

1 Jan. '08--Janus the one, and if this proves to be a two-faced month, it has put on the good one first. Today was mild, way up in the 40s, and C and I began the year with visible progress outside, cutting back the hydrangea, pruning the witchy old crabapple on the north patio, hoeing up a colossal amount of weeds in the veg patch, putting out some onion sets to try get that limping crop through the winter.

And today was an exceptionally good one on the ms, after y'day's pallid progress. All that, and salmon for supper. Keep it up, '08.

3 Jan.--Just past 4:30, nearly 50 degrees out but dank with rain and chilly with wind. I'm gambling a bit by leaving the salad patch uncovered tonight. Quite sizable day of writing, taking Ben and Maurice through Waterloo without ever having been there myself. And C had the inspiration to try Hubbard's shoe grease on my scabby-looking leather chair, darkening it back into respectability with probably 50¢ of shoe grease rather than \$1600 of new chair. So, progress, progress, on the day.

Oh, yes, and Whistling's ongoing long line of success: it was #7 on PNBA's bestseller list as of Dec. 23. We shall see if it hung on there through the conclusion of the year, which I think would give it more than 30 straight weeks on the list.

7 Jan.--The weekend was marked by someone blowing up our mailbox Saturday night, likely something like a cherry bomb. I had to scramble for a couple of hours on Sunday, in bastardly cold weather, affixing a replacement box to the shaky old platform that was left. Then today, in still cold damn weather I had to go out and adjust the whole thing so the box door would open all the way as the postal person requires.

In spite of that, I got a good substantial amount--some 60 pp.--of re-reading and editing in small fixes on the 1st half of the ms. Went back to the final scene this morn, adequate progress. Part of the trick now will be to give these scenes late in the book the same texture and finesse as the early one^s

7 Jan. cont.--We had a pleasant night out last night, dinner with playwright Robert Schenkkan and his wife, writer Maria Headley. Maria's food was terrific, salmon done just right served on greens and sided by beets; a right-on carrot soup; peppers w/ cream cheese snacks. The other guest was novelist Matt Ruff, who's just won a PNBA award for Bad Monkeys. Matt is 40ish, slightly graying wiry hair; there's a lot of generation difference between us and we didn't know each other's work, but he seemed good enough company. He apparently went through the evening with something physical going on in him, quite a number of trips to the bathroom. Robert I like a lot. Greeted us barefoot, made us dandy scotch (C) and bourbon (me) drinks when we'd been girding for an evening of wine, won our hearts right away. He's caught in the screen-writer's strike, listing off maybe 4 or 5 projects that are now hung up. Luckily he has a new play ready, By the Waters of Babylon, going into rehearsal tomorrow. Maria is a trip, dressing like a junior sex goddess--low-cut, and lipstick enough that C and I chortle it reminds us of the Beckett play where Billie Whitelaw's red, red lips are the only things to be seen on stage--but smart and ambitious, embarking on a project to get 37 female playwrights to rewrite Shakespeare's plays.

The weather has turned snotty again, possible snow tomorrow before things warm back up into rain.

How could I forget to mention: The Whistling Season did in on the Dec. 30 PNBA list, hung in there, #12, completing its straight run through the year.

8 Jan.--Very good day of work, 5 pp. achieved, majority of it fresh writing. And I called Becky today to see what has resulted in the Houghton-Harcourt shotgun marriage, and it still hasn't. Might have news for me next week, she said, hinting it might be good news about her. This week's news is that Dan Farley, head of Harcourt, "blew out" in the negotiations for him to be at the top of the combined publishing operation. The Harcourt folks suspect the San Diego office, Dan's bailiwick and an obvious stray piece of geography for a new ownership to lop off, was the issue.

10 Jan.--Last night about 9 the phone rang and I grumpily answered it. Turned out to be Bob Ferguson, the King

County Council member from our district, wanting to know if he could name a floor (first floor! his is the First District) of the County Council building after me. Each councilperson gets to do a naming after one of their constituents, and he and his wife have liked my books, so... Told him heck yes, and C and I will intend to come downtown for the little ceremony.

Another good day of writing, which has been standard this week. A propitious one tomorrow could--could--close off the final scene and move me onward and backward, to the not very big patches I have to fill in. God damn, it feels good, especially up against where I was a year ago at this time.

