

1 Jan. '07--At 5:30 this morning, about a dozen bites into cereal sprinkled with peach and banana, I took the first ten little green go-daddies, dexamethasone, of the pill marathon. With customary glucosamine/chondroitin tagging along, it's a daily total of fifteen tablets/capsules. So far so good on the dex; I have maybe a bit of heightened awareness, a mental aura that is not quite a buzz on, and my ~~mouth~~ mouth and voice are somewhat dry, but I haven't (yet) had anything running wild.

Therefore I wrote. For a while this morn it was tough to get going on 11th Man, but I wouldn't say it was different from most Monday-morning gearing up, and I've had a pretty productive day on the interminable football scene.

About that interminable aspect: at the U Book Store before Xmas I plucked off a remainder table Frances Steegmuller's old "dual biog," Flaubert and Madame Bovary, and one of the rewards(?) of reading it has been the realization that I'm writing a la Flaubert, going over and over the sentences, the words, the punctuation marks, not many if any pages regularly per day but a particular doneness at some instinctive point. This book ~~is~~ especially, which has to reel out storyline across three years of war, probably can't have the intense detailing that gets people by the eyes in Bovary, but maybe this pace will have its benefits.

Weather currently is a gray damp curtain just above the peninsula and Sound (although C and I got in a dry n'hood walk this morn), and due to get heavily rainy tomorrow. We're eating crockpot soup tonight, as I wasn't sure my pill-pummeled taste buds would appreciate salmon from the chunks I barbecued during a break in the weather on the 29th.

A footnote to '06: Whistling Season made John Marshall's "ten best" list in the P-I, sixth such selection.

2 Jan.--A good steady day, fine progress on 11th Man, perhaps because I am a bit wired by the drugs. I was supremely skeptical when Dr. Becker in the second-opinion session smiled and said who knows, maybe I would be more creative on dexamethasone et al instead of dragged down by them, and indeed, who the hell does know? In any case, I do have a lot of pep, could not bring on a nap this afternoon, and am consciously about to quit for the day (plus it is 3:40)

2 Jan. cont.--before unknowingly wearing down too far. As to the initiation of Thalidomide at 8 last night, it not only did not make me drowsy, I had to get up at 10:45 and take a Temazepam sleeping capsule to have any hope of sleep. Once I'd done that, though, I conked off without stirring until 5:15. I was just a bit spacy this morn until I could get coffee and breakfast into me, but I'm not sure it was any more than is usual from the sleeping tablet alone. Again today, with Thal pill # 2 on its way, so far so good.

Ah, though, one incident to record that would not have been so pretty. As I have done for decades whenever we have bagels, I went to saw through them with the breadknife, and for the first time in all those decades the knife glanced ~~and~~ off at the start of a stroke and hit my other hand. I looked down expecting, one day after my start on blood thinner to see a carmine ooze in the fleshy part between my thumb and first finger, but I had reflexed so fast that the knife merely touched and did not cut. From here on during this, C will do any severing that needs done.

3 Jan.--Another strong writing day, probably powered by dex. Deus ex machina-like, just now when I was scanning around, wired up, for more and more tasks to do after closing down the writing, Dr. Kato called ~~and~~ with the general advice to pace myself. And so this is a short entry, and I'm off ~~to~~ to do my exercises and call it a day.

4 Jan.--Not a bad writing day, ~~but~~ as I whipped a tough page of the coach's 12th Man speech and some much-needed transitions, but I am noticeably more spacy this 4th and last day of the dex "pulse." Also there's a rash on my back and no bowel movements, as I have e-mailed Dr G et al about and for good measure put in a phone call to the Cancer Care Alliance pharmacist Deborah. Now to see what it is like to come down off dex these next 4 days.

5 Jan.--Unwired, this afternoon, in contrast to y'day's nerve torsions. Just reported to E that I am starting to feel tired--we both hope it promises sleep tonight, when I'll try it without Temazepam so as not to get too reliant on it---and will shut down soon. Have had an e-mail exchange with Dr. G about my having turned into the Illustrated Man, tattooed with rash across my back and shoulders and a bit around to the top of the chest. He thinks it's something

5 Jan. cont.-- usual with dex, and while it thank high heavens does not itch (yet), I grabbed some hydrocortisone cream at N'gate Group Health this morn in case it cuts loose. Every Friday is blood-draw day now, to see how I'm doing with the blood-thinner in me, and C drove me down so that we got there at the maximally efficient first few minutes after they opened at 8ish.

Today's writing: not as much as I wanted, little more than a page, and pretty fancy stuff for a football scene, but it's a part I wanted to get past. Not bad for a day that was otherwise an adventure in the skin trade, rash division.

And a dollop of undiluted good news: Whistling Season was #7 on the Dec. 31 PNBA bestseller list. Becky's 6th printing increment is paying off.

6 Jan.--The lurid rash diminished overnight; doesn't look too bad now. On the other hand, I've put on three pounds and am a bit spacy this morning. One-twelfth of the way done with this, I hope.

Rain and wind y'day and last night, but this morn is lovely (ahead of another promised blow) with the Olympics standing white.

7 Jan.--This morning's boisterous weather has settled down to misty gray an hour ahead of sunset. My own mistiness cleared somewhat today and I put in a full writing day, I think making reasonable fixes in the eternal damn football scene.

8 Jan.--On the 8th day we romped. Slipped in between the rough weathers of this big winter and went to the Skagit. No snowgoose flock on the ground near enough to get to, but marvelous patterns of Vs overhead. Swans everywhere, and eagles damn near the same-- $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. out in one field like a gaggle of loafers. Traditional lunch, pizza and pilsner, at the LaConner brew pub, and home by 1:30. C did all the driving; I probably would have been capable, but not proven.

Am feeling quite good today, although still a few degrees off true north up there in the head. Tomorrow starts the second go-round of dexamethasone.

9 Jan.--Day 1, dex pulse 2. Am not as wired as I expected to be--though I'm ~~not~~ wired enough--and even managed to get a nap, which I don't think was in the picture during the 1st pulse. Anyway, whether it's the dex or intrinsic me, this was an achieving day, rewriting the bodacious football scene into something I now think is tolerable and can let sit and cool for a while.

And so far we have survived the storm, although snow is due at midnight. This is massive weather, fronts as sharply defined as geologic rifts; it is 46 now at 4:35 --50 not long ago--and it's supposed to hit 30 overnight. This morning was balmy, great clarity to the air; superstructures of tugboats passing were white as swan breasts. The wind was building, a parasailer or two jinking around out there by 9, unheard-of early for them. As the day went by and wind chopped up the Sound, we watched the march of the fishboats, three of them--C said they were like Papa, Mama, and Baby--on trials; the Arica, the Rebecca Jane, and the big mother ship too far out for field glass reading. Then about 2, rain started at the Nalders across the Sound. Its advance across the water to us could be clearly seen; it was here in about 5 minutes, which meant about a mile a minute. At 2:17 the lights blinked for the first time. A spasm of hard rain, but wind was the main thing. Then at around 4, it died away, and colorful clouds hung around for awhile; just now, there's a closing curtain of sunset in the southwest, darkness of overcast and rain shoving in on it from the north; Kingston's lights are dimming out in a squall.

10 Jan.--3:50, and the past half hour has brought just what we did not need, ice pellet/snow that is sticking. It's supposed to go down to freezing and stay that way through tomorrow, so this may mean everything becomes a skating rink. Y'day we finally escaped with barely a trace of snow, which went right away this morn, and the power blessedly stayed on. I didn't get into y'day's entry the dead battery saga, in which we had to call AAA for road service to jump the dead battery, ^{in car} a dome light was left on, who knows when.

Today was a strong writing day, touching up the football scene this morn and getting 2+ fresh pp. this afternoon to launch the flight to Alaska. So far I am not as keyed up as during the first go-round of dex, but still have to be careful about my judgment and I notice ^{a tendency} to fumble things, like milk bottle caps.

11 Jan.--Amid this weather snap of snow and ice, we seized the chance to get out while the roads were thawing just after mid-day and went to N'gate Gp Health a day early for my blood draw to see how I'm doing with blood thinner in me. While we there on main routes that were functioning, we went on north to Costco & Home Depot, where C loaded up on bread and light bulbs and I braved a crammed Starbucks to get us a mocha. With this sharp cold, weather is clear as a crystal bell; just after dark, a comet was bright and clear in southwest sky--curtain call from The Whistling Season.

Good writing day, steady couple of pp., as this less dex-clouded week has gone thus far.

12 Jan.--Wintered-in day, 1st one we haven't managed to walk the n'hood. Have been bringing in the hummingbird feeder at night so it wouldn't freeze solid. First thing this morn, a bit before daybreak, the tyke was hanging there indignantly in mid-air wanting to know ~~where~~ where it had gone.

4th day of dex pulse, somewhat less woozy (so far) than during the 1st one.

13 Jan.--Cold snap continues, but the road was bare and so we managed our daily walk by staying on either pavement or gravel on the verge and then down the bare street of the dogleg at the bottom of the hill. On the way back, we were coming up the slope to Ed Stay's house and Ed was out talking to a guy walking his dog. As Ed crooned, "Here, now, Newfie, don't," his 105-pound Newfoundland came riotously romping at me and slammed into my left knee. I got hold of his collar before he could bound onward and knock C down. Went home and I iced my knee. No lasting damage, but shades of my arthroscopic surgery, when I had to exercise on the flat path in the hillside park and dogs would come like bullets at the bloodspots of my incisions while ~~the~~ their owners would prate, "Oh, he won't hurt you."

14 Jan.--1:45, sunny frozen afternoon, and the Seahawks' season just ended with the Bear's overtime field goal at Soldier Field. I'm having a tremulous day, as I see the diary says the 2nd one after the 1st go-round of dex was; I hope history repeats and this clears away tomorrow. Was able to keep busy y'day with some year-end finances. Meanwhile, I'm in the Seattle Times today (phone message of congrats from Tony during nap time) in the announcement of PNBA awards.

Damn, but it is cold, hanging at about freezing all day. The heather looks gorgeous with accents of snow on and around it.

15 Jan.--Clear and cold, although now (10 a.m.) I see first few mares' tail clouds, with tomorrow's forecast for snow that will turn to rain. This morn went to the mattress project, new one for me in the guest room for the nights ahead--who knows how damn many there'll be--when I have to hole up there. The routine at the moment is to sleep in my usual bed with 2 sleeping pills in me; they conk me out very satisfactorily, a solid 8 hours last night after my shaky day, for instance; then try it downstairs when I'm off the dex to take a break from the pills if I possibly can. In any case, the Sleepaire mattress guys showed up pronto at 9, I've stripped away the butcher paper path I laid for them, C is battling the laundry to a standstill, and we've either made progress or haven't lost ground.

Today I turn the corner to the 2nd half of this first phase of the drug regimen. I'm steadier today than y'day (it wouldn't take much) but even so I'm something like a rough draft of myself, squiggly around the edges. And I've started to fret about Carol, who y'day when I asked her how she was doing admitted to uncomfortable stiffness, enough that she'll brace Dr. Eggert about it when she next sees him. I hope to christ a moderation of this chilling weather will help her out.

All in all? I'm making it through, probably in better shape than I think. But I sure as hell do not look forward to this next dex pulse, which I figure will wear off a week from tomorrow or the next day, the 23rd or 24th.

16 Jan.--Thaw has come, it feels balmy outside at 38. I've had a clear-headed day, although it's been a hectic one with the overnight and morning snow--C's yoga class was done in by weather again--and a window estimator coming to take a look at the huge west pane in the living room, which has sprung a fatal leak that produces a wandering plume of moisture. After we did our daily walk and found the road bare, C scooted out to the store and bought a whopping piece of salmon to get us off the storm rations we've been on. She feels greatly better today, for no reason she can identify. I have meanwhile plugged away at 11th Man. Ah, and the hummingbird(s) that I feared did not make it through the freezing days reappeared today, busily patronizing the feeder I've kept thawed.

17 Jan.--Strong day of writing, dex-powered. Further thaw, too, and C and I repeated what has become our safe-footing alternative, down the hill to the dogleg.

Began the process of letting people know what's up with me. Called the Nelsons, caught them 10 minutes before they were to catch a ferry en route to Portland for a dog show, laid things out for Marsh and set up a dinner with them here at the house instead of the blessed Provinces for the 31st. C then scheduled with the Damborgs, when we will go to the Provinces because I'll be out of the dex phase. Then I called Tony Angell, who said he'd had a feeling I was tending to something when I didn't return his weekend call pronto. He was his intrinsic noble self, working it out as we talked that he'll bring over some sandwiches and some art to show sometime soon--i.e., show the flag, get a read on me, pitch in any way he can.

18 Jan.--And today my agent and my editor are apprised. Lucky as hell, I got hold of both of them fairly promptly at mid-morning. Liz took it all in soberly and supportively, wondered if I indeed wanted to let anyone else, even Becky, to know. I said I'd pondered that, but figured the threat was Internet gossip and I didn't want her hearing it secondhand. She took the point, said she's expecting the best out of my medical process, and they love me back there. Becky focused right in, and she too gave me the option of whether to let anyone else know or not. Thinking it through, she said Harcourt is a pretty discreet bunch, she could

18 Jan. cont.--simply tell Michelle in publicity so she can fend off requests for appearances by me, and the marketing and sales people Laurie and Paul so they'll know why I'm not available, and let it go at that. Told her it ~~sounded~~ sounded OK to me. She said she may come out here in late March with Laurie to call on Pennie at Costco, wondered if she'd be able to see me if she did come. I said yeah, probably. Told her about the writing steaming along fueled by dex and that I'm nearly at the halfway point of 11th Man, but want to wait until after the stem cell transplant to show her more ms, when I'm sure my head is clear.

So, my professional obligations are met, and now onward to friends. C and I are going to lunch with Midge, in town from Spokane, at Chinooks and I'll probably tell her the medical news.

Addendum on Becky: she wanted to know what my drugs are, and when I mentioned Thalidomide, she said, "You don't want to get pregnant, then." Told her I'd been counseled more on sex than any time since I was in the Air Force.

She chortled and said, "Only you would make that joke."

19 Jan.--Weather moderated some, rain holding off, and desperate for salmon I barbecued us some outside over the lunch hour. First thing in the morning, C drove me to N'gate Grp Health for weekly blood draw to check the coumadin effect; ProTime reading as it's called was 11.3, just below normal range that starts at 11.4; last week it was 10.9, 11.9 back there in 1st week. Main side effect at the moment, as I e-mailed Lynn in Dr. G's office to ask about, is a sore distended butthole from the constipation giving way last weekend to about half a dozen bowel movements in a couple of hours. The aptly named Anusol salve I found around here is good, she said, and so are sitzbaths, which I deplore. Still, I'm doing them every night before bed, plopping in the tub for three songs' worth (Ian Tyson so far) on my MP3 player while instructing myself over and over not to somehow drop it in the water. And under the influence of the dex--next to last day of this final pulse, this month--I had a strong writing day.

20 Jan. - Handwriting Today, because I
damnablely distressed the back of my
left hand somehow during yard work
& it doesn't like typing. Will try to give
it a rest over remainder of weekend,
although that's hard - the ~~other~~ dex has
such a head of steam in me & keep
wanting to get things written down. Had a
dynamite morning on 11th Mar, wrapping
up the Alaskan scene of drinking with
the Russians. And the yard work was a
welcome break outside. I drove the
steel posts & hung the sugar pea trellis
(must have been amid that I brunged up
the hand, although I didn't notice a thing
wrong at the time) & C moved down the
dead ground asters around the backyard
decorative blueberries.

21 Jan. - Still going at it by hand. The
left one felt OK when I woke up, but
complains when I really use it. Stretch-
ing exercises seem to help some. This is
a complication & could really do with-
out. Will limp along somehow. Grayer &
chilben today, time to hunker in anyway.
Managed to finish a letter to Linda
Miller on the computer, & to jot notes &
editings onto the Alaskan chunk of ms.
I have by damn finished the first
phase of dexamethasone, & while on this

21 Jan. cont. - Just day after, I am jumpy and a bit wobbly, I'm also still lit up in the head & full of writing. Will see what the afternoon brings, maybe work on the yellow pad.

22 Jan. - This is the rugged day of the descent from dex, 2nd day after the 'pulse' is over. Tremulous & jumpy about seems it up. Still am nursing the left hand & sparing it the keyboard, although it feels better today. Have worked on the yellow pad, doing the short scene of Bill Reinke listening for planes in the dawn, & it's a few hundred words of progress. Meanwhile the weather is vile - windy, threatening. But good news came from Becky: Whistling won an Alex Award from the American Library Association, which she says gives it a great boost as a young adults book, crossover sales, library buys, classroom use. Another hurrah for our side.

23 Jan. -- 3:40 now, and it has taken me until about now for the dex tremors to wear off, three days after I'm off it. Quite the stuff. Anyway, this does give me hope I can be reasonably steady the rest of this week and get some things done -- finances, haircut -- before I go into the next siege of this. My lame hand pretty much straightened out today and I dumped into the computer the weekend's yellow pad work, which added up very considerably. Also came up with an endcap bit of scene to get out of the homecoming portion of the ms, another welcome advance. The weather, mellow in the mid-50s, at last let C go to yoga.

24 Jan.--Marvelous outing today, sun shining in the Skagit flats. Not a snow goose in sight, but everything else was, including Mt. Baker in spectacular detail, every crag.

Walked the Indian Slough trail as is our habit, and pintails were plentiful, plus cormorants hanging their wings to dry. Pizza and beer for lunch in LaCommer, another sound habit. Stopped at Sky Nursery on the way home and I've completed the pea trellis with a new section. Also re-established the coldframes over some semi-surviving lettuce, maybe carried away by the mellow weather.

At the moment, just past 4:30 and exercised, I feel not too far from normal. (I indeed drove a shift on the backroads of the Skagit.) Was still tenuous first thing this morn, though, and since I'm off dex, that must mean it's the thalidomide. (No sleeping pills last night, to break off ~~that~~ any dependence.) Today I did the Celgene STEPS phone 'survey' necessary for Group Health to re-order Thalidomide for me, which consists of 3 ways of asking if I'm having sex with people.

25 Jan.--Finally steadied down off the dex, I was competent this morning to drive myself to N'gate Grp Health for blood tests, then continue on to chore missions--haircut, 2 new pr bluejeans. And at lunchtime, Tony Angell came with splendid sandwiches made by Lee, he and I and C chowed down and he showed us art he's been working on for a Puget Sound creatures book he intends to try on Yale U. Press when his editor comes out next month. One piece is a quite astounding food-chain layering--an eagle looking down at a grebe looking down at a herring ball beset from below by other diving birds, and eelgrass beneath it all. It was Tony's first look at me since I let him know by phone what's up medically with me, and he seemed reassured.

It was Burns Day on the CBC, which means it was 26 years ago that I marked it in Juneau, incidental to coming down the long coast on the Sea Runners' route. Maybe I have not been the stay-at-home I usually think of myself as.

26 Jan.--The small indelible blessing of a new typewriter ribbon. It's the start of the afternoon, and I've already had a worthwhile day at the ms, getting Ben and Jake out of the Canadian wilderness in thrifty fashion, and I can now re-read the 150+ pp. I have and decide where to tinker or not. The first two chapters I went through this morn looked pretty good, praise be.

Sunny, this afternoon, although I'll probably hold to deskwork and gamble on getting out to the garden on the weekend. I did set the coldframe back into place the day we went to the Skagit--some of the uncovered lettuce stumps did survive all that freezing weather and so I'll see if I can nurture them--and intend some lettuce starts in the garden room.

On the medical front, I'm clearer and calmer now that the dex has receded, although the Thalidomide is always there with its consequences of constipation, skin trickery (itchy spots all at once showed up last evening, and evidently have gone just as fast under the Clabetasol I dabbed on), the slight numbness in the right foot, and who knows what else. The Damborgs are coming tonight for a drink and then we're going to the Provinces, so at the point when Mark starts to make his martini and spies my glass of water, I will fill them in on my pill regimen.

27 Jan.--This is notification weekend, the Damborgs over drinks last night (actually it was Lou who spotted my glass of water) and a propitious being-in-touch call from David Laskin this morn which gave me the chance to inform him of my medical situation. So it goes. Meanwhile the weather in this one-thing-or-another winter is staying exceedingly moderate and C and I got out into the yard in the afternoon. She whacked down overgrown herbs and fuschia while I fought weeds. And at the end of the afternoon, just ahead of one of the spectacular sunsets we're having with this winsome weather, I grilled sockeye salmon outside.

28 Jan.--Tonight I take the 28th and last Thalidomide pill in the elaborate card-accordion (covered with warnings against having sex), and tomorrow we see Dr. Ginsberg for his evaluation of how this is going. To my chagrin, I am considerably shaky today, and since the dex is a week into the past it has to mean it is the effect of the Thalidomide. My energy has stayed OK, I did some more ms tuning up and wrote a pretty good $\frac{1}{2}$ p. early this morn before we went off to pick up David Williams and Marjorie. Walked Magnuson Park with them, and as we neared the car I filled them in on my medical regimen. I hope that's all of that for a while, but I expect it won't be.

The weather held again today, sunny and into the 50s, and we trimmed the spreading tree in the middle of the front yard and I made some lettuce starts in peat pots, Redfire & Italienischer. Also, by damn, harvested some overwintered spinach for tonight's salmon salad supper, and although I'm supposed to be wary of vitamin K leafy goodies while I'm on blood-thinner, I figure to have a little.

29 Jan.--Damn fine news, the drug regimen has worked, driving my protein level down from 2.7 grams/decaliter to .7. Thus I am in for one more month of pills etc. rather than two, and then it's the stem cell job, likely early April. The blood test results are no small relief, as this Thal/dex regimen has the statistic of being effective in 75% of cases; finally in this damnable disease I'm in the majority instead of the awry little figures that have been singling me out.

Decent morning of work, ahead of medical prepping. I now have gone through the first 5 ch. of 11th Man making my inserts, checking for overuse of certain words, and the like

30 Jan.--First day of dex pulse #1, month 2 of blessedly only 2. This is still going to take some enduring through-- here at 4:15 I'm noticing the wired sensation and the skip in logical cognizance as I go to do physical little things-- but by damn I intend to. Weather gorgeous and treacherous today, a white frost overnight that we judged the slickest of the entire winter and so we waited until after C's yoga class was over, circa 2 p.m., before walking. Writing went quite well, although not entirely in the

30 Jan. cont.--direction I figured I was headed. I sat down to plan out the 1944 middle of the book, especially the New Year's party in Gros Ventre that starts it off, and did some useful blue-sheet roughs, but primarily ended up doing a page to be added to the scene of Cass and Ben drinking scotch in his dump hotel room; it sets up the USO minor role later in the plot, which I got to thinking needs to be done because who the hell knows any more what the USO was.

Salmon for supper, bonus of the outdoor grilling I braved on the weekend.

31 Jan.--Constance and the Olympic peaks neighboring it to the north are emerging, just, above a solid cloud of fog that starts at the middle of the Sound. We heard foghorns as early as we got up this morn, which was damned early, 3:45 with C awake because of her renewed prednisone intake and me blearily having misread the bedside clock as an hour later.

Frost again this morning, although not nearly as heavy as y'day. If the weather holds tomorrow, we may try another ~~Sakink~~ Skagit outing even though I'll be wired on dex.

Y'day was another day of mild revising and jamming possible snatches of scenes onto paper. I have to seriously tackle the New Year's party scene, another tricky one; will see if it takes me all of this coming month, as I fear it might.

Mood at the moment is fairly steady and my fingers don't tremble much when I extend them, the breakfasttime dex maybe not having caught up with me yet.

1 Feb.--Another fine sunny outing to the Skagit, our outing of choice this medical winter. Third time was the charm and we did see snow geese, in the distance near the cannonball islands at the end of the Blake resort road and nearer in a field south of the Conway church. Also

3 bald eagles in treetop at one of the farms on the Blake road, sundry hawks, pintails galore and some shore birds at Indian Slough. Pizza and beer in LaConner.

Last night Ann and Marshall Nelson came here for supper instead of our customary monthly meeting at the Provinces,

1 Feb. cont.--inasmuch as I wasn't sure how I'd be faring on dex and I didn't particularly want to spend the evening on the ins and outs of myeloma in a public place. Carol fed them meatloaf, Marsh brought a knockout '02 pinot noir, we talked and joked, I think they left feeling better about my situation.

A dab of ms work this morn before we headed for the Skagit. Now, at 4, it's all chores ahead, sorting mail, tending the lettuce seedlings, exercise, and then, alas, a fleet enema as constipation has shut me down the past 2-3 days again.

2 Feb.--Scruffy day, 4th of this pulse. Managed some dabs of ms work, but there's been a lot of dex discontinuity. Two more go-rounds of this stuff.

Weather has clouded in some. Grilled up a lode of salmon ahead of possible rain.

3 Feb.--First day off the dex, considerable case of the shakes at midday. Slept some of it off for a couple of hours, but at 2 took--for the first time--a Lorazepam pill that is supposed to settle me down. Got some ms work done this morn, though not a hell of a lot. C went to Edmonds to a Rick Steves travel presentation, and I turned to chores, cleaning up the bathtub I've been sitzing in for 2 weeks, mopping the floor, getting garbage out of the house. David Laskin came at 3 to fetch the Montana post office info Marcella sent, we talked for a while about his forthcoming European tour and all the rest of the travel he'll be doing this spring. Three NY Times assignments mentioned amid that.

So, a day I am going to be glad to see the end of. As C pointed out, I am now 2/3 done with dex, four pulses completed out of the six, although I still will be on Thalidomide until nearly the end of the month. Thanks heavens the drug regimen has been working, as there was a 1-in-4 chance it might not.

And now to exercise.

4 Feb. --Another rough day, quivery, during which I resorted to Lorezepam after breakfast and nap to try to settle down. 3:30 now, with nothing much accomplished.

5 Feb.--Mid-morning and I think I'm showing signs of coming off the dex, although it took a huge night's sleep and an hour's nap after breakfast to get me to the vicinity of stability. Still some trembling and mental jitters.

Heavily foggy day. We're waiting until afternoon to walk the n'hood. Passed some time late y'day by watching some of the Super Bowl, the Chicago Bears unable to handle Indianapolis.

6 Feb.--The day of the big window. The crew from Centennial Glass showed up before 9:30 with our new $10\frac{1}{2}$ ' hunk of glass to replace the living room's western one that sprung a leak and went cloudy. They had it in by noon, and 3 hours later it started raining. Close enough.

Did a small dab on ms this morn before C and I turned into furniture movers. This is my sane post-dex day--as usual I came down off it at about $2\frac{1}{2}$ days, noon y'day--and tomorrow

I start the next pulse. Next-to-last pulse, thanks be.

Passed the remainder of the afternoon, after we had the house back in order, by winnowing books for the community club rummage sale. Four boxes of literature; I cut hard and fast, anything that had languished since we moved here or didn't otherwise recommend itself went out.

7 Feb.--Not too bad a day so far (3:30) considering that it's the onset of a dex pulse. Made some ms headway this morn when I sat and thought and figured out to have the Senator and wife and eligible daughter at Cloyce's New Year's party; I think it'll work, although it's tricky to do.

The weather has turned springlike, 50ish and showery, and I went to the veg garden after naptime to transplant lettuce seedlings from peat pots into the ground in the coldframes. Had to ignore some spits of rain to do it, but it's done.

8 Feb.--Spent all the morning sorting filecards, old and new, and while I came up with much good stuff it consumed time like mad. Felt the dex moderately enough.

On the other hand, in the springlike weather of the afternoon I went down to the old fruit tree, having figured out how to make grafting scions with Felco pruners etc. instead of razorsharp grafting knife, and the very first thing I did was catch an outer tip of skin on my left little finger in the end of the pruners. Just broke the skin, though the Cumoudin-thinned blood started rolling out before long, and C helped me get a tight band-aid on it. Went back to grafting, and did a total of ten cleft grafts, 6 Karmina and 4 Melrose. C eventually hollered to me from the deck that it was 10 to 5, when I'd have estimated it might be about 4, so I guess it was an engrossing endeavor.

9 Feb.--A bit higher on dex today, tendency to drop things and lose track of what I had lined up to do. No chance whatsoever of the cherished afternoon nap these days, as the mind won't turn off, but I do stay on the bed and rest for 45 minutes or so. Also, the past three noons, just as I've thought there might be an outside chance of dropping off, a crow has landed in the bigleaf maple and yawped until I drive him off with the BB gun. The same crow every day?

Again this morn, sorting file cards and putting together scene-by-scene file-tabbed categories. Gonna be useful whenever the hell I get it all done.

Mellow afternoon weather again, so I went out and checked the green goop seals on the apple grafts, and of course nearly all of them had cracked a bit as they dried overnight, which lets fatal air into the graft. So I daubed them again, then transplanted Italianescher lettuce starts into a coldframe, then sowed 6 rows of Red Sails lettuce in the rest of the bed, then harvested spinach and kale for salad with supper, and so it went until 3:30. I had hoped to get back ~~time~~ to the ms deskwork, but while I'm on dex it is just simpler to keep going on whatever I happen to be at, rather than sort elaborately.

10 Feb.--Last day of next-to-last dex pulse, and my nerve ends are quite het up. The mind is functioning very quick and scatty, hard to do anything sequentially but I fixate on and kill off whatever chore is under my nose. Spent this morn on a few dabs of correspondence and the last inning of shaping up the file card categories for fitting into the ms ahead. Useful enough.

Showers were forecast, but it's fairly pleasant out and I'd better take advantage of it to get outside again this afternoon.

11 Feb.--Sunday, managed some mild financial chores in the morn and garden work in the afternoon. For better or worse, started 2 pans of sugar peas in the garden room. Also had to reseal some of the apple tree grafts, helluva job to get all the air bubbles ultimatley defeated.

Dinner at the Damborgs' the night before, greatly welcome. I was a bit unsteady from the dex dose but did not knock anything over or the like. Mark, I notice, is quite affected by my case; he's been through cancer situations with other friends including his longtime rowing partner, and he uncharacteristically grasped me by the forearm along with the handshake as we left.

12 Feb. --Rocky and groggy start to the day of trying to come down off dex. Y'day I determined to resort to the Lorezepam calmative, so took one in the morning and then two before naptime to try to get some real rest. By nightfall I decided just to keep the accelerated decline up, took sleeping pills and went to bed quite early, and while I was up 2-3 times for bathroom stops I had a big night's sleep. Whether I can really get anything done on the ms today or not is still an open question; time is passing very slowly, but the New Year's scene I'm on stays muddy and unresolved.

13 Feb.--This morn I am mostly down off the dex faster than after previous pulses (probably due to a large night's sleep, off-center as it was; about 8:30-3:30), but on the other hand feel fairly beat up, with my left calf giving me hell for no reason I can identify. We have walked the n'hood, and after early lunch C will go to yoga and I will try for a long nap. With a clearer head I am starting to make a little progress on the New Year's '44 scene that has taken so many false starts. I'd wanted to finish this scene by the end of this month, but that may not be in the picture, given how rocky the past couple of dex pulses and aftermaths have been. One more to go. I've decided I will ride out that finale using the Lorezapam calmative pronto, not get too far strung out before resorting to it.

The weather has grayed and cooled; soaking rain forecast for Valentine's tomorrow. Nonetheless we shall be in good company, the Laskins coming to share a rib roast with us.

14 Feb.--A clearheaded day at last, if only until the final dex pulse starts in the morning. I drove out on chores this morn, to Sky nursery for fruit tree spikes etc. and to the Fred Meyer watchmaker to have 2 links taken out of my mysteriously loose-hanging wristwatch band and so on. And this afternoon I have begun to make some progress on the sinuous New Year's scene where I have tried a couple of things that haven't worked; I've simplified it down to Ben and his father and ultimately his mother, and it now seems to move along reasonably. Given that my last hurrah of dex pills runs through the weekend, I anticipate working on through Sat. and Sun. too, then dosing myself with the Lorezapam calmative to try to get normal again by one week from today. Whether it's the overall effect of the pills or the buildup of the Thalidomide, I'm getting random aches and stiffnesses that I can't account for in anything I've done physically--a sore left calf, for instance, and some ribcage pangs when I wake up. C assures me I'm doing heroically; I simply hope for adequately.

15 Feb.--At 6:30 last night David Laskin showed up at the door with a splendiferous bouquet--C had predicted there might be flowers--and we awarded him single-malt scotch and salmon spread until Kate came from the U and an exercise class a bit past 7. C experimented with a boneless rib roast from Costco, I'd gathered enough spinach and other garden greens to put a flourish on the salads, thus a delicious Valentine's dinner in all possible ways. Before Kate came, David questioned me about the physical side of the treatment I'm going through, then asked about the psychological aspect. I said something about there really being no choice in girding and doing it, not nearly quick-headed enough to lay out the better answer that occurred to me first thing this morning: that I don't have any "why me?" in this, I have always figured life coldly asks any of us "why the hell not you?" and therefore it becomes a matter of doing the medical chores and seeing what happens. On the writing side of things, as I was pouring drinks David said at his age and with all he's written he should have more confidence than he does, but while he's been drafting a start on his WWI book he's had the feeling it's all been done before and, comically but I guess worse, he ends up wondering if he's doing a kind of Hogan's Heroes, the excitable Italian soldier here, the taciturn Scandinavian soldier there... I gave my usual opinion that the "been done" should be ignored, only paralysis awaits in that direction, a writer can't ~~fore~~ forswear sea stories forever because Conrad happened to write 'em. I pointed out, too, that the ethnically mixed platoon that critics and reviewers so smugly mock is a goddamn actuality; in the five military units I was in, you could look around and find six to ten guys who absolutely fit what the smuggers think is a tired formula--there at ~~the~~ Wichita Falls, the Italian pipefitter from San Francisco, the Baptist yokel from Florida, the Cajun, "Pineapple" from Hawaii... It's the old case, which the critics are too lazy to try to handle, of the "cliche" carrying an intrinsic truth that just cannot be as fully conveyed any other way: you do make hay when the sun shines, you do prime the pump to bring the water...

15 Feb. cont.--On the logistical side of writing, David has a whale of a lot of travel ahead in the next 3-4 months, France to tour the battlefields he's writing about, Rome with Kate for their 25th anniversary (and, Kate mercifully clears her throat, a travel-page gig he's doing for the NY Times), Pittsburgh for some WWI unit research and Philadelphia to call on his parents, Montana and North Dakota. I find I don't envy him any of it--or ~~for~~ that matter, the family pockets of resource that enable it--given our own ventures into the world with what C and I had to work with.

Kate for her part reported that the UW provost had just laid it on the law school faculty that the successor to the e-mail-disgraced dean will be an internal hire, and she said there is one guy, currently the chancellor at the Bothell campus, who actually might be okay.

All in all, another good evening from our cadre of friends. Here on the home front, I am in day one of the last pulse of dex, feeling somewhat revved (just made a list of 8 or so items to try to do by the end of the day) and on the other hand nagged like hell by the painful left calf I've had most of this week. I put in an e-mail to Lynn in Dr. Ginsberg's office this morn asking for any advice on alleviating the goddamn thing. My hope still is--~~bristly~~ christ, am I hoping--that by a week from yesterday I will be down off the dex regimen and on my way to feeling normal.

16 Feb.--Small but useful ms bit this morn, at the Flaubertian pace of about a graf a day, before life went medical again. C drove me to N'gate where, on y'day's e-mail advice from Lynn of Dr. G's office, I ~~was~~ had my sore calf checked for blood clot by Dr. Madwed. Fortunately she concluded it's a muscle pull, as I thought it was. (Memo on it is in the Dr. G file.) And thankfully the damnable thing is much better today, perhaps because I iced it unmercifully for a couple of hours last night.

The day was mild although dingy, and after nap I concluded I ought to make a start on the pea planting rather than make a total marathon of it tomorrow (ahead of what is supposed to be a sustained stint of rain). Got the planting trench hoed, measured out and refolded the needed netting, and put 15 China pea starts in to get underway. C was puttin Ironite on rhodies etc., and after an hour or so both of us were rained out.

17 Feb.--8:30, waiting for a bit of sun to come onto the veg garden so I can plant the pea starts. We have walked the n'hood and C just left for the grocery store, so we are underway on the weekend. It's mellow and streakily clouded out right now, showers forecast for later today, so I intend to grill salmon after naptime.

Third day of dex in this pulse, and I am teetery in body and head. I think it's a situation where I can focus on one thing at a time--like planting peas--and get something measurable done. The calf muscle still feels okay this morn, although I'm going to need to be mindful of it in the outdoor work.

One of the weird bonuses of The Whistling Season's success--\$5000 was our cut--arrived this week, couple of copies of the Readers Digest condensed version. I've only checked into it in a few spots, all I want ever to do, but C has taken a little closer look and says it's like reading the skeleton instead of the body. I do get a lot of promo ink from the editor, who tells of Rick Bass's PW review catching her eye, and I'm given a 4-page bio which includes a dab of the really pretty good q-&a done for Harcourt all the way back there on the dreaded q'airre. Am I ever in strange company in that set of four soup-canned books, however: Norah Roberts, John Nance with some kind of space potboiler, Jane Cleland with a thriller(?) called Consigned to Death. There are covers are, grouped on the front like a meeting of power suits where somebody in workclothes wanders in and takes a seat, and of course it's Whistling, its prairie wheat and schoolhouse and literary typography amid the billboard screeches of the other three writers' names and brazenly colored titles.

18 Feb.--The red line of dex-taking at last ran out, butting up against the number 18 on my February calendar page, today. 240 pills. The day itself, while chilly, was manageable enough that C pruned rose bushes, although I hung inside and fiddled mildly with finances.

19 Feb.--In this last (I hope forever but who the hell knows) descent from dex I'm resorting to a calmativ^e pill of Lorazepam about every 4 hours through the day. It has produced not only a surprisingly sound nap after lunch, but possibly has helped with a sound day of writing. When I'm not at the desk I am somewhat unsteady on my feet. Another 36 or 40 hours and I should get myself back more or less intact.

20 Feb.--The rough descent from dex, this second day away from it, even though I've taken Lorezapam morning, noon and mid-afternoon, and had a long nap. I feel unsettled, a bit balloon-headed, and walking and other motions are inexact. Have clamped myself to the ms work and have some pp. to show for it both y'day and today, whatever they read like with a clearer eye. I suppose this falls under the category of doing what I can, in pretty damned diminished circumstances. If the past dex pulses are any guide, around noon tomorrow I may start to ~~become~~ become myself again.

A bit of good news during dex haze; the blessed Bob Mintz-heimer at USA Today ran the Alex list of winners, showing off Whistling as a young adult crossover buy.

21 Feb.--This has persisted as the toughest aftermath of dex, an unsettled struggling morning and finally some relief in the afternoon after a decent nap. The afternoon was sunny and mid-40s, and C worked outside using the hedge trimmer on the sprouts of the small plum tree and then the inner side of the front hedge, so after setting up the power cords for her and inspecting the pea patch I stayed on, propping up in the big green recliner on the downstairs deck in the thin winter sun. Not bad, actually, for February.

Probably because of so many stints of trying to sleep off this dex quimsy, my neck is sore, stiff on the right side. More stretching exercises.

22 Feb.--Main event of the morning was a haircut, which took close to an hour because the one efficient barber--the shop owner Deanna--is away on a cruise and her cohort Robert tells various chapters of his life's story as he cuts. Anyway it's a good haircut and I needed it. This afternoon I ignored the nice weather outside and buckled down to facing the tricky New Year's scene I've been laboring on for a couple of weeks. It's still intricate, but today's

22 Feb. cont.--changes seem to thrust the storyline along, which the damn scene kept lacking. C meanwhile worked outside, trimming the old pear tree etc.

As to the state of health, the neck is better. I am still somewhat shaky, which I guess has to be attributed to Thalidomide. C tells me it's not really noticeable on me, and that's good because we have social outings tomorrow night and Sunday. I do wonder if I'm risking chance of infection by being with a bunch of people, but I haven't wanted to be a hermit.

23 Feb.--Main news of the day is from Liz, putative movie offer on The Whistling Season. C and I always roll our eyes and consider these as evanescent, but this one has actual arithmetic attached. It's from somebody Liz describes as "an old Hollywood guy" (he sent her a DVD of something he'd done with Audrey Hepburn) named Blaine Novak, who supposedly has a money guy in Denver. What's been negotiated in Lynn's office by an agent named Michael Cendejaus is a \$10,000 option, terms for 2nd year still being worked out, and purchase price of, as I savvy it, $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ of budget or minimum of \$200,000 and maximum of \$500,000. Michael is to be in touch with me about it all. I asked Liz if this all sounds okay to her, she said it does, and I intend to make as few ripples as possible if this actually shows signs of happening. Bring on the bucks.

Around naptime, I came down with a case of the shakes, and since we're heading for a social evening at the Angells, I decided to resort to the calmativ Lorezapam. It seems to have helped.

Last night we watched the TV reprise of Jean Walkinshaw's shows on Roethke and Tsutakawa, good interesting pieces of work which we'll get to talk to her about on Sunday.

24 Feb.--Genuinely rainy day, and how rare for the Doigs, we slept in until about 6:30. Had dinner at the Angells last night with Tony's co-author John Marzluff and wife Colleen and their crow-and-raven book editor from Yale, Jean Black. Good convivial evening, with Jean out here to talk to them about a follow-up book of reported incidents of corvid behavior--When Ravens Go Bad seems to be the joking, or maybe not, working title--and Tony is to try her

24 Feb. cont.--on his own diary book. Marzluff it turns out is taking a class to Yellowstone by way of Ringling, and was dumbfounded to learn I'd lived there. Wants me to talk to his class, and it's tempting, but I dunno.

Healthwise, I seem somewhat steadier today, although just in case I took a Lorezapam a little while ago and likely will do another in early afternoon. Today and tomorrow are the final two Thalidomide capsules, and I'll see how soon I regain the self I was before this regimen began on Jan. 1. I also anticipate a tough two months to come, with the stem cell collection process and its preparatory injections and I guess a chest catheter in March and then the stem cell infusion and the infection-prone recovery period in April.

Meanwhile I had a tough and frustrating week of ms work, which began to straighten itself out somewhat on Friday.

25 Feb.--Much of the morning spent reading Sunday papers and easing off Thalidomide nerves with two intakes of the calmative Lorezapam. This afternoon we go to Walt Walkinshaw's 90th birthday party.

26 Feb.--At about 6:45 last night, I showed C the pill I had been looking for--dark gleaming capsule of Thalidomide, the 56th and final of this two-month drug regimen. Whatever daunting territory lies ahead in this stem cell adventure, I have made it through the gauntlet of pills, sometimes 18 a day. Today I have already taken a Lorezapam to try start calming down off the Thalidomide shakes, and likely will do another before lunch. I'm to go ~~into~~ to N'gate first thing this morn for blood tests and to pick up the jug for a 24-hr urine test commencing tomorrow, and will decide in the next few minutes whether I'm steady enough to drive myself. Am also downing glasses of water to try to flush the Thalidomide out.

Y'day we went to a poignant event, celebration of Walt Walkinshaw's 90th birthday. Who the hell ever knows about these things, but I have a feeling it may also have been a farewell to Walt, a figure of grace and good humor and true humanity in our lives this past quarter century since Jean did her Winter Brothers show for Channel 9.

26 Feb. cont--When we arrived--at what we thought was a politely social 15 or 20 minutes after the appointed hour but which had panicked Jean because we're ordinarily so bang on time--Walt was in a wheelchair and when I shook hands and asked "How you doin'?" he answered "deteriorating." It wasn't said grimly, but it turned out that he had fallen twice a few days before, Jean was unable to get him up herself and called the fire department which sent a couple of burly firemen, and out of all that, the kids Meg and Charley came and set up a hospital bed on the main floor of the house, doing away with Walt's upstairs life because of the wheelchair confinement. The gathering was longitudinally deep to WWII as Walt's former law partner Stim Bullitt was on hand, recovering Jean said from lung cancer treatment, and our gift to Walt of the book SEA OF THUNDER about the battle of Leyte Gulf turned out to be more pertinent to Stim, who was in a 23-man code and communications unit during the invasion, maintaining contact between the shore and the naval forces. Stim is likely somewhere between 86-88, we figured--Walt calls him his oldest surviving friend--and gauntly striking. Walt, hunched in the wheelchair by his body's continuing betrayal, looked to me oddly Oriental, reminding me of George Tsutakawa in old age in Jean's recently shown TV portrait. Walt still is mentally sharp, working on a paper for his Monday club--about straddling two centuries--a discussion group of which he is both the oldest member and the longest-standing member.

The gathering was graciously generational, with granddaughters Lena and Ana there, along with Charlie W'shaw and wife Vickie and Meg (W'shaw) and husband Larry, while the outsiders were simply us and Jon and Tom Buell from Portland, plus Stim's companion whose name I've unfortunately lost--Tess? A good Greek meal fixed by Charley and Vicki, some not particularly successful singing led by Joan, and that was the afternoon.

Even before Walt's occasion, I had been thinking about the creative circle C and I have been at least outer atoms of, here in our Puget Sound life. Theodore Roethke, subject of one of Jean's rebroadcast choes, died a couple of years before we moved here, but Tony Angell used to play badminton with him, and there we were the other night at

26 Feb. cont.--Tony's as he told of Roethke and I told of Norman Maclean. (Tony didn't tell this one then, but it's my favorite Roethke anecdote from him. Probably it's during the Seattle World's Fair, Nureyev is dancing, and at intermission Roethke spots Tony in the crowd and cries out, one badminton competitor to another, "Hey, Angell, how about the calves on that guy?") Similarly Walt y'day recalled a party in the bohemian warehouse or whatever it was where he and Jean lived when first married, Roethke and poetic cohorts on hand, and in came a stray cat that walked along the top of a couch until it reached the shoulder of W.H. Auden, who reached up and petted it. Tangential, I suppose, is the most that can be said of my/our connection to so much of the Puget Sound creative community, given my penchant for holing up and my general disinterest in networking, yet I find something in the tangents.

This morn I concluded I was not quite steady enough to drive myself to N'gate Gp Health for blood tests and so C zipped me down there, I was the 1st in line, we shared a fine big sumptuous mocha on the drive back, and now when I can get the last capsule-dose of Thalidomide flushed and calmed out of me, the next of life begins.

27 Feb.--36 hours distant from Thalidomide, I finally am beginning to feel like a full version of myself instead of a shaky rough draft. I still do have some quiver, and getting through the night without sleeping pills as I wean myself off them is a series of traipsing to the bathroom every couple of hours, but my head is clearer and my physical stability is better. On the other hand, C is coming down with a cold, and it's going to be highly unusual if it doesn't pass to me. Face that when we have to.

Although it feels like I have been up for days, it is 9:15 and I've made good progress on the ms this morn. I'm also doing the 24-hour urine test, which is a nuisance but not a major distraction.

Conversation y'day with Mike Cendejaus of Lynn Pleshette movie agency, with the surprising good news that he's negotiated Final Say for us on the screenplay. If we don't like it, they have to re-do it. Still nothing signed, so it's all evanescence, but at least it sounds better than other overtures from Hollywood ever have.

28 Feb.--Tony and Lee came for lunch today, Tony with much to celebrate. His editor at Yale, Jean Black, seemed enchanted with the artwork he's done to accompany his owl diary book, and is packing the art and ms back to New Haven with her. And the UW Press, by all evidence looking over its shoulder nervously at Yale, is ponying up a \$10,000 advance to Tony for a book of his Puget Sound art. So, a good lunch occasion.

1 March--And today we have snow, quite a hell of a lot of it. Four or so inches that came last evening and into the night. I meanwhile had a tough night of trying to sleep, rashly deciding it was too cold to brave the downstairs bedroom and then unable to get back to sleep after a 1:30 bathroom pit stop, C's cold-dictated breathing coming through my earplugs in our bedroom and the constant loud drip of melting snow doing the same when I at last resorted to downstairs. Anyway, I seem to be surviving it.

Resolved to get some chores done today if nothing else (although actually I'm making some progress on the ms), I went on-line for my blood test results, starting to prepare for Monday's session with Dr. G. Am not entirely sure what I'm seeing in the monoclonal protein result, whether it is not as dramatically down as it was at the end of January's drug regimen or whether the "spike" and the overall percentage are being interpreted separately on the different months' result. Will find out Monday.

2 March--3:30, a calmer day, in which I have worked quite steadily on the ms and believe I have done myself considerable good there. Phone has been blessedly quiet, and I'm already dreading next week, probably Tuesday, when I have to initiate some calls, business on the shank of whatever the next medical regimen is to be. Today I feel measurably better, no incidences so far of the hand cramps and near-ones in the calves, less tremulous overall, although I did feel my energy sagging after we walked this morning.

Rain and warming temperature have taken the snow, as of about an hour ago, and it's supposed to warm up more during the weekend, thank god. Both C and I have felt the cold weather, a lot more than we like. I've returned to sleeping in the upstairs bedroom, a single sleeping pill getting me a much-needed 7 hours' worth last night.

2 March cont.--Last night the ground still was white but the roads were bare when we went to Edmonds to meet Eric Nalder and Jan for dinner at the ^Provinces. (Bit of a tear-jerker for C and me, as the Provinces is closing for half a year or so while that Milltown block is remodeled, and who the hell knows if the restaurant will be resurrected successfully or whether we can reconstitute our monthly dinners there with the Nelsons, which have been going on for more than a decade.) We had a good time with the pair of them, Eric always an astonishing piece of work--that good-guy detective head of his--and Jan has finished her first novel. We accordingly treated.

3 March--A mild Saturday, temp abt 52. I made a morning trip to Fred Meyer and Sky for fertilizers etc. and both C and I got in an afternoon of gardening. She whacked and whacked at the big distressed rosemary bush out front, and got rid of the portions that were droopy and looked like they were dying. I transplanted lettuce seedlings, fed the downslope apple trees and all the blueberry bushes, and so on.

At 3:30 I started the charcoal and fairly soon after I cooked 2 chunks of salmon for supper and suppers ahead. It's the Kingsford charcoal and hotter and steadier than what I've been using, so the fish cooked a bit more than I intended, but it's still delicious.

March 4--Nice weather, and as C had scoped out a new planting plan near the distressed rosemary bush she'd been working on, I suggested we head right for Swanson's nursery before the medical schedule gets in the way. Consequently she spent the afternoon putting in rock roses and sun roses, while I cleaned out the garden shed, cluttered and spider-ridden, and stashed various of our new bags of garden stuff there.

7 March--This is the point at which the stem cell treatment begins to scare the socks off me. At Monday's appointment with Dr. Ginsberg, he went over satisfactory test results --protein in urine test had decreased something like eightfold--and said we might as well proceed with all speed, and I said Onward. Accordingly I had an hour and a half prep session y'day afternoon with nurse Paulette, and was given a trio of sobering pamphlets about the transplant process and chemotherapy to digest, and in about 45 minutes I head for Cancer Care Alliance to have the veins of my arms looked at to see if those can be used instead of a catheter in my stem cell collections. I also had a practice session y'day in injecting myself in the abdomen, as I'll be doing starting this Saturday. The long and short of it is, I will come out this phase of dread and apprehension at what is in store for my body--almost certainly it will never be quite the same again--and get on with the step-by-step doing of it; I simply must.

Meanwhile phone messages about business matters have stepped up, and I've felt burdened by the variety of things to be handled. All I know to do is keep plowing.

8 March--Big walloping days of one task after another, the medical chores always central but often hard to follow. Today I gathered from the Northgate Grp H pharmacy the Neupogen blood stimulant I am to inject into myself starting Sat. morn, and found that it is not the one vial injection that was demonstrated to me y'day but two vials each time, and a subsequent phone call back to the injection center nurse Amy brought the info that it means two injections of myself each time. Also out of that conversation it emerged that I am not supposed to throw away the needles afterward but turn them in at the lab on Cap Hill; N'gate failed to provide me a disposal bag, so I went to our garage and found a coffee can that will handle 'em, that'll have to do.

Amid all that and phone calls too numerous to list, the movie deal came through. Mike Cendejus faxed me the agreement, it looks remarkably straightforward, and he says he has the \$10,000 option check in hand.

10 March--This morning I injected the blood stimulant Neupogen into my abdomen not once but twice, with C sitting by to lend a hand if need be. I was shaky and nervous at it but by god got it done, as I intend to the prescribed next 3 mornings, too. If the Neupogen does its stimulating of stem cell growth on schedule, the collection day will be Tuesday the 13th at the Hutchinson. I'm then supposed to have a respite until the last Monday of the month, the 26th, when chemotherapy would begin, followed on the 29th by stem cell re-infusion, and the hard first weeks of recuperation.

A calm between storms right now, medically and meteorologically speaking, as a tropical rain of 2-4" in 36 hours is supposed to move in tonight.

Among the preparations I did for the medical siege ahead was the income tax, which I labored on most of y'day and most of this morn. C just went off to mail it Edmonds on her way to pick up crab for supper--the Damborgs are coming, in probably the last entertaining we'll be able to ~~do~~ do for a while. We got John and Jean Roden here for drinks y'day and let them in on my case. It went quite well, as I was determined not to let John's off-the-top-of-the-head questions ~~scatter~~ muddle things and I ~~determinedly~~ stuck to the narrative of what's going on with me medically. Jean can now be some support for Carol. adamantly

11 March--Sunday, and a Pineapple Express rainstorm just missed this area, going north thru Forks to British Columbia; we got thorough misting rain thru the night and this morn--clouds are breaking up now just before 4. This has been a low-key day, my double injections into my abdomen going a bit better today than y'day and a spate of ~~tax~~ and other chores ~~xx~~ dealt with the past few days. I have some discomfort in the lower back, but it feels more like classic bad back than the bone pain described as possible with the Neupogen injections. It's better when I'm in this desk chair or the computer chair. In any case, a day of reading Sunday newspapers and doing small chores. Last night the Damborgs were here for crab dinner, nicely described in C's diary as the first time we ever came to the wine rescue of Mark.

12 March--Whirlwind week underway. C drove me to Grp Health Cap Hill, this morn for 8 a.m. blood tests. We came back pronto, walked the n'hood, she went off to lunch party at Margaret's, I started back on the 11th Man with some mild ms tinkering and did some laundry, the mail brought an \$8500 check for the Whistling Season movie option, the Grp Health nurse Paulette called just after 3 with revamped stem cell collection schedule which will involve 2 days instead of tomorrow. And sowe try to stay flexible.

13 March--9:45, with afternoon of stem cell collection ahead. My CD34 blood tests y'day morn which regulate readiness for stem cell process were good, and on the other hand it turns out the collection is to extend over 2 days instead of the one we had hoped.

At least the day got off to a good start, with phone call from Becky with news that Borders is making The Whistling Season its August book club selection. She said it means orders of 17,000 for Borders stores, 5,000 for their Walden store--"really significant," she calls it. This sizable Borders order--or "Very very very big" as exec sales director Paul von Drasek put it in the office e-mail--helps to offset what Becky says has been conservative ordering from bookstores, because of their financial situation. She sees Whistling as "tailormade" for paperback and book clubs, and so away we go, we hope. Liz chimed in with a call of general support a little later, I called her back and gave her the medical update.

14 March--7 a.m., in an hour we embark on 2nd day of stem cell collection process. Y'day's at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance--the Hutchinson Cancer Center, the "Hutch"--went from 1 to 4, and those became a long three hours, although the nurse overseeing my collection, Phil, is aiming for at least four today. I'm going to try napping and listening to MP3 player, my reading of "A River Runs through It." Y'day's intention, said Phil, was to run 3 times the amount of blood in my body--he figured it at 4.7 liters in me--through the apheresis machine. The end result was what looked like a quart-size plastic bag, like a sophisticated big baggie, about half full of the stem cell collection, a deep rich brooding red, like an essence of blood, which I guess it is. Today's goal, sigh, is a "large volume" collection which would

14 March cont.--amount to 28 liters through the machine and I doubt that my bed-confined body can hold up that long, we're likely in for a third day of this, tomorrow.

A few details: y'day I weighed 149.2 (shoes off, chinos & short-sleeve shirt), bld pressure 134/67. My white cell count was 32,000; the day before at Gp H lab it was 23,600, so my Neupogen self-injections did the job. The collection machine C aptly described as a Rube Goldberg device, with a couple of small black disks that must be the pumps spinning with a ~~xx~~ rapid tick-tock like an accelerated clock and an overall machine hum beyond that. Phil, a guy about my size with a graying mustache that comes down each side of his mouth like a kemptly trimmed handlebar variety, established me in the hospital bed on my back--in the clothes I wore in, no hospital gown--and positioned each arm on a pillow, with palms up. Blood pressure sleeve on my right ankle, giving a surprise squeeze--surprisingly strong--every half hour or so. Blanket over me, and twice near the end of the process when a vein spasm shut down the collection (a bell goes off and the machine noise changes markedly) smaller heated blankets were put over my right arm. (The blood was coming out of there and returning into my left arm. Thin clear plastic tubing about the thickness of a pencil lay along both arms and ultimately up to the machine. Phil proclaimed my veins good and large and he inserted the needle into each about an inch below the inside of the elbow joint. I had asked for a condom catheter (although wouldn't you know, I did not have to urinate during the entire three-hour process, a modern record) and when he presented me the baffling wad of plastic he said it went on just like a condom; I told him, well, it's been a while since I put on one of those either, and he laughed and said the same for him. With the pubic hair involved, getting the damn thing off at the end was one of the touchiest parts of the process. In any event, that was the picture of me, spreadeagled on the hospital bed, with red-running tubes out both sides and the discreet catheter tube down the right side of the bed from beneath my blankets.

14 March cont.--amount to 28 liters through the machine and I doubt that my bed-confined body can hold up that long, we're likely in for a third day of this, tomorrow.

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16 March--To my surprise, I have felt good today, better than since I don't know when. Y'day was the 3rd day of stem cell collection and the $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours of lying on my back in the hospital bed with tubes in both arms had me done in by last night. Sleep was pretty much as usual, up 3 or so times to pee and then another inning of sleep, so I didn't feel particularly refreshed, just physically okay. The morning tremble of my hands was gone, too. Stress had been having its way with me, evidently.

Today has been a workday at the desk, some touching up of the ms now that the medical schedule has left an opening for Becky and me to get together when she comes to Seattle near the end of this month. And much phone calling. When I responded to Kathryn Barcos call from the the Barclay Speakers agency, there was my first \$10,000 speaking fee offer (and that's after the agency takes its 20%, i.e. off \$12,500). C and I will look that gig over this weekend. Also was on the line with Patty Limerick, who'd been at dinner last night with Jim Guercio, whose name is on the movie option money check, and discovered all that conjunction; more to come on that.

18 March--Some catching up to do, which I'll attempt at spaced stints through this day, Sunday. In about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr we go to meet David Williams and Marjorie to walk at Shilshole. It's a silvered day, the early thorough fog now lifting halfway up the headlands across the Sound, and with this touted as the driest day for several to come, C just dug out a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ chunk of frozen sockeye that we'll grill for supper and suppers to come. Today I'm feeling pretty good, though my night's one-sleeping-pill try at dozing through without getting up 2-3 times to pee did not totally work; two pills the next time I try this.

With Becky now on the near horizon--lunch here at the house on the 27th--I worked a helluva writing shift y'day, Saturday, to get the ms thus far ready for her to read on the plane from NY, so we can talk about it. It comes out at 160+ pp., and while it still doesn't entirely turn the New Year's '44 corner of plot, it's close enough to show how the intercutting scene is going to go.

19 March--3 p.m. on a day when I feel like I've spent the time marching through mud, which is to say logistics. Rightly or wrongly, given my medical situation, I am handling the calendar beyond this stem cell spring as if life will go on much the way it was, and so there's a trio of events--Loveland, Boulder, and the South Dakota book festival--that I've tried to corral into as few plane flights as possible next Sept. Beyond those, there's the offer benchmark fee ~~off~~ \$10,000--that came in from Dowagiac, Michigan, by way of the Barclay Speakers Bureau. I'm figuring if fate decrees against any of these, call 'em off farther down the line.

Y'day afternoon stayed nice, into the 60s, so C and I both plunged into yardwork. She trimmed the street side of the front hedge and worked on the euonymous by the driveway, while I planted potatoes and fought weeds. Today the weather has been tougher, showery and somewhat humid, and I've had to struggle for energy, even though I feel okay.

C is reading the extant 11th Man ms--166 pp.--that I'm readying to FedEx to Becky before she comes out here next week. It's a real break that I will get to see her, and talk about the ms, before I undergo chemo and the transplant.

Addendum to the stem cell collection stint of last week: the Hutchinson staff was quite impressive in its routines and procedures, the male nurse Phil and a shifting cast of Mylene and Libby and Lisa at other times (their boss, who runs the apheresis unit, is Melodee; she is a fan of The Sea Runners and came by to talk briefly before the collection process started the 2nd day). I was on the bed 3 hrs the 1st day and $4\frac{1}{2}$ each ~~nth~~ of the next two, and the collection result as best I can tell is in the category of good enough. The Group Health goal is 10 million stem cells per kilogram of bodyweight, and my collection ended up 8-something, I was told. One little oddity about the Hutchinson experience: all 3 days when lunch showed up, it was lettuce salad with chicken or cheese or the like on it. The last day, the ingredient atop was bacon bits, and so, eating one-handed and with my wrong hand at that, whenever no one was watching I would use my fingers to try to dig out the prized bacon bits.

20 March--First day of spring and a cold one it is, dropping to 40 around noontime and coming close to turning the rain into snow. We waited and did get our walk in in dry style, but another chilly shower arrived as I was picking salad for tonight's salmon salad supper. Along with the kale and spinach I included half a dozen prime lettuce leaves, so it can be said we had lettuce with the start of spring.

C finished reading the ms this morn and I incorporated her dozen or so small changes and this afternoon took on her larger one, trimming down the football scene. That had been on my mind, too. Today's book biz news came in a call from Liz, relaying from Becky that Hudson News will give Whistling front-table face-out treatment in its stores, which I think mainly are in airports; 1100 copies ordered. I really cannot think of a succession of good breaks for a book to this extent since those early magical reviews of This House of Sky.

21 March--A clear day, in more ways than one now that I've boxed up the chunk of 11th Man ms for FedEx pickup; it's headed for Becky, who is to read it on the plane as she comes out here at the start of next week. I can now tidy away at things a bit, modulate the ten days before the transplant gauntlet begins.

I have mixed emotions about the ms swatch. Glad there's as much of it as there is, about 170 pp. Bothered that there's so much more yet to be written. There's also the abiding contrast between this piece of work and my last one. People seem to have found Whistling an easeful captivating read; as C said after going over the 11th Man material for me, this baby is cinematic. I do believe it'll shape up into a strong story, but then so did Bucking the Sun and Prairie Nocturne, and my schoolhouse kids of The Whistling Season sold circles around those other two. Ah well, persevere and see what happens. 

~~22 March--Y'day and today, I put in the Pacific shore section of 11th Man, not great progress but at least getting that part underway. And y'day's mail brought the \$2000 check that goes with the PNBA award.~~

22 March--Something rare, the Doigs sleeping in to 7. Both of us resorted to sleeping pills last night, wanting to give our bodies a chance to recharge, and lo, here we are, halfway through the morning and just getting underway.

So far we figure it was worth it. I've sketched out a morn of mild chores, going out for a haircut, gassing up the CRV, making a few phone calls, and then intend to get to the 11th Man ms this afternoon.

23 March--Y'day and today, I put in on the Pacific shore section of 11th Man, not great progress but at least getting that part underway. And y'day's mail brought the \$2000 check that goes with the PNBA award.

27 March--A most welcome visit today by my esteemed editor, Becky Saletan. Main points:

--From the 170 pp. of 11th Man ms she read on the plane from NY, she sees this as another strong book. She's not worried about how different it is from Whistling Season; says I gained a lot of new readers with Whistling, same could happen with this one.

--Whistling Season's paperback print run thus far is, she thought, 40,000; believes it'll continue toward the 75,000 advertised.

--I sketched out loud to her the idea of making the next book a novel placing Morrie in Butte, and she liked the sound of it.

--Harcourt very likely will be sold by end of summer; she says the parent company, Reed Elsevier, has a potential buyer they're not identifying.

--She brought printout of Whistling hardback sales as I'd requested, it shows 52,653 books in print, 47,831 sold or still in stores--i.e., only 9.8% returns thus far. (We'll see if publication of the paperback triggers more returns.)

28 March--A bit of interim, today and tomorrow, before the medical wheels begin grinding. The weather is nice, perhaps offering a chance to be out in the yard this afternoon.

) On the other hand, I just stepped out to the coldframes and was wildly barked at by a dog on the Nesses' deck; have to hope like hell that's temporary.

More on Becky's visit: she's very praising of her Harcourt staff currently, the publishing house functioning

28 March cont.--to her satisfaction except for the chronic last-minute covers from the art director. She is learning to deal with the estates of Harcourt's back-list gems; she's going to reclaim paperback rights to Orwell's 1984 and Animal Farm, which have sold tons and tons for NAL down through the years, and add the diplomatic touch of bringing out edition's of selected Orwell essays. George Packer is a college buddy of hers, and partner with her and Marshall in the Berkshires house, and he'll guest-edit and do intros for the essays. Similarly, Harcourt is reclaiming The Princess Bride, dealing with Mort Janklow representing William Goldman.

31 March--Saturday, the weekend leading into chemotherapy and stem cell reinfusion. This morn I am choring mildly but fairly steadily, readying some reading and listening material for the downtime, hospital and otherwise, ahead. C meanwhile is stocking in food and doing the laundry.

Y'day's 10 a.m. appointment with Dr. Ginsberg was surprisingly pro forma; we were home a few minutes after 11. He said he didn't have much to tell me--my latest blood test readings were OK as far as he's concerned--and he went point by point through my page of questions to him. C and I got a refinement of the daily schedule for next week; from here on, it is largely a matter of bracing and enduring.

A bit of hoo-ha in y'day's mail, letter from Western Writers of America saying The Whistling Season is a finalist for a Spur award. As I noted to Becky when I faxed it along to her, this is at least the 3rd or 4th time the WWA has nominated one of my books, and all the way back to This House of Sky they can't seem to bring themselves to give a non-shoot-'em-up guy the award. There's also been the point that I never go to their conventions, so at C's suggestion, this time I put a line in my thanks letter saying my doctor won't let me travel until later in the summer; see if that gives me the missing excuse for truancy.

C and I got in some yardwork y'day afternoon--I can't do any digging in the dirt during my recuperation, damn it--and on short phone notice, Tony came over again, bringing a couple more videos to entertain us (theoretically) during that recuperative wiped-out period. He admitted, though, he

31 March cont.--also simply wanted to get out of the house, in the aftermath of a horror that hit Lee's family a few days ago, her nephew hanging himself. Tony and Carol and I, seated on our lower deck looking out over the garden and the Sound and where the three of us have come to in life, soberly agreed it was impossible to imagine anything worse for a parent to go through--Tony said, particularly a father, in the case of a son--than the suicide of a child.

1 April--And now we are at the day before, three months to the day since I first downed those ten green little pills. There have been other hinge days prior to occurrences that I knew would alter my life from what it had been: early in freshman year in high school, leaving White Sulphur Springs for the unknown north of Montana, the Dupuyer country; departure into the military; the decision not to pluck the Indiana U. faculty job and a life of professorship. This one, of course, comes with medical postings ahead, almost certainly for the rest of my life. Hard to gauge this dispassionately, but I have to grant that I made it through 67 years of life with relatively little wrong with my body, never enough to put me in a hospital overnight. On the other hand, as C and I walked the neighborhood this morning, I thought about the recuperative creeping-back of that capability in the weeks/months ahead, and I am almost exactly at the age my father was when he similarly underwent the regimen of walking a little farther every day in our college-time neighborhood in back of University Village, in his struggle against emphysema. Be that as it may, what I face has a day-to-day aspect with arithmetic of improvement intrinsic to it, according to medical experience, and so onward we go.

After this morning's walk, went to the veg garden and picked a sumptuous salad of lettuce and spinach for tonight--to accompany C's recipe of pork in tomato sauce, and our homemade applesauce--~~and~~ as a culinary last hurrah before we begin fending with whatever dietary permutatins come with chemotherapy.

3

April 2 - 10 AM, in room 522 of Group Health infusion center, w/ chemotherapy drip into my left arm. * (Combo of Melphalan, 20 mg. Dexamethasone & Dilaudid). Carol stayed long enough to see me hooked up & get the week's schedule - this two-bed room is crowded, a lymphoma patient named Eric in the other bed, nurses coming & going - then left for more congenial place to put in her time. This is supposed to be a 4-4½ hr procedure today.

* My nurse, Karen, came in just now & explained that Melphalan is coming - i.e., this ~~has~~ has been IV prep stuff until now - & she has to start infusing it pronto when it arrives as it has a short life. So, I'm about to get the real stuff, & not incidentally, the scheduling nurse Lynn was here a bit ago warning me of nausea tonight & cogitating about what medication to give me for it.

10:35: the Melphalan has just started, at a rapid rate; the Volumetric Infusion Pump is clicking 2-3 times/second, & I feel a coolness in my arm where the fluid is entering.

C was just here, having discovered the bagel place up the street & had a good snack & a place to read the newspaper.

April 2 cont. - 11:15, the Melpalan infusion just finished, & the medication infusion has resumed in a slow tick-tock, grandfather clock compared to the hectic chatter of the Melpalan pace. I put on earphones & listened to some of A River Runs Through It - Paul & Norman taking Neal & Rawhide fishing - on my Walkman while the infusion pump was clacking away. In all immodesty, the reading still sounds damn good.

Thus far, this 1st day of chemo, & all that impends beyond it, has not gone badly. Sporadically the nurses have talked to me of the probable rough spots ahead on the calendar, & it re-enforces the approach to this that C & I have talked about, take this regimen a day at a time & keep thinking of it as something with a limited duration.

2:45--We are home, have done our daily walk (down the dog-leg street and back, rather than my chancing the full hill-and-dale route), and C is working in the back yard. I have felt OK, although in the past few minutes a slight queasiness has started. Whatever devolves, onward we go.

3 April--Today was a 7 a.m.-1:30 p.m medical day, the 2nd round of chemotherapy and the implanting of a two-line catheter called a Groshong in my upper right chest. It does add up to a more rigorous day than ~~the~~ y'day, and this diary entry probably will be the sum of what I get done the rest of the day. I did put in a call to the nurse Lynn, running by her the facts that I've put on a dozen pounds in the past 5 days (now 163#), I'm urinating less than usual despite all the fluid I'm drinking, and no bowel movement for the past 2 days. And I did a n'hood walk, the dogleg street again, right away when C brought me home from Grp H.

Odd eating of the day: I was allowed only coffee and apple juice before we headed to Grp H, then after I was wheelchaired back up from the catheter implant at 10:10, breakfast (Cheerios, cranberry bagel, yogurt and a truly green banana) was awaiting on my bed table and I ate it all; then pronto at noon, here came lunch (turkey sandwich, tomato soup, milk, coffee) and this time I ate it all except for chocolate chip cookies which I'm saving for dessert tonight.

4 April--Day at home, ahead of tomorrow's stem cell transplant, and now a little before 3 I'm feeling more rocky. After talking with Margaretta, the nurse filling in for Lynn today I just ~~took~~ took an anti-nausea pill. Other symptoms I reported to her: I'm not peeing as much as usual, bowel movements (this morn, none since) have been of the constipated ~~sort~~ sort, and my hands and wrists are puffy and I have a considerable spare tire around my belly. (Have changed into chinos because my usually roomy-enough Levis were too tight.) I have managed to nap, morning and afternoon both. Mixed report, I guess, likely the first of many.

4:50: closing down for the day now. Have eked out bits of deskwork--checked over 5500EZ Pension Plan form and entered diary notes from visit to Wright and Jo Morris into the incipient piece about him for the P-I--on the basis that among the days added to my life with this medical procedure are these days, tough as they are, to be made whatever use of I can manage. Won't always be able to, but when I can...

9 April--"You are doing really well!" a pert nurse (not even my own) enthused as I left the infusion center this morn and ~~R~~ Friday as well. And I suppose that is true enough, within the blood-test arithmetic that my white cell count is down to 500 (I believe 3500 is normal) and infection is a main threat. Accordingly, my supremely capable topkick nurse, Karen--who I lose after tomorrow to three weeks' vacation (hers, need it be ruefully specified, not mine)--outfitted me with ~~sanitary~~ sanitary masks to wear as we come and go the patient-spoored hallways of Group Health Central.

Other firsts today, besides this mild return to the diary: 4 min. on the exercise bicycle, and modified stretching exercise.

Bld pressure this morn was 119/69--those readings stayed good even during the stem cell infusion on the 5th--and my weight was 156, thankfully deflating from the saline intravenous feeds that ballooned me from 153 on March 30 to the upper 160s a week later.

10 April--Today my white cell count was down to 100, reflecting the necessary plunge of the immune system so the stem cell engraftment can take place across the next 10-12 days. While in the Gp H bed this morn for my daily IV feed, I felt a diarrhea attack coming, and after I dealt with that, lower gut cramps came. The nurse Karen got a couple of Immodium pills into me, and both gutquakes have gone away long since (it's now 3:40 P.M.). She brought in a transplant patient who's exactly one week ahead of me, Dennis Hanson, for me to gauge his experience a bit. They hospitalized him last ~~Friday~~ Friday for the weekend--his red cells count was down enough that he needed a blood transfusion, and his mouth and throat has become so sore he couldn't swallow water--and he got out y'day still feeling somewhat rough but quite a lot better today. He was reassuring on the hospital stay, which he hadn't wanted to make either, and C and I both figure Gp H will similarly put me in, this Friday. Dr. G came to see me today too, saying the diarrhea and the sore mouth will be prime concerns the next tough 2-4 days.

12 April--The one-week anniversary of my stem cell transplant, and thus far I have contrived here at home rather than undergoing hospitalization. Y'day morn was a crucial point, when I woke up abt 10 from one of my usual long naps during Gp H intravenous feeding ~~and~~ and had one hell of a lump in my throat. It was the chemo aggravating the esophagus, and as it was damn near impossible to swallow without pain, that looked like the exit point to the hospital. Dr. G's admin've nurse Lynn ultimately laid out the options from Dr. G--a spate of antibiotics, a pain-killer, a mouth-deadening ~~pa~~ mouthwash, vs. the hospital and intravenous automatic handling of all this--and I read her body English (with aural touches: "It is crowded and noisy in there") and chose the home route, with all the pills. So far it's worked, my 100+ temp y'day went down to 98.7, and I have felt pretty good. On the other hand, about all I do is sleep.

14 April--Saturday, at home, i.e. no hospital, steady as it goes. I feel pretty beat up--about 3½ hrs sleep last night, and C pointed out this morn that for all of April, my body clock has been disrupted by the constant ~~hospitalized~~ medical beds and naps and so forth. But I'm still able to eat, past the remarkably dry sore mouth and throat, and the panoply of pills I guess is keeping various things at bay from me. Have talked on the phone with Leez, Tony, and Lou Damborg, and must call Liz at home tomorrow to reassure her; also managed some small pieces of correspondence today and will shortly exercise.

17 April, Tuesday--The turning point, propitiously on our anniversary. This morn at Grp H my sore dry mouth improved hour by hour, and by the time Dr. G came in to look at me just before 10:30, he declared I could go home and go off ~~antibiotics~~ antibiotics, and need not come back until Friday. Y'day was a pretty good day, though fatigued; got thru the weekend with Sunday also quite a stint of fatigue. So, my white cell bld count all of a sudden is 2000--up from 700 last Friday--and Dr. G says it coincides almost exactly, the rebirth of the immune system and the vanishing of the ugly sore mouth as it's attacked by everything. This is a day we both take as an anniversary gift.

18 April--The first day of the rest of everything. Not sure yet how my stamina will hold out, but I am definitely in a different body than I have been during all the drug and chemo rigors. Sleep is rough, waking up around 2 again this morn, and I got up at, I dunno, 3, 3:15, had a smoothie and a cup of well-milked coffee, laid back down for a while, came down to the desk to read, C got up early, and I then had b'fast around the usualy 5:30. My mouth is close to normal, but still somewhat sensitive, so that I have to watch the heat of food. Still have diarrhea--one recent bowel ~~movement~~ movement I swear had both diarrhea and constipation--but it's not very bothersome. Most of all, my head seems to have cleared, if that's an apt description of notions and wordplay jumping around in it. At any rate, I now feel I can achieve something akin to usual work, if I can maintain the energy.

Funny incident y'day on our final daily foray to Group Health on Capitol Hill: on the nasty curve below Lakeview Cemetery, C was carefully giving a bicyclist leeway and being honked at by the car behind her for her caution. As we passed the cyclist toiling uphill, I said, "It's Steve Ginsberg." It was indeed my good doctor, riding to work. He is enough of a demon bike rider to scare me, admitting to us at last week's session with him that he'd crashed on his way home the day before, bruises, his shoulder hurt, and so on. He reminds me more than a bit of Bill Lang in Bill's colossal riding days. So, I hope to hell he lucks out on those two wheels and I get to have him continue doctoring me.

My hair and beard is falling out. I don't know what it says about my level of vanity that I didn't think to jot that down until the 3rd graf into this. But I just visited the downstairs bathroom and I am beginning to look a fright. Thus far, my reaction is so what?

21 April--Y'day, 1st evaluation session w/ Dr. G since my stem cell transplant. A good report--says I'm doing "beautifully"--with a not unexpected major qualifier. He's to see me again May 15 and at that time see whether monoclonal protein is totally absent from my blood count; I double-checked him on that, and he said it has to be zero. If that proves to be the case, then he does one further test: the bone marrow sample from my hipbone to make sure there aren't myeloma cells not being revealed by the protein test. If either test shows any trace of myeloma, then I'm in for

21 April cont.--a "tandem" transplant, i.e. one that uses the other half of my stem cells that were collected. This scenario did not really surprise me--the imminence of it, next month, maybe a little--but it did catch C a bit off guard; as she said, Dr. Ginsberg is a master at "unfolding" these things.

Whatever fate holds in that pair of tests, I now have 3 weeks of que sera sera, in which I can try to get back to writing, and general life.

Today I feel pretty good, although I imagine the energy will wane. I walked with C y'day morn, $\frac{1}{2}$ hr on the alternate route up 175th and around, and have felt all the hard surface in my leg and groin joints. This morn we walked from the house to the dogleg and that went better. I've still had diarrhea, although last time to the pot indicated it may be lessening. My mouth is nearly OK--which is to say massively improved--though there's a bit of 'scalded' feeling yet to the palate ridge above the tongue, and my sense of taste has a metallic tinge; supper last night, the first grilled salmon since this stem cell process started more than a month ago, the salmon was the one thing that tasted really flavorful. And I have a drippy nose, about like a schoolkid's; it drips before I'm aware it's going to. Dr. G did give me the go-ahead to work in the garden, carefully, have a drink before dinner, eat a cheeseburger rare (but not tartare, he insisted with a grin)... Final medical note of the day, he started me on pills to prevent shingles, which as many as half of ~~the~~ stem cell patients come down with and which I sure as hell don't want to.

Pleasanter topic, Whistling, Becky called on 19th with news 39,500 copies of the p'back have been ordered by stores, remarkable # for any book of mine: Barnes & Noble, 8500 (and I calculate that if B&N sells the same % of the national total as on the hardback--12%--that indicates a " " of 70,000+); Borders, 17,760 w/ their Book Club promo still a possibility; our buddies at Raincoast, 1500; Hudson News, 6-7,000 from wholesalers for initial coverage, with their 15,000 earlier estimate still in prospect; and Costco is expected to "support the book strongly." Becky meanwhile has a national bestseller in the novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist, good-oh.

23 April--Resumed work on 11th Man this morn; no great steaming success, but I think I improved the leads to the New Year's chapter and the Pacific shore one.

Am feeling pretty good, though susceptible to fatigue just about any time. Roof of my mouth still slightly raw, but I've been able to eat whatever I want, now. New routine is morning walk in Shoreline Park, on the dirt of the soccer field for the sake of my achy lower body; 3 rounds takes 15 min., then I drop C at the 10th Ave. intersection and she walks home from there.

Fog this morn that is supposed to burn off and let us work outside this afternoon. Y'day was fine in the afternoon, I transplanted our tiny tomato seedlings to their home on south side of the house.

24 April--Back at ms, though I have to fight fatigue to do it. 9:30 now and I've had to lie down twice. So, the writing output is not what it needs to be, but on the principle that every little bit helps...

Am about to go to the park for my walk, and while I'm at it I'll go to the garden and pick tonight's salad and spinach. C and I got in another afternoon's work in the yard y'day, but now it's turned chilly and showery.

26 April--Feeling somewhat better today, Thursday, after a rocky development Monday and Tuesday afternoons. About 4 o'clock each day, a dazzler shaped like a sideways V came in my left eye; lasted nearly an hour the first time before it faded, and about 20 minutes the second time until it just abruptly went away. At C's urging, I called Group H optometry just before 4 p.m. ~~Phone~~ Tuesday, and at 9:30 y'day I was being examined by our beloved eye doctor, Liz Faulstich. An optical migraine, she said; the eyes are healthy, this should go away (and did, y'day afternoon). Could be age-related, but given that ea/ch point of the two days when the thing happened I was tiredly trying to wrap up the day's ms work or list of chores, I'm betting it was caused by stress. So, I need to take a life a little slower and more relaxed. Have done so today and made a bit of progress on the ms.

An odd conjunction earlier this week, I think on Monday the 23rd, when C and I against our habit left the radio

26 April cont.--on after All Things Considered and supper, to listen to the Fresh Air interview with Bill Moyers. That was the day David Halberstam was killed in a car wreck.

We met both of them on the St. Petersburg trip, the fantastic night at Potemkin's palace swimming to mind. To the bafflement of this household, the NY Times did only a perfunctory obit, grafted into the news story of Halberstam's car crash, for one of its most famous reporters.

30 April--Got back to ms work this morn, with decent results. Worked in the veg garden after lunch and nap, finishing the transplanting of the lettuce seedlings I'd started inside in a pan and giving the bluebs some ammonium sulfate. C tore out the spinach (wintered-over, starting to bolt) from the middle bed for me and worked over the soil, then she fertilized the rhodies w/ 16/16. Rain is in the forecast, and we have the property ready for it. As to me, I feel like I've had a real day's work, but no sign of the ocular migraine of a week ago. So far so good.

2 May--Decent morn of work on 11th Man. The Pacific Coast scene of Ben and Prokosch goes together more readily than the previous ones I've been struggling with; may it hold up in the long run.

Weather is lousy today, chilly, with a shower moving in now at 9:45 just as C and I would like to take our walk. Y'day I deviated from the soft soccer field footing I'd been restricting myself to and walked the dogleg street instead, doing okay with it.

Becky called Y'day afternoon to transmit a very nice staff pick--and candidate for Booksense--at the big Harry Schwartz bookstore in Milwaukee for Whistling. Also said "nice numbers" of the paperback are going out. On the lesser side, Jan Christianson's ms sample that I gambled into Becky's editorial orbit did not stick with her.

Drinking time last night, David Laskin and Kate came over for scotch and good talk. They've been true bricks about keeping in touch, checking on how I'm doing. David is just back from his Pennsylvania trip, and has Alaska ahead; with one thing and another, he's doing 4 NY Times travel pieces, causing Kate to shake her head a bit.

4 May--A somewhat better day, physically, though last night (my fourth without sleeping pills) was fairly rough, once again more like a series of cat naps than extended rest. I get up in the morning feeling battered and weary; have taken to lying down for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or 45 min. after breakfast, to recuperate a bit from the night. Had a conversation with C mid-morning about my sleep situation; she suggested trying the calmative, Lorazepam, and I'll do that about 8 this evening. Also am thoroughly sick of the sciatica-like pain down my right leg, which I assume is from the old tipped disk in the back, and am doing back exercises ~~again~~ against that.

The ms work went quite well today, whether the result of some renewal of resolve (god, I get tired of being diligent) or further mending from the chemo, I do not know. Take it and run, in any case.

8 May--Blue sky above the shroud of fog on the Sound, so we apparently have lucked out on the day the Centennial Glass crew is to replace our second leaky living room window. C and I did our morning walk early, and just now have moved rugs etc. in preparation for the window crew. And, I've phoned Bill Chamberlin in Florida, telling him we can't socially fit him in when he comes to Seattle this weekend, alas. Odd how everything congregates, but we have four events with friends here in town in five days and that's plenty.

And then, next Tuesday, we have the appointment with Dr. Ginsberg to see whether the monoclonal protein has been wiped out by my chemotherapy etc. or whether I am in for more of it and a "tandem" transplant of the remainder of my stem cells. I went to Gp Health Northgate y'day morn for the indicative blood test. I am darkly apprehensive about this medical verdict, the repeat of the chemo gauntlet if the monoclonal reading isn't zero and pretty surely Thalidomide on a "maintenance" basis thereafter.

That would be a step down from hope to chronic disease management, no doubt for whatever is left of my life. I am trying to take the meantime day by day, but there is no way I can put that imminent test result entirely out of mind.

14 May--The day before the assessment by Dr. Ginsberg, and I remain fretful, wary of what is to come. This medical tipping point comes at a time when I'm feeling really pretty good--the majority of my stamina back, able to walk C's full exercise route with her this morn (albeit with some complaints from my lower joints), a fairly strong set of writing days last week. My leukocyte count in the blood test on the 7th--if I'm remembering right that it's the white cell count--is 4400, back within normal range, up from practically nil after the stem cell transplant a little more than a month before. Many signs are good, which will make it all the more dispiriting to me if any least trace of monoclonal protein persists in Dr. G's reading of the tests tomorrow.

I have been handling some financial details over the weekend and today, ahead of possible funk from tomorrow's doctor session, and have a few distracting out-of-house chores lined up if needed in the days to come. C through all this has been solid as a brick, although I know there have been tons of stress on her.

We have seen friends galore the past nights and days.

The theater outing with the Damborgs was a particular success, with my stamina and achy knees etc. holding up well through the night. C and I liked Mark and Lou's dinner choice of 10 Mercer, and the Intiman production of "The Skin of Our Teeth" was two-thirds pretty good; the last act, which took a dark Brechtian turn, threw C and me. Then salmon supper at the Angells on the ~~21st~~ 12th, a good visit with Tony and Lee. Y'day morn, David Williams and Marjorie came for one of our Sunday walks, and we provided muffins and coffee. Tonight the Nelsons, with some skittishness, as Ann was called back for tests of some sort last week after a physical.

A note on how I look these days, appraisal no doubt sharpened and darkened by the imminence of tomorrow's verdict. With my beard thinned down to a sufficient mustache and a translucent goatee, to myself I look markedly older, bat-eared, mightily bald-domed. And ~~thinner~~ thinner. In the past year the cords of my neck have begun to stand out, and with the proportion of my beard gone, I now look like I'm inhabiting my shirt rather than wearing it in the old known fit.

15 May--Today's medical result was not only good but incredible. The monoclonal protein reading in my blood test was zero! Neither C nor I went into this day thinking that would be possible, given the persistence of this hobgoblin since it began spiking, a year ago Feb. I am not totally free of further chemotherapy and stem cell transplant yet--Dr. G is having me do a 24-hour urine test, then another blood test for monoclonal protein 4 weeks from now, then if those two tests are clear he'll take a bone marrow sample from my hip--but this was the first big hurdle. C and I were elated leaving Group Health, and so how did we celebrate?--pulling in to the Bagel Deli down the street, for lunch of bagels and cream cheese.

16 May--Back to Dr. Ginsberg's report y'day. Session began with my presenting him my little list of things nagging me--lightheadedness when I get up too fast from kneeling, the tightness and other discomfort down the back of my right leg, etc.--and ~~then~~ he'd rendered advice on those, he said "Your numbers look good" and he started through the blood count results on the computer screen. Leukocytes (white cells) had recovered from chemo wipeout of my immune system, from less than 100 to 4400, platelets were similarly back up, and he got quite engaged in going over a category called "differential," how much up or down those were, usual in the aftermath of stem cell work, he said. Then he announced, "And your monoclonal protein is zero." C afterward wondered if that was some kind of doctor humor, keeping back ~~that~~ until then the essential number we wanted to hear, the only number we wanted. I tend to think it was just his mental march through the numbers. But in any case, as he put it, "a goal has been achieved" and I was almost agog with relief, as I think was C. Docs and civilians, never the twain...

Today I called Liz with the news (she said she'd think of me in my Superman suit) and similarly Becky. Book news continues good there--Costco taking 5,000 of Whistling--although a piecemeal sale of the company has started, and there's no telling where that will take her, the Harcourt backlist, my next book, and so on.

Ms work: pretty good today, I'm close to roughing out 2 pp. about the demise of Prokosch to a balloon bomb.

24 May--It's a various life. We're just back from John Kessler's basement in Ballard where I recorded two BirdNote sessions, per request of exec producer Chris Peterson. She'd told me on the phone they had singled out a Red ^{leap} ^{Mtn} graf from Ride With Me to do, and when I got there, lo, the scriptwriter Bob Sundstrom had piggy-backed a second one, from Winter Bros. I managed not to grimace and bring up permissions and copyright, and just did 'em, pro bono full speed ahead. Pretty much nailed each of them on first take.

We then headed for Swanson's nursery on our route home, where I bought a quite lofty SunGold tomato plant to ~~enhance~~ enhance our lagging tomato patch and C bought some nice New Guinea impatiens.

Start of the day was Group Health physical therapy, where Sabina, trimly teutonic, set me onto a new batch of exercises for my back and achy right leg. Useful visit, in that some of the back exercises I'd been doing may actually be bad for my back in its current state. Her formula is belly button exercises to strengthen my stomach muscles, which sounds good to me.

We've had some pleasant socializing since my last entry. Mayfields were here for dinner on the 18th, then Linda and Syd came by on the afternoon of the 19th to do show and tell of their month at Bellagio in Italy. Three hours of great conversation; Syd says she thinks the time at Bellagio was the best of her life. By their pics and reports, the place is a stunner, a Lake Como peninsula that's been a prize since Roman days.

Ms work: not as much of that to report as I'd like, although despite a medical day each of the past 2 weeks and quite a lot of other busyness I did get done Prokosch's final scene and roughed a few pages each on Ben's further Pacific visits to Animal and Danzer. Ideas have started to perk, so we'll see what Memorial Day week and the month of June produce.

27 May--A damp Sunday, not unusual weather allied to Memorial Day. We did our daily walk in a mild drizzle, and otherwise have hunkered in. I've done some cautionary back-up disks on our ancient Mac--didn't really need many,

I've been pretty good about that--in response to Mark Damborg's experience of a dead hard drive the other day. And Ann and Norm stopped by, per phone request of Ann a few days ago, to see how I'm doing.

Y'day we had an actual outing, propounded by me, to the UW campus: to the library to renew my card, then to the Burke Museum to see the coastal native artwork of marks and prints, then lunch at Chinook's.

The night before, Mark and Lou came for salad dinner and brought from the European Vine Shop the case of French wine grandly ordered up by Liz Darhansoff after my zeroed-out blood test--"I drink to your health--Liz D." reads the card with 1/2 doz each of reds and roses. Mark, wine aficionado that he is, brought and loaned us a colossal book of wine regions of France, so that we can damn near trace to the exact field where these bottles came from.

And on the 24th, I went to Gp Health physical therapy and under the advice of Sabina am doing exercises to strengthen my stomach muscles in hopes it'll help my back. For one reason or another, my right leg nags have eased somewhat.

Lastly, a literary note. Lois Welch will visit us in early June, but meanwhile she as Jim's executor is handling the Penguin re-issue of The Death of Jim Loney, and she found in going back through the reviews that there wasn't a worthwhile cover quote worth pulling out in the whole damn batch. She therefore has invented the retroactive blurb, starring me. Asked me if I could come up with something, a one-liner really, for the cover, and after looking over the novel a bit and mulling Bevis's really pretty good analysis of Loney in Ten Tough Trips and staying mindful of Lois's own thumbnail assessment of it, I came up with: "An undying story, told with the austerity of Camus's The Stranger, of a wounded soul seeking to become whole."

Readers can make of that what they will and ultimately of Jim's story of a willed death.

5 June--June is here, days of it, and I have been wrestling manuscript and attempts at household chores constantly enough that these pages have been out of visiting range.

But just now I have printed out 10 pp. of Ben with Animal at Eniwetok and it at last feels reasonably right to me.

Meanwhile we've had Lois Welch as a houseguest the past two nights--she's in town in honor of her former student Andrea's Ph.D. ceremony at the UW English department tomorrow. We're to fetch up with her for lunch on Thursday and C will then take her to Edmonds to catch the 5 o'clock train back to Montana. It turned out that not only did I have medical news for Lo, she did for us, too. About the time my stem cells were being collected from me, she was operated on for what proved to be a big benign cyst. She told us, though, there's also this 'thing'--"It is a carcinoma"--attached to her kidney and will have to be taken off later this month. She seemed less concerned about it, C and I agreed, than we could be. So, here's hoping, for us all. Although it was somewhat tough on my writing--Jim had the same situation, the guest quarters attached to the workspace--it was really good to have her here, Lo expressing her gratitude for the chance.

Atop that on the social side, we had David Williams and Marjorie here for dinner with Lois the night of the 3rd, and y'day C and I met the Atwoods at Ivar's for lunch. First time of catching up with them since last fall, and Peter has been through his medical trial--and evidently come out of it fairly well-- simultaneous with mine. He and I are the same age, within a month, and thank heavens we are married to supremely coping women.

After Ivar's C and I went farther south on the waterfront to the Coast Guard museum, where the retired CG captain running it provided me considerable--threatening toward more than I wanted to know--about Coast Guard foot patrols on the Olympic Peninsula coast during WWII.

6 June--C has just (@ 3:40) passed by the window with a filled yard bag, reward(?) of weeding. I went out after lunch myself to transplant lettuce buds from garden room pan to a lettuce bed, and did some other mild garden tinkering. This seems a calmer day, for whatever reason, perhaps because the ms went better y'day and I'm now on a piece I think I see how to do. Somewhat out of phase with actuality, though: this historically is D-Day, and I'm working up to the invasion of Guam.

The weather has turned snotty--I'm awaiting a TV weather forecast to decide whether we grill salmon tonight or go with a dinner fruit salad; magnificent options--with showers that don't really drench.

13 June--A fairly bountiful day on the ms, as the others recently have been when not reduced by medical appointments. I had the blood test again on the 11th, which will tell the tale on zero monoclonal protein or not.

Besides the stamina that's gone into writing, I've been able to be vigorous in yard work, sawing away on pruning projects, long hours at vegetable chores, and so on. So I really have regained my physical self--I have been thinking I have extraordinary vigor lately, and C tells me that I'm back to normal.

14 June--In about 45 minutes I leave for Gp Health physical therapy appointment, so am delaying the start on the ms today, probably until afternoon. Exercises given me by the phys therapist Sabina have helped my back a lot--and the infernal sciatica-like pain down the back of the right leg is gone, for now--so now to see what constitutes maintenance and whether there is any more betterment to be done.

Met the Nelsons in Edmonds for dinner last night, resuming our old tradition of monthly get-together. They were still aglow from their European trip, bless them. We resorted to El Puerto with the Provinces vanished during Milltown renovation, and while the food was pretty good, C and I both came home feeling bulked up on beans etc.

A note back to Lois Welch's stay with us. She did something quite interesting just before she left, telling

14 June cont.--me she wouldn't mention my recent medical history to the usual Missoula suspects (Kittredge, Annick, possibly Ginny Merriam etc.) given the hooah that followed the false report of my death a few years ago. As C later said, it amounted to Lo saying "these are my friends, but they don't have to be trusted with this." Lo also had some conversation with me about archival stuff or more likely non-archival--Jim's awards and so on. Told her we don't have a ready answer for that in this household, it'll likely be left to our executor to handle. Being around her that couple of days set me to thinking about what a remarkably adjustable life she has had, out of the rather strictured academic family in Salem, to the Missoula high-life scene where she met Jim, thence to dealings with his Rez family while at the same time the Germans and French were acclaiming his greatness. Much observed, much taken in, much handled with different flavors of grace.

19 June--"Remarkable" was Dr. Ginsberg's word for my transplant result ~~today~~ in today's consultation, and to prove it, he changed his thinking about taking a bone marrow sample from me. Not necessary, he's convinced at this point. Thus as C said, I have been given my life back. With zero amount of monoclonal protein in blood and urine tests for the second straight month, I now am free until next checkup three months from now. Our interpretation is that Dr. G is saving our ammunition; if there had been any trace of myeloma, slumbering or whatever in a bone marrow test, that would have meant another stem cell transplant. But with absence of monoclonal protein as the gauge--in essence, nothing terrible can be happening in me if that stuff is zero--we can all get on with life, on the basis that the past 5 months and 19 days of treatment/transplant did their job. It is still sort of stunning, to be able to look forward to the next chunk of life without medical procedure (the catheter was also taken out of my chest on this very big day!), so more thoughts anon.

21 June--Certainly my best week in a while. Last Sunday, the NY Times Book Review put me at the head of its Paperback Row column, with mug shot and the line "presiding figure ~~of~~ in the literature of the American West." Dr. Ginsberg's clean bill of health for me for the summer. Whistling Season moved up a notch to #3 on PNBA bestseller list. Today I rounded out the long difficult Eniwetok/Guam section of 11th Man, freeing me up into tinkering that and the Cape Alava pair of pieces into a single sizable skein. On top of it all, the Grp Health physical therapy exercises prescribed by the teutonic Sabina have greatly helped my back and my walking.

So I am brimful of equanimity, right now, and C and I celebrated by meeting Midge McGilvray for lunch at Chinook's. Tonight, it's grilled chicken salad, replete with our garden yield of lettuce, sugar peas, onion.

In half an hour David Laskin, nobly voluntary in all this is coming by to muscle our filled yard waste bin up to the road for garbage pickup in the morning. I have to lay off shoulder work until the catheter hole below my collarbone heals up. C and I just now changed the bandage, and the gory place seeped a spot of blood at us, so we've decided to leave it bandaged over for several days before approaching it again. The catheter removal on the 19th was definitely no fun. First of all, it takes place in ~~Group Health~~ Radiology, a basement area that is more drab and worn and, well, basementy than other parts of Group Health. The staff there also has been about half an hour behind schedule both times we've had to be there. The physician's assistant, Larry, in blue scrubs who did the catheter extraction told me that about one time in twenty, the catheter can be pulled right out, in no time at all. (Dr. G had taken a look at it on the chance he could do so and decided it was too "grown in," so I didn't think that was in the cards.) Beyond that, most can be ~~etc~~ drawn out with the aid of clamps, said he. And lastly, the most stubborn need some snipping into tissue to get 'em out. I have not liked the catheter, intrusion on the body, from the start, and naturally mine gave me all three versions of extraction. It seemed way longer as I was stretched on my back on the

21 June cont.--operating table in the Frankensteinian radiology room, but C figured it only took 17 minutes even so. The spot on the chest doesn't exactly hurt, then or now, but there's an awareness of it and I can well believe I shouldn't be exerting on it for a while.

26 June--My last day at 67. I'm approaching tomorrow's birthday on the tide of relief at last week's medical news. An odd mark of what I've been through showed itself a few days ago when I showered for the first time in 2½ months--it was baths all the way when the catheter was in my chest--and in soaping myself up I found myself curiously short of hair in spots, boyishly so; pubic area, down the legs, while my arms and back seem as hairy as ever. Headwise, my beard is coming back in although a bit wooly, and there's a film of fuzz where my hair was.

Becky called from Harcourt today, in response to my good-medical-news messages to her and Liz y'day, and she provided the dandy book news that the Whistling Season paperback now has 55,000 in print and according to Bookscan is selling well, steady 2500 a week. Costco has a 5,000 order somewhere in that. And she reported that a favorite editor of hers at Atlantic in London showed her the submitted copy of Whistling and she urged him to give me a try. She told me she wants me to set the record for having the ~~long~~ "longest blossoming career."

On the 11th Man, with some weekend work and a quick polish job y'day on Prokosch and the balloon bomb, I have turned the corner to Ben and Cass in Seattle, evidently eating and drinking at Pike Place Market.

30 June--A year from today, the 11th Man is due. The writing pace I've hit lately gives some hope I may actually meet that deadline, although this is a hell of an ambitious book and there's still the medical minefield ahead.

Today is lovely, mid-70s and blue. I did a dab of garden work in late morning, but am constrained from the yard work--hedges!--we really want to get done, because of my still healing catheter incision. The damn thing isn't much, ½ inch or so, but it's there.

And I had a lovely birthday 3 days ago, thanks to C. We tinkered in the yard the first part of the day, then went

30 June cont.--to Swanson's nursery and I subsequently went to Sky for cheaper dirt and compost than Swanson's; the Doig idea of a happy birthday, two nursery visits.

C came up with nice useful presents, a dual kitchen timer for when she's cooking and I'm barbecuing, a Duke Ellington CD and the like. The Rodens came for dinner, bearing a chocolate cake. John has turned even more anecdotal than he used to be, so the conversation scats all over the place, but so be it, I guess.

A bit of catching up: y'day I was interviewed by phone by freelance Susan Roxborough for Seattle Magazine's gallery of "iconic" literary figures. It's supposed to be a Vanity Fair-like gimmick, which would be more efficacious if local magazines weren't so hopelessly minor-league. I gathered she's getting \$400 to interview 10 writers. And a week or more ago, I closed off an avenue to becoming the Western reviewer for the New York Review of Books. Betsy Burton of the King's English bookstore in Salt Lake got acquainted with Robert Silver at this year's Book Expo, he asked her for a recommendation, she called to see if she could tout me. Huh uh, I better stick to what I'm doing, I said.

5 July--The blue heart of summer. This is supposed to be an 85 degree day, so C and I started early and cool at 8 to trim the downslope hedge. Y'day we did the high south one. All this marks my return to upper body mobility, with the catheter incision no longer hindering. I am now down to one band-aid, over that, and 3 pills (Acyclovir, to ward off shingles) a day. If that ain't a ton of progress...

On the 3rd I met Tony for lunch at Third Place, and we signed books for the store afterward. By good luck, here came George Carroll, the Harcourt sales rep, with the store mgr Robert. Thus George and I got evidence that each other was at work. Tony seems good, with a UW Press book coming that will showcase his sculpture career. He has been magnificent at keeping in touch and pitching in during my medical siege.

10 July--Hot tedious weather, 86 outside the window now at 3:45, hotter promised for tomorrow. C and I trimmed the road side of the front hedge pronto at 8 this morn, got it done in about 20 minutes. In the vegetable beds the lettuce is suffering under the frost blankets I've put over to keep the sun off the Red Sails variety; our staple of salads, it wilts to illustrious nothingness in this blaze. I don't do well in such weather, and so have come up with maybe half a page to show for a day of ms work. Did spend probably $\frac{1}{2}$ hr this afternoon on the phone with the would-be movie guys, listening to their hype about The Whistling Season. The Hollywood script guy, Blaine Novak, has what is to us the puzzling approach of "cinematizing" the whole goddamn book and then boiling it down and boiling it down to the 120-page script necessary for a 2-hr movie. The money guy, Jim Guercio, sitting at his place at 8400' somewhere in the Colorado Rockies, puts in his two bits' worth or admitted digressions whenever he feels like it. Remarkably, they don't show much sign of tumbling to the fact that I'll give them damn near all the rein they want in fashioning the book into a movie.

11 July--And today it is 93, at that same time of day. Rats.

Mike Cendejaus, the movie agent, called today and I asked him if he thought Blaine Novak still had the moves to make a movie. He said the biz is a mystery; it took 7 years to get Brokeback Mtn made, 8 to make Memoirs of a Geisha. He admitted Novak's initial 300-page "script," the "cinematized" version, was a first for him, but he pointed out our unusual deal points--i.e., script approval--mean that I can say at the time the script comes down to 120 or so pages, there's that scene that I loved and why isn't it in there... So, we're agreed Novak's approach is quirky, and this is a crapshoot, but no visible harm yet. Mike's saying of the day, which I told him I'd sew into a sampler and put on the wall: "It ain't what it ain't until we see what it is." Got a page of ms done today, and riffled the UW Library catd catalogue on-line, in preparation for a research grab the beginning of next week.

19 July--after a gap in the diary where, as C aptly put it in hers, I underwent the loss of a good friend, the publishing house Harcourt. The news was in the NY Times and Wall St. Journal 3 days ago, Harcourt sold to Houghton Mifflin, which in turn had been bought up by an Irish educational software outfit called Riverdeep last fall. The swallowings. I called Liz this morning for her take on this, and she didn't have much of one yet--lots of conversations are going on between Harcourt and Houghton Mifflin, she said, and it's not clear yet whether the houses will be combined (which is my bet) or Harcourt will be permitted to go on as an independent imprint. For my part, I will try to cling to the tail of Becky's blouse wherever she ends up.

I meanwhile am making some visible progress on the ms in what has been a fairly crammed week--we're waiting right now, at 3:15, for Lynnwood Honda to yield up the CRV on this day of servicing both cars. On other days C has gallantly overseen the getting of new toilet seats and the cleaning of runner rugs, while I put in an exhaustive day of research at the UW library at the start of the week, the 16th. Weather has been, surprisingly, showery, which limits our outdoor work--blueberries are waiting, bean-planting is waiting--but at least decently waters the property for a change.

20 July--C went online this morn to check the e-mail, and while she was there checked the PNBA bestseller list, where Whistling Season sits ever so nicely at #3. Then she thought to take a look at the independent stores' national bestseller list, the Booksense list, and by damn there it was at #15, with the notation that it's been on the list for 12 weeks.

And now we're off to take Jean Roden to lunch at Swanson's Nursery for her birthday. In the rain, but so be it.

2 August--The diary has gone to hell in a handbasket, consequence of my immersion in the destroyer scenes in 11th Man. I think I'm finally on the brink of getting the sub attack scene, hoping to wrap it up tomorrow. If I can, that still leaves 4 full weeks before Labor Day to work over the 1944 sections. Could be worse.

7 Aug.--The typewriter is back out of its hiding place (the garden room) where it has been the past hr and $\frac{1}{2}$ while I was photographed by Jeff Corwin for the Seattle Mag literary portfolio piece. Jeff was a good pro, but I still don't have any qualms about getting the typewriter out of sight--if it's around, the situation with reporters or photogs alike is the immediate cliché, "an analogue man in a digital world." It may be so, but I do not believe it is the most interesting thing about me. So, anyway, the shoot is done, and in $\frac{1}{2}$ hr C and I head for the Damborgs and an early supper before we all go to ACT for the one-man Roethke play.

17 Aug.--Rainy Sunday morn, perchance to catch up in these orphaned pp. a bit. Showers since midnight have been slow and slight, so we'll need to see if this has measurably helped the dry, dry ground. Another damp weather system is supposed to pass through tomorrow.

Am now at the midpoint of the 4 full weeks of August which I'd singled out as the span to get the $\frac{1}{2}$ doz or so chapters of the ms section "1944", so far, into semi-polished continuous read. So far so good, I think, with the tricky shipboard movie-night scene the only chunk I know of that needs full inventing, and the Eniwetok-Guam scene needs a going-over with the research pp. I photocopied a few weeks back on my UW library day of immersion. If the creek don't rise, I may get to Labor Day (and a damned busy month of September) with 230 or so pp. of presentable ms.

And don't I wish I knew if that is a lot or not. On the one hand, it seems as if I have been laboring on this book a long, long time, with quite a ways to go. On the other, there's been the medical gauntlet (on one thing or another I've still been in for Group Health appointments about once a week the past six weeks or so) since last Nov., and for that matter the very considerable amount of time spent on the book

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Aug. cont.--tour ahead of that. So, the days of my life have been taxed with tasks other than word-making.

As to that life, the latest is I have some numbness--neuropathy--in the bridge of my left foot and the toes of my right. It's not crippling, nowhere near, but low-level aggravating, yes. I saw Dr. Kato about it on the 8th, and she immediately talked with Ginsberg and they took me off the anti-shingles pill, Ayclovir, which it turns out can rarely cause neuropathy, in about 1% of people who take it. I'm to report in to Dr. K again on the 22nd, on progress or lack of it. Meanwhile I've had biweekly physical sessions (last one on the 17th) that feature exercises therapy to strengthen my stomach muscles and thereby my back, my walking, my standing, and at this final one Sabina told me neuropathy may not be reversible. Against that is my cautious estimation that the numbness may have lessened a bit these past few days. I think ultimately I'm headed to a Gp H neurologist to get a prognosis on this.

The phys therapy exercises have been a palpable relief to my back. Sabina's goal of getting me to the point of pain-free standing for 15 minutes has not been met--I've been skeptical of ever getting to more than about half of that--but otherwise I'm greatly aware of a more capable body core, a sense that I walk from my bellybutton down now, rather than just with my snarky legs. The other main bodily qualm right now is sleep, ragged from night to night. Dr. Kato prescribed a new sleeping pill--Terazodone--to replace Tamezapam, which can induce a Valium-like dependence (though I've been careful to knock off on it every so often throughout the, what, year or more that I've taken it). It seems that most nights a $\frac{1}{2}$ pill will help, and reaching a point in the ms where my head isn't writing on into the night helps too, naturally.

Out beyond the boundaries of skin, we got something major done at the start of last week when Bob the painter (across the 13th-15th) redid the eaves etc. on the south side of the house that have been so wretchedly peeling and flaking. We still have ahead some electrical work and autumn tree-trimming, but we're feeling somewhat better about maintenance of this place. Y'day we trimmed the wiggly purple plum tree at the SW corner of the property, for what we vowed will be the last time. It's a helluva

Aug. 19 cont.--job, requiring me to wield the power trimmer from way up on the 8' orchard ladder while C steadies the ladder's support pole. (The plus side has been that I'm capable of work that strenuous.) It's forever hard to see spots to simplify this much-planted piece of property, but having tree guys whack that plum tree down to a trunky bush this fall is our intention.

On the better side of lushness at this point of the year is the yield in lettuce, tomatoes (golden cherry ones as yet, with smallish Early Girl reds about ready), beans, berries. We are at, I think, 38 quarts of blueberries frozen in baggies, and another 7 or so quarts of assorted Hollywood plum, peach, Asian pear. It may be that we're overdoing the freezing--can we really go through a quart of fruit/berries a week after this harvest quits--but it seems like we're interested in seeing how much we can base our meals on what we can grow.

Social side: Friday the 17th, we went to dinner at David Williams' parents'--Jacquie and Walt--to meet Marjorie's parents, Jay and Barbara Kittle. The sets of in-laws get along swimmingly, which is quite a tribute to them all as they are considerably different personalities. And last mid-week, the 15th, we had David Laskin and Kate here for a fruit-and-berry salad dinner and some talk of Montana before they head off to a family vacation at Chico Hot Springs.

Sept. 3--September morn, and Labor Day. We've marked the holiday weekend as we traditionally do, staying home and laboring. Considerable yardwork the past two days, including trimming the big south hedge and the escallonia, and I have rejuvenated the veg garden, putting in the next phase of lettuce seedlings and winter spinach, onions and kale. There is meanwhile the fruit and berry harvest, which we shall pile in to full supper salads tonight and tomorrow--4 kinds of berries, Bartlett pears, prune plums, Melrose apples, plus a last few peaches of what Linda and Syd gave us when they passed through on their way to Camano a week ago. Have been freezing the crops as if we're hoarders--something over 50 quart bags of it all, so far.

I had greatly wanted to turn a corner on the 11th Man by Sept. 1, and by damn did so, although only by dint of

Sept. 3 cont.--about 1500 fresh words out of nowhere--Ben and Cass in the roadhouse, and the Coast Guardsmen trying to catch up with Prokosch--that last week of August, when I realized Prokosch's fate did not stand well by itself so soon after Animal's. C right now is upstairs in her easy chair reading the ms, all blessed hardwon 250 pp. of it. I am hoping this is the 2/3 point. It has seemed to take a very long time to achieve the 100 pp. since C and Becky read the first major chunk last spring. But then, I have been through quite some hell of a lot with the 5½ months of stem cell transplant process wedged in there, haven't I. My health self-assessment currently is really very good, the main complaint the touches of numbness in my feet that I am to see a Gp Health neurologist about tomorrow. The physical therapy exercises to strengthen my gut muscles have in turn helped my back, although it's still fragile--I set off some pain last week by standing talking to our neighbor Tiffany too long, and it lasted off and on for 3-4 days, back and down the right leg as well. On the larger scale of things, my stamina seems fine--was able to wield the power trimmer from atop the orchard ladder in the hedge work, for ex--and there have been a couple of inexplicable bonuses from somewhere, something, in the re-setting of my immune system: by now I seem to have more hair and with somewhat more color to it than before the chemotherapy, and my weight stays quite steadily right at 150. And so at age 68 I have grown into a smaller size, going from medium to small in shirt orders, having various trousers taken in by a tailor, and last week buying myself a new set of blue jeans with 34" waist instead of "36.

There is no telling, of course, how long this truce in my indolent myeloma can be expected to last; I have the 3-monthly blood tests and sessions with Dr. Ginsberg in early October. Everything could speed back in the direction of hell then. Meanwhile I have this tricky month to maneuver through, with the pair of Colorado trips and the South Dakota book festival, the P-I piece to write, the movie script ostensibly to be looked over, etc. So I am going to need all the energy I can scrape up. But for now, I have achieved a tough stint of ms and lived to tell the tale.

8 Sept.--A week and a day of this formidable month are gone, and some necessary hides have been nailed to the wall. C read over the 250 pp. of 11th Man ms for me on Labor Day, and found nothing wrong with it. I gritted in on extraneous projects and wrote both the P-I piece and the Loveland luncheon presentation. Whipping those I think now frees me up to get back to the ms on Monday--ideas came on this morn's walk around the n'hood, Ben and Jake driving back from the High Line funerals of Angelides and Prokosch--which is valuable time gained in a week when I'll spend Thursday and Friday on the Loveland trip. Loveland will bring a payday, rare enough this year--\$6500--although there may be a cascade of money ahead. Liz's office belatedly sent me the Harcourt royalty statements for the 1st $\frac{1}{2}$ of the year, which hadn't produced any dough, and in looking them over and then the contract, I discerned that Whistling has earned back enough to rate separate accounting and the \$50,000 11th Man advance that Harcourt has been charging off ought not be charged against Whistling. Nor did the royalty statements show any sub rights amounts, when the Reader's Digest condensation brought in 10 grand and the large-print edition I think was for \$8,000. Called Liz, in Maine, and quick as a wink she fobbed me to Chuck in the NY office, who left a message saying I'm right and he'll get at Harcourt about it. There ought to be some Whistling p'back \$ in the Nov. royalty accounting, too, so this lean-looking year may plump up.

Gorgeous weather lately, low 70s and bright blue, and C and I trimmed the downslope hedge this morn. I have been nursing the veg garden vigorously and we're living on supper salads, fruit and salmon alternating, with good prospects on into the autumn. Jean came over today to share in the produce, and she and C picked a qt of bluebs for her and John.

As C noted in her diary, the social event of this week was dinner at the Everett Country Club, not exactly our usual kind of venue, hosted by Doug Smith. Even though our DNA could hardly be more different--Doug and his younger brother Wayne both have been corporate-ladder business types, and in comparison I'm a buffalo hunter--I am greatly fond of the whole clan and have been ever since their mother Hazel and dad Doug welcomed me on the

8 Sept. cont.--evident basis that if Carol picked me out, I must be some kind of a prince. An old GTE buddy of Doug's, Hank Boras and wife Dolores, were also on hand, and Doug's sometime traveling companion Lucia. It was the kind of occasion we've come to expect of Doug, eat and drink all we can and the heftier the tab, the more he seems to enjoy it. The thing of it is, this isn't showing off in any way, it's just his method of being generous and sharing his good financial fortune a bit.

Ah, and the medical front. On the 4th I saw the Grp Health neurologist, Dr. Searce (prncd Sears), about the numbness in each foot and he diagnosed it as delayed reaction to Thalidomide. Good news is that it could go away in 6 months or a year. It's a nuisance rather than an impeding ill, so I'm trying to forget it as much as I can.

10 Sept.--Phone conversation with Becky today, which brought the news that they have thus far shipped 78,000 copies of the Whistling Season and have another 20,000 in the warehouse--wahoo! Bookscan shows it selling 2,000 a week, which she translates into 2500 a week overall. Barnes & Noble has sold 7200, Borders 14,000, Baker & Taylor 3500, Amazon 1900.

The other good news is ethereal, might or might not happen, but this most heavenly of editors passed along the inside skinny that her boss, Dan Farley, and she may end up in the top jobs once the Houghton Mifflin and Harcourt publishing houses are shaken together. She says Farley, at least, is behaving like someone with "an assured future" after his visit to the River Deep owners in Ireland; they had tried to recruit him to Houghton Mifflin before the Harcourt buy. I asked Becky the respective sizes of the editorial operations and she said HM is about 50% bigger. In the meantime of what may be months and months of the merger taking form, she is trying to hang onto her editor-in-chief Andrea and trade paperback head Tina. In parsing through all this with me, she did say that what looks to her like a powerful part of the merger will be the trade paperback lines, HM's Harvest Mariner with Harcourt's strong backlist, which would be good for my p'backs.

No sooner was Becky off the phone than Chuck Verrill

10 Sept. cont.--called to substantiate my reading of the
Harcourt royalty situation, saying Whistling has done well
enough that they owe me \$25,000 in accelerated advance
and royalties as well. As C said, what a fizzy day.

Sept. 13, Sea Tac, Gate X11 - Waiting to board my Denver flight for the Loveland gig. Left home at 5:30 AM, traffic was a breeze. The terminal is busy though not overwhelmed; the Alaska electronic kiosk (although I'm nominally flying on American) saved me a hell of a time to get a boarding pass.

This should be a fairly painless trip, now that I have trudge through the security gauntlet. (I'll say this for Osama Bin Laden & his bunch, they've taken any pleasure out of plane travel.) Ted Schmidt of the Loveland library will be in charge of me, I've been around him before and liked him. The trip I dread is from Denver to Deadwood at the end of the month, - a puddle jump airline, stints in cars driven by strangers - but it's leavened somewhat by the news that Michelle Blankenship, the Harcourt director of publicity & my own publicity wizard on the Whistling Handback tour, will be there.

As to the Loveland appearances, I spent an appalling amount of time y'day marking up the text for delivery. I think in the future I should not bother to record a talk (as I did this one, then did the marking-up while playing it back) but just rehearse it aloud, marking as I go.

Sept. 14 - On the runway @ Denver, 6:30
& running late. But I am homeward bound
with cheers in my ears from the 2 Loveland
gigs. All went well with the events, although
I had the comparison advantage that James
Calvin fizzled for them last year - would
not talk about the writing process, just stood
up there & read from The Measure. Ted
Schmidt, the library director, did a nice job
of squiring me around, & surely he must have
sweet-talked the committee into the \$6500
fee I'm going home with. Audiences were
good & receptive, though distressingly gray-
headed, & overwhelmingly female.

My cousin Marilyn & Joan turned up at
the luncheon today - & I was fortunately
forewarned - & I liked visiting with them.
I got to tell them the story of the last two
people in line last night, a good-looking
couple about 30, the woman a couple of
weeks short of giving birth. They explained
that the boy on his way is being named out
of my books - they chose Varick - & they
wanted a book signed to him for someday.

23 Sept.--Dark, 6 a.m., the first day of fall. Each season now carries with it a parsing of my blood. The 3-month test will be done at the start of October, I will see Dr. Ginsberg on the 10th for his verdict on the numbers in the blood. Things seem to be going well in my body, but there is no escaping some level of apprehension.

In the meantime, I have been slogging through this crammed month, preparing for the Stegner Award doings in Boulder and then the dog-and-pony show in Deadwood, whacking away at the ms all the while. Preparation can only go so far: I had a heads-up call from the Whistling Season script writer, Blaine Novak, alerting me that the movie sugar daddy, Jim ~~Guercio~~ Guercio, has had a quadruple bypass yet is absolutely determined to meet me at the dinner occasion Patty Limerick is putting together next Wed. According to Novak, Guercio is one of those western guys I with weird coincidence was writing about in 11th Man a few days ago, who does not believe a woman's grasp of life includes the steering wheel, and so his wife has had a hell of time telling him no, he is not going to be the one to drive to Boulder. It should make for an interesting evening; Guercio represents as much as a potential half million dollars to C and me if everything clicked in the movie deal (which we don't for a moment believe will happen)...

The Damborgs are picking us up at 9 this morn and we all head for Bellingham, by way of a dike hike at Indian Slough first, for an approximate birthday dinner thrown by Ann McCartney. It's not my favorite excursion--much of the day in the car, and a big mid-day meal--but something we owe a friend.

Sept. 22, 7 AM, gate N16 @ SeaTac,
waiting for the plane to show up so we
can head for Denver. C drove us in the Civic
& despite foggy roads we were through security
an hr and 8 minutes after leaving home.

There's a social day ahead of us - lunch
with Patty Limerick & her guy Houston,
then dinner tonight with some of Patty's
donors and, ahem, Jim Guercio of the movie
option \$. The ostensible scriptwriter Blaine
Norak called me the other day to warn me
of how "jimmy" looks after his quadruple
bypass. C & I are agreed it's going to be
an interesting evening;

I managed to get in a half-day of ms
work y'day in spite of packing etc. Have
not quite finished the rest of scenes I'd
~~wanted~~ wanted to try by the end of the month,
but pretty close.

5 min. until when boarding is supposed
to start, & there's just been an announce-
ment the plane is being taved around to
the gate. We'll see.

Sep 7, 29, Rapid City airport - Security
just confiscated my gift bottle of honey -
telling me it's a "liquid" - so that little
mishap about characterizes the South Dakota
Book Festival. A malleable handling of logistics
all the way, starting here y'day when I
walked off the plane & there was no one here
to meet me. Luckily there was a volunteer
driver here to meet Debra Earling & Dan
Brown, & properly horrified, she tucked me
into her entourage. This morn, in my
main session, I had to round up chairs for
Kent Meyers and me at our table next to the
~~podium~~ podium, then we had to hand a single
mic back & forth. When I saw the same
state of the microphone situation, I at once
got up, quieted the audience & told them we
had to have a mic check or we'd all be
fighting the problem for the whole damn hour.
Volume proved to be OK, so I handed the
mic to the truly inept guy named Laverne
who was to introduce us, & he promptly began
by holding the mic a foot in front of his
face, totally inaudible. I jumped up again &
more or less steered the mic to his mouth.
He then bumbled through my introduction,
having real serious trouble with the title
Dancing at the Sacred Fire, then pausing to
think it over & say, "That sounds interesting. I'll
have to read that." I got off lucky, though, as
he moved along to Kent, whose book The
Work of Wolves was the SD state read
2 years ago, and introduced him as author
of Dances With Wolves.

Sept. 29 cont. - Ah, well. Logistical maladroitness aside, there was a good enjoyable group of writers on hand, David Lashin prime among them. We got to hang around together at breakfast & lunch, & he saved my skin by letting me share his room after the Hickok Hotel & Casino - mostly the latter - kicked me out of mine at 11 this morn, 2 hours before my ride to the airport. Craig Johnson, the mystery writer from Ucross, Wyo, was there as he was in Billings a year ago, a bluff cowboyish guy & like a lot.

- The aircraft needed to get to Denver has just arrived, huzzah!

Last night's "Literary Feast" was as overweight as I'd figured it would be, with 11 of us reading, theoretically for 10 min. maximum each. That immediately went to hell when Pete Dexter, bleeding off, read inaudibly for 20 min.

There were a couple of other ducks, predictably, & everyone else did reasonably. (Lashin had the bad luck to have a stint of the crying baby during his reading.) Something that worked OK - thank heavens - was Dave Tommsett & Deb ^{Langner} ~~Langner~~ playing & singing "Monkey With a Typewriter."

2 Oct.--Thoroughly home from Colorado and South Dakota in different weather, in what in fact seems to be early winter. It's been rainy off and on since C picked me up at SeaTac the night of the 29th, and the wind has been gusting all day. Now at 20 to 3, I've wrapped up the day's ms work and indeed the triple set of scenes after Prokosch's death, not a helluva lot of pages but a ton of technique. I hope to trudge along day by day on next scenes I've roughed out, with Dr. Ginsberg's next medical verdict looming on the 10th. We intend to take a day off just before that, to go to Dungeness or Ebey's Landing.

Catching up on Boulder: we spent much time with Patty Limerick, splendid whirligig of talk and ideas. First day there, we had lunch with her and her ~~Patty~~ betrothed, Houston Kempton, at Brasserie Ten Ten almost across the street from the snazzy St. Julien hotel (we had rm 427, top-floor corner looking out on the Flatirons, top-notch). C and I bought a bottle of wine for lunch and we yakked away, Patty holding Houston's hand there on the table much of the time. Their wedding, in the auditorium of the student union at the U. of Colorado, is going to have hundreds of guests. Best food of the trip at the Ten Ten, which I should keep in mind if anything brings me back to Boulder ever again, albeit a fly that had been buzzing us most of the meal--the restaurant had doors and windows open to sidewalk dining--took a suicide dive into Patty's wine glass. Houston is a hunk, a bright sensitive one at that, almost movie-star good looks. Patty, eight years older, is even slimmer than when I had supper with the two of them a year ago, and that was after she'd dropped 40 pounds, I think. She runs every morning--as she pointed out to me, all the years of doing nothing but sitting at a desk have given her good preserved knees. Thank the gods that she has as much energy as the sun, because she and Houston will have his daughter and son half the time. The next day we had lunch with Patty alone, at Tom's Tavern on a corner of Pearl St., a decidedly ~~unBoulderish~~ beer-and-cheeseburger barroomy kind of place that Patty immediately adopted because it's so unBoulderish. The talk then went every so often toward the emotional, Patty on the point that my books have a lot of death yet she finds them affirming, and wound within that

2 Oct. cont.--of course her experience of Jeff Limerick's dying, which she had known was on its way but still was overwhelming. As we talked some of the mutual toll we've seen in our years of trotting through western history and writing, I cited to her how I still miss Bill Stafford and Dick Hugo, and thought to ask her if she had known Rich Roeder, with his particularly tragic last stint of life. She hadn't, and as C and I described Rich's unlikely partnership with Mike Malone, Patty choked up a bit and quoted Grandma in This House of Sky, "Charlie, why did you have to die? Why did Mike have to die?" It turned out she didn't know his history of heart trouble. Through all this talk of mortality, I held my tongue about my stem cell transplant etc, not wanting to lay that on Patty at this auspicious pre-nuptial time of her life. Regarding Houston, whom C and I greatly like, she let drop--no, Patricia Nelson Limerick does not let drop, she contributed these friend-to-friend--two tales. When we were at lunch with him, she told the story of how she once shouldered a drunk and passed-out contributor in an upright soldierly carry, and acting this out at a party once, Houston had been a very compliant limp stand-in for the potted guy and she ended up thinking, ~~"Well"~~ after they unfolded from each other, "Well, that was quite pleasant." Now recently she's had three dreams involving Jeff, she said, and in the one most pertinent to the oncoming wedding, Jeff is ill with the tumor that will do him in but cognizant, quite approving of Patty's plan, which is that she will have an affair with Houston to advance a seamless transition, a notion which all the other occupants of the dream roundly disapprove of. So, what a treat I found it, as ever, ~~to~~ to be around Patty and that busy head of hers. She told us that both Tom McGuane and Tony Hillerman have caricatured her in novels--what is wrong with those guys, are their drying-up nuts shrinking up into their brains at the sight of a woman as macho as they think they are?

3 Oct.--Did some roughing of next scenes in the ms--Ben going back to Hill 57, at last finding Agnes--and weather cleared enough to set up 2nd coldframe w/ Red Sails lettuce transplants. Also picked raspberries, and C gleaned more blueberries--another dinner of homegrown fruit salad, ah.

Back to the Colorado and South Dakota trip. The Stegner Award ceremony, night of the 27th, packed the house at the U. of Colorado's slick law school auditorium, nearly 300. Patty showed up in a purple ~~fringed~~ fringed buckskin jacket and boots, and her cohort Charles Wilkinson likewise in cowboy boots and in a bolo tie, while I was duded up in my cream-colored blazer, blue button-down shirt and dark tie--as ♀ Patty neatly told the audience, "dressed like an Ivy League professor," the 3 of us proving once again that the West is a complicated place. The questions from Patty and Charles went well, as did the ones from the receptive audience. In telling my couple of Stegner stories, Patty fortunately prompted me to remember my line about the NY

Times calling him "William" Stegner--"West of the Hudson, we pronounce that Wallace." It brought down the house. At the end, with the Center of the American West staff lined up behind me, I read my brief tribute to the memory of Wally that is in the back of the diary, then Charles Wilkinson exuberantly read the text of the award--good lively prose that turns out to be his own--and after accepting it, I beckoned Carol to come up with me. As we stood there hand in hand in the storm of applause, I looked over and my beloved had damp eyes.

Next day, the 28th, she embarked for home in a 1st-class seat and I grumbled onward to South Dakota. That Skywest flight was not nearly as bad I'd dreaded--the guy in the seat next to me was big enough but not huge, and the Canadair aircraft was bigger than what Tom DeBoer, driving me back to the Rapid City airport the next day, called a "flying culvert." It was a 50-mile drive up to Deadwood, our volunteer driver a bit wobbly at the wheel but not terrifyingly so. I signed quite a hell of a bunch of books, in the various Festival sessions, and met and schmoozed with a fair number of my fellow writers. As I told C, I'm really pretty moved by the fact that I never

3 Oct. cont.--felt one bit of resentment from any of them; my work seems to shield that off. The festival itself, I shall consider once-in-a-lifetime, period. Best things about it were time with Laskin and the chance to see Michelle Blankenship of Harcourt. No steaming-hot news of what will happen as Houghton Mifflin swallows Harcourt, but I did have the useful chance to tell Michelle my big book-touring days are probably over. Her dad was with her, a nice Ohio guy in a John Deere cap who sat back and let Michelle deal with writers.

Back to the Boulder gig, the dinner on the 26th with Patty's financial heavy hitters. There as promised, or forewarned (in the phone call to me from the scriptwriter Blaine Novak), was Jim Guercio of the Whistling Season movie money. Can't say anything against the guy, he gave me the jacket off his back. (It's quite a sharp wind-breaker, with 3 historic cattle brands from his Montana ranch on the right sleeve where sergeant's stripes would sit, and his own stylized rafter CR--for Caribou Recording,

I guess his original company--over the heart. Contrary to Novak's call, Jim looked pretty good, damned good really for someone who'd had a quadruple bypass not that long ago. His energy was okay during the evening, although his wife Lucy told C he sleeps with oxygen (the Guercios live way to hell up in the Rockies at something like 8600'). It was interesting to see that all the money guys in the room plainly would have traded their lives for Jim's with the music legends, Chicago, and Blood, Sweat and Tears and so on. In my last couple of minutes with him, he did the business of the evening, thank god: in essence, told me the Whistling script is a rehab project for Novak, who after starting out with Jim somehow way back there "went off" with Bogdanovich and other Hollywood types, into drugs and alcohol. Jim says he's been clean ten years. So, that sort of answers my suspicion as to where and why Blaine's career ducks out of sight, quite some time back. We'll see if he's still got the chops to conjure a movie--I'm supposed to get the script to look over by middle of this month.

Oct. 10--Another 3-month reprieve. Dr. Ginsberg proclaimed himself pleased with my blood-test readings. More tomorrow.

11 Oct.--The next patch of life reaches from here to the Jan. 31 appointment when Dr. G. once again will parse the internals of my blood. As C said, this year I can go through the holidays without all the apprehension. That said, my reaction to the "clear" bill of health this time was a great relief but not the mighty lift I got from the blood-test results of 3 and 4 months ago. Couple of pertinent things: Dr. G this time reported there's a trace of monoclonal protein in the most refined test, too small to measure but present; he showed no bother over it, instead expressing pleasure over my greatly improved hematocrit (anemia) and urine protein (kidney) readings from a year ago. The evil stuff is there, though, a zero reading with an asterisk. The other thing, as I told C, is the periodicity of these medical verdicts, which probably stretch ahead of me for all time and which I've been through, what, probably twenty or so times; it's a bit hard to get the morals up to tippytop every single time. I do feel considerably more sanguine today, and settled in on ms work like a good fellow.

Before it gets lost in the mists, the last event in the brief spate of Whistling events went really well, audience of 220 at ParkPlace Books in Kirkland. And big burst of applause again when I mentioned that I hope to bring Morrie back in the book after this one.

16 Oct.--First 2 days of workweek have been productive on the ms, but the scene of Ben with Vic's aunt on Hill 57 is tough, tough. I've caught a bit of a break in what else is bearing down on me, with the scriptwriter Elaine calling y'day to once again promise me ths script in a week's time, and Tony Angell similarly letting me know he's not quite ready on his art book I'm to do the wordword for. Whew and whew.

Good evenings with friends over the weekend. Dinner at Linda Sullivan and Jeff's on the 12th, their condo looking sleek and elegant after all their work on it. The Laskins came here for crockpot-and-garden salad the night of the 13th. We got caught up on David's highly unproductive

16 Oct. cont.--trip onward to North Dakota from the Deadwood book festival. He caught some local flak after his talk about persecution of Hutterites in WWI, and my only surprise is that he didn't get hit with some before now. Then Sunday, the 11th, we turned down the Damborg's offer to drive with them across the North Cascades but fed them rejuvenated crockpot soup when they got back.

Weekend weather was good, and we achieved a helluva bunch of yard work--planting garlic, transplanting lettuce I hope to overwinter, shutting down the watering system, battling weeds--on the calvinistic basis that if we didn't do it all then, it would be an eternity of chores from then on. The weather indeed has turned on us, with possible big windstorms swooping in a couple of days from now.

18 Oct.--Big wind on its way: how many times have I written one version or another of that, in our Puget Sound years? This storm is forecast not to be on a scale of the drastic blow of last December, and apparently is tracking north toward Vancouver I. rather than hitting us square. Nonetheless lights are blinking pretty often, and we've each unplugged our computers for extra insurance. Pretty much hunkered in today, I did 2½ fresh pp. on the Agnes scene, most in a while. Ah, but damn, on the way in the schedule--plopping atop the schedule--is the Whistling screenplay, the foreword for Tony's retrospective art book, and the biennial treecutting, which will need to take in a swath of the neighbors. I fear I am sentenced to weekends of hard labor, probably on through Nov.

20 Oct.--It took until 4 p.m., quitting time, Friday, but I completed a version of Ben's visit to Hill 57 y'day. I intend to let it sit a while, in the meantime go on to Cass's squadron getting their P-63s. Today, which is chilly and turning stormier all morn, I'll try shuffle through a few desk matters, although I'm a bit tired from a so-so night of sleep. It is always in me, the knowledge poking through somewhere like an iceberg, that any time I can I have to do things that count; and so I will pass my eyes over some aspect or other of the ms this weekend day.

21 Oct.--End of the weekend, 4:15 Sunday, sounds of Ken Wiley's jazz history program drifting down from C's kitchen radio. Unintended, but I may have nailed the rest of 11th Man these past 2 days (thank goodness the weather was so poor it kept us holed up). Outlined the scenes from here to there, and while it looms as a hell of a lot more work, it feels to me the way the book ought to go.

24 Oct.--And a blessed new typewriter ribbon, long time a-coming. Sizable various day, as we were propelled out of the house by the water dept's notification that the water on this street would be shut off from 9-3, so we speeded up my intention for us to go downtown on chores at the end of this week. So, to Artform to get framed Jeff Corwin's portrait shot of me out by our garden shed looking like Bernard Berenson at I Tati, and the pleasing memento one of C and me in the backyard at the Baldwins' in Glenview, Illinois, in 1962. Then to a pair of lighting shops, the 2nd of ~~one~~ which had a nice reasonable overhead fluorescent we're going to try in the main bathroom, to kill off the weird wan German incandescents on the medicine cabinet that have always been a bane. Then to a stunning lunch at Shun, the Japanese place we cottoned onto when the chef did sushi at the Shimozatos' going-away party last Friday. Last, to the U Book Store, mainly to pick up a travel book on Antwerp, my new candidate for the setting of the finale of 11th Man.

And we came home to the promised package on the doorstep, Blaine Novak's screenplay of The Whistling Season. I shall wait until the weekend to peek into it.

26 Oct.--A day off from the ms, dictated by a twitchy right eyelid when I sat down to try to work. I inspected my glasses and all 3 pair were out of shape, consequence of my perpetual shifting among them. Went to the See Center, came home and took a Lorezepam which produced a long sound nap, and matters had improved enough that I sat down with the Whistling movie script and went through it this afternoon. It is faithful enough to the book, so much so that some 40 pp. have to come out of this version, as I savvy it. More anon.

28 Oct.--The tenth month of this complex year is nearly gone. Back before Labor Day, and intermittently ever since, I had the severe ~~insect~~ fret that I was going to come out of two entire months, travel-laden Sept. and chore-choked October, with at best 25 pp. of ms to show for 60 days of hard going. The result is proving somewhat better than that, with 30 quite substantial pp. achieved and 6-8 more usefully roughed out. The 11th Man is still a formidable way from being done, but maybe I can glimpse it from here, into next spring or summer.

In the meantime, Blaine Novak's screenplay of Whistling has arrived, and I read through it on Friday the 26th when my eyes were protesting out-of-whack glasses and probably too much computer screen. He's stayed quite faithful to the book; too much so, for the rather gentle work to have any chance in this gutspilling era? What do I know. C has gone over the s'play too, and we'll talk it over after our morning walk around the n'hood.

Yesterday, Mister Novelist here had the strange experience of walking in and out of neighbors' lives, up and down our block, and while it was thought-provoking it also was exhausting. The catalyst was Dave Weiss, the tree-trimmer whose crew lopped things out of our view corridor a couple of years ago. The two properties to the north and the two to the south are part of our panorama of the Sound and Richmond Beach, so their tree situation has to be negotiated along with ours. It's a biennial task I dread, even though we've had phenomenally cooperative neighbors up here on this street, and it's utterly essential to get this done now before mortality gives us new unknown neighbors to deal with. Hence, out I/we went:

--C and I called on Larry Flock, 2nd house to the south, 8:30 y'day morn after our walk. Larry had no problem with our wanting to nick a few gawky pieces of foliage out of his yard; indeed, nobody is giving us a hard time about any of the trimming, it's the glimpses into the lives that set me to thinking. When we walked into Larry's place, the tile-floor dining room was empty of furniture, Larry explaining he practices dancing there, ballroom and swing. I looked around at the not awfully big room and asked, You can swing in here? By himself, Larry answered; he practices

28 Oct. cont.--moves, watches instructional videos etc., preparatory to going on a cruise in January. As C noted later, Larry at the silver-haired age is not exactly handsome but he has a scalawag look; I wondered if that was catnip to women, and we concluded probably so. As we were leaving, Larry mentioned that "the lady who stays here"--i.e., the live-in domestic partner--was in ~~the~~ another part of the house and would be when I eventually show up with the tree cutter, but "she's shy." Indeed so, as we've never knowingly laid eyes on her in what I think is now the past few years of her residence with him.

--When Dave Weiss showed up, I took him next door to the Nesses, as he's to bill their cutting to them (while C and I fork out for haircutting the other properties, as neither of the geezers nor scalawag Larry shows any sign of wanting to spend any money on this). Kaare was there, so I thought Fine, he can give us the general picture from his deck and Dave and I can walk down to the brink of the bluff to fill in the details. Kaare had barely begun when Sigrunn came home from some errand, and quick as a blink he abdicated to her and scooted in the house. There followed what must have been a good 20 minutes of convoluted conversation with Sigrunn over what should have been about 5 minutes of looking and deciding. As I speculated to C over supper, you can be around Sigrunn and savvy where Norse legends come from, everything part of one looping story. Before we were done, Dave and I heard about: Kaare's fall from a ladder while trying his own tree-trimming; Kaare's untidy whacking of lower branches on their cedar out front; Kaare's boring habit of sitting in the sunshine and reading newspapers when they go to Hawaii, where she doesn't want to go in the first place; the foliage on Larry Flock's side of the fence which bothers her but she hasn't talked to Larry about it and shows no sign of doing so; and so on. As Dave and I were telling her to leave the front cedar, a handsome tree, alone unless and until neighbors up the slope complained about it, Sigrunn looked up at the Wards' place and wanted to know from me whatever happened to their rebuilding plans, and episode now, what, three or so years in the past. With all of that, I now realize Dave did not get an estimate sheet signed while we were there, so I don't know where the hell that leaves matters.

28 Oct. cont.--A few days back, I went to call on Barney Hyde to get his okay on this tree sweep. He's famously hard to catch at home, so I was glad to see his car in the garage. Rang his doorbell. No answer. Looked around the corner into his backyard. Nobody there. Disturbed as to what might have happened to him, I peeked into the garage--and was heartily invited in by Barney, who was sitting in his car reading his mail. I guess he might have been in a reverie caused by his Fordham alumni magazine, which had a cover pic of Vince Lombardi in seven-blocks-of-granite lineman crouch. The upshot was that the tree issue was okay with him (although in looking things over with Dave Weiss I now realize I'll have to go through this with Barney again to deal with some alders way downslope on his property), and Barney, leaning against his car, swung the conversation around to the fact that he has an enlarged heart and at 94 is too old for anything to be done about it. He quite calmly was telling me that he knows his time may be about up.

--After the trek of the property lines with Dave Weiss, and he'd gone, it occurred to me that as a courtesy I ought to stop by and tell Hank Kastner what we'd eyed out on his line, although his daughter Lynn had told me to simply go ahead with what we want and Hank has done so himself in the past. I knock, Hank makes his way to the door with his walker--we figure he's about 90--looks at me there alone, and I think doesn't even say hello before asking, "Where's your tree cutter?" Surprised, I tell him we'd gone down and taken a look and the cutter then left--"It's my property," said with a real flash of what must have made him formidable as a lawyer, "I should be in on it." I have to say, being jumped on by someone we've gotten along with very comfortably for nine years smarted a lot. ~~increased~~ A considerable realization there, as I reflected on it, how much tender treatment I get out in the world as a writer, and how much distance there is between that and being just another neighborhood schmoe trying to deal with a chore. Anyway, I made the point to Hank that my understanding was I was to look things over with the tree man and now I was there to tell him how things looked to us, could I show him from his living room? I pointed

28 Oct. cont.--out the couple of clumps we want cut, he declaimed "If you want to pay for 'em, go ahead!" and I told him of course the cutting was on our nickel. That settled him down, and we talked more civilly for a bit, in the course of which Hank mentioned spending tens of thousands of dollars on things his kids were doing--"These kids!"--and recited the recent aggravations of water being shut off, phone cut, and a sewage backup at his place which had cost a \$500 RotoRooter visit. So, miffed as I was--and it's the kind of thing I wish I could shrug off immediately but it refuses to leave me for a while--I must realize that Hank has the concerns of 90 years on his shoulders, his daughter Lynn isn't going to be around for next couple of weeks, he sees money seeping away everywhere he looks, and so on.

On another front: C and I have both looked over the Whistling movie script, and I'll call Blaine Novak and offer some possible cuts we see, if he'd like them.

31 Oct.--I did not have to call Blaine N., for at 11 a.m. on Sunday the 28th the phone rang and there he was, on pins and needles to know what I thought of the script. Told him I could give him the Scottish compliment, "It's not bad"--and right away said I appreciate how respectful he's been of the book. He's now to do a next draft with camerawork in it (he turned down my offer of suggested cuts, having apparently convinced himself 164 pp. of script isn't too long; the Hollywood agent, Liz, and I all think it's 500 pp. too much) and I asked him what he and Guercio do after that. Cast the movie, he said, throwing names such as Jennifer Connally (for Rose) and George Clooney (for Morrie) at me, lotsa luck to us all. If they can nail down big-league actors, then they could possibly take it to a studio and withstand demands for script changes, or failing that, Blaine knows his way to all the elements of making the movie independently--so he would have me believe, on both counts. We shall see, shall we ever.

The tree guy Dave Weiss called, tomorrow is the day (or at least the first one) of trimming, so I will be outside trying to ride herd on that. Luckily, although diligence

31 Oct. cont.--has no small amount to do with it, today I finished up the scene of Ben and the colonel in late '44, a decent stopping point. Back to my report of a few days ago, that I'd been fretting about getting 25 pp. out of these two months and was well along into 30-some; it's now 40, with some snatches of rough draft beyond that.

4 Nov.--As C exulted, an unencumbered Sunday. We got a big load off ourselves y'day when the downslope tree trimming was finished, and we negotiated the price down to something more reasonable, which still was \$2200+. Dave Weiss's tree outfit, foremanned by his dad Bob, staggered along from one equipment problem to another for the 2 days of cutting on these five contiguous properties (ours and the 2 houses either side of us). The 1st day, Nov. 1, the most veteran tree climber Jason spent nearly all morning in the deep ravine alder grove on Barney Hyde's property with a broke-down chainsaw, and the other two in the crew, Travis and Juris, both good vigorous workmen, lacked climbing saddles or some other damn thing and couldn't take up the slack. Jason finally did top the 8 or so slender 100' alders that were taking away our view of Richmond Beach, but that was all he did accomplish the rest of the day. Thus the one-day job lapsed in a second day, y'day, when Juris was the only climber. He's Latvian, big and strong and unfazed by hard dirty work, so he did finish off all the topping needed on our slope, most notably the big cedar. But his work ground to a halt for a while when the chain on his saw came loose and he didn't have the socket wrench needed to fix it--the wrench was in truck, Bob had taken the truck to go back to get the pole saw, etc. So, C and I spent much of those two days with our teeth set on edge, but the damned task is done for the next 2-3 years, and we managed it while 94-year-old Barney and 90-year-old Hank Kastner were extant to give us permission to trim on their places (as long as we paid for it), rather than having to deal with future new neighbors.

And last night furnished a needed respite, thanks one more time to the Damborgs, who'd proposed we got out to dinner and then attend Bill Kittredge's reading at Elliott Bay. It coaxed the pair of us into doing something we should have done anyway, going to hear Bill, and so we got

4 Nov. cont.--to visit a little with Bill and help pad his audience, which was smaller than we expected, 40 at best. Beforehand, Lou's find of the Collins Pub, next to Smith Tower, did well by us for supper, C and I powering our way through a rack of ribs and many sweet potato fries.

On the writing front, I don't quite know how to account for the results across the days of tree trimming, when I had to do a lot more overseeing than I was comfortable with, but I not only achieved the daily pages on 11th Man needed but assembled the foreword for Tony Angell's book of his sculptures and banged out a cover letter for my P-I piece and sent ~~it~~ that packet off to the managing editor, Dave McCumber. Thus did we become unencumbered, as C said.

8 Nov.--Liz's office reports that royalties are on the way, \$32,677 from sales of dear Whistling Season and the \$25,000 bonus triggered from a contract clause. We'll take it, all.

Here on the home front, C thank goodness has landed an appointment with Dr. Eggert first thing tomorrow morn. It has been rough to see her contend with the stiffness, which evidently is there waiting whenever she goes off Prednisone. I greatly hope better days are ahead for her, by way of Eggert.

This morn we were thwarted on what~~st~~ should be the last major ~~zhoomer~~ house chore of this year, installation of a fluorescent light in the master bathroom. All-Electric called $\frac{1}{2}$ hr before the guy was due to show up; now we're rescheduled for early Monday.

At my end of things, the ms work is going reasonably (and I'm aware that it had better go and go, ahead of the next medical verdict $2\frac{1}{2}$ months from now). When I've asked how she feels about going to Tucson in January, C in short has given me license to skip it and keep working on the book. I well may.

Ah, and oh yes, Whistling remains on the PNBA best-seller list, #3.

12 Nov.--Whew. 1:45 in the afternoon and we have just been through another windstorm. It canceled us out of a lunch downtown with Ann and Marshall Nelson, Ann understandably reluctant to risk the ferry schedule with 60 mph gusts possible, but we've rescheduled for Thursday. And C and I have come out of the day with a bright gain, a fluorescent fixture in the main bathroom to remedy the incandescent version that we've never liked (9 years' worth) there.

I'd intended to spend the day on the electrician and the Nelsons, but since we ended up hunkered in, I went back to work on the Leyte Gulf section of ms, which I also spent much of the weekend on. By now I have it to the point where I want to put it out of sight for a while and move on.

Later: C and I belatedly got in our walk of the n'hood, in almost eerie calm now that the storm passed through. Now I have time to make a bit of a note here about the kind of work I've been doing on the Leyte Gulf piece. My original chapter lead, from last week and enduring until today, was:

"The battle of Leyte Gulf, as history came to call it, dawned halfway across the world day by late October day as censored reports cautiously kept score of enemy vessels sunk versus the toll on the American fleet."

By lunchtime today that was seeming maybe okay as history but pretty stentorian for fiction, so I ultimately fetched farther into the piece for three separate sentences and moved them together for this version:

"The war licked its chops over the battle of Leyte Gulf, as it came to be called, with the inevitably from day one that history would speak of such a gang-fight of fleets in the same breath with the Spanish Armada, Trafalgar, Jutland and Midway. Ben all but moved in to the wire room at East Base to follow reports of the military struggle shaping up around the Philippine Islands. It proved to be like reading War and Peace standing up."

Lastly, general report on the household, C is plainly much better after having seen Dr. Eggert on the 9th and going to 5 mg. of prednisone for the polymyalgia rheumatica. It's a real relief to see the difference in her.

19 Nov.--1 p.m., with the afternoon beyond 2 shot beyond hope, P-I photog Mike Urban coming. His pics to go with the newspaper's writers' series have sometimes been ultra-gimmicky--Sherman Alexie tied to the railroad tracks--and I am not going to be gimmicked that way. I considered whether to leave this typewriter out in plain sight this time to decoy him off, but no, decided the hell with it, it's going out of sight before he gets here and he'll have to resort to something radical for props, like maybe books.

Thanks heavens I managed a strong weekend of work on 11th Man, killing off a couple dozen yellow stickited problems, as this is Thanksgiving week on top of photog week. We are not--again thankfully--hosting it this year, the Maloofs are, but Ann and Norm will be staying overnight with us as usual.

We've been mightily social lately. On the 15th, lunch downtown at the Brooklyn with Ann and Marshall Nelson, after oohing at Marsh's law firm's posh digs upstairs. Next night, to the UW for David Laskin's Cushing Gray lecture at Suzzallo. David did well, though highly nervous. Had a nicely crafted talk, taking off from a pair of apposite quotes: his Aunt Sylvia's long-ago crack "What do you have to write about?" and Elizabeth Bishop's wonderment to Robert Lowell, "When do the real poems start?" Afterward, C and I were approached by the previous year's Cushing Gray award winner--it's really worth something now, \$5000 and a year's office in the library, unlike my "award" year which consisted of one goddamn phone call from Lee Soper saying I'd been awarded it, period--the playwright Robert Scheer and his zingy wife, writer Maria Headley. They had come to my attention, without my knowing who the hell they were, because they were sitting just off to the side of C and me in the row in front and quietly (but from the little smile on Maria, apparently quite effectively) playing with each other's knees. Robert right away said to us we should come see his new play at the Rep in Jan., and Maria with that little smile said we ought to come to dinner. Phone numbers were exchanged, we'll see what happens.

And Saturday night, the 17th, we had Tony and Lee here for dinner, beef stew and a lot of good talk. Tony took our beloved merganser sculpture to be photographed for his next book, but brought us a very finely patinaed bronze night-

19 Nov. cont.--hawk as a stand-in. Tony told me this is his best year ever, financially, he thinks partly because the huge ravens at Sleeping Lady have put him in people's consciousness. Also was telling me how fluent his working methods are, now that he no longer has the school job taking up half his head. I listened hard, one of the things I can contribute to a conversation, and said to him with a wistful smile, "Too bad we're not 15 years younger, isn't it." He'd just turned 67, a year+ behind me.

The house has had something nicely added: C and I have hung the Stegner award along with the newly framed 1962 pic of the two of us and Jeff Corwin's portrait shot of me Bernard Berenson-like at the garden shed, as a matched set on the long wall in the guest bedroom.

22 Nov.--Thanksgiving, and with the forthcoming feast not held at our place for a change, a bonus morning. There's this entry to be tended to, Xmas envelopes, next year's calendar to be made, sundry office stuff to be cleaned up--plenty to do without undue straining. I intend not to go near the ms today, having roughed in (with y'day's more-or-less version of Dex's Armistice Day funeral) the full sequence of scenes to Ben's parting with Cass. The home stretch--Ben to Antwerp--awaits, and I must achieve a version of it, more-or-less if nothing else, in the two months and a week ahead; my medical parole runs out again on Jan. 31, my next session with Dr. Ginsberg.

Meanwhile I am cruising along in a way that seems to impress our friends; Tony said in a phone call y'day how great it was to see me "at the top of your game" when they were here the other night. The writing, while it is still a stubborn 2 pp. a day to mine out of myself, stays steady. My sleeping has improved, into a pattern of bedtime by at least 9:30, sleep until getting up to pee about 1:30, drop back to sleep without too much trouble, wake up again around 3:15, maybe pee, maybe not, drowse until 4:15 or so and get up then. Last night was the first in a long, long while with C back beside me in the main bedroom (she's been in the guest room for months, but with Ann and Norm coming for overnight she came upstairs to keep the bedding there washed and pristine for them), and we both slept fine. Love on the couch beforehand helped considerably.

22 Nov. cont.--C's absence to downstairs on account of my medical whims has made for something I have to swallow hard over every morning, the loneliness of waking up alone. Beyond that, though, what we have come to call this perilous year is treating us reasonably well at the moment.

This Thanksgiving morn--7 sharp as I write this--is clear and cold, 36 degrees, the frost blankets on the lettuce rows stiff with cold. We have been eating magnificently from the garden, some of the best salads of the year; now to see if I can coax the salad greens past these white nights.

24 Nov.--Chore day, after the holiday. I did both our Xmas letter and the handmade schedule calendars we like, somewhat bleary tasks both. 3:25 now, and in $\frac{1}{2}$ hr I have to cover the lettuce rows w/ frost blankets. That's worked OK so far--we're having a fruit salad for dinner tonight as a slight respite from turkey and fixin's.

We did our own 13# turkey y'day, propitiously as Lois Welch was able to come to dinner with us, after vegetarian Thanksgiving at Frances McCue's. Lo looks pretty good, we traded stable medical reports. I asked when Death of Jim Loney will be reissued, she thinks it's to be in Dec. She's enormously pleased and gratified with Louise Erdrich's foreword (I think for Loney, although it may be for Winter in the Blood) after Sherman Alexie totally screwed up his try at it.

C has efficiently listed the lineup of the perfectly pleasant Thanksgiving gathering at the Maloofs--thankful is exactly the word that they hosted it this year instead of us--so I'll just dab details. It was at the big table of 8 or so of us that somebody wondered out loud how many books had been produced by our bunch, and I did the census: 14 by Bill Calvin, my 11, Frank Zoretich's 3, and Walt Williams' "12 or 13," he didn't know which. So we figured 41, and I slipped over to the smaller table where C was with David Williams and his mother Jacquie, both writers, and reported our table's total, "no pressure on you two, of course."

24 Nov. cont.--The Thanksgiving weather was gorgeous, fine views out to the UW stadium etc. from the Maloofs' living room; a good day all around. One more typifying detail: C was urging Frank Z. to do a Seattle "cheap eats" book, a la his New Mexico cheap thrills books, and the talk led around to, what in hell exactly are cheap thrills, Frank? He cited odd museums, such as a rosary museum somewhere in this state, and David Williams chipped in that there is a museum guide, mentioning "the rosary museum, the toaster museum" and so on. Conversation went on for a couple more minutes, then there was a tiny lull and Frank asked: "Where is the toaster museum?", gliding right into characteristic cheap thrill mode. It's great to have him back in Seattle. And now to put the vegs to bed.

30 Nov.--Whew, tough week. And that's without even the evidence I see here, that I haven't got to the diary since post-Thanksgiving. This morning had a spate of chores--photocopying the Xmas letter and our homemade desk calendars, and stopping by the Rodens to borrow their moosive old phonograph to play WWII bawdy songs on--and then the top of the afternoon had garden chores--readying the cold-frames with trouble lights to provide some heat in what's supposed to be a freezing night--so that it was damn near 2 p.m. before I got to the ms in any meaningful way. This particular scene, after Ben parts with Cass~~xxxx~~ when her husband is invalided home, has been a real sonofabitch; have tried three different approaches to it, and this third one finally feels right, just get Ben to dueling with Tepee Weepy by teletype now that the team is down to the last three men. Don't know why this had been such an SOB but it has; weirdly, I got more done during Thanksgiving week than this week.

Propitiously we're heading out of the week--and ahead of promised snow--by way of dinner at the Madison Park Cafe with Bill Calvin and wife Katherine. Kathy suggested it at Thanksgiving, and with Bill soon to go off to Beijing to give a climate change speech in the Great Hall of the People, we're all sneaking it in.

My face was there to see, at least theoretically, for a couple of hundred thousand readers this morn, when the

30 Nov. cont.--P-I ran my profiled mug along with my piece on Wright Morris and Loren Eiseley. Wednesday of this week went to the other part of this 'writer in residence' gig, morning of prep'n and then talking to an audience of a couple of dozen of the staff that afternoon. It went very well, managing editor Dave McCumber quite gracious and apparently happy to have me in this writers' series, Eric Nalder nobly introducing me, and then I mostly talked craft, taking them through the opening pp. of This House of Sky and The Eleventh Man. Rightly or not, I got into such points as what the bus driver says ahead of his "You're him" recognition of Ben. Told the P-I'ers it'd be natural to have the driver swear in surprise, but a novelist really doesn't want to have the guy say, "Jesus, you're him" ever since Steinbeck did all that with Jim Casy in Grapes of Wrath. I checked back in Grapes and yes indeedy, his JC says "You don't know what you're a-doin'" before they kill him and then one of the fruit farm thugs says, "Jesus, George, I think you killed him." As I told the newspaper folks, I was just writing a soldier's homecoming, not the Second Coming.

Came home from the P-I with a couple of books, McCumber signing up and bestowing a copy of his about his stint of cowboying in the White Sulphur country, and Nalder nabbed the Collected Letters of Wallace Stegner for me, I guess out of the review slush pile. Have been pretty far into the Stegner book, blinking at how much writerliness he expended in correspondence. His son Page, the editor, posits it as putting the bellows to the creative fire, but damn, there's a lot of creativity disappearing under a stamp. Or maybe Wally saw that load of letter-trading somewhat as I see this diary, putting moments onto paper as they happen along. I am getting more and more curious to see Fradkin's blog when it comes out in a few weeks; one of Wally's letters to Page seems to say he didn't know how to end Angle of Repose, and that's been a part of that book that has always bothered me. Myself, I'm extremely well-served by Page's selection of Wally's not very many missives to me.

1 Dec.--6:45 a.m., black as cats, waiting for major weather. Supposedly some snow today, big rain tomorrow (Sunday), rain and wind on Monday. Meanwhile I'm gearing up for a miscellaneous weekend by setting up the Rodens' borrowed record-&-tape player to pull off two albums' worth of bawdy military songs gathered by Oscar Brand. First one has been "Hallelujah, throw a nickel in the grass, save a fighter pilot's ass." Highly promising.

Fine evening last night, dinner with Bill Calvin and Katherine Graubard at one of their favorites, Madison Park Cafe. Mad Park is a part of the city we just never get to, more like an island village than metropolitanland, and the cafe is in a cozy house. The owner Karen knows my work, had me sign up three of her hardbacks, bought us the first round of drinks and generally laid on the hospitality. C and I agreed the food was good--the carrot & ginger soup was terrific--without being fantastic. As we savvy it, Bill & Kathy eat all their meals out except for cold cereal breakfast. Since we spent a hundred bucks per couple last night--admittedly a splurge, with wine and dessert--that kind of expensive grazing quite boggles us. Money from somewhere clearly no problem in that household, a distinctive stucco townhouse-like place on lower Capitol Hill, with two Lexi in the garage. Bill drove us in the younger Lexus, the GPI system prominent on the dashboard. After the evening, I remarked to C how lucky we've been in the minds we've known, and she agreed but added our core motto, luck is the residue of design. In any case, it strikes both of us as remarkable that Bill & Kathy seem to like to hang around with us, all the way back to Paul Allen's ~~Thanksgiving~~ St. Petersburg gala; C's hunch is that the minds of we two couples just are so different that they're as interested in ours as we are in theirs. Neither C nor I can think of a brain like Bill's that we've been around--as C said, he's obviously a sponge for information. (The house had piles of books everywhere, including a stack across the top of the grand piano that looked like a kid's fortress.) He's big, carrying a worrisome extra weight there in his paunch, and seems shambling because he talks out the side of his mouth and goes around letting his hair and beard be willful, but damn, what an interior life. This morning he flies off to Beijing via Air Canada through Vancouver, to deliver his ~~talk~~

1 Dec. cont.--climate change speech (in the Great Hall of the People, no less) to the World Bank's funders of the 'green revolution.' We asked him the basic timeframe he sees on climate crisis, and he said 10 years. In essence, if the world doesn't get a grip on itself within the next decade, the probable two degree increase in temperature becomes three, and that's the point at which immense catastrophes can ensue, he thinks. The grip that is needed is also colossal: to keep the earth temperature to inching up to that third degree, the increase in carbon release must halt, i.e. hold steady--and it currently increases by 35% a year, he says. C and I do not see how there's any hope, with China and India joining this heedless country on the consumption binge--as Kathy said, Europe seems to be the only place that gets it about climate change. Bill is working the case in his speech; said he's citing the WWII-gearing up that the FDR administration achieved, and he's trying to refine a popularly graspable analogy along the lines of the tortoise and the hare, with the point that the hare when it does move does it in jumps, and therefore could win the race.

It turned out in the course of the conversation that Kathy did not start out in zoology and Bill didn't in biology --she began in math, and he was a physics major at Northwestern and took an engineering degree at MIT, before both of them came to the UW to get their PhDs in more science-flexible programs than they could find elsewhere. Kathy told us her interest in nervous systems was spurred when she read what was ultimately a Nobel paper that had found the math of transmission in neurons (if I have this right) was the same as in transoceanic cables; so, she saw the opportunity for mathematical modeling in the field of science. The linear reach of both their minds is a revelation to C and me. Bill uses a directional device, about the size of a cigarette lighter, to go with his hearing aid; he set it atop a glass in the middle of the table last night and seemed to get by fine in the cafe hubbub. Kathy then told of her parents' separate hearing aid experiences--her father had only used it when he thought it was badly needed and never got accustomed to it, while her mother used hers through thick and thin and did very well with it; the point, Kathy

1 Dec. cont.--said, was to get your system to adjust to the device's system, a way of looking at things that wouldn't have occurred to me nor perhaps to ~~me~~ C.

One last note on last night. Bill had flown in earlier in the day, where he'd given his climate change speech at Rice U., and when we asked how it went, he bemusedly said the audience had given him great applause, although they should have been scared to death.

4 Dec.--A few hours after the last entry, the mail came with the huge news that Whistling is up for the richest damn book prize on earth, the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. Over a hundred other novels are also nominated, so I'm not practicing my Irish yet nor have we spent the 100,000 pound prize (which we figure to be about \$200,000). As Liz said in her phone message after I faxed her the news, "it's very nice." A bonus of pleasure is in the fact that three of the 22 American libraries in the nominating process picked Whistling--Denver, San Diego, and Lincoln, Neb.

So it made for an otherworldly weekend as we sat around fizzed up with that news, addressing Xmas letters to the sound of bawdy pilots' songs. And meanwhile a hell of a storm, evidently record rainfall and flooding. In sum, it snowed Saturday, rained terrifically all day Sunday, and rained and blew y'day until about dusk. Today is changeable, mostly misty, and just now there's a rainbow over the ferry landing at Kingston.

Phone call y'day from Dave McCumber saying how pleased he was with my P-I session and reader reaction to my piece. One guy e-mailed that the piece was a fresh reminder of what intellect can do behind a well-turned phrase.

6 Dec.--Dany publishing news today. First, the long-missing \$25,000 bonus earned by Whistling showed up in the brokerage account. Then Becky's assistant Tom faxed the sales chart I'd asked to see as a holiday gift to myself, and what a gift it turned out to be--Whistling has sold 90,000+ in paperback.

Weather has moderated enough, though chilly, that I BBQed chicken breasts in early afternoon for a couple night's suppers.

Oh yes--and Whistling is still on the PNBA bestseller list, for something like the 27th or 28th straight week.

8 Dec.--Cold, cold day, wind from the north, temp around 40, the chill felt here in the office, even. But it has been bright and clear, until a scrim of clouds came over the west in early afternoon. I've left the frost-blanketed lettuce beds covered, as I likely will the next couple of days; the more mature and prime lettuce in the pair of cold-frames gets the warmth of lightbulbs ~~at~~ these nights. We're off to the Laskins at 5 for drinks and snacks, a greatly welcome excursion out of the house.

This is Saturday, and inasmuch as it's too nasty to do anything outside, I spent the morning and top of the afternoon bluesheeting the sequence of the rest of 11th Man, then making file card categories for those scenes, then sorting extant categories for promising stuff. The finale is feeling better and better to me, although there is a helluva lot of work yet to be done, likely a minimum of 15 scenes. The past day or so of rough drafting, I skipped all the way to the end, i.e. last p. or 2 of the book, and got a version to mull and polish and hover over from here until the rest of the ms is done. I can now also work into the ms from the back, attacking whatever scene seems most promising on any given day. Tidy it ain't, but it feels like a good hunch to tackle it this way.

Added to the week's good book news was C's good health report--weight and blood pressure okay, bone density supposedly better (surprising in light of her necessary prednisone intake), etc. The one burr of worry (to me) is something on a lymph node, which she will have examined in a little over a week.

We are zwash in Stegneriana currently--Eric Nalder having nabbed the Collected Letters for me at the P-I, and a galley of Fradkin's bio arriving a few days ago. I'm still working through the Fradkin, but so far it seems pedestrian. I'm also a little put off that his characterization of my relationship with Wally doesn't seem to square with the version he checked with me--although maybe it simply sounded better on the phone. Wally "counseling" me does not fit literarily, as I never (and wouldn't) seek or take writing advice from him; I remember a postcard where he said that whenever we got together he wanted to pick a bone of a certain habit I had, and I was pretty sure it was my utterly conscious polic~~y~~y of going beyond "he said" as often as I

8 Dec. cont.---could. Which I had vowed to myself to tell him, along the lines of "Wally, it's worse than you think-- it's deliberate." There's an entire orchestra of ways people have of speaking, and to me it's a thrifty ~~time~~ way to add to characterization.

Anyway, Fradkin does not lead with, nor really make much of, what seems to me has to be a leading fact about Wally: there he was, an upwardly mobile academic and literary careerist at Harvard, when his father turns into a murderer. That just plays so powerfully either way: if it affected Wally, there's a potent story, and if it didn't, there's just as strong a story.

More anon. Under the Southwest-like palette of today's sunset, we're off to Laskins and the start of holiday season.

11 Dec.--Another strong day of writing, 3+ fresh pp., including what feels like a complete scene of Ben and Maurice meeting up with the German infiltrators at Waterloo--

I woke up this morning thinking about whether to try such a scene, and by god there it is. Similarly, over the weekend I pecked away at changing the second Medicine Lodge scene over from Ben going in there again to his father going in, and I stayed with that y'day, and there's another one that seems workable, a gain of $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. pp. I'm excited about this recent pace, even though there's a lot of the last of the book to pull together yet. Going to try to blaze on through the rest of this month and January.

Leaden weather--the kind of heavy gray chill I'm trying to write about during the Antwerp December of '14, actually and C and I are feeling a touch of cabin fever, although we are getting out and socializing some. Tonight, downtown to Union, to meet the Nelsons for our monthly dinner; our turn, alas and alack for the credit card. It is a due celebration for the Whistling Season's earnings.

At the Laskins' on the 8th, a couple of scotches for C and a couple of Maker's Mark for me--I told Kate and David it's the fancy bourbon our Montana literary friends have worked up to from Jim Beam--and nimble talk as it always is with them. Kate had tried out on David the final exam she's giving her contracts class, a sperm donor who's-financially-

11 Dec. cont.--responsible hypothetical that had the other three of us working our brainpans. David had had a good research hit--he's doing a very valuable historical job of gathering stuff on immigrant soldiers in WWII--for his book, and as we gabbed it emerged he hadn't settled on a title yet, maybe just plain Immigrant Soldiers. I called him the next day with some book recommendations he'd asked for, then I said: "Soldiers of a Second Soil." There was a pause at the other end, then he asked: "What's that?" "The title for your book," say I. We'll see. He may find better. But he said he did find that one kind of haunting.

Back to Stegner and the influx of books (two). Fradkin finds a pattern of Wally brushing against trouble by basing fiction uncomfortably close onto actual people, not just the Angle of Repose rumble but back to that early novel borrowing Mary's aunts. As fond as I was of him, and as sky-high as I think of his non-fiction, I get to wondering if those cases are consequences of lack of imagination on Wally's part. He was avowedly a realist, but he was such a weaver of language and marathon man at the typewriter you'd think he might have played with character and plot more than he seems to have. (Also, the borrowing of lives, if that's what it was, seems strangely spotty. Talking this over with C, I wondered why he'd never done a home-stead novel, with all that luscious Saskatchewan kid experience sitting there ripe. And if how come no story of a real barburner of a life, his cousin Tom Heggen?) There's the disturbing chance that a dab of his father's grifting habits carries into this, but Wally was so four-square in other ways I'd rather think money fear was chasing him, making him work fast, boilerplating to get it done and earning. One further thought from the Fradkin examination: he sees Mary as something of a hypochondriac--although, good grief, he also briefly mentions she had cancer somewhere back there in time. This does lend credence to something I'm sure Wally said to me in the course of our ABA gab session in Anaheim, but have wondered ever since, did I really hear that? The memory is that I asked if Mary was with him and Wally said no, she hadn't felt up to coming, "my wife has long enjoyed ill health." Yipes, I thought then, and still do.

Dec. 16, in the dark of morning. We're catching the 10:35 ferry to Bainbridge for lunch at Linda and Syd's, hurray. They have newly refinished floors, post-dog claws, to show us, Linda has tales of being Nat'l Book Awards judge. I have show & tell abt the Dublin Literary Award nomination, and we always have a helluva good time in general. C and I are about to walk the n'hood as daylight comes in the next few minutes. If I don't get back to this today, just want to record that Whistling has resurged on the Pacific Northwest Booksellers bestseller list, from #10 on Nov. 25 to #4 on Dec. 9.

25 Dec.--And the magical book was still up there on the PNBA list when C last checked, Dec. 16, #5. The mail keeps singing its praises, from a 5th grader in Portland writing to say I am "amazing!" to a remarkable note from Judine Brooks, who before marrying Terry and thank god getting blessed with his NY Times bestsellerdom, handled half the books ever written in her Waldenbooks job. Not the least of it--I hope--was the phone call from Blaine Novak on the 22nd, saying he has fought his draft of the movie script down to 119 pp., intends now to go back and add a few scenes, so the thing is close to what he calls "the golden mark," 125 pp., i.e. 2 hrs running time. I nudged him on how he sees the eventual schedule, and he did have an '08 mental calendar to lay out to me, albeit one dependent on raising probably \$25-30 million for the budget. I made sure to tell him about the Dublin Literary Award nomination, and he loved it, immediately proclaiming to me all the karma accumulating around things Irish--his son is named Yeats, he has been talking to ~~the~~ the Irish Film Board as well as the Montana Film Commission (he says "Jimmy--Guercio--threatens to bring his six-shooter and put a hole in my head if I do the film in Ireland"), yadda yadda. He probably did have a valid point amid all that when he said if Whistling would win the award, it would make his job so easy. The upshot of all this is that he wants to send me the next script version in mid-January. I said OK, but cautioned him I might not get to it until the end of the month.

For there is a chance I may achieve my own draft, the full blessed yearned-for revisable ms of The Eleventh Man,

25 Dec. cont.--by going like hell until then. Across the past considerable while I have been writing 7 days a week, and am closing in on Waterloo and the final Antwerp buzz bomb and the like, although there's still a lot of work awaiting on those.

That, then, is the Christmas Day report. The Rodens and Damborgs are coming for roast beef dinner, and C is nudging the house around, upstairs. It's heading for 9:30, an orange Wallenius Wilhelmsen tubby car carrier is passing the snowlit mountain peaks straight out my window. Rain with some snow in it is supposed to be on the way. When I went outside this morning just after 4, as I nominally do to see if the newspaper is in the driveway yet but actually to experience the weather and the cusp of day, the just-past-full moon was in thin overcast, enough of an aura around it (moondog, I guess, akin to a sundog) that ~~like~~ it appeared to be in a cavern in the sky. The weather let up on us y'day, which was timely, for we went downtown to the classic old Sorrento Hotel for a drink ~~with~~ with Betty and Roy Mayfield and Betty's brother Jim Hemstock and wife Nancy. It was proposed as martinis at 3, a tradition Jim and Nancy follow every Xmas at the Sorrento or the Empress in Victoria, but C was the only one who turned out to go the martini route, her first in many years. They're all terrific people and the setting was great, the old dark-wooded room, but as C said, the staffing left something to be desired, "some teenager in a suit" inelegantly telling us no, we couldn't have a cheese platter as Nancy had tried to order because all such stuff was committed to later booked parties. Anyway, a fine outing for the suburban druid Doigs.

I may say this again in a week or so when the year closes down, but what a two-headed year this has been. Annus horribilis back there in the whimsams of dexamethasone and thalidomide, and the ferociously agitated mouth and throat membrane after the stem cell infusion; and now, for just about the last half of the year, the galloping progress on 11th Man and the continuing soar of Whistling. It is remarkable, although I do not have time and inclination today to remark on it tellingly enough,

25 Dec. cont.--how the body and mind heals from ordeal.

When I go in to Dr. Ginsberg on Jan. 31 for my next medical verdict, I'll have to study up all over again on this medical situation, this version of me with the new immune system having distanced itself so fully from the get-through-the-day patient I was.

27 Dec.--Big bitter dose of weather moving through, rain just above the freezing point, needle-close to being snow but never quite. Supposed to be the same tomorrow, and dank on through New Year's. C and I are keen for a chance to go to the Skagit and see the snow geese, but no chance in sight until maybe the middle of next week.

We pulled off Christmas pretty much without a hitch, the Damborbs and Rodens here for roast beef dinner, plus blessed Lisa in from Minneapolis. She brings such an antidote of grounded sanity to John's bombast. For about 2 1/4 hours I was grumpy that John, damn his hide, again used the occasion as a chance to get his exercise in and set off on foot in the rainy dark, just as he did 2 years ago when Mark and I had to go fish him, lost and confused, out of the night. We lucked out, I think barely, this time because Lisa and Jean caught up with him before he got to the intersection where he generally screws up. Anyway, C simmered me down by pointing out that this is the only time we do ask Jean and John over in the dark time of year any more, precisely because he refuses to arrive in a car; we both think it's a goddamn shame, but we can't come up with anything else to do about it. Conversation flowed fine before and after dinner, the roast seemed to knock everybody's socks off--Lisa, thin as a blade and utterly disciplined about keeping herself that way, had seconds!

Have been back at the 11th Man y'day and today, good pp. progress, although I'm at the point in the bunkered-in part of the book that I have to invent from scratch.

30 Dec.--The next to the last morning of '07, and if the weather gives us an opening at all we shall mark it with a show of snow geese. The winter has housed us in more than we want, and a trip to the sacred Skagit flats is luring us a lot. We are going through this season--it started somewhere there back before November--in an oddly thrilling household glow, the writing of 11th Man burning in me like a filament. I woke at 2:30 this morning, two of the book's final sentences clear in my head. I put in a big day of ms work y'day, Saturday, and the couple of complex scenes yet to be done--which may well take all the month of January--brim in me with that feeling I have had only a few other times with books, that if I could just work for the next hundred hours straight the book would be done. It's never that basic, or I don't have the iron constitution to do it that way. But even as I contradictorily pace and ~~xxx~~ push myself just enough, these are monumental days.

Christmas postscript: a knock on the door at noon y'day, Lisa Clemens with a brown envelope she tells me there's \$40 million in. Whether or not the articles about Bill Pohlad the Minneapolis film backer who was somewhere behind Brokeback Mtn, lead to some financing for Whistling Season or not, I'll duly pass them along to Blaine Novak in H'wood.

31 Dec.--New Year's Eve, with sunset nearing. It shutters a year when I spent so much of the first half in the stem cell process, yet I've managed to write approximately 50,000 words of The Eleventh Man, pickaxing my way to within sight of finishing it; wrote the P-I piece, the foreword to Tony Angell's book, the speeches that went with the Colorado and South Dakota trips, and maintained this diary. One year ago today, I would not have said those achievements were likely.

The weather has blessed us today, sunny enough this afternoon that I worked on the winter lettuce beds, moving a coldframe over the next most promising crop (and not incidentally picking full supper salad to go with fruit, after last night's salmon version) while C pruned away at the big hydrangea. And y'day we did indeed travel to the Skagit, and had a stunning show of snow geese. They were near enough the road into the viewing area that when

31 Dec. cont.--they would periodically take off, they would launch up into the wind and kite off sideways directly over us in the CRV, a taste-of-infinity pattern that can only be called Escher-like. Perhaps emblematic of the year, the price of admission was a major splat of goose crap atop the car but the magnificence of the winged show was well worth it.

Center of the American West
presents the Wallace Stegner Award to
Ivan Doig



Photo courtesy of Carol M. Doig

In a time when the American West cried out for definition and explanation, you responded with full and vibrant portraits of the northern tier; your Montana homeland and adopted Northwest, from cow and alfalfa country to the "stonecliff skyline" of the Rocky Mountain Front to stormy seas, always anchored in compelling and authentic Westerners; your work, ever opening up new territory, grew into an exploration of a full century of the western experience; and the people, ever ready for another journey with you, grounded in the West but universal in reach, have responded to each new book by heeding the adventuresome and irresistible call of your spirited Mariah Montana: "Pack your socks and come along with me on this."

-2007 Wallace Stegner Award

September 27, 2007
7:00 pm

Wolf Law Building Courtroom,
University of Colorado at Boulder

Reception and book signing to follow.

A Conversation with Patricia Nelson Limerick and
Charles Wilkinson. Followed by the Presentation of the
2007 Wallace Stegner Award to

Ivan Doig



Doig grew up in rural Montana "among the sheepherders and characters of small-town saloons and valley ranches" in the 1940s and 1950s. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from Northwestern University and a doctorate in American history from the University of Washington. Doig's best-known book, "This House of Sky," was nominated for a National Book Award. Among his other books are the "Montana Trilogy" of "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana." His most recent book, "The Whistling Season," received rave reviews in The Washington Post and Kirkus Reviews and Booklist, and has been optioned for a film. Mr. Doig lives in Seattle with his wife Carol.

Ivan Doig's writing holds a central place in the great renaissance of Western American literature in the last 30 years. His fans constitute an influential network of committed and well-informed Westerners. The Stegner Award allows us both to honor Ivan, and to give his followers an occasion to share their loyalty and admiration with him and with each other.

-Patty Limerick

The Wallace Stegner Award

Each year, the Center of the American West awards the Wallace Stegner Award to an individual who has made a sustained contribution to the cultural identity of the West through literature, art, history, lore, or an understanding of the West. In the spirit of Wallace Stegner, the recipients have demonstrated singular achievement, creativity, and dedication to the perception of the West and Western issues, and have communicated to others the importance and uniqueness of the West as a distinct region. In short, the award is presented to those who have faithfully and evocatively depicted the spirit of the American West.

Previous Stegner Award Winners

- 1990** - Bill Hornby former - Editor of The Denver Post
- 1990** - Ed Marston - Publisher of High Country News
- 1991** - N. Scott Momaday - Pulitzer Prize-winning author
- 1995** - Juane Quick-to-See Smith - artist and activist for Native American issues
- 1995** - Alvin Josephy - Western author and historian
- 1996** - Eleanor Gehres - Manager of the Western History/Genealogy Department of the Denver Public Library
- 1996** - David Lavender - Award winning author and western historian
- 1997** - Daniel Kemmis - Former Montana statesman and mayor of Missoula, and current Director of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West
- 1997** - Reg Saner - Award winning author and poet, and Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Colorado
- 1998** - Paul Schullery - Author and naturalist at Yellowstone National Park
- 1999** - T.H. Watkins - Environmental author and former editor of Wilderness magazine
- 2001** - Rudolfo Anaya - Award-winning author
- 2002** - Vine Deloria, Jr. - critically-acclaimed author, Professor Emeritus of History, and former Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians
- 2003** - John Nichols - The Southwest's beloved author of numerous novels, including his New Mexico Trilogy: The Milagro Beanfield War, The Magic Journey, and The Nirvana Blues.
- 2005** - Terry Tempest Williams - Award winning author
- 2005** - John Echohawk and Billy Frank - Native American Activists
- 2007** - Ivan Doig - Award winning author

**The Stegner Award is made possible by the Generosity of the Olson Family.
A special thank you to Dolan's Restaurant for their generous hospitality.**

EVENT LIST 2007/2008

MODERN INDIAN IDENTITY

"MY FATHER'S STORIES: REMEMBERING OKLAHOMA"

OCTOBER 25, 2007

7:30 PM, ATLAS 100



Eva Marie Garrouette



John Hickenlooper

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NOVEMBER 7, 2007

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RETHINKING GEORGE CATLIN'S VANISHING AMERICA

FEBRUARY 7, 2008

LOCATION AND TIME TBD



John Hausdoerffer



National Sacrifice Zone

FILM SCREENING AND CONVERSATION

"NATIONAL SACRIFICE ZONE: COLORADO AND THE
COST OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE"

FEBRUARY 28, 2008

LOCATION AND TIME TBD

MODERN INDIAN IDENTITY:

AN EVENING WITH ROBERT MIRABAL

MARCH 19, 2008

LOCATION AND TIME TBD



Robert Mirabal



Sandra Day O'Connor

JUSTICE SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

APRIL 17TH, 2008

7:00 PM, MACKY AUDITORIUM



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Stegner award remarks:

U. of Colorado, Sept. 27 '07

If I could ever stand on a passing comet and watch the clock of earth below, a moment I would choose is in the summer of 1921. A boxy, spoked-wheel vehicle called a Hudson Super Six is trying to make time on the indifferent dirt road down through the Smith River Valley of Montana. There in the middle of not much but sagebrush, that car passes a rickety small dairy farm called Moss Agate, and the twelve-year-old boy named Wallace there in the carload of the Stegner family heading for Salt Lake City and yet another new try at life, crosses paths--for whatever space of time it takes the car to trundle past--with an asthmatic eight-year-old girl there at Moss Agate who will live long enough to

become my mother, and a stout, ² much put-upon, durable ranchwoman
who became my grandmother and ultimately the woman who raised me.

Destinies, outlined against the basic earth. One way or another, that
is a story we all write in the American West, whether in memory or on
the white canyons of paper. I feel immensely honored tonight to have
my own path of writing life entwined with Wallace Stegner by way of
this award in his memory.

26 Feb. '07

Walkinshaw

Dear Walt and Jean--
^

Just a quick note of thanks, and hugs and tickles, and that sort of thing, for our inclusion in yesterday's memorable gathering. We felt like thoroughly inducted members of the estimable--not to say extensive--Walkinshaw tribe by being there.

We need to say, too, what grace and pleasure the pair of you have added to our lives in the fortunate quarter-century since Walt opened the pages of *Winter Brothers* and Jean had the patience to wait for an unbudgeable writer to finish his first novel before he would look up in the direction of a TV camera. In retrospect, it all looks miraculous, but the best part of it has been having the two of you as friends. Along with Walt's monumental milestone, Carol and I silently celebrated that long true friendship yesterday, and we always shall.

Affectionately,