yearling arrived, and damned if my intro doesn't look pretty good.

24 March--Winding down household tasks toward our trip to Vancouver in the morn. Since last entry, we had a cold hard turn into spring--it snowed on 1st day, and was raw the next--and now mellow mid-50s y'day and today. Did some gardening. On the ms, I have reached the Helena earthquake scene, w/ about 12,000 words done since turn of year. Slower than I've wanted, but I'll now try for a full draft by Memorial Day.

Good socializing last night w/ Eric & Jan Nalder; took 'em to the Provinces to celebrate their new house in Suquamish, across the water from us. As ever we asked Eric how much he could tell us about what he's working on for the San Jose Merc News, the answer is the Gov. of Calif. No specifics, but I asked if he & his investigative partner on this, I think the Merc News Sacramento bureau chief, have a specific avenue of look in mind, i.e. this isn't a general frisk of Grey Davis? 5 or 6 of them, said Eric. Only further comment was that Davis spends "all his time" raising money.

1 April--Wow, there is just too much to life to usher regularly into these pages. Nearly 4:45 now, after a day of resuming work on the ms, and I'm too beat to do last week, a blessed vacation in unblest weather, much justice. Suffice to start with saying we got away to Vancouver for the night of the 25th, 31 floors high--as up as it was possible to go--in the Delta Pinnacle above Coal Harbour.

2 April--C did a comprehensive diary entry on our V'couver trip, so I'm going to punt and go on to our March 29 date with Linda and Sydney in the Skagit. Met 'em at the gate to the Indian Slough hike, the weather crummy but not quite raining and not quite blowing hard enough to discourage us, so we did that walk and then had lunch at the Rhodie. The 4 of us at our favorite corner table, the Rhodie owners Carol and Don newly back from 4 mos. in Spain and cooking up to their usual wonderful level--as I said to Linda in a note, to hell with Camelot, I'll take that. Linda is about to be profiled in the S. Times Sunday magazine--the reporter called me among others--and we talked about that and her work on her New & Selected volume, and so on. Something she asked us about St. Petersburg reminded me I'd meant to tell her about "bone music," bootleg jazz records made from old X-ray plates, and the other three of us could see her leap onto that, Sydney saying aside to me "You've got her!" Over the weekend I photocopied the Sunlight at Midnight reference about that, and also some stuff to include w/ my letter to Ron McFarland of the U. of Idaho English dept., trying civilly to steer his sabbatical project question--what memoirs influenced me in writing SSky--toward Hey, you know, there's a chance there was some originality behind that book.

The weather has warmed a little, and dried enough, that we're getting outside these afternoons, working on the place. At the desk, I had to clamber hard to get going on the ms today--finances mucked up the early part of the morn--but I did get another couple of pages done. Trudge, trudge.

11 April--Alas, poor goddamn diary. The marathon of reaching a full ms draft just shunts this aside day after day; I'm generally too weary to face any more empty white space. If the weather would have let us outside I'd probably not be at this right now. But, hence: I'm probably going to be able to make a Memorial Day deadline on achieving the sonofabitching draft, or close. The most heartening sign I've had lately is that the midsection of the book, the Fort Assiniboine episode, looks surprisingly good as I glance back at it, and if I keep plugging and give this other

11 April cont.--damnably hard part of the book some time to season, maybe the finale will live up to the rest of the book.

A splendid good time last Sat. night when the Walkinshaws came for dinner. Jean, at 75, is plugging away in her own indefatigable fashion at Channel 9. Walt was just back from fancy fishing in Yucatan, at a place which has decided to try for a couple of kinds of niche tourist trade--fishermen and nudists. Despite our accusations, he claimed his bunch had not coincided with their bunch.

Weather has turned showery, but maybe is staying warm enough to do the vegetables some good. Tonight we'll have a salmon salad with some of our own lettuce mixed in with our plentiful spinach, huzzah.

12 April--A reasonable end of the writing week, while not a thunderously triumphant one. Some stitches are missing, but I have a continuous skein of ms all the way to Susan's mission to NY. There's still much to be invented, there at the NY end of the tale, but I have some rough pp. waiting, and if I can conjure some of the scenes I've already managed to, I ought to be able to come up with the rest. It was reassuring, this morning, to glance back at the section of Monty in Harlem and see how fairly easily improvable it is.

2:45 of a Friday, and C just has come in from yard work, some ministrations to the lawn despite this being a gloomed-over afternoon. If the weather stays lousy tomorrow, I may try a UW library run.

22 April--Hectic, Jesus, hectic. Counted ahead at the start of the week this morn and found I have probably 15 scenes to complete in this next-to-last section of the book, which floored me. Grimly set to work on the first 3, and I think whipped one and nearly another, and scored some progress on the other. Damn, though, it's going to be a strenuous stretch to get all those done to some reasonable level by Memorial Day, let alone the finale that I'd hoped to reach by then.

Well, it's what I do, and there's never been any clause that says it has to be easy. On the better scale of life, we had a perfectly fine anniversary, # 37, with a good lunch at Ray's Boathouse.

27 April--On about the 23rd or 24th and blessedly since, the ms work took a very discernable turn for the better. I can only credit brutally hard work as the reason, after I started the week with the dismaying count of scenes yet to be finished in this section of the book, 15 or more. As Hillary is said to have said of Mt. Everest--"Knocked the bastard off"--I knocked off seven of those this week, some quite short but others substantial. Perhaps most encouraging, the tired old bin of atmospherics--what room the characters are in, how they look at each other--began to refill itself pretty nicely, so that the scenes feel as they're not going to need much propping up in revise. This sort of progress, which I don't think I've recognized since the hiking scene in Mtn Time and the dambreak in Bucking, comes at quite a cost; the bargain side is that I feel so much better, with an interesting buzz on virtually all day long, but the deficit is that I'm really getting tired. It's Saturday morn now, and I've been emptying my pocket notebook, which in and of itself would take nearly all morning if I let it. So, I'm going to dump here a pair of undone diary nudges I found in it, mercy-kill a couple of other chores, and try to take the weekend easy. The weather, not so incidentally, has been a good soaking rain, most of y'day and last night, clearing now. The belated entries:

--In the sun's transit northward along the Olympics this time of year, on March 4 it set behind the Brothers.

--the snow--and I can't tell if it was the soaker mentioned on March 8--provided these details:

--ragged sleeves of slush on the deck railing

--the outlined white surfaces of limbs on the apple and plum trees

--changing textures of the veg garden dirt as snow hit, melted, dampened, soaked, began to cover

--the heather, making snowballs in blossoms

--with the sky and mountains blotted by the storm (into a single grayness of moisture), the snow seems to fall from below us, i.e. down there against the vegetation where it's the first time it can be seen descending.

28 April--A fine beautiful day, finally, with clear sky and hours of sailboats skitting past, on their way back from what must have been an overnight Victoria race. Also, C sat up in bed at 5 this morn and there was the Norwegian Sky cruise ship alight, in the Sound like a newly opened treasure chest. It's heading for 10 now, C is fussing together a crockpot pea soup for when the Damborgs come tonight, and I'm about to head for the garden.

1 May

~~April 28~~ Well, hell. Y'day was so exquisite and the forecast was for more of the same, so I intended to take today off and we'd go to the Skagit flats. The lid of gray cloud hasn't budged all day, ~~and~~ it stayed chilly and breezy enough that we didn't even go to Plan B, a walk of the Arboretum and lunch out; just hunkered in and wrote, which at least brought me the best advance yet on what has proved to be a tough week, after last week's real feeling of progress.

5 May--January she come back, fickle weatherdevil her. A stream of cold air all the way from the Gulf of Alaska started passing through here y'day, on into tomorrow; temp around 50 or less, blowy, bits of showers. Spent some time today trying to organize myself toward the Montana trip. Had my eyes checked Friday, less than a year after last checkup, and damned if my reading prescription ~~don't~~ need to go back toward the earlier one; I'm losing some focus flexibility, and a compromise prescription ought to make newspapers and books easier.

Tough week of work, having lost 5-6 hrs out of the work total by 3 visits to medical facilities, the eye exam and the skin doc on Mercer I. and then Gr H pharmacy.

12 May--Weekend of good weather, and we're to mark it today by going to a Sunday baseball game; Marshall Nelson was able to snag the law firm's season tix for today because no client can be that self-indulgent on Mothers' Day, he says. For whatever the hell reason--and it's not because of exertion, I've been damned careful of them--my knees are acting up more than they have in months, so we are going to take advantage of the parking pass Marsh mailed us and forge into the belly of the beast, a

12 May cont.--garage south of the stadium.

Right now C is walking the n'hood w/ Ann McCartney (I'm saving my knees for the Safeco concrete), who over-nighted with us after a conference in Portland. She coincided at supper last night with Tony and Lee, whom we hadn't seen in a while. Tony is really stove up with ~~xxx~~ his back, and apparently is finally going to see a doctor about it. He's starting to make the shift toward retirement, @ end of June, and is reading about early naturalists, feeling his way back into the history of bird artists etc., which should be a stimulating immersion for him. The two of us vowed to get back to meeting for occasional coffee and gab--he brought it up, and I was about to because it had been on my mind; ought to be good for both of us.

Meanwhile on the front lines, I had a weeksaving day of work on Friday, a fresh 4 pp., double the usual, that pretty much took care of the scene where Susan and Monty try to work with the alteration in his voice instead of replicating it. I also at last realized how to straighten out the scene of Wes prowling Scotch Heaven, although there's probably a sizable 2-3 days' work to bring that around. Am now down to half a dozen key scenes, apart from the finale, and it's chancy whether I can whip 'em by the time we go to Montana, but possibly. In any case, my intention is to be measured in the writing work thru the summer, not have the season plagued by the harsh schedule I've been on.

The neglect of this diary slid over a small but intriguing incident of last month, when a phone call came in out of the blue, New Mexico guy named Jack Loeffler, some kind of folklorist, wants to know if I can steer him to old Scotch sheepmen in Montana. C fielded a couple of calls from him and steered him to a time I'd be available, and I groaned and pulled out my "sheep" file and a few other things, and by god realized I'm actually a pretty good source. Suggested to him some things, such as little classified ads in county papers, that he hadn't thought of, and we had a pretty decent conversation; it did tickle at me a little that the one time we had glancingly met, he was picking up Gary Snyder's award

12 May cont.--at the SW booksellers' gathering. But he was humble and grateful to me on the phone, didn't make much of himself or what he was up to. About 2 days later there he was in the NY Times, profiled in the "Writers in Place" series: he's the guy who buried Ed Abbey in the desert.

18 May--Y'day was an acme date, in living in this part of the world--Norwegian Independence Day and the arrival into the stores of Copper River salmon--and any litcrit type reading this in the future had damn well better get his pallid self around into a grasp of this. Norskie Independence Day brings big doings in Ballard, and so away went the Nesses, dressed to the nines, and away went my source of massages, Nancy Huntamer--in short, around us, in our sort of honorary Norwegiandom since the Nesses moved in (I'm having to break myself from saying "Yah, yah" when I mean Yes these days), the day had at least as much impact as the 4th of July. And ah, the coming of the Copper River run of salmon: when I turned on the TV about 5:15 the morn of the 16th for a weather forecast, there on NW Cable News was a pic of an Alaska Airlines plane that had just landed with the first fish. C got on the phone to her source Brian at the Larry's Market fish counter, and as a result last night we barbecued an exquisite meal--Copper River sockeye, put it on the grill for 11 minutes, it cooks perfectly. Of such calendar-clocked events is Northwest life made, for us.

Good god, I see I haven't made an entry since our Mothers' Day baseball game, although C blessedly did. Gorgeous late afternoon, clunky game by the Mariners. It was well worth it, to see Pedro set up hitters with a high fastball strike, then do whatever the hell he wanted with them (struck out 12, I think); and to watch Ichiro, who despite not having a great game, including a strike-out, beat out a ground ball to the shortstop that bounced only once!

And has C has noted, Lois Welch has been here for dinner, and on the 11th, Tony and Lee. Partly as a bit of easing toward retirement he's been reading early naturalists' work, and I look forward to his cues on ~~the~~ that, on down the line.

18 May cont.--As to the week's work on the book, it produced a goodly amount of pp. and brought some big scenes to the brink of completion, but the story keeps on being longer than sin. I should be in semi-respectable shape with it by the time we head for Montana.

19 May--Am just off the phone w/ Vernon Carroll in Cut Bank, enlisted by our Montana Historical Society buddies to get us in viewing range of the Two Medicine site where Meriwether Lewis collided w/ the Blackfeet. Another of the propitious generousities Montana offers.

Good sizable evening of entertaining last night: our reprise of the St. Petersburg "reunion" done by the librarians who were on the trip with us. Betty & Roy Mayfield, and Betty's Calgary court clerk sis Sue, and Betsy Wilson, head of UW library, and hubby Dean Pollock. The iffy weather gave us a break, finally providing some sun and warmth about 4 o'clock, and so when everyone got here at 6 we were able to establish on the deck for beers, smoked salmon and cheese. For eventual supper C had done crockpot 4-beans, an immense salad from our garden, and cold cuts and cheeses from Dale's Deli. Some good tales were told, Betty in her role as Paul Allen's librarian and Betsy in hers as the UW honcha:

--On the St. P trip, a techie was taken along who was specifically to pull in the telecast of the Seahawks exhibition game and tape it for Paul A. to see there on the ship. The guy couldn't make it happen, and Betty reported the aftermath: Paul A.--"Were you able to make it work?" Guy--"No, sir." PA: "Did you try really hard?" Guy, with head still hung: "Yes sir, I did." PA, after a moment: "Then enjoy the rest of your trip." Then, saved as the guy was from beheading from his job, the only excursion he could find that had space for him was the shopping trip, where the only other person was Martha Stewart. The guy told Betty, with a sigh, "I bought a bottle of vodka."

--The UW library has been bequeathed Slade Gorton's quarter-mile of senatorial papers--yes, 1300 linear feet--to catalogue, and Betsy was at a meeting with the old ghoul himself; Dan Evans; I guess UW prez McCormack; and so on, to discuss the \$350,000 funding needed for a cataloguing project of that sort. Betsy says it's just

19 May--an archival rule of thumb on these political papers bequests that the politico puts up about a third of the \$\$\$ along with the papers, and a suggestion list of donors who can be tapped for the rest. But here come the Gorton papers, and no coin of the realm from Mister Fish Sticks Heir. So, there's this meeting, and it's explained to him about the need for suggested donors. Slade wrinkles up for a moment and says, "Gee, I can't think of anybody." What had to have been the inward groans and flutters of the UW contingent went on until Betsy thought to try baseball: wouldn't there be people grateful to him for his part in keeping the Mariners franchise here? That got him going, and he said yes, call his office after a little and they'd get up that kind of list, and then he wanted to talk sports. But he hasn't ever come through with the goddamned list, and so Betsy and her shaker of the financial tree, Maryan Petty, are seeing if they can get any congressional money from Patty Murray or Mariah Cantwell, pretty exactly the last two people in the world wanting to lift a finger in aid of ol' Slade.

--Betsy and Dean are about to go off to Paris and London, part of her work on a OCLC committee, and they'll bring back an extremely rare set of early Buddhist mss the UW has managed to purchase--which are tiny frail pieces of something like birchbark, looking amazingly, say Betsy, like pieces of bacon. There's a Seattle outfit called I think she said Import Expeditors who'll meet them when they touch down in Chicago with these rarities and have to bring them through Customs.

27 May--Memorious Day, although probably not as much as I should make it that. There was the considerable skein of Lake Union Memorial Day hikes, 7 miles of talk among 4 or 8 or 10 of us and then a picnic buffet at someone's house. If not exactly sorrowless times, sturdy ones in retrospect. It's doubtful my knees will ever let me endure 7 miles of pavement again--fact is, it was a Lake Union Memorial Day that blew out one of Linda Sullivan's knees--but I find that worth only a shrug, on the scale of what can happen. We had on the schedule a perfectly acceptable holiday bash supper for 8 of us at the Atwoods' last night, which had to be called off when Peter came down with something respiratorally wicked (as, weirdly enough, Linda Sullivan did the previous Sunday night when we were

27 May cont.--scheduled for supper there). Given the grungy weather, overcast and a bit heavy--i.e., usual for Memorial Day--I worked on the ms this morn; this afternoon we listened to an entrancing 2-hour Nat'l Public Radio program about newsman Robert Trout; then I chored in the garage, tightening the hour's worth of bolts on the groaning goddamn garage door, while C yanked weeds at the north edge of the lawn.

As to the ms: since the last entry, I pretty well shaped the scenes leading to the finale, some sketchy spots but some plump paragraphs I hadn't counted on, too. By this time next week we're to be in Missoula, so I'm going to try to use available morns--and take off a day as soon as there's any good weather--on fixing the scene of Wes's visit to the empty North Fork valley. For reasons I still can't pin down, it has been an absolute sonofabitch, the earlier tries at it by and large accounting for any shortfall in my deadline goals to now. Made some headway on it today, but I'll be lucky to get it in hand by the ~~some~~ end of this week, even. All I can wearily say is, goddamn.

8 June, holed up in Whitefish--Ken Adler, inimitable majordomo of the Duck Inn, joked when we ^{came} down for muffins and coffee, "The ski bus leaves in 20 minutes. And there is indeed fresh snowfall on the Big Mtn runs that were bare y'day when we looked out the window of our room. We scooted here a day early from Choteau due to forecasts of one to two feet of snow in the Rockies down to 5000'--Marias Pass is 5200+, while Going-to-the-Sun is still being plowed out from the winter--and if the weather and cabin fever aren't too extreme we'll hold on here through tomorrow, to see if we can get into Glacier Park a little.

We've of course had colossal days all the week of this trip, such as y'day along the Rocky Mtn Front. Joe Moll of the MT Nature Conservancy fetched us at the Stagestop Inn a little after 9, and we headed to my English Creek country, out along the road to the Jensen ranch--the miraculous moisture of this spring after 3-4 years of drought has the country looking green, although grass isn't very tall because it's been so cool--and onward to the Boone & Crockett hq overlooking Dupuyer Creek. The day was good, no wind, nothing threatening in the sky--Joe was flabbergasted when Lisa Flowers at the B&C and Karl Rappold at their ranch told us the snow forecast; he thought, and I would have agreed although I don't bank on the looks of the weather, that a storm was about 2 days off--and the country looked glorious, the reefs jutting up and toward us. Lisa F., the B&C education director, showed us around the really quite stunning new education center, and then we made about a 20-mile U-turn through Dupuyer to reach the Rappold ranch just before noon. They have a handsome sign at their gate announcing they've been there since 1882, and in we go, pulling into the yard of the ranch to be met by half a dozen dogs, including improbables such as a dalmation and a basset. Karl zoomed in on a 4-wheeler with fenceposts on the back and Bill came stork-striding from wherever they'd been working, every part of him from head to arms to hands to legs to feet oversize; it strikes me how much he's like the legendary long-gearred lantern-jawed John McTaggart whom my folks worked for in about 1960. As Carol said afterward, you wouldn't know these brothers, Bill &

8 June cont.--Karl, are in the same family. Bill is a bachelor with what I think are shy mannerisms--I've known him for 45+ years, but still really don't know how to sort him out--who doesn't much like looking straight at you and veers in and out of a nervous loud voice during conversation, but has nonetheless pushed himself into public functioning. I remember he took public speaking in high school, as did I, and he's been a Pondera county commissioner, although as we heard the story he was defeated in Tuesday's election. As we were leaving I made a mild offer of reciprocating hospitality if he ever ventured to Seattle, and he said he doesn't travel much, has done so only on Air Force flights (p.r. trips for folks such as county commissioners) to Colorado Springs etc.; so he's seen hardly any of the rest of this country on the ground, but has watched mid-air refueling!

Ten or a dozen years younger, Karl is a vigorous mustached cowboy-hatted (Bill wears a tractor cap) picturebook rancher, conversationally smart and vigorous. I'm assuming he's the one the Conservancy wooed in the swap of ~~an~~ an under-the-mountains parcel of land directly west of the Rappolds for conservation easement on their place. His son John--this would bear checking but I think the generations since the original homesteading have been John, Karl, John, John William (Bill Karl (him), and John--works for the B&C, and Joe Moll thinks he's a good bet to carry on with the home ranch. Quite to our surprise, nay our astonishment, when we told Joe and his Conservancy honchoes to set up our day with them along the Front however they wanted, back came the news that we were invited to lunch with the Rappolds. The way it worked, to get back to the dog-pack greeting, was that we stood in the yard and talked for 10-15 minutes--Bill energetically ordering the dogs to quit barking and jumping on us, rather than talking to us--and then we were invited down to Karl's modular home for lunch. (Bill evidently lives in the old family place, and C and I would have loved to have seen in; my hunch, slightly more than 50-50, is that he's a neat freak rather than living like a badger.) Karl parked his big black hat on the living room stove, Joe and I quickly followed suit with ours, we were shown to the

8 June cont.—table, and the Rappold brothers maneuvered in the kitchen, the two of them practically filling it: Karl got out the pasta salad his wife had fixed before she went to her job in Valier, and some roast beef coldcuts and a loaf of white bread, while Bill cut some watermelon pieces. We helped ourselves, and ate and talked, with Karl having to go out at one point when the veterinary arrived to look at a bull's abscessed hoof. (The Rappolds had just lost a \$5000 bull killed by 3 younger ones; even for them, ranching ain't easy.) Karl had a 1 o'clock meeting to go to—on water rights, a whole other saga—but talked wildlife with Joe before he had to go. He outlined the routes of the 3 grizzlies they consistently see—Joe told us afterward he heard the same lore from farmers in Japan in his bear research there; they always say the bear makes a loop with customary stops, and Joe says he really has no reason to doubt it—and said one has a paw that measures 10" across; that, Joe did doubt, but said there are various ways of measuring. When Karl went off to his meeting, we made conversation with Bill for half an hour or so—he was most at ease with talk about our high school classmates or the elk along the mountains, which he said bunched up unusually, 600 strong, last winter—while I tried to keep track in my head what was long enough to be neighborly ~~and~~ versus impending snowstorm. I guess we may have passed up a chance to be shown the "upper" part of their place—i.e., right in under the mountains—by Bill; he didn't bring it up, but Karl said something to him about "using the diesel" if he did so—but so be it, we can't go through these days just boundlessly.

9 June—Iffy weather, snow showers touch-and-go along the ski mountains north of Whitefish. We're going in to Glacier Park regardless this morn, and tomorrow will head for home and see what we face on Lookout Pass.

Back to the day-by-day of this trip: on the 6th we put in an immense day, leaving Arnsts' a little before 8:30 for Fort Assiniboine and looping from there to the Two Medicine and to Choteau for the night. The day was bright but windy, and we could see blowing dust as soon as we were in the Big Sandy area; the air was hazy,

9 June cont.--and we saw about a 40-acre dust storm whip itself together and lash off eastward. I hadn't allowed quite enough leeway in travel time and so we had only a brief stop at Fort A., but there isn't much of the old fort left anyway, and the main point was to get a grasp of the site's geography thru C's pics and my notes. From there we started pushing west to Cut Bank, and despite strong headwinds and a hellish stretch of roadwork east of Shelby we were only a couple of minutes late for our appointment with Vernon Carroll at the McDonalds parking lot on the west end of Cut Bank. Vernon turned out to be 45, slightly Indian-looking--his manner of speaking reminded us of Jim Welch's gentle politeness--with shoulder-length hair which he'd had to batten with a logo cap against the whooping wind. I similarly went into Norman's Western Wear there in the little westside shopping center and got myself a cap, to have something that would stay on my head. Then I climbed in with Vernon and his teenage son Devon, with C following us in our rig, and we set off down a maze of dwindling roads--the Valier road out of Cut Bank, to Hugo Aronson road, to a straight-south ranch road in to Vernon's place (and one other) on the Two Medicine. The day still looked fine, except for the wind that would whop us whenever we stepped out of the vehicles. Vernon pulled in at a cottonwood grove on the river, where C parked our rig and climbed in with us (Devon soon departing to jog home to the ranch, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile or so.). Vernon pointed out the highest bluff southeast across the river as the viewing site, and we started by crossing the single-lane--i.e., just wide enough to take a set of truck wheels--bridge he'd installed across the Two Medicine; no sides to the bridge, just a naked flat span with the light-chocolate rapids of the Two Medicine ~~xxxx~~ at high water foaming up under it. That started the 15-mile tangent out across rangeland to get us to the bluff which was perhaps three straight miles from where we left the river.

14 June--We arrived back from Montana on the 11th in nice weather. The 12th was perfect weather, bright, mid-70's. Y'day, the 13th was 92 above, according to TV weatherpeople the hottest day in 4 years, i.e. since we've lived up here in the sun field. The house did get hot, 82 on thermostat when we came up from watching video of Empire of the Sun about 9:30. The weather pretty well zonked me in the afternoon; today's cool marine air has me considerably more vigorous.

The first efforts around here have had to be yardwork, and so I'm facing the prospect of resuming writing on Mon. with stacks of research material everywhere.

To resume on the trip diary: Vernon Carroll's conveying of us to the Two Medicine site was across rangeland I probably had been on, with Dad on his stint as John McTaggart's hired man on that ranch, but even in this greenest June in a decade I was struck by the shortgrass; Vernon is pretty sure it's the native grass, the lore of prairie grass up to the belly of a buffalo or horse didn't happen in that country. Quite a lot of the ground is the patchy sort, little atolls of grass (the size of your hat or hand) with bare hardpan soil around. Also alkali areas, and Vernon pointed out a sizable alkali lake just east of his property.

The fight site is a big deep bowl of geography stunning in its claybank cliffs, dropoffs, big trees way below on the river. V. took us to 2 viewpoints, creeping his hired rig higher along the bluff well away from the edge--could well have been his innate courtesy, but he said he's not fond of heights, just as we aren't--to the tallest bluff where C took pics while I stood as a mostly ineffectual shield against the hard-shoving wind. Boisterous as it was, we were all relieved it didn't accelerate to what V. said had been forecast, 60 mph gusts.

So we have been and seen, at one of the touchpoints of western history. It'll all help as I frame a bit of Lewis & Clark history into the prairie aspects of this book; occurred to me this morning that, just there on that cliffed river, the two medicines--the whites' power of economic thrust, the plains Indians' flow of hunt for provender and warriorliness--mixed with deadly results.

14 June cont.--As to the briefly current inhabitant-inheritor of that prairie eddy of existence, Vernon had just sold the ranch--18,000 acres, along with 500+ cattle, for "well over a million dollars"--to an empire-building neighbor named Rob Wellman. The two possible buyers--evidently on the basis that V. and his father handled the sale themselves, no broker--were Wellman and the Blackfoot Tribe, and V. said Wellman's pockets were a bit deeper and a whole lot quicker; V. said in his quiet way that when you deal with the tribe you have to deal with the 12 tribal elders, and from his remarks one of the aspects of Two Medicine life he's tired of is tribal politics. Wellman in contrast, according to V., is the hard-charging sort who has taken advantage of having enough Indian blood for tribal enrollment and used it for grazing privileges etc.; with the Carroll-McTaggart place he'll have 40,000+ acres, some of it farmed east of the Two Medicine site, and V. said banks vied to lend W. the money for the ranch purchase. As to V's future, I truly wonder: he's chosen to move to the other side of the mountains--Frenchtown, outside Missoula--and, he said with his polite rueful laugh, the first time away from his parents (he's 45), who've bought a place on the Sun River outside Gt. Falls. He thinks he may go back to college--he dropped out originally after a year, although he's exceptionally well spoken (explain his national role as some kind of Presbyterian elder with the qualifier that he's "not overtly religious" but thinks the church does some good in the world)--in archeology or anthropology. He mulled the life ahead, an acre of suburbia amid many neighbors "when I had only one neighbor here and we never got along," but the three years of drought, the sometimes 4-5 trips a day into Cut Bank (it must be 15-20 miles of mostly fairly tough dirt roads) for school doings for his three kids, the age of his father, all must have added up to the decision to pull out.

Backward through the trip a bit more: the morn of June 7 with Joe Moll of the MT Nature Conservancy, he drove us from Choteau out past the Jensen Ranch to the Boone & Crockett Club's education center, @ south edge of the "Scotch Heaven" country I write about. It's a terrific new facility, with knockout views of the reefs of the Rockies, and is run by Lisa Flowers--wife of Teton County game warden Tom Flowers, Joe said--who seems both very

14 June cont.--with-it and down-to-earth, a good possible future source. We had alit with Vernon Carroll and Joe M. for that part of the trip by way of an overnight in Great Falls on the 5th, with the Arnsts. Cille & Gary Payton and daughter Michelle came to supper there that night, so it was something of a tribal gathering as of our old visits there. (It was also our 3rd night in a row of sleeping under the plumbing!) All those folks are OK, just Gary P. is awaiting treatment for prostate cancer, but has lost 25+ pounds and seems generally better off than he was before, if they can defeat the cancer. Genise has some sort of foot problem, and while Wayne looks pretty good, he does seem to be shrinking in size except for a bit of a front-porch belly--even someone as physically active as he's always been evidently gets that bulge in his 60s.

17 June--Resumed ms work today, getting the Montana trip findings sorted and even a fresh page written, to my surprise. Weather abominable, showery but no real moisture, humid this afternoon. C foremanned Pat and another yard guy this morning as they trimmed the ~~knives~~ hedges and the south purple plum tree.

Phone call from Jean Walkinshaw, saying the seed I planted about her doing a show on Tony Angell is doing some sprouting. Mister Behind-the-Scenes, me.

Had hoped to add to the diary report on the Mont. trip, but the energy isn't there, after the day's ms work.

21 June--A brow bright day, this first one of summer, even if it's 80 @ 2:45. And my first week back at the ms gleams a bit in its own right; only about 1500 words, and I didn't quite get out of the Susan-Wes confrontation scene as I'd hoped, but the tricky Harvard Club scene is down on paper, and all of this week's writing seems to have body. It has meant gritting and sitting in here on some gorgeous mornings, then panting through yardwork in afternoons, but that seems to be the order of things. Tonight we go to the Walkinshaws, always a good go.

27 June--My birthday, under the cloud of a headcold that came on y'day and murky weather that settled in this morn, doing in our intentions to go to the Skagit flats. As I told C, I'm stumped as to how have a jolly good time out of the day. So, we'll hang around and tinker; I'm going to see whether I can at last finish off the Montana trip diary, which is already receding 3 weeks into the past. And I am buoyed by the nifty stuff C presented me with this morn: a birthday card right up my alley, showing computer dingbat faces along the lines of my Internet brands in Mtn Time, and a pair of hot-weather shorts that I've needed for, oh, the four years we've lived here, and mirabile dictu, an elegant wallet of the mode I'm used to.

As to the writing life: I am now down to the very last of the ms draft, the Carnegie Hall scene. Unfortunately it ain't an easy one; with luck I could have it in hand by the end of next week, but as stubborn as this ms is at persistently having pups, it's more likely the week or so after that. Besides the drafting I have put in shifts on revising the early parts of the book; loosened up each of the first two chapters with additions that totaled about a page each, and they read smoothly to me now.

Onward and backward to Montana: mainly wanted to catch the flavor of the first night, at the Welches' in Missoula. We pulled in a little after 4, were ensconced in the ever more imaginative guest quarters, and with the showery weather extinguishing Jim and Lois's planned backyard barbecue of buffalo burgers, we settled into the living room as we've done so many grand times there, the other two usual suspects--Bill Kittredge and Annick Smith--soon joining us. Book chat--Jim is gearing up to send a proposal in to Gerry Howard at D'day for his next one, a further piece of ~~fiction~~ fiction based on the Sioux in Marseilles; Annick is getting back to work on her Sitka novel; Bill described an intriguing novel he has in mind about a geezer coming to terms with his life, and I hope to Christ he can sail into doing it--and the good dance of tongues that goes on among the six of us: divvy us down the sides of the room all those years and we fit Faulkner's terrific remark about his friend Phil Stone, each doing half the laughing. Until: Jim, who could see

27 June cont.--onto the front porch from where we were sitting, looking as astonished as I've ever seen him and let out, "It's my dad and Gladys!" Indeed it was: Jim Sr. 88 years old, wiry little buckskin guy, wearing a hearing aid which evidently functioned only as a signal that we had to semi-shout to make ourselves heard to him; Gladys, an Assiniboine from Wolf Point, around 70, fairly sizable but probably not as much of her as there could have been, given her former profession of making Indian tacos. The pair of them came in proclaiming they were just stopping to say hello, had to get back to Great Falls before dark, and promptly sat down, plainly leaving Jim and Lo wondering just how much they were settling in. They were passing through town, as it turned out, on their way back from Cataldo, Idaho, and as Gladys announced it to the mystification of the other four of us, "Jim's sister's graduation. What graduation, and for that matter, what sister? Answers came they many: high school, the 18-year-old offspring of Jim Sr.--i.e., 44 years younger than Jim--after the senior Welches' marriage broke up, and if I savvied it right, not the daughter of Gladys but of one of Jim Sr.'s previous ladyfriends. I think all this was hard cheese for Jim, but of course catnip for the rest of the roomful of storytellers. Jim Sr. ended up at the side of the room with Annick and C and me, and the three of us got a couple of nifty gleanings out of that:

--Jim Sr. said he could remember, from when he was a boy (and the dates check out: in the 1920's, old Blackfeet warriors would still have been around Browning, as Kit-tredge said later, like old fighters from the Iliad), the old men sitting around in front of Sherburne's Merc, talking sign language about their exploits of the past. Gave an example: made a fist, touched the thumb-end of it to the top of his forehead, told us that signified the Crow Indian who wore topknots. Then split the fingers of his right hand putting them ~~them~~ astraddle the extended parallel-to-the-ground fingers of the other hand, mimicking rider on a horse--that storyteller, he said, was telling that he stole a horse when they fought the Crows. Then the teller indicated to another one of the oldsters and made wavy motions with both hands down from the crown of his head

27 June cont.--to his shoulders, in essence saying "but he stole a woman!"

--Jim Sr. figured he was 8 when his mother took him to one of the last of the big tribal gatherings on the Belly River in Canada. The various clans welcomed them, each one feeding them some meat, until he told his mother, "I can't eat any more of that meat." "Young man--she always called me 'young man'--you eat it."

--He also gave us some sun dance details which Bill and Annick, who know a lot more Indian lore than we do, didn't seem to know. Jim Sr. said there was a lot of fussy choosing of a tree with just the right fork in it, to serve as the center of the ceremony. When that had been installed, files of warriors, each led by two men, approached the tree from the four directions; ultimately a big medicine bundle--and this was the news to Bill and Annick and us, that it was a kind of community bundle, with everybody putting in an item sacred to them--was raised into the crotch of the fork.

Gladys more than held her own in similar conversation with Bill and Jim and Lo--as Bill said with a chuckle later, "Gladys is a piece of work." Jim and Lo said she'd raised 14 children, 7 or her own, 7 nieces and nephews and whatever that she'd taken in.

The party-crashing that the other 4 of us loved and naturally had to be dealt with by inner squirms in Jim and Lo ultimately devolved that Jim Sr. and Gladys hit the road again after about an hour, but not before fairydusting us with a couple of other memorabilities. Jim Sr. was on his way to Browning the next day to vote in the Blackfoot tribal election, and he and Gladys grumbled about the long-entrenched leadership circle of Earl Old Person. Jim Sr. reeled off complaints about Old Person getting too fancy a notion of his own self-importance, concluding: "He's not a routine Indian." No sooner were they out the door than we all piled into Jim, howling "Jim! Jim! There's the title you've got to write a book for--The Routine Indian!" And it was Annick who provided Jim a nice catharsis for this drop-in gutspill of family matters (I'm not making it up when I say Jim Sr. was an 82nd Div. paratrooper in WWII) when she said of his dad, "He seems like

27 June cont.--quite a rogue" and Jim instantly said,
"All his life!"

1 July--Well, this has been a helluva lot harder passel of days than I had wanted. The cold I came down with on the 26th, along with the overcast weather, tamped my birthday way down; the next day, by afternoon I felt pretty good, was congratulating myself on having shaken a 36-hour cold; and the next morn the cold was back with a vengeance. Took a Benadryl at noon, and by the time we went to the Rodens for the birthday-celebrating supper Jean came up with for me, I was doing OK. Danced with my tongue for that supper, reeling off tales of our Montana trip to keep the evening out of the slough of politics: the Doigs and the Rodens agree on politics, we just don't agree on how much table energy to put into expostulating. So, a good evening there, and a good hike y'day w/ David Williams and Marjorie along the grain terminal walk. Then came lunchtime today, when I went to print out this morning's writing, and the computer lost it. I frantically managed to remanufacture most of it, and retrieved a bit more from the trash icon before the machine froze again. Did what remedying I could--it's too goddamn tedious to recite the computer maneuvers here--and eventually settled in with yellow pad and pencil to jot out tomorrow's start on the ms.

10 July--The weather y'day changed from murky to perfect, and I took off the fine bright day for us to go to the Skagit. Restorative to us both--C of course caught my damn cold about 5 days after it hit me. I went back to work on the ms this morn feeling a lot better about it and life. This week is choppiier than I wanted, the "oh, sure" go-ahead I gave the Pack NW Writers' Conference award guy catching up with me in the form of a needed 5-min. speech; I whacked it into shape, cut down from one of the book awards ceremonies I've m.c.'ed, in fairly short order this afternoon. But I am closing in on the final pp. of the finale scene, at goddamn last.

12 July--I'm there. Achieved the draft of Prairie Nocturne minutes before lunchtime today. The flying fickle finger of fate being what it is, this is the night I receive the Pacific NW Writers Conference's lifetime achievement award.

The day is fittingly gorgeous, sunny and with a breeze taking down the predicted 80+ so far. C got in most of a morning of yardwork, I've just been out for the daily bounty of raspberries for b'fast. In about 2 hours we trudge south through traffic to the glamorous SeaTac Hilton, sigh, for the awards dinner. At least I'm feeling loose and unburdened, as good a mood as I can order up for a pre-dinner dinner with 15 or 16 strangers and then a couple of hours of banquet sitting. 'celsior.

17 July--Y'day I began to revive from what came along with my "life achievement" honor from the Pacific NW Writers Ass'n the night of the 12th--a roundhouse bout of gastric disorder. Likely it derived from the dab of hollandaise sauce I put on the wan helping of broccoli at the banquet; whatever the source of sabotage, I had about 3 days & 2 nights of gas pains in the lower gut about every ½ hr. Whom the gods would honor, they then deliver a gut punch to, huh?

We've managed some spirited yardwork--a few days of perfect weather furthered that--and the past couple of days I've spent some immersion time in touching up the ms, starting back in the early part. Am pleased as hell to say it touches up like a charm. Whatever its reception, this piece of work is beginning to feel like the best I can do with what I've got, and that's all I can ever bend my back to.

22 July--Deep in the heart of summer; 90 forecast for today.

Weekend spate of socializing, culminating with supper in the Damborgs' back yard last night, another marker of maximum Seattle summer. Stopped by the Atwoods' house-leaving party on our way to Mark and Lou's, too. But Sat. the 20th was our full-extension social effort, taking the Rodens to the Skagit flats for a hike to celebrate Jean's birthday. At about Alderwood Mall we hit one of the all-time I-5 traffic snarls; a dumptruck had tipped over in an overpass about 5 hours before, and it took us nearly

22 July cont.--2 hours to inch to the Broadway exit into Everett, where we then scooted around the blockage. Had lunch at the LaCommer brew pub, that was fine. But then we got ourselves to the wildfowl area to do the dike hike, in fine weather, the long leafy glade of path ahead of us, and about 150 yards into the hike John got interested in the small red berries of what was possibly mountain ash along the dike. In his hoppety-skippety fashion, he told me that in military survival training that was the kind of berry a person shouldn't eat. Right, I say, I had that same training. C and Jean are right behind us, he says something more about the berries, C says right, eating red berries in the wild is a famous verboten. I declare, says John, as if he and I hadn't just parsed that through. We get our feet in motion again, he says something like "I just wonder what they taste like, I'm going to see," and takes a step off the path toward gathering a berry before I can say anything. It's also a step off the ten-foot-high dike, and he vanished as if the earth swallowed him. He could be heard falling, rolling, whatever was happening there in the foliage, for a significantly long beat of time. Finally there's a kind of resigned catch of breath, no cry of pain or anything of the sort, and I crouch at the mouth of the tunnel he's created through the greenery, wondering how we're going to get him up out of there if he's broken something, and for Jean's sake ask as calmly as I can, "You all right?" He is, he's down there on his side, having rolled about the last half of his plunge, probably parachute training or some other instinct having kicked in, and ~~some~~ he's come through it better than an 81-year-old probably has any right to. He's ~~still on~~ still on his side when he launches into, "Now why did that have to happen?" I am thinking, let us count the ways, such as not wearing your glasses when you're hiking through the woods and ploughing off to try a taste of a possibly poisonous berry, as I get a hand down to him and help him yank himself up out of there. When he was back up on the dike and seen to be in one piece, Jean, lord

22 July cont.--bless her, walked off down the trail ahead by herself for a few minutes to work off steam.

On the writing front: had a good week of revising the front part of the ms last week, 125 or so pp. pretty well shaped up. Again, yet, and still, it's what I like to do, and believe I am best at.

29 July--Some waters of chronos under the bridge since the last entry. We marked C's birthday pretty lightly, taking a walk at Green Lake and then to Swanson's nursery, and chicken on the barbecue grill for supper. Just before that I dug into the windowframe project of the big window on the deck, and found plenteous rot. Miraculously, Brad Hembree had it carpentered back to solidity 2 days later. I then did the rest of the odious paint scraping--careful as I could be, it still racked up my left knee for about 3 days--and the area is now sealed and ready to C to paint, of course just in time for drizzly weather.

Most remarkably, the ms revise flew along in the form of another 150 pp. since the last time I was to the diary, and this morning I printed out the 276 pp., just short of half of the whole thing, that carries the characters to Fort Assiniboine. For the record, this working-over includes not only filecard queries and possibilities I've built up as I went along, but a category of FIND checks: whenever I suspected I was heavily using some word or phrase--who knows how this happens, but this ms was getting speckled with "little," for instance--I made a reminder card, and during y'day's crummy weather I put in an unusual Sunday shift and ran computer FINDs on those. Besides "little," "something," "get," "eyes," and so on; in each case, I was able to get appreciable monotony of language out and a bit more variety in.

30 July-- Gray drizzly morning again, at least useful for deskwork. Walked the n'hood with C for the first time since my knee acted up.

Am using this as a catching-up day, a breathing space before the next stint of ms revise, and so will go back to final bits of the Montana trip. To round off the night at the Welches, after Jim Sr. and Gladys went on their way there was usual good dinner talk. Kityredge got going

30 July cont.--on old days of wild wonderful drunk poets, along the way citing to Jim the time Jim lit into the Bay area while Kittredge was there, and as Bill summed it, Jim didn't take his shoes off for four days. The acme of writers reading and drinking, for both Bill and Jim, was James Wright. By their tellings, Wright no matter what he had poured into himself could go onstage and gloriously spout poetry, usually not his own, extemp. Kittredge prizes the time Wright was on hand when Benjamin DeMott, who represents to us western lot the eastern-network panache we'd like to see ashcanned, was declaiming something about racial literary progress, chances black writers were getting now, and Wright yelled from the audience, "You gonna tell them that up on 123rd Street?" i.e. Harlem.

And, lastly, the Helena portion of the trip. The MHS library research clicked fine, the staff splendid to me, and we coincided with Mark Wyman, out from Normal to research hoboes & railroad bulls across Montana's 3 rail lines. Mark and I now go back about 35 years, much of it attested in letters, and we still get some kick out of each other even though we're pretty damn different by now. Mark had just been back to Livingston for the first time since he was a young reporter there 40 years ago, and was glum about how much the town had changed--while I find it incredible that Livingston's downtown is one of the most preserved in the West. (Not to mention that my memories of going there on shopping trips, as a kid from hick Ringling, don't comport with a wonderful generous civic past.) He lamented that there was hardly anybody around he still knew, except John Fryer in the bookstore; I ~~know~~ hooted and said there weren't three bookstores in the whole damn country where you could walk in after 40 years and find the same guy running it. So it went. When we went to lunch at the Windbag, Mark didn't even open his menu before asking--it sounded plaintive, whether or not it was meant to--"Do you have any fruit pie?" The young waiter stood there trying to figure out whether that was some exotic drink or what. Anyway, I find it astounding that a historian thinks Montana would have stayed the way it was forty years ago, and Mark finds it just as astounding that time's passage is so marked.

30 July cont.--The other Helena episode had to do with, shades of Mtn Time, brands. The spandy new MHS librarian, Charlene Porsild, had left a phone message just before we started the trip, wondering if it would be okay to put our last year's hefty charitable contribution toward historical brand books--she said something like, "Ivan, I have a chance to get every brand book!" My reciprocal message said sure, why not, and so when we walked in to the MHS, Charlene had it all arranged that we'd go across the street to the Dept. of Livestock and be patted and cosseted by the folks over there, too. I hadn't clued in on just what was up with this brands project, but it amounted to this: people are forever ~~walking~~ showing up at the Historical Society saying granddad over there on the Musselshell used to brand his cows thus-and-such, and could they see the old brand records? The MHS would knit its brow and say it didn't have anything like that, they'd have to go over to the Dept. of Livestock. Where, with 60,000 active livestock brands to maintain, the Livestockers would knit their brows and say it'll cost you \$75 and take, oh, maybe a month. Not terrific constituency service, that, on either side of the street. However it came about, Charlene tumbled to the possibility of using our bucks to microfiche all the brands, the MHS draws off all the brandseekers, the cow guys get 'em off their back, everybody is happy as hell. Away we go, over to the brands dept. Jack Wiseman, the guy in charge, and his staffer Darcy treat us grandly, in fact dig out for us the record of my dad's renewed 80 brand in 1940 (although it's Charlene, who doesn't miss many tricks, to ultimately double-check the ledger and find the brand after Darcy overlooked it in the excitement). The males of the Livestock Dept. are all in boots and snapbutton shirts--there's not a buttonhole in the whole building--and the women are wearing goodlooking wine-colored cowgirl jeans, and so C and I, who love to see how things are done, are having a good old time. Along comes the public info person and asks me what my interest in brands is, I invoke Dad's and tell her I consider brands a classic language of the West as Greek and Roman were of the ancient world, whether or not she wrote that down straight. Comes now the real visit, Charlene and Jack getting to show us off

30 July cont.--to the executive director of the dept., Mark Bridges. Up we go, Mark's office proving to be a corner one with probably a better view than the governor's. Mark is out of a modern western picturebook, goodlooking 40ish guy with a Marlboro Man mustache, plaid cowboy shirt, snap buttons you bet. He probably didn't have a clue about my books, but the name meant something to him even so: "You any relation to Gordon and Jay?" It turns out both of them have been livestock inspectors, and more to the point, of Montana's 56 counties Mark is from Meagher, and beyond that, from Martinsdale. Right away I could do some ranch talk with him, about Dad having worked on the big 71 ranch one spring I could remember. With things perking this way, Charlene, who has alternately looked enchanted at how nicely this diplomacy is going and a bit furrowed up, apparently can't stand what's on her mind any longer. She goes over to the bookcase, where the Montana sun from all of Mark's windows is beating on, and as if pleading on behalf of orphans says, "Mark, I really have to get these from you someday." "These" are, holy jesus, the bound original records of the Montana cattlemen's association, all the way back to when Granvill Stuart and Teddy Roosevelt were original members. Mark grins at this latest try of hers and says nothing doing, we use those all the time you aren't getting those, Charlene. A little gleam comes in his eye and he says, lemme show you what else I just got. Goes over there to the sunfield and brings back an old coverless ledger, slaps it down in front of us historical types. Goddamned if it wasn't a wolfer bounty ledger--Mark's domain includes predator control--from the 1880s, maybe earlier. C and I and Charlene are goggling at this--where wolves were killed, when, who by, the bounty, absolute baseline ecological gold motherlode--and Mark genially tells her, And you're not gettin' this either.

15 Aug.--Tall ships are passing, inbound to Lake Union for weekend of display. So far they are bare-masted, but just before 5 yesterday one came in under proverbial clouds of sail. It's 9:15, on a fine blue morning, C is overhead painting the railing of our deck while I whang

15 Aug. cont.--away at Prairie Nocturne, and all is well.

17 Aug.--This month is past its midbend now, and I'm a bit jittery about all that's left to do to spruce up Prairie Nocturne. The problem with having a high-powered editor is that she's high-powered, and so last Monday, the 12th of August, twenty weeks before the contract deadline on the ms, here came the phone message: "Hel-lo, Ivan Doig. (Rich pause) This is Nan (diva-like downswop)." The gist: she wants to schedule Prairie Nocturne as her Sept. '03 book, but needs a completely edited ms by Dec. to do so, am I in a position to provide Manhattan Nocturne--rich apologizing chuckle at herself--Prairie Nocturne by maybe the end of summer as I thought I might?(Actually as she put to me last spring and I said I'd try, no promises) Didn't manage to catch her when I called back the next day, and when I tried the day after that, she was off ~~em~~ until this coming Monday on one of those NY publishing weekends, Wednesday or so until the next Monday. I finished my couple of days of scraping paint on the deck railing and the south picture-window frame, so C could get at the painting in this spate of fine weather, then went back to the ms and immediately hit a mire I hadn't counted on, Angus's funeral scene needing a lot more tension in its structure and pacing. Sweated bullets on that for 3 days, getting it done, and just beyond it there's the tricky transitional gap I'd left to carry Susan and Wes to their uncertain attitudes toward each other after Fort Assiniboine; and beyond that is the Mose Rathbun scene that needs skillful finishing. When those are whipped, there's the 200 pp. of the last of the book to bring up to the same polish as the first 2/3 of the book. So, I'm going to dicker Nan for mid-Oct.-Nov. delivery of it all, and am going to need to do some dervishlike revising in the meantime.

25 Aug.--An utterly gray socked-in morning, birds making low routes past us. C & I both napped after breakfast, catching up on our late night. We went to Bainbridge for supper w/ Linda and Syd, and as perfectly as we enjoy the prance of such times with them, we got home just after 11 with the mutual thought that the nearly 8½ hrs spent, by the time we drove downtown, parked, rode the ferry & then reversed the process homeward, was pretty nearly the

25 Aug.--same time it would have taken us to drive to Vancouver for supper and back. We now have 4 sets of friends on the other side of the Sound, alack and alas. But, the travel aside insofar as we can put it, we caught up on I&S's Rome teaching excursion, which sounded nifty except for the foot problem Linda's come home with from all the walking, and similarly gave them our tales of our Montana trip.

Otherwise, the past week was one where I did a murderous amount of work on the ms, revising over 100 pp. and in with it finally nailing the pesky scene of Wes taking himself and his conscience back through Scotch Heaven. C read ms for me, found nothing sizable wrong, blessed be. I still have 6 or 7 scenes that need final fill-in or polish, and with the quarterly MGUS checkup coming on the 29th I'll lose some time this week, but the prospect isn't bad for whipping those scenes by the time we go to Oregon in 3 weeks. No further word from Nan after my couple of phone messages to her saying Sept. '03 publication date seems OK to me but we need to arm-wrestle a little about when I deliver the ms to her; I'm still going to say mid-Oct-1 Nov.

31 Aug.--A wall of fog on the Sound that looks substantial enough to walk on top of. Still rainless; not quite sure when it last rained, somewhere back beyond the 4th?

MGUS news: I came through the latest set of blood tests OK, all levels basically unchanged as they've been since the original diagnosis. Saw Dr. Ginsberg on the 29th, will repeat in 6 months. So far, so good.

We intend this as a considerable yard day, trimming the fantastically robust cotoneaster on the S property line before the Nesses come back from Norway. The weather has actually been delicious, recent days: C has worked outside in mornings, and though I've been chained to the ms, a couple of afternoons I set up my Citroenesque French lounge chair on the downstairs deck and sprawled back to do some ms revise out there in perfect temperature.

As to literary progress, the dogged work of this week has left me in pretty reasonable shape: 3 scenes left to work on, plus whatever other brushing up seems needed.

7 Sept.--Saturday, but I wrote on the ms anyway, trying to get rid of the pesky remaining scene, Mose and the Crees, by next midweek. I'm so close to having all of Prairie Nocturne in place that I can taste it.

We've managed to garden in the afternoons the past week, each day clearing off to low 70s ~~and~~ or high 60s, and the past 3-4, big piles of showerclouds and even some thunder and lightning have built over Bainbridge and/or the Kitsap Peninsula each mid-afternoon. It rained for an hour or two, about 2 a.m., first moisture I think since July 7.

10 Sept.--Today I finished the Mose Rathbun scene, the last loose end of Prairie Nocturne. Hallelujah.

13 Sept.--Exquisite weather, due to go gray about Sunday when we head for our Oregon vacation. Ah, well. We're ticketed into Ashland plays, will have meals with the Browns and the Lesleys, will see some coast in foul weather or fair. It's time I took a break from the ms, so as to be able to read it over with a fairly fresh eye when we get back.

To my surprise, Prairie Nocturne as it now stands is about a 400-page book. Nan may want that trimmed down, but structured as it is I don't know that there's a hell of a lot that can just blithely come out. Anyway, it at last feels like a book, surprising me here and there as I flip through the pages, and whatever its reception it is a formidable act of imagination, if I do say so myself.

On the 11th--which, history will note, we came through without the next round of murder from religionists--I went to the UW library for a couple hrs of fact-checking and to be given a tour of the Suzzalo renovation by Betsy Wilson. I was too late in the process to do it in hardhat, drat, but Betsy and Maryan Petty did me nobly for an hour. The reading room had just been set up with round table w/ deep maroon-brown tablecloths and gilt chairs for the \$100,000 a head fete that will be presided over by Bill Gates Sr. tonight. C & I are invited on the greatly more general night, Nov. 14, when Linda Bierds will read her poem of dedication. The renovation/earthquake retrofit took some astounding work-

13 Sept. cont.--the overarching web of steelwork that's now to transmit any tremors into the footings had to be put into the reading room ceiling in a space of only a few feet (between the historic plasterwork of the ceiling and the roof above, which required women welders because men would not fit. Also, everyone who worked up there--under the eye of a constant fire marshall, because of the welding--had to have every work item attached to her body on short tether, so tools wouldn't fall through the historic plaster. The other lovely piece of work is around the apses at either end of the reading room, where the original stone had to come out and the steelwork installed; that is now plastered over, done by a master plasterer they could in Tacoma, so that it perfectly matches the stone of the rest of the room--the guy used 63 pigments to do it. By all accounts, working on such a noble old piece of architecture seems to have touched wondrous chords. Betsy said the contractor's contract ended at the start of this month, but touches of work were still being done, gratis. The company that replicated the three historic chandeliers in the front entrance delivered six, saying oh, we made a mistake on the order is all, they're freebies, and we just happen to know where they could be hung. Toward the end of the tour we went into the Smith reading room, the old NW collections room, where I announced to Betsy and Maryan that three dozen years ago on damn near the same date, I'd have been in there starting my UW career.

17 Sept., Ashland--Ensconced in the so-far marvelously quiet and nifty new Plaza Inn, a fountain burbling outside and a wall of trees above the nearby creek. Got here just before 3 y'day, after leaving the Benson in Portland @ 9:10. Had dinner @ Higgins w/ Craig & Kathy Lesley on the 15th--Craig, to our horror, on crutches because of hip pain just as he begins living at Whitman College for his year as resident writer. He'd put in a couple of weeks of classes and seemed undaunted although the situation would certainly have me turning & running from it. Kathy seemed in fine humor, with Elena into her junior year @ Brown and Kyra, w/ even higher SAT scores, heading into her last high school year.

As for us, we are immersing into "somewhere else" now that we have these good digs in Ashland (the Benson stay was functional for seeing the Lesleys but city-noisy) and a day w/ 2 plays and a theater tour. I'm nursing my knees through these sidewalk excursions--they feel okay today, but I'd better be careful--and C is being very mindful of what she eats, so we're doing well now that the transportation portion of the trip is behind us.

Rained a bit--.08" for the day--as we left Portland, but while there some clouds here, all is dry so far.

The afternoon of our Portland Sunday, we went to the Classical Chinese Garden in the otherwise frayed-looking Chinatown, and it is phenomenal. Stunning craftsmanship all through it, from the pavilions to the different kinds of waterlilies in different sections of the reflecting pool to inlaid stones 3-4" long in the walkways through the entire place. Bravo again, Portland.

27 Sept.--Home since the 24th from the quite splendid Oregon trip, and more than halfway through my read of the Prairie ms. So far, it's smooth and strong.

Ah, Oregon. All 3 Ashland plays were first-rate: Noises Off played and paced the seriously madcap way farce should be, As You Like It captivatingly fanciful in spite of the rain showers--we were just under cover, by a row or two, under the overhang of the new seating area; everyone in front of us in raingear, blankets, and whatever else they'd been able to fashion against the

27 Sept. cont.--weather, it was hilariously like being in a massive campground; and the last play, Julius Caesar, the most interestingly done of the bunch. The brooding metallic staging has been controversial, I guess even controversial, and while I wasn't predisposed to like a nontraditional treatment of the play--hell, I don't mind togas--I thought it worked, the moodwork of the set a chiaroscuro for the fine clear presentation of the play's language.

9 Oct.--Y'day I completed the re-read touching up of the ms, two weeks' worth since coming back from the Oregon trip. By now there's no counting how many slight changes I made, from a single word to a half paragraph slipped in or nicked out, but I'd guess 150-200, on a manuscript of about 430 double-spaced pages. Incidentally or not so, the book stands at just under 140,000 words, I think second only to *Bucking the Sun* in page girth. So, the long fever is over once more. Much of the work of the past 2 weeks was exhilarating as writing can ever become for me; there are moments in this editing spate that I know I am working at a level almost no one else can. As to the total book, the future is again a secret. C is giving the ms a final read, tomorrow I'll march through the UW library checking last facts, and then away goes *Prairie Nocturne* to New York, just like Susan, Monty and Wes.

In the last round of work on the book, I never found my way to these pages on Sept. 25 to mark another major milestone of my word-making: this diary was 30 years old that day. At times I've been fickle with it, and I have the impression it was sharper and more vivid in its youth, but here it still is.

16 Oct.--In the usual coarse end to the long finespun process of writing a book, y'day I manhandled the ms into the express mail to NY, and Liz, and Nan, and who knows what. After C had done her last read of the work and I'd made the crx fixes out of my UW day of immersion into fact-checking, I ran the computer FIND check on a few words I was aware of overusing, such as "just" and "now" and "a little," all of them springing from my tendency to calibrate a scene as precisely as possible--

Oct. 16 cont.--and in the 1st third of the ms, I found such a welter of "just" that I thought, hmm, maybe I'd better take a full look at this. Thus came my last go-through of the ms, beginning on Oct. 10 and finishing y'day morn; it actually was the kind of last read I've always given mss--seeing how each sentence shapes up and stands by itself--but I hadn't particularly thought this one, with all the polishing I've been doing on it, needed that. Hell yes it did. So, that got done, and on the final morn the computer and printer of course went sulky, freezing with every attempt to print out a few corrected pages, and then the effort to package the ms had to be hashed together with barely viable strapping tape, and then the parking lot at the post office was full and 15 people were in line ahead of me... I'm damned if I know why this last step in sending a ms off to be a book is always like this, but it always leaves me too spent to be exhilarated.

In any case, Prairie Nocturne is away, and here again is the question of what I do with the rest of my life. That'll probably be chewed on repeatedly in these pages, but for today we're going up to the Skagit Flats, in this stunning Indian Summer weather--right now, just past 8, it's cloudless and bright.

20 Oct.--Fog season now, thick this morn and quite a lot of y'day. Have been doing mild indoor chores--catching up on gardening plans and records, tending to a few financial details--since the ms went off to NY. Liz called a day or so after receiving it, had read the first 100 pages and said "it is so good"--a word choice that heartened me a lot more than the customary publishing world balloon of adjectives. She's to pass it along to Nan this week.

We entertained tooth and nail y'day, when Carlene Cross came to dinner as scheduled but Gabriel Miller and Karen showed up at around 10:30 24 hours haead of schedule. As best we can tell we pulled off our welcome with straight faces, and C fortuitously had just made applesauce and there was a leftover end of the fancy homemade bread Ann Nelson had given us, so she whipped together the promised snack. We liked Gabe and Karen right off the bat, Gabe with his father's charm but an actual profession and direction in life to go with it,

20 Oct. cont.--Karen a quite stunningly pretty woman who doesn't act the part at all and seems businesslike about her job as a fundraiser for the UW law school.

21 Oct.--For the record, the computer's word count on *Prairie Nocturne* is 139,890. Liz called today after her read of it, proclaimed she "loved it," found it "deeply compelling" so that she kept reading straight through "and this is a woman who has a lot of reading right now." She even thought the NY material, which she confessed she had been leery of me tackling, seemed "right on." The one kick she had was Susan flinging herself into a passionate try with Wes right after proclaiming love for Monty. My reaction, and C's, is that it was meant to be as much a surprise to Susan as to the reader. We'll see if it trips up Nan.

In the gray weather that has set in, I'm starting to archive the *Prairie* ms revisions and otherwise try to set the working house to order. The printer right now is cranking out 80 pp.--20,000 words--of unused ms material which I'll file away.

26 Oct.--Persistent fog these days, the weather as standardly grungy now as it was wonderfully sunny before this set in. This Sat. morn, I am just back in from picking salad makings and b'fast berries, while C has gone to a furniture sale near REI to see if she can find a phone stool.

I've been nagged by the old right-groin pull the past 3-4 days--it came on for no discernible reason, around last weekend--and am trying to stretch my way out of it. Despite it, managed to get the FM antenna installed in its most receptive spot--which turned out to be the north most post on the deck railing, rather than the ridgepole of the house. And have spent desk time the past couple of days sorting and refining into file folder categories the bulging "lingo" file I've been collecting for, oh, 40 years.

Considerable socializing last night at the Mayfields'. Besides us, their ex-nighbors Ollie and Christina, and Jeff and Annie Lowdermilk, also from the last occasion of this sort at their place; and Carolyn & Richard--she teaches art at Bellevue CC and we both quite liked her, he's an engineer and struck us as a bit blowhardy, on

Oct. 26 cont.--most topics that came up. Ah well, he wasn't bad, and 7 out of 8 is a wonderful ratio of enjoyable party companions.

30 Oct.--Clear and chilly, for our trip to the Skagit flats w/ the Damborgs later this morn. It's 39 on the downstairs porch thermometer, and there's frost up along the front hedge. The arctic air has cleared away the gray, and there was a splendid radiant sunset y'day. Earlier I potted in the veg garden, transplanting kale and lettuce sprigs in my continuing experiment toward winter salad greens, after a dogged morning and early afternoon of desk chores. C produced a fine substantial supper of chicken breasts, and then the CBC sent us a charming evening of music, most winsomely the Vancouver Symphony performing Mendelsohn's music for Midsummer Night's Dream, with a wickedly fine Shakespearean actor narrating as Puck. ~~xBlissed, blissed~~ Ah, and earlier I had a long phone get-together with Tom Holden in Ann Arbor; getting close to 45 years on since our college friendship clicked into place, and it was good to hear he and Beth are well. Blessed, blessed, day-ends such as y'day's.

All of which is counterpart to Lois Welch's heart-breakingly gracious note apprising us that Jim is undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment for lung cancer. "Guardedly optimistic," says Lo; if there were any justice in fate, that optimism would not have to be guarded.

3 Nov.--Chilly Sunday morn, likely to be the last of sunlit procession of days. Fog is snaking and retreating and snaking again along the Kitsap shoreline, but not over here. Nights these past, what, 4-5-6 days have been lawn-frosty; 50ish days, providing afternoons when we've worked in the yard. All of it dry, dry; leanest moisture in past 54 autumns.

To my continuing surprise, the weather held for both of our doings with the Damborgs. The Skagit trip with them was an immediate bird extravaganza-- snowgeese in sight as we trundled toward the turn (past "Cow Town" dairy) into the first viewing area. Fine Vs of geese and a mass liftoff or two, and trumpeter swans flying

3 Nov. cont.--huge and extended against the water, and disc-whirls of dunlin flashing past. C and I had simply decided to make the day a basic tour of spots we favor, so Mark and Lou can choose to go back to them if they want, and everything clicked, from the plenteous birds to the tasty pizza and really pretty damn good local beer at the LaConner brew pub to the Indian Slough walk and the apple-buying visit at Merritt's. C's diary entry covers the power outage that coincided with Mark's beginning effort on our FM antenna installation, although I should put down the mystification that passed over him as I turned on the radio after he had fiddled the antenna connection into place on the back and nothing happened.

Nothing daunted--as I've noted before, the Damborgs are immensely valuable friends because they are dauntless--back they came at 3 y'day to resume on our antenna dilemma. Mark brought a pole about 8' long to test for himself the illogical reception results C and I got when we tried the antenna various places, and his came out the same as ours--the highest possibility, by the ridgepole, did not improve the mushy KUOW reception (which we don't much mind because we can bring that station in by cable) and wasn't as good in bringing in KPLU as the deck-post spot C and I had zeroed in on. So, with considerable experimenting and cogitating--Mark obviously loves projects of this nature, you can see why he's an engineering prof--across about 2½ hrs he fashioned a sturdier connection into the back of the radio (by simply doubling over the copper wire so it would hold in a too-loose snap-slot, a perfectly obvious solution that never would have occurred to me), I untacked the cable along the side of the deck and the house for the location experimenting and then retacked it when the result came out the same as we'd had, he drilled a hole into the house and he and I fished the coaxial cable through it with surprisingly little frustration (I thought up running thinner wire out to link up with the cable, he thought up the tight little hooking arrangement to link the two), he affixed the faceplate to the wall to hold the cable and the connection, and by god we at last had decent reception of KPLU, with its jazz riches, on the same radio with the CBC's wealth of classical music. Onward to drinks and crab dinner, with the salad and apple pie the Damborgs brought along. Well done, by the four of us.

3 Nov. cont.--Meanwhile, at least theoretically, my ms is supposedly being read by the Scribner editorial brains trust; mid-week fax from Nan said she was "loving it" so far but confessing she was only about as far she'd read before in the good-earnest sample I provided a couple of years ago.

While waiting on the NY editors, I've shaped up my lingo collection into a dozen or so more usable folders; immersion into the language, one way or another, is something I need nearly every day.

4 Nov.--Bull's-eye for Nocturne on at least the first round. The fax machine began chattering today, Nan and Susan full of praise for the ms w/ 120 pp. left to read, Brant finished with it and full of specific compliments. Now to await Nan's full appraisal.

6 Nov.--This was Prairie Nocturne's day of superlatives from Scribner; it may never be more highly loved than in this daylong apache dance of passionate phone calls and faxes.

I was put to flirting with the book again yesterday when Nan asked for quick Author's Questionnaire mini-essays describing the book and saying something about why/how I wrote it. Those condensations, which have to be diamond-hard, I always find a grueling chore, and after spending all of yesterday on the "How I wrote..." couple of hundred words, I went to bed spent and, as C anxiously observed, looking strung-out. I assured her that's exactly what I was, sad to say. This morning I got off on a better foot with the book description by adapting the best lines of my original proposal from three or so years ago, grumbling meanwhile about why somebody in Simon & Schuster's army of marketing minions couldn't be doing what I was. No sooner did I have the description done, about 8:15, when here came the ring of the phone and Nan. "Great," says she about Nocturne; "fantastic job!" Went on to lay out that she knows I get impatient about having my stuff called historical, but she thinks this book plays to my strength, the history in it is really interesting. She thought I handled the book's

6 Nov. cont.--leap into NY "incredibly well," which with Liz's similar comment makes two medals of honor from these quintessential NY women. The good luck rolled on: she finds Susan a "fantastic character," and, a relief I hadn't expected, "loves" the title. Then the climax: "So, we'll publish it on November 11." She said actually that idea, which seems so perfect for this WWI/Armistice Day-laden book, was Susan Moldow's. Dazed with the cloud of good fortune and that perfect-sound stroke of marketing, I said Geez, Nan, I guess that's why the two of us work for her.

Amid the writing of the above graf came a phone call from Brant Rumble, the associate editor and right-hand man of Nan whom I'll be working with on final toning of the ms. Brant is an amiable Alabaman, as I learned during Mtn Time, and that should go reasonably well.

Well, that's the gladsome stuff on the home front. On the national scene, y'day's election was a disaster, the Democrats' very thin restraint in ~~Bushery~~ the Senate on rampant Bushery now wiped out, and it'll be onward to Iraq.

A real rain this morn, for the first time since--July?

Oh, and a final good line of the day: after I sent in the damnable questionnaire material, here came a fax from Nan that began: "If you wouldn't mind writing some author questionnaires for others on our list, it would be a big help."

7 Nov.--A few further thoughts on y'day's enthusiastic gearing-up in NY on behalf of Nocturne:

--All through my work on the book, that is across all the years of writing it, always sitting at my elbow was the assumption that the Harlem Renaissance--Monty making it to NY and trying to stick there--would be the face the book would present to the world, particularly the precinct of it inhabited by the publishing literati I deal with,

Nan, Liz, Susan Moldow, et al. That's not really their perception at all, it turns out: the Klan in the West and the WWI toll and aftermath is the focus they find in the pages. So much the better for me, as best I can gauge, if those instinct-written scenes (as differentiated from the necessarily researched Harlem ones) are the eye-catchers.

7 Nov. cont.--Nan twice remarked, once in her first letter of reaction and again in y'day's phone call, how polished and confident she finds the writing in Nocturne, and in y'day's comment she added that the ms likely needs a lot less line-editing than Mtn Time did. I leapt in to tell her I made a mistake with her on Mtn Time, letting her at the work-in-progress about three drafts ahead of when I normally let an editor see my stuff. As I explained (and it still seems to me a reasonable idea at the time), I'd wanted (a) to give her a chance to see the ms she was inheriting in my shuffle over from Simon & Schuster and (b) to see how we worked together in going-over a ms. Did it too soon, me culpa not youa culpa, I told her, and I could hear it register with her--again, I think a tweak of events that's helpful to me, the Nan who lost that \$60,000 contract argument with me realizing that ~~I~~ normally a slickly done piece of work will come in from me.

Some rain again this morn, and more in the forecast; it's getting to be like November. Went to Tony and Lee's for supper last night, 1st time we'd seen them since the 1st of July. Tony really limps around with this bad back condition, although his mood was good and the small pieces of art he showed us for his upcoming Foster-White exhbtn look quite up to par. The daughters are willowing upward; Larka is notably less needy of being the center of attention than when she was a one-girl circus as a tyke, although she did show us the belly-dance moves she somehow picked up. Tony passed along his trio of recent writings, one of the articles a quite thought-provoking piece about his artist buddy Don Eckelberry's sketching of the last ivory-billed woodpecker.

Almost forgot, although how could I: among Nan Graham's comments to me was the commendation that my chapters were such good reading she'd stayed with them instead of doing Hillary Clinton's, which she was due on.

10 Nov.--A small cut of morning sun, literally peachy, caught first snow on Mt. Townsend as we were at breakfast. A sizable rain is forecast tomorrow night--we haven't had a needed daylong or all-night drowner yet out of this series of weather systems--but right now it's mild (50ish) and broken-clouded. Juncoes are monkishly tilling away under the purplish canopy of the blueberry bushes, the heather

10 Nov. cont.--blossoms burgeoning behind them. Even as I've written this, though, the mid-morn is dimming down, and I'd better get out there on my few garden chores.

--Afternoon now, the weather still shifty, but I've started the barbecue grill to see if we can sneak tonight's king salmon to doneness and eat it cold.

The night of the 7th, we went to the UW to hear Bill Cronon give the Danz lecture, his chosen topic "humanist environemtalism." The big auditorium in Kane Hall was jammed, and Bill was wondrously deft in his lecturing. By the end of the evening, though, when we'd called in at the grad school dean's reception for Bill just long enough to clap him on the shoulder and say hi, C was shaking her head about the "academic hothouse" reception and I'm afraid that frames Bill's talk, too. He went through 14 points, keying from the dualism of the definition of nature--in one meaning, it's everything, in another of our usages it's everything we are not, everything not human--and time and again he came back to what he considers central reasoning, that we must always be aware of and respectful of the other pole of argument, belief, value. As with the Uncommon Ground collection he fathered, I'm unable to see how this can be carried through in what is always inescapably a political fight over environmental issues, without it amounting to polite surrender. Hell, I'd gladly settle for 50-50 results in environmental battles, if Bill's thesis would produce that--but the other side(s) will never back off and say, oh sure, our turn to give the environment a break, your turn to win one. I think if Bill wants to herd the issue into dictionary meanings, as our other buddy Richard White tends to do with "wilderness," he'd better deal with "neutral," which is that out-of-gear spot in the middle between forward and reverse. Interestingly, in the questions afterward, a guy who looked like a grad student~~ly~~ very politely and deftly asked Bill if he could cite us instances where he thought environmental disputes had been dealt with along some of the lines he had just laid out. Bill is so swift that he covered without I think even being aware that he was covering, by talking a bit about a Wilderness Council campaign he's had a hand in that points out to people that the migrating birds they

Nov. 10 cont.--enjoy in their backyards migrate in from the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, and thus ~~like~~ ANWR is part of the nature that touches all of us and we touch back. Bless the finespun ethicism behind that, but is it going to hold up against the blunt political fact of the Republicans having retaken the US Senate 48 hours before? I'm only a shin-high historian compared to heads like Bill, but even I know of another set of 14 points--Woodrow Wilson's--that got crumpled by the forces of politics.

Here on the home front, the office continues to strew itself with layers of stuff I'm ostensibly trying like hell to put away. Have been going ~~at~~ through filecards, seeing what they suggest toward future work, and y'day I came across a rubberband-scarred one with notes I took during our June 27 '81 flight with Ted Schwinden--the Montana guv's birthday present to me--and figured it belonged at the back of my '81 diary, which I accordingly dug out. Browsed into it a bit, and find I had many of the same frets then as now. Trying to make the work~~at~~ pile up into something worthwhile. Trying to keep fit. Reagan then, Bush now. I was pleased to see that I seemed to stay level-headed at a time when Sky and Winter Bros were both in the final running for nominees for the American (as it was that year) Book Awards. And from one of those earnest pages of 21 years ago, up came an item short and sharp and terrible: Jim Welch had just told us of Dick Hugo's lung cancer, as we just now have heard of Jim's.

Nov. 11--A year from today, Armistice Day, if everything holds together, Prairie Nocturne is to be published. As C says, starting tomorrow when people ask me when the book will be out I can chirp, "less than a year!"

15 Nov.--On the grumble side, spent y'day morn and this morn putting together a promo memo for Scribner. On the hallelujah side, Linda Bierds was magnificent y'day afternoon at the Suzzallo library celebration, reading her poem wondrously in that secular cathedral of a room. Our buddy Betsy Wilson did well too, and C and I happily fetched up with her hubby, Dean Pollack, and Betty Mayfield to enjoy the proceedings with. Betty reported that she had Faye Allen talked into coming, only to have Paul whisk her away

Nov. 15 cont.--to New Zealand for the America's Cup doings.

She said Paul will sail as the 17th man on the boat (I think today) and his adrenalin is pumping; Craig McCaw has been sailing in that spot, but Betty jokes that as the stock market tanks more and more, Paul owns more and more of the boat.

This week I also hashed together the book's acknowledgments, which I'm in the habit of lacing with considerable source material to show the book's street cred. Next week, it better be the 5-minute talk I'm contributing to the UW library's literary salon night, and maybe some finances, and the week after that, Thanksgiving and the ms both descend.

Addendum: from CBC radio, C caught mention of a CBC TV program that night on Bill Reid's "Spirit of Haida Gwaii," and while it proved to be mostly a music festival Reid had initiated, we had a great time watching it: Haida singers, and a singer-activist named Bruce Coburn performing among other things what he said was Reid's favorite song, Stan Rogers' "Northwest Passage"--I've been going around ever since humming the great line "...the hand of Franklin/ reaching for the Beaufort Sea..." And the climax turned out to be a Spirit of Haida Gwaii oratorio, which with the CBC's wicked fine camerawork in onto individual musicians and intercuts to the phenomenal boatload of figures of the namesake sculpture and a grave but bemused recording of the words by Reid himself, we had a thrilling time. I lament that I never met Bill Reid, who seems to me the towering artist of this coast, in any medium including my own, so far. Great final words of the oratorio, about Haida Gwaii, the Haida nation of the islands: "The boat sails on, always anchored in the same place."

Nov. 16--Rain passed through last night, but today was mild with some sun--a last low glow is warming the bookcase as I write this at 4--and I did yardwork for a couple of hours this afternoon as C built a pot of stew. Glum news, though, of the sort that's been steadily coming in, another friend on the cancer list--Tom Jones, prostate cancer diagnosis. Damn this price of life, aren't any of us even going to reach average mortality these days?

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24 Nov.--Watercolor wash of fog and soft cloud this morn. Both of us spent most of the past week choring, C toward our Th'giving throng and me toward clear decks for the ms to come in for a landing. The exception was the 20th, when the weather looked decent and we sashayed up to the Skagit, the usual lovely routine of looking at the snow geese, pottering north through that beloved farmland, doing the dike hike at Indian Slough, retreating to LaConner for pizza and a beer at the Brew Pub; then a buy of salmon at Haggins market for supper. Some exquisite clarity to the day, although there were patches of fog: Mt. Baker looked as if every detail had been freshly painted in.

I'm writing to the gurgle of the emeritus coffeemakers, running water through the pair to tune 'em up for the Thanksgiving throng. Talk about seasonal murmurings.

Back to our doings: night of the 21st, we went to the UW for an English Dept. event, Linda Bierds and David Shields talking about the "I" of their writings. Linda was a marvel as ever, taking us through a chronology of three of her poems across some years--"Fossil," "Grandson," and "Testament: Vermeer in December"--to show how her memory of her grandmother and a few of her belongings have shape-shifted with time. David did a good summary of their approaches when he said Linda actually has a narrative sense and he, ostensibly a prose writer, has a poetic inclination. But, as with Bill Cronon, his presentation and I guess his current approach to writing is so finespun there's a danger it'll gauze him over. In essence, he says what interests him is his response--that is, writing about his response--to, say, popular culture. I wonder if that can be done in book after book. Anyway, I quite like David although we could be from different planets literarily, and I would suspect that deep down he doesn't give a big rat's ass about my kind of stuff. From the sound of it, he's talked himself into the self-justifying solipsism that autobiography is just as made up as fiction; it's fine with me ~~too~~ if the postmodernily-afflicted want to throw out the bathwater with the baby, I don't mind being the only storyteller extant if it comes to that.

24 Nov. cont.--The sun is coloring up the heather blossoms now, so maybe some more yardwork can be sneaked in this afternoon. Both of us worked outside most of y'day afternoon, and indeed I provided a full salmon salad dinner from our winter greens, including the first lettuce leaves (Italienischer, mostly) from our coldframe sowing. So, onward and probably outward.

28 Nov.--Just over $\frac{1}{2}$ hr now until the Thanksgiving crowd begins to gather, on the most springlike of these holidays that we can remember--49 above now, at 11:30. C has cleaned this place within an inch of its life, we have a nearly 21# turkey in the oven, my set-up of coffee makers are perking away in the first lap of keeping the crowd lubricated. Hosting this is a helluva lot of work, but often it's been one of the finest days of our year. Und zo, we brave it once again.

1 Dec.--Oy, ouch, and fooey, it is abruptly December. Nor did Prairie Nocturne return to me from NY last week as it was supposed to, further piling the work into the holidays. Now I truly hope the revisions turn out to be light dusting.

A fine mellow Thanksgiving this year, particularly given the shittiness of the world situation, the political and judicial clamps that the bastards of this Administration are putting on the country, etc. I'd say every one of the 17 or so of us recognizes what is going on and puts some kind of a shoulder against it, but nobody was consumed by rant. (I still feel that vocal cords paralyzed in the wide-open position are a kind of victory for the Bush bastards.) Whatever light hindsight sheds on this season, the 28th of November was a sunny day, crowned with an exquisite sunset that drew people out onto the deck in their shirtsleeves to watch ~~it~~ color the mares' tail clouds over the southwest mountains. As C has noted, the food this year was astonishing, right from the get-go when Mark & Lou arrived with pate and a head-of-cabbage dip spiked with radish curls etc. on toothpicks; and the next thing, Ray and Priscilla Bowen bustle in with caviar. Stunning grub all day--Jerusalem artichoke and celeriac from the Bowens, two mammoth salads from the CCalvins, a

1 Dec. cont.--Waldorf salad from Linda Miller (probably the first of those I've plowed into since she left here a $\frac{1}{2}$ century ago). As ever we had some celebrating to do with hoisted champagne glasses--Linda's NOW poster enshrined in the Smithsonian, Bill Calvin's Phi Beta Kappa book award--and endless visiting. This was also the year when the afterdinner walk around the neighborhood, in the best weather ever, became worse than the proverbial herding of cats. Linda ceremonially walked as far as our old house, and then she and Gabe turned around, fine. Priscilla too turned around about then, due to her recent hip transplant. The rest of us strung out--I walked for a while with the Maloofs, then with Karen--and as we straggled back into the house for coffee and dessert, I gradually noticed some of our aircraft were missing. Most notably Bill Calvin--oh swell, it crossed my mind, one of the world's leading brain theorists dreamily adrift in the dusk in streets he doesn't know, prime target for a car coming around one of these corners--and then with some relief I figured out Mark Damborg must be with him. But more and more minutes went by and they didn't show up, and when I went up the driveway to see if they were on their way, Peter Rockas, longtime coffeeshop buddy of Bill, ~~was~~ popped out there in concern too. He'd glanced over his shoulder at the top of the 175th st hill and realized Bill and Mark must have turned back at the base of the hill--but back to where? Peter and I didn't dither, he just said C'mon let's take a ride, and in his car we found the two of them just cresting 15th from the south, i.e. still quite a way from the house. Peter and I grinned at each other had and mutually confessed to ~~the~~ having the two words "heart attack" on our minds. I have yet to get straight from Mark where the two of them went awry, but it must have been down the dogleg before 15th comes up the hill.

For the record, the Thanksgiving gang this year: Mark & Lou Damborg, Tom Orton briefly before going on to his brother's, Ray and Priscilla Bowen, John & Katharina Maloof, Linda Miller and Gabriel and Karen, Catherine & Bill Calvin, Ann McCartney & Norm Lindquist, Peter Rockas.

4 Dec.--Mild rain this morn, 1st of any kind for a helluva while. We've not yet had anything resembling the big wet storms that reliably started about mid-Nov. It brings to mind Isak Dinesen's line about the year the long rains failed.

We took y'day morning to go to the U Book Store and do some mild Xmas shopping for one another. Our lives are so complete it's hard to think of anything further either of us can use, so the gifts tend toward CD's, pj's... The afternoon was so mild we both worked outside, C cutting down the ground asters out front while I gleaned a supper salad, to go w/ y'day's grilled salmon, from the garden greens.

And I finished my re-read of English Creek, 1st in quite a number of years. Found two genealogical disparities between it and Prairie Nocturne which I've decided are just going to have to stand--in EC, I have Wendell Williamson as Warren W'son's son, and of course in Nocturne I've feathered in a whole new generation between them; and I have Jick born on the Ramsay place on Noon Creek rather than at the Indian Head ranger station as Nocturne points to--but beyond that, I fell head over heels in love with English Creek. Liked the voice, felt good about the craft that works in details in a constant weave. And was reminded of what I surely knew then, that it took a lot of guts to pace a book that way, gear it down to day-by-dayness--intestinal fortitude not only on my part in handing it in to Atheneum that way, but on Tom Stewart's part as editor for letting it be. And the rodeo scene bring back to mind the yips from Harry Ford, one of the silky dukes of publishing as Atheneum's art director as well as its poetry editor, in not wanting that spaced-apart blurty announcer's lingo. I held tight for it, and it still looks to me as if it pays off on the page, conveying Tollie Zane's dopiness and setting up the finale where Jick and Ray get to mimicking it and laugh themselves, and the reader, right out of the chapter. So it turns out to have been a book to immerse in, and the spectrum of folks who have singled it out in my body of work--historian Bill Robbins, Eric Nalder of the two Pulitzers in reporting, Tom Holden as one of my closest readers, and for that matter Carol in special affection for that book--have good reason, it looks to me like.

5 Dec.--No followup moisture since y'day's rain quit about mid-afternoon, but no wind either, so the ground has stayed damp-looking. Cloud cover today, except for an enticing break over Sequim. Since we have a full agenda tonight--to Tony Angell's sculpture show at Foster-White with Mark and Lou, and then out to dinner with them--we're close to home today. Now, @ 10:15, C is out on a provisioning trip, and I've just finished (?) a morning of delving toward what I'll do after Prairie Nocturne.

And this morning's winner is...The Rainbow Rope, to my considerable surprise. I spent y'day fairly contentedly mulling through the one-room school book, The Whistling Season, but in terms of a next piece of work that wouldn't have to be so "created," so necessarily immersible in research and recreated context of times, my Cuban missile crisis opus pocus at the moment seems more accessible, more ready-made. We'll see if this lean holds up, or I fall some other direction in '03.

Have just finished the Thornton Wilder biog Tom Holden sent me, The Enthusiast, and there's enough representation of Wilder in his own words in there to show how vital it is not to dither over what-to-do-next. Some looking over and trying on for size, sure, but Wilder got so he didn't produce anything publishable for several years on end. Incredible for a talent such as his, that evidently reeled off The Bridge of San Luis Rey--this mild Wilder binge began C and I each read it again and were both wowed. But there he ultimately sat, high-centered, and I'd like to think I can wobble words toward some given project, as long as health will let me.

7 Dec.--Y'day morn showed only sifts of fog--today is gauzed over as of now, 8 a.m.--and we got ourselves by napes of the necks and went up to the Skagit Flats on one of our routinely wonderful getaways there. Swans were, well, swanning around in the fields, but the snow geese were nowhere close.

Even so they provided another indelible memory, in our long loving history with that flock, when we were at the viewing point just beyond the Cowntown dairy, and off to the east the geese rose, an enormous swirl of particles against the fog, with such a massed clamor--one big solid sound that was close to a roar--that for a moment I thought it was the noise of heavy machinery of some sort. We then went on up to

7 Dec. cont.--Merritts' Apples, another of our regular stops this time of year, and bought some more whopping Jonagolds and some pears after the honcho fed us samples and a gift box of apple jams etc. for the elder Rodens for Xmas. Both of studiously ignored the radio preaching that was blaring in the apple warehouse, as the place is quite a touchstone for us, the Merritt enterprisers at the top of their craft even if they turn out to be rabid churchniks, and we hope to lope back up there in Feb. when the place gives lessons in pruning fruit trees. After Merritts', we did the Indian Slough dike hike as usual--tide was in, no ducks to speak of, but we got a kick out of the herons dry-docked morosely out in the fields waiting for the water to turn, 7 of them at one point. Then into LaConner, again absolutely per usual, for pizza and beer lunch at the Brew Pub.

The night before, the 5th, we coalesced with the Damborgs at their place and all went to the Foster-White Gallery in Pioneer Square for the opening of Tony Angell's show. It was a good deft show, albeit without the stunning prints or big grandly assertive sculptures that some of his past shows had; I think there were nine stone pieces, and I'd guess about 15 bronzes. We caught up briefly with Gilia and Bryony, both of them thank god sanely employed instead of trying this or that in this treacherous economic climate. Then it was back to the Damborgs for a drink, then to dinner where they had suggested, @ Cafe Lago, and what a helluva dinner it was--Carol and Lou's lasagna and my ravioli and Mark's gnocchi, all scrumptious. Mark as ever interrogated the wine list until it hollered uncle, and we drank something mysterious and nifty. I think of Phyllis Theroux's maxim that we all ought to have one person who blesses us in spite of the evidence--she had in mind grandmothers, but I hereby put in the amendment that we also should ~~have~~ each have one wine maven in our lives, and Mark is agilely ours. C chipped in inspiration, too: when the dessert menus came, Lou was saying oh, maybe one biscotti, C and I were turning down everything, when Mark said wait a minute, look at these dessert wines, a couple of them are sensational stuff. C with perfect timing said, one of each and share? Mark lit up, and indeed we merrily passed around snifters of oenophile ambrosia.

10 Dec.--Spent a perfectly pleasant weekend fiddling with veg garden catalogues and order forms, and much of y'day in figuring out a planting guide, in the effort to stretch our salad makings into the winter months. And Saturday night, the 7th, we went to the UW library to hear the Medieval Women's Chorus sing in the Suzzallo reading room, the acoustics indeed cathedral-like. And there was quite a sketch afterwards, when I asked Betsy Wilson how to go about getting a book out for show-and-tell at the library's 'salon' fund-raiser tomorrow night. The library was closed except where the Medieval Women were holding forth, so somebody had to guide me into the stacks and actually check out the book to me, and there was a hilariously expanding phalanx of library officialdom--Betsy and hubby Dean, Carla Rickerson, the undergrad library head Jill, a staff person or two Jill had to consult--gathering to catapult me into the stacks, with C intoning "How many librarians does it take to..." Finally off Jill and I go, C along with us, to the 4th floor Dewey decimal books for my 1st show-&-tell choice (New York by Paul Morand) only to discover (a) the book is in the mendery and (b) my reading glasses have fallen out of my vest pocket during the Medieval Women. Away C goes to try to find my glasses, onward Jill and I plunge for my second choice, The Silent Traveller in NY by Chiang Yee, a Library of Congress call letter beginning with F. I check and double-check the call number listings beside the elevators, assure Jill it's in Allen 3 north, we get there and I see P call numbers everywhere; I've done the classic dumbbell thing of zeroing in on the periodical call numbers in the listings instead of the book ones. I feel like a ninny, apologize to Jill, we sweep off to the main Suzzallo stacks again, find the book, and now go down to the thoroughly dark circulation area. There Jill turns on the circulation ~~com~~ desk computer, except it doesn't come on and doesn't come on, she feels like a ninny, apologizes to me, finally writes out a note checking the book out to me, desensitizes it for the alarm system (I hope), and we straggle back out of the stacks to the librarian phalanx again.

10 Dec. cont--Interrupted this to go get a haircut, and came back to find newly arrived 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ of my ms, sent back by Brant Rumble with his pencilings. And so to work, I guess this afternoon.

One further Scribner chapter first. Through a serendipitous chain of events--starting with Ann and Norm asking us to Xmas b'fast at an Edmonds B&B with rooms named for Harlem Renaissance figures--Susan Moldow sent me the biog of

Madame Walker they'd published. She stuck a note inside it, and apparently the set of papers which had been under the note, as they proved to be the spec sheet on the print run of a Scribner novel, Wrapped in Rainbows by Valerie Boyd. Three versions of print run, each one exquisitely financially detailed--the kind of stuff a writer never gets to see. So, I had a general notion of how little it costs to produce a book, but there it is in b-&-w, \$1.85 on a 28,000 print run of a 500+-pager; and not so incidentally, 52% gross profit from that scenario. And the

second page, la de dah, lists all the accounts--chain stores to distributors--that order books. Stuff worth knowing.

14 Dec.--Steady strong rain, although no wind with it yet. Started in the night, and if it keeps up it will be the biggest soaker in a long while.

I'm plugging away at the editing of *Prairie Nocturne*, once again serving as my own line editor, thanks all to hell anyway. I well know this is the way of the publishing world anymore, but it's an especially tauntful fact in that Nan Graham is deservedly acclaimed as a terrific line editor, and there she is, just out of reach, editor-in-chiefing the Scribner publishing line and putting patches on Hillary Clinton's \$8 million book. The arrangement that's been worked out at Scribner so that Nan can do about three jobs at once isn't a bad one, with an associate editor, no less--Brant Rumble, who started off as her sound and reliable office assistant--handling the actual pencil after Nan has given a ms her read. My hunch is Brant shines best on big stuff gone wrong, so a ms like mine, where the editing mostly consists of fixing a mance with a better mance, falls mostly back in my lap with occasional marginal queries. He's obviously had a hell of a time keeping track of filaments of plot and character I've

14 Dec. cont.--woven through the book, in the Scribner working method of serially editing across several weekends; he's three weeks behind in getting the whole ms back to me (the last 3/5 is promised for today), and thank god I nudged the first chunk out of him so I could get going on it this week. Anyway, I still think editing is my own primary skill and if I have to do it pretty much solo, goddamn it I will. C has a blessedly keen eye in looking over changes either Brant or I come up with.

On the 11th we made yet another run to the UW library, in this unexpected season of being enchanted by the refurbishing of Suzzallo. Betsy Wilson & Marjan Petty nailed 14 writers, incredibly, to come have dinner with library donors. This "literary salon" was the first function in the revived Smith Room, and because I'm the nearest thing to an institutional memory about that room, having started inhabiting it as a rookie history grad student 36 years ago, I got tapped to talk about the library's usefulness to writers at dinner upstairs in the swank Peterson room.

I may be stupefyingly tone-deaf about this, but as best I could tell--and I did have all my antenna up--the carnie midway array of writers got along fine. I made what rounds I could:

--met Charlie Cross, of rock music writing, as we came in;
--looked up JA Jance, whom I prized from our long-ago writers' lunch at Fuller's, in celebration of the opening of the Sheraton. She and her husband Bill were sitting over in an alcove, JA explaining that functions of this sort turned her into wallpaper.

--met Kevin O'Morrison, whom we ultimately shared a table assignment with;

--saw Tess Gallagher across the room talking to David Guterson, went over. David and I met for the first time, each of us saying a little shyly we didn't know why it had taken this long. In the swirl of things we ended up in conversation with Tess and, decidedly less so, her Irish painter partner. I think I at least got his name, Josié, but could barely decipher any other word he said, and damned if it didn't look as if Tess was having some of the same trouble. She had a good story about trying to help him

14 Dec. cont.--name his paintings, to the effect that they finally reached an obdurate one where he said thank you very much but he'd name this one himself in appreciation of her efforts--and called it Josie's Rage.

--And the two brightest people in the room talking to one another, Linda Bierds and Suzanne Lebosck, MacArthur geni. C and I were immediately taken with Suzanne and regretting that we hadn't linked up with her before now--her hubby, Richard McCormick, has bailed out of the UW's presidency for Rutgers'.

Eventually the migration upstairs to the supper tables of 8 each, and we fared quite well, w/ Kevin and Linda O'Morrison, donors Shelly and Janet Jones, and Ellen & Daniel Blom. C sat with the Bloms and I didn't get in on any of it, but Daniel is a big-league book collector; when I showed off Chiang Yee's *The Silent Traveller* in NY during my talk as an example of an obscure book that only Suzzallo could provide me, he happily whispered to C that he had that one, and *The Silent Traveller* in the Lake District, and *The Silent Traveller* in Paris... As to my talk, it seemed surprisingly well-received in a roomful of prof'l word crafters. Linda B. said afterwards that even Heather McHugh, as she put it "a notoriously hard sell," got to nodding along with what I was saying, and I noticed that myself at the outer edge of my reading glasses' vision. Talk about instinct: I somehow knew that if anybody in the bunch was going to blow me a raspberry it would be Heather, if only on the basis of after-dinner role I was in. But right off the bat she seemed to tune in on some of my phrasing--"perfectly nice innocuous" amid the first sentence drew her first nod and bit of grin, I think, and so, OK, another gauntlet run without my losing writerly blood by the pint.

21 Dec.--Past week went to ms review; with 100 pp. to go now, it's percolating along okay, thanks more to the editing skills under this roof than Scribner's. Brant's go-over catches occasional things that needed caught, but his pencilings don't show an instinctive feel for making a line or a graf more shapely. Carol thank goodness is first-rate at close editing, and I continue to think it's my main talent. Anyway, among us, bi-coastally, we are getting

21 Dec. cont.--Prairie Nocturne more deft on the page, in--god help me--the still hopelessly fascinating process by which a piece of writing improves every time you run your eyes and mental matter over it.

On another anatomical front, I got a rude shock 2 days ago when I was virtuously doing the final maneuver of my stretching exercise and must have twisted my torso too high off the floor as I was rolling onto my side to push up to a sitting position. Virtue apparently will do a person in: I got up with a backache. Next morning, it had me awake by 2 a.m. and seized up into one of those barely-can-climb-out-of-bed downers. As I told C, this episode, first in a long while with my back, wasn't a single sharp pain, but was damn near cartoonlike in its general stiffening grip across the bottom of everything back there. I started exercises right away, did 'em every couple of hours, and by last night things were much improved. Not bad again this morning, but in my 1st go-round of exercises, the last dab I was doing--about midway through the Step 3 series of pushups--a shock went right down the back of my right leg as if a cattle prod had lit it up. Swearing like a sonofabitch, I agonizingly got up, and thank goodness that pain has mostly passed. So I now know, the hard way, that 2 steps of the exercises are enough just now.

We've had a fine spate of seeing friends this past week. Linda and Syd here for dinner on the 16th; Carol wowed 'em with New Zealand salmon, baked tomatoes, lime salad, apple crisp... 'Twas marvelous to catch up with those two; I still lament not having them on this side of the Sound so we could get together more handily. Got a gala ahead, though; to C's and my astonishment, since we only casually know Syd's son Fred and his intended Rebecca, we're invited to the all-stops-out Jewish wedding (on Sydney and Linda's allotment of guests, natch) in May: 300 people, full ritual, it sounds like a ball.

And Tony and I are trying to re-institute our long-lost habit of getting together occasionally for beverage and gab, now that's he's retired from his state education job and I'm out of daily word-count on Prairie. I have to say, it is automatically a hoot to fetch up with him this way: I got to his place and since he had to ship some waxes to the foundry, we took his car for our ultimate circuit to the Lake Forest Park shopping center. I approach the car,

21 Dec. cont.--confident that the lion-sized dog that was awaiting me in there the last time we tried this is no longer on the scene, but the inside of the vehicle still turns out to be an obstacle course: in the back of the wagon, taking up the entire back, is a bale of hay. The rear seat has sundry things strewn which Tony for some reason starts clearing away, maybe to have enough flat space to put his box of waxes down. The passenger seat, which I'm trying to get to, has a layer of papers, maybe kids' artwork, what looks like some mail, considerable loose change, and crumbles of something I don't trust at all. And so we launch, roaring to each other that we're back in the mode now.

And on the 19th, traditional monthly Provinces gig with the Nelsons. Bless them, so far they are not flinching at all about the ferry schedule, although Marsh has to endure a considerable bus ride from downtown on these evenings. Good news of that night was that Ann has quit smoking, with some kind of anxiety medication helping her through promisingly this time. As this is the year the seasonal mail and other messages is bringing a drumbeat of cancer reports, we'll take any hopeful sign we see.

24 Dec.--In about an hour we go to the Rodens for dinner, and @ 8 in the morning to an Xmas breakfast with Ann and Norm. It'll probably be enough, by the time we settle in with ourselves and a roast beef dinner.

I kept at the ms editing today since we're weathered in, fairly steady rain although not heavy. Think I've handled the burnishing of Ninian and Donald getting the rustlers--mostly making the hat clue more obvious to the Scribner gang--and some other dabs as well, y'day and today. Have read the entire ms now, and have figured out the couple of spots, where Susan and Monty are facing the fact of each other, where things need moving, recasting, whatever. Here is where some really good editing from the direction of, oh, say 1230 Ave of Americas could have helped me greatly, but I can come up with the necessities on my own, now that I've waded into sight of where they're destined.

Ah, and speaking of things writerly, the season's chutzpah award has to go to Eric Lacitis of the Seattle Times

24 Dec. cont.--Phone message this afternoon, ol' Eric saying he's calling various writers, wants from 'em an anecdote that can go into a column about what ~~like~~ '02 life was like, hopes I can participate. So, Eric, which do you prefer, that we spend Xmas Eve or Xmas itself doing freebie work for the S. Times and thou?

Nice bit of neighboring y'day when the Kastners came from next door bearing a poinsettia and, lo, smoked salmon, in thanks for all my garden goodies to them during the summer. They both looked good, bless their venerable heads, and C chivvied them into staying for a drink.

27 Dec.--Storm log, of what has been forecast as the strongest blow since March of '99:

--Wind arrived @ 5 a.m., the rain well ahead of it, midnight or so. This is the east wind into the eye of the low, so there have been howling gusts in the garage, I think for the first time since we've lived here. Now, @ 5:35, barometer is 29.3, rain off and on, steady rushing sound of wind and, as I write, some ghost-howls in the downstairs fireplace.

--7:15, still "east wind, rain," in the famous phrase. TV weather showed 30 mph in Eugene, 20-some in Portland, 16 mph here, numerical portrait of what's a-coming. By now dark has thinned enough I can make out clouds over the Peninsula, and they look businesslike, a long low wooly roll about the ~~in the~~ height of the Olympics and above them big dark patches with holes blown through.

--7:30, now the wind seems to have shifted, the neighbors' flag up the hill and clouds scooting in the eastern sky both indicating current from the south. A half-moon in a nimbus sits up there in a space between cloudforms.

--8:05, barometer just over 29.2, temp now risen to 51 on downstairs thermometer. Wind not so noticeable in the house right now, but when I step onto downstairs deck there's a solid ~~sound~~ sound along the shore. First white-caps, scattered and still not very big, have begun; the Sound was leaden and unbroken, although with rumples to it, earlier.

--8:50, rain thickening on the Sound in a kind of curtain from Point Jefferson toward Shilshole; only falling lightly here yet. The Sound isn't showing whitecaps but all the water is in motion, as if picking up and heading north.

27 Dec. cont.--9:45, strongest gust yet a few minutes ago. The Sound is now lumpy, with an overall wave pattern that crests white, goes to gray, crests again farther along.

Just faded now is a wan rainbow, south of Kingston. No ferries seen for awhile. No windsurfers yet; in the '99 blow they were antic out there.

--10, big gusts now, and first flicker of lights. Still no rain on this side of the Sound, though the far side is gauzy with it.

--10:15, some harder gusts yet. Gulls waft in it like very white scraps of paper blown. Waves are ~~are~~ more numerously white-capped and spray occasionally blows off their tops.

--10:30, rain now, not discernibly heavy just looking out the office window, but blown in on the blocks of the downstairs deck about four feet from outer edge, unusual.

--1:10, TV weather shows the reverse of the morning wind speeds, 31 here, 21 Portland, 14 in Eugene. Barometer is back up to 29.4, although there are still very spirited gusts. Highest gust in Seattle, according to TV, was 53.

Our impression here is, strong gusts along this bluff have been spread over quite a span of time, late morn to now. Rain stopped $1\frac{1}{2}$ hr or so ago. The Sound has big rollers now, and it's high tide.

28 Dec.--Have been deep in fixing the ms whenever we haven't been holidaying or bracing for the weather, as per y'day. By all due diligence, in between storm-watching I recast 2 scenes in y'day's very long day, killing off the apartment part of Monty & Susan's second-thoughts scene and moving some of it to the Central Park horseback ride and some of it to a new scene of him phoning her at work. All this, plus the recasting of the walk through Harlem as lead-up to Monty's declaration of love instead of an afterglow, feels to me like the right carpentry, even though none of the skilled readers who've pored over the ms have suggested anything of the sort. My confidence in the face of that, what do I chalk it up to? Me writer, them readers? Finding the chops as a jazzman would, the more I noodle with the keyboard?

To try to catch up on the holiday doings, where we didn't do bad for a household with a guy with his nose down into 400+ pp. of ms. Bill Reeburgh called on about the 14th,

28 Dec. cont.--wondering if they could come up from a Vancouver WA house-hunt the next weekend and catch up with us. I did gulp a bit but we told 'em come ahead, and their overnight stay on the 21st and on into early afternoon of the 22nd cemented the Doigs and the Reeburghs back together, after I don't know how long, maybe half a dozen or so years, when they were something like Flying Dutchmen unable to resolve living in Alaska or California, we were obstinate about not trekking off to their kids' weddings (C hates big out-of-town shindigs of the sort, and my knees were at their messiest), and in general the center did not hold. I had enough phone calls from Bill over those years, snarking over Carelyn's reluctance to quit the Fairbanks house/property in favor of California, while she simply dropped off our map of contact despite having known C for more than 40 years, that I at one point asked him if they had to go on together this way. His answer was that they did, and seeing them here side by side at last validates that, I guess. Bill quite simply has a magical job as chair of UCal Irvine's earth sciences dept.--it's one of the epicenters of global warming research--and whatever their homelife or lack of has been, it's thrashed around to where he apparently is going to stay on at Irvine until retirement, not terribly far down the road.

Xmas Eve, away we went to the Rodens, for an evening made very nifty by the younger generation--Lisa and Jerry Clemens John's nephew Sherwin and his partner Carlene, and a buddy of theirs, Jeff Akers (if I got the last name right). A jokey meal, and then we got John to talking about being shot down over Korea--I'm not sure even Lisa had heard the full recounting such as John gave calmly and reflectively, that sometimes maddening man at his best.

Came the morn, we went to the Edmonds Inn for b-&-b breakfast with Ann McCartney & Norm Lindquist and Norm's daughter Christine and her hubby Neal. And ultimately home to our wee exchange of gifts, and a glorious roast beef dinner, and each other.

31 Dec.--And here goes this year, in weather that for good or ill has moderated to showers, and today to less than that. I in fact went out for half an hour in wan sun in early afternoon and gingerly sprayed lime-sulphur on our little fruit trees. Otherwise, I have stayed hunkered at Prairie Nocturne revising, working my way through Monty and Susan's entanglement of love; I feel I'm within a day of finishing that, which likely means three days. It had been hard draining writing, but oh ever worth it.

Beyond doing what we usually do around here, there are no great year-ending conclusions to put down. We're roasting a turkey, will likely listen to KPLJ's jazz ~~xxx~~ extravaganza and read, and wake up as the same people in '03.

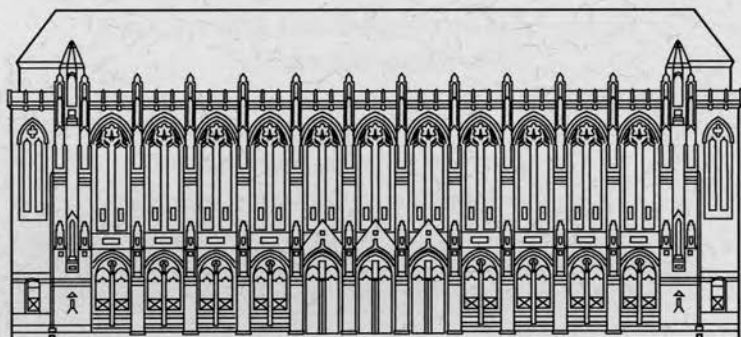
75th
ANNIVERSARY & REOPENING

CELEBRATION

NOVEMBER 14, 2002

2:30 PM

Reading Room



SUZZALLO LIBRARY

University of Washington Libraries

CONVOCATION PROGRAM

Processional

la morisque (by Tielman Susato)

Trombone Choir

Directed by Don Immel

Opening

University Marshal, Ronald M. Moore

Welcome

Betsy Wilson, Director of University Libraries

Introductions and Remarks

Richard L McCormick, President

Remarks

Lee L. Huntsman, Provost

Remarks of Inspiration and Appreciation

Betsy Wilson

Significance of the Architecture of Suzzallo Library on the

University of Washington Campus

Norman Johnston, Professor Emeritus

Se per Havervi Oime (by Morten Lauridsen)

UW Chamber Singers

Directed by Geoffrey Boers

There

A poem dedicated to the Suzzallo Library Reading Room

by Linda Bierds, Professor

Introduced and read by the poet

Benediction (by Kathleen Skinner)

UW Chamber Singers

Recessional

Achieved is the Glorious (by Joseph Haydn)

Trombone Choir

RECEPTION

Immediately following the Convocation in Rooms 101 and 102
of the Suzzallo Library

TOURS

Tours of the renovated Suzzallo Library will leave the
Octagon area on the first floor from 3:45-4:30.

EXHIBITION

*75 Years of Scholarship:
the History and Renovation of the Suzzallo Library*
Room 102 of the Suzzallo Library

Funding for this event provided by the
Kenneth S. Allen Library Endowment
and the
Ann L. Nieder Library Endowment

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Linda Ambre, Cathy Gerhart, Diane Grover, Adam Hall,
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Broadside of poem, letterpress printed using hand-set type,
created by Jim Koss