11 Jan.--Trifecta of good news today. C's breast cancer screening was OK. Scribner royalties came, \$4600+. And I threaded the last of the narrative into the 11th Man's last scene. From here on it's all just fixes and editing in. I've done it.

16 Jan.--Agent Liz, sounding actually excited, left a phone message while C and I were munching down ham salad and pea soup: Becky has been put in charge of both imprints, her counterpart Janet Silver at Houghton Mifflin is out. As Liz said, it could not have turned out better for us.

19 Jan.--A big week, big big big. I have done mammoth amounts of work on the ms, some mornings starting about 4, and am within one shortish added scene (Cass and P-39 squadron in storm peril) and a few fixes of having it ready to go to Becky. This turns out to be more fortunate than I sensed, as she called at the end of y'day afternoon, the culmination of her immense week of ascension at Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt, and after her reports on blood in the water--her HM counterpart, Janet Silver, fired on Tuesday--and not--Michelle Blankenship possibly staying on somewhere in the merged publicity forces--she passed along word that Laurie Brown, everybody's favorite sales director, would love to have 11th Man on Harcourt's fall

19 Jan. cont.--list. This contravenes Becky's original instinct, and Liz's, and pretty much mine, that it would be wiser to wait until after the non-bookbuying election season and bring 11th Man out on the 1st combined list of the two houses, early in '09. Becky says she got Liz to say, "I'll listen," which is a lot. My take on it now is that Laurie's is quite possibly the best input--she makes the point to Becky that I have an established basis of readership, the election blahs may not be such a factor. In the notion of waiting until '09, I did have a pang about the book missing the Xmas buying season. In any case, the vital thing now is to get the ms in to Becky and Laurie so they can have a look at it, ahead of the looming catalogue deadline for the fall list.

Talked with Becky at some length about the mountain of work that has descended on her, with this merger. She said she's going to have to be very careful about taking on books she'll handle herself. "But I'm not giving you up," said she, magnificently.

A day or so before that, Blaine Novak called about the Whistling script, another barnburner of a phone call, or as he said, "a fast blast" to let me know what was going on--which then went on for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. In essence, Blaine was alerting me he's inserted filmwork that would give a background to Rose and Morrie in Chicago pugdom. "Circumferential drama," he ~~x~~ called it--a term I and I liked--of the atmosphere surrounding Windy City prize-fighting in 1909. He s to send me this script version imminently, and obviously would like a fast turnaround, as he explained he'd like to use the screenwriters' strike to advantage--he and Guercio would sing with the Writers Guild on their terms and be free to make the movie. One laughable problem, although Blaine and I have to hope it ~~and~~ stays only laughable, is that Guercio is fixated on George Clooney as the adult Paul. I groan at that, and Blaine goes into a metaphorical frenzy. "Jimmy, I said to him, if you want to get on a slow train with this movie, waiting for George Clooney is the way to do it. Jimmy, George Clooney is the quick way to die of attrition. Jimmy, did you ever see that Beckett play 'Waiting for Godot'?"

22 Jan.--Sunday the 20th was a splendid day, the wheezy printer managing to produce the last forty-page batch of 11th Man ms at the stroke of 5 p.m. C and I find it amazing that I have been able to write as much of the book as I have in the past two or two and a half months. At this moment she is upstairs reading the last scenes of the ms, while I've been doing cover letters to Becky and Liz--it's all to go to NY tomorrow.

Even the weather has been rewarding, cold dazzling days that are spectacular in the blues of the water and sky, the white lightning of snow along the mountain skyline, that skyline crisp as a black paper cutout in the aftermath of sunset.

--C and I have just gone over her little list of things she caught in the ms, mainly typos. Now I shall read over the last portion of the ms, the Antwerp finale, one more time, and prepare to package.

23 Jan.--This day I sent off The Eleventh Man to my beloved editor and agent. What its reception will be with them and the world beyond, I don't know. The book is greatly different from The Whistling Season, with all the mortality at the heart of its plot, and it may have been a tougher and darker story than I had any business tackling at age 65+. But there it was, an idea that interested me, and so I burned through any number of good characters, Animal Angelides, Dex Cariston, Jake Eisman, Jones, Maurice, and most of all Ben and Cass, for the good of the story. What a writer does; what this writer does.

Along with the triumph of sending 400 pp. of fiction to Harcourt came a medical tug of reality, my every four months' blood test and peeing a jugfull of urine. I am not yet apprehensive about the next verdict from Dr. Ginsberg a week from tomorrow, but the scent of "what if..." is there, it can't not be.

As C noted, another brilliant blue day, although the slash-burning bastards over on the Kitsap Peninsula are full at it today, smearing smoke up into temperature-inversion weather. Clouds and precip of some sort are supposedly on the way. C and I are both hungry to get away for a little while; we've been held in place not only by my ms finale of work but 5 medical apptmts between us this month, hopefully just to prove we're both okay.

24 Jan.--One medical weight lifted today, when Gp Health called to say the test on her lymph nodes showed nothing but a prominent carotid artery--as Dr. Rowland told her in the manual exam, it shows up because "you're skinny." C was not fretting over it, and while I wasn't worrying openly, it's a relief to have that out of the way.

This morn I delivered my jug of urine to N'gate Group Health, and so now we're in the countdown to Dr. G next week. My mood is good, reasonably mellow. The day has been much better than forecast, high 40s, light clouds. (On the other hand, last night's freeze seemed the hardest yet. The Brunia lettuce under frost blankets looked dire this morn, although it seems to have perked back up with the sunshine. I have the coldframe Red Sails lettuce under industrial-strength tarps with a light bulb in each 'frame, so I think they made out okay.) I ended up a round of telephone tag with Blaine Novak this morn by telling him to send me the Whistling script damn soon, casting it as advice from C who foresees that I'll start on the next book any time. "She's not Jewish or German (his wife is), Blaine, but she's from New Jersey, the next best thing." He did not sound as if he has the whims about the "circumferential drama" scenes he's trying to add, as he did in one of his phone messages, so I have some hope he's just working hard at it. We'll damnwel see.

It is now 3 o'clock, I'll go do my belly exercises which have helped my back so much, take a shower in honor of tomorrow's naming of the King County Council 1st floor after me, and at 4, C and I will sit down to talk about the next book, Morrie Redvivi^{us} (at least in approximate Latin).

26 Jan.--Five WHEREASes later, I have been proclaimed the name of the first (main! gleaming new! high-ceilinged with terrific glassy sculptural effect up there!) floor of the new King County office building. It's called the Chinook Building, and County Exec Ron Sims--he of all the WHEREAS usage in my proclamation--got to name the top 4 floors and each of the 9 County Council members one of the other floors, corresponding to their districts. Thus, luck of the numbering, Bob Ferguson's is District One and

26 Jan. cont.--he and I got the first floor. C's diary entry catches it, it was a charming occasion, complete with tongue-teenagers whose ideas (for homework assignments, they both admitted) produced the Chinook name for the edifice and the names on each floor notion. And the populous Chow clan, honcha'ed by Seattle School Board prez Sheryl and with another son who is a judge floating around the edge, couple of dozen of them from 91-year-old Ruby, much like a ~~queen~~ dowager empress silent but upright in her wheelchair and husband Ping, who kept the restaurant going when Ruby went into politics. And Larry Gossett, my one identifiable semi-contemporary there--he was a Black Student Union leader and I think worked in the UW mss and archives when I was doing my dissertation--assembling four roughneck-looking activists, black and white, up there in memory of his honoree, Tyree Scott, who broke the racial barrier in construction trades here. Conspicuous by absence, John Spellman or anyone of the family; I would have bet hard money he'd be present and lapping it up. The room (on the, ahem, Doig Floor) was jammed, couple of hundred people. My patron saint, Bob Ferguson, had three bright likable young staffers there, Sam, Tibor and Megan the photographer, and he was there for the entire ceremony and indeed was no doubt the mover and shaker behind the whole naming thing. He's bright and busy-tailed and has a Kennedyesque crop of black hair, and he seems genuinely quite blown away by This House of Sky and The Sea Runners, first thrust upon him by his father. He told the crowd the story of having me sign a copy of Sky ~~for~~ at Eagle Harbor for his friend Aron, but flipping it open to browse before giving it, and Aron never did get that book--I re-signed it for Bob then and there y'day. It turns out there's a bit of literary mafia involved here--Bob's sister Ann works at the UW library, and her husband is Paul Constantine, one of Betsy Wilson's prize hires. Betsy introduced us to him soon after she pried him away from Cornell, and I liked him on sight, so always greet him and chat, as I did a few weeks back when I was running down 11th Man military details in Suzzallo. So when Bob called his UW library sources to ask if it was a good idea to put my name on a floor, his sis and Paul enthusiastically said, you bet!

A last note on the day, which my delicious wife

26 Jan. cont.--immodestly did not put into her diary account. When the remark was made to the Rev. McKinney about his floor being the nearest one to heaven, C leaned over to me and whispered, "You know there that leaves you, Doig."

Onward. The weather is a'changing, some cold rain this afternoon, possible snow tonight. We're going to Laskins for dinner, right here in the 'hood, but we hope the two generations of Williamses don't get weathered out of coming. Here on the home front, I've had a past few very pleasant days of sorting things toward the Morrie book. I feel greatly validated about clearing the schedule as much as I have, gaining the freedom to sit and putter, which for me is pretty much the same as thinking. I think C has a bit of a pang about missing a chance to go to Pt. Reyes, but I'm quite glad I turned down the Stegner conference Phil Fradkin is putting on there in a little more than a month. I wasn't much willing to go along with his request for some message or already-written piece about

Wally to be read at a session where non-attendees (and there are a significant number of us: Gretel, Terry Tempest, Jim Houston, and interestingly, Wendell Berry again, just as he was in absentia at the San Francisco Library occasion--does he just not travel, or is there something else going on with him and the memory of Wally?) are to be "heard from." But I took a breath and realized, naw, that's okay, and went out this morn and photocopied my Seattle Times remembrance of Wally and mailed it off. People are going to have to realize, though, that fond and admiring as I was/am of Wally, I am not going to jump every time somebody says the name Stegner. The one definite thing I can see I learned from his example is not to spread myself thin at this stage of life, as he kept on doing into his eighties and amid ailments. I generally think if I live my life right, I'll never go to another conference. It's of course hard to be that absolute, but this health watch certainly gears me in that direction. My abiding belief is that the one thing I should be doing with whatever is left of my life is writing books.

28 Jan.--Spectacular morning, with an inch of fresh snow on everything that can hold snow. Puget Sound is gray and silvery, and the mountains have peach-toned dawn light beneath a cloud curtain that comes just to their tips. Unless rain or sun takes the snowfall, it has totally mucked up any walking for us today, but what lacework scenery.

In just over 72 hours, I see Dr. Ginsberg for my next medical verdict. In a couple of usefully sobering though not spirit-lifting coincidences, I came across in the diary while looking for something else the fact that when I see Dr. G. on the 31st, it will be 7 years and 1 day since that phone call from Dr. Kato saying she wanted me looked at by a hematologist; and the current New Yorker has Jerome Groopman's article about the "business" of searching for new drugs against myeloma. More about that later.

This morn, and in little patches through the weekend and back to the day after I sent off The 11th Man, I am tinkering with stuff for Morrie's encore in the next book. Have just come up with the "Are you dim, man? What you need is an eisteddfod" angle. So far, the book idea seems pleasant and promising.

Dinner at Laskins on the 26th, along with both generations of Williams. Obama won the South Carolina primary that day, and we had political talk that pinged and ponged. Probably no firm conclusion, except that we all think Bush has trashed this nation. Walt Williams in particular has been in the political wilderness for most of the past three decades--he was a budget and policy political scientist, and starting with Reagan, the primacy of Republican political manipulation over any sane policy approach has him despairing.

I deliberately did not bring up my King County "flooring" that night, as I figured it was time the spotlight did not hog me quite so much, but want to get down another thought or two here. Myself aside, although maybe I count somewhat as an environmentalist, those who were named represent civic activism rather than whopping public names. No floor with the name Bullitt, Gandy, Jim Ellis, Dan Evans, Gates (or for that matter Hohvanness, Hendrix or

28 Jan. cont.--Cobain) on it. As C said, liberal Democratic politics all over that slate of floors except possibly the John Spellman floor, and even he was one of the more moderate Republicans. Rather a populist set of floors, my ilk and I.

29 Jan.--Liz just called, said she had just put down the 396th page and The 11th Man is "better than anything I've ever done" and she's "overwhelmed" by what a writer I am. So there. (I dare not look back at other diary entries on similar occasions to see what her praise might have been then. But this is unalloyed good news from my agent. Becky on the other hand is editing as she goes, Liz says.)

Meanwhile I'm working up the prospectus for Morrie's encore.

30 Jan.--A mixed day this is. I have a troubled lower gut, the GI tract and bowels trying to sort themselves out, and so am feeling kind of quimsy. Ignoring that as much as I could, I had a long phone session, an hour or more, with Blaine Novak about his revised Whistling script. I didn't like his ending, which was an attempt to have a Scout Finch-like recital of things past, akin to that very effective finale of To Kill a Mockingbird, maybe because I didn't think ^{his} language was up to it. But he also had Rose's insurance money preserving the schoolhouse forever, and I banged together an alternative more in keeping with the book, that Paul goes on into education and politics and sees to it that the one-room schools are not orphaned. I'm not sure if Blaine buys my version any more than I did his, but he's agreed to live with it for a while as he revises yet again. It is a mystery to this household of journalists how he can spend so much time on a piece of writing and never come to a finished version, but I'm not going to press him until he and Guercio pony up the next option \$10,000 in a month. Mike the movie agent says he doesn't think Blaine will invoke the "force majeure" of the screenwriters strike to delay payment, because we know he's been working the script all the while. I asked Mike about the strike outlook, he said if it's not settled by the time of the Academy Awards it may go on until the Screen Actors can also declare a strike, July 1.

Probably more essential to this household in the long

30 Jan. cont.--run, y'day I finished the prospectus for the Whistling kind-of sequel, Morrie in Butte. On top of all this, of course, has been the countdown to the medical session tomorrow. Tonight, although the weather is filthy, we're to meet Ann and Marsh at Stanford's steak house at Northgate, which should get my mind off my various gut quivers for a bit.

31 Jan.--Seven years and a day after Dr. Kato's phone call to me that there might be "something in the blood," Dr. G. assessed my latest tests and said "We have a very good trend." A "tiny" reading of monoclonal protein, white cell count on the low side as it's always been, the other test results okay. So I am medically paroled again, until the last of May, hot damn.

I felt steadier this morning, before seeing Dr. G., than in the past couple of days. As best C and I can figure out this level of apprehension that declines on the actual medical day, the fact of knowing the exact situation in a few hours is a relief.

Dinner with Ann and Marsh last night at Stanford's at Northgate, everybody's meal good enough that we intend to meet there again next month, and the table talk terrific as usual, both of them as high as we are about ~~the~~ my being "floored" in the King County building. And when I sketched out to them the Morrie-in-Butte book, damned if Marsh didn't today e-mail a title suggestion that sounds right on: WORK SONG. I'll think about it over the Oregon coast trip we intend next week, but likely will slap it on the book proposal.

The weather is still a bitch, windy now along with the 40 degree highs and snotty showers. For all that, I brought in supper salad makings, to go with our cache of frozen fruit, tonight.

Ah, and the added good news of the day, C pulled the PNBA bestseller list and Whistling is still there, #9, for something like the 40th straight week.

2 Feb.--Ho for Oregon. We've spent today packing and readying, and tomorrow (Sunday) we drive to Arch Cape, most likely to put in three days in the rain. It will at least be a change of scenery, without the backup bells of construction equipment going off all the time. We'll likely go into Portland for 2 nights after the coast-- Kathy Lesley propitiously called y'day, and we haven't seen her and Craig since my medical episode.

And there's business to be done by phone on Monday, Becky to call the Arch Cape number, she and I and maybe Liz (although I'll try to call her earlier to get her take on this) to hear Laurie Brown's reasoning for bringing The 11th Man out in the fall rather than early '09. Becky said y'day she's $\frac{1}{2}$ way through editing the ms, "loving it... it's strong, so good..." She's also in the New Yorker, unnamed, in George Packer's piece about Hillary Clinton-- it's Becky whom Hillary was calling "Buttercup" during all the editorial surgery on It Takes a Village.

Dinner last night at Damborgs', with the wonderful added company of Linda and Jeff, and sensation grub, maybe the best of many good meals we've had from them--pork roast on parsnips, and a kale dish with a cheese covering. Then blue-flamed plum cake!

Weather has moderated some, although the pattern looks damp through out week away. Today I interrupted the packing chores to go out to the old apple tree and snip branches of last year's successful Newtown Pippin, Liberty, and Karmina grafts, to try some more.

5 Feb.--Morning at Arch Cape, waiting for daylight. Surf and wind are going at it strong, but so far it's merely spitting a bit of rain, so we'll gear up and try to get in a last beach walk at Nehalem. We've managed it the previous 2 days here, y'day with no hint of wind, even. Heavier weather is supposed to be on the way tomorrow and the next day, so we think we'll hole up here tomorrow and then go into Portland.

Well, the book biz, of which considerable got done here y'day in a 4-way conversation with Becky, sales director Laurie Brown, and Liz. The upshot is that Liz and I have been persuaded to an autumn pub date for 11th Man, with our strong stipulation that it be brought out as early as possible if we aim it into that season. (Laurie thought books could be in stores in Sept. for Oct. pub date; Becky will have to check the production pipeline.) Laurie made the argument to us that she really wants the book available for Xmas, it's the kind of book people will read and think, "who are the three people I can give this to?" Laurie also made these points:

--she thinks the election season will not be as much a factor with this book as many others, with a lot of people "scurrying away from the election." Liz is not entirely persuaded on that, nor am I, but I do have some faith in Laurie's argument to Becky last week that my basis of readership should sell a lot of books in spite of the political season.

--the subject--a war that won't go away--is still with us.

She foresees sending out "lots of galleys" and there was some talk among Becky, Liz, and her of trying to land a sizable NYTBR review--Laurie has some kind of inside track to get a galley to Scott Turow. They would also try to pitch me to the NYT Arts & Entertainment section. C and I agree we won't hold our breath until any of this happens.

I asked Laurie, since this is the last Harcourt list, will the sales reps we've relied on be surviving and therefore muster enthusiasm for the book? She said she's asked that hourly, all she can say at the moment is that a lot of our "old friends" will stay on.

5 Feb. cont.--After the 4-way conversation, Becky stayed on the phone with me about where we stand with the ms: she says it needs "no reworking to speak of." She's very enthused about the voice and the "unusual" structure. Specific quotes: I "write so beautifully" in it, "on the top of my game," "It's almost letter perfect." We arranged she'll send the ms back for arrival this Saturday. Meanwhile in the merger, she goes to Boston to resolve some matters within the Houghton Mifflin staff, says things should be settled in the next week and a half, and the next phase is in view and looks exciting.

12 Feb.--Some week it has been, with no chance to lift a hand as far as the diary. From that decision in the Arch Cape phone conference to go full speed ahead to publish 11th Man this fall, I have gone over the ms with my changes, and after Becky's editing of the first $\frac{1}{2}$ reached me Monday morn, turned that chunk around and sent it back today, Tuesday. The 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ with her edits is to come day after tomorrow, and I'll intend to have it back in NY Monday morn. Luckily there's been nothing major to be done to the ms; Becky has done a great job of tightening some lines a bit, and between us we're achieving that alchemy that turns a ms into a book that just hasn't been published yet. Nice feeling.

The sewer project war zone is hitting us full force, a machine having just cut a path in the street paving right in front of the house and a "gopher" out there now trenching the dirt out. Across probably the next week+, sewer lines will go in there. Kate O'Neill offered us their house when both she and David are gone, starting Friday, and C intends to take them up on it. If I can turn the ms around by Monday, maybe we can clear out of here for a few days.

We left Arch Cape a couple of days early, in the face of a forecast of 3" rain and 65 mph winds--the power supply down there is iffy enough to twang our nerves a bit in the best of times. It helped to get away even for as long as we did, though.

16 Feb.--Perhaps a weekend to catch my breath, in an enforced pause. Becky had a tumultuous week--she had to fire people, both in the Houghton Mifflin Boston office and NY--and humanly could not get to the 2nd $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ms and turn it around to me; she said Thursday night she went home and fell asleep with all her clothes on. We'll see if she can get the ms chunk to me on Monday.

Meanwhile, we've had to put on hold our try at getting out of the sewer project din. Y'day was fairly quiet as they worked near Barney's house--the day before was a cacaphony--and C holed up in the Laskins' house for the part of the afternoon when shudders were sent through the house. I managed a bit of veg bed work before being rained out, then dabbled around in the garden room, readying for spring.

A week ago, we went to the Democratic caucus, along with maybe 800 others from the precincts around here. Our vote, which we were totally in accord with, ended up 54 for Obama (after the two undecided Tuckers and the Kucinich guy switched over so that 2 of our delegates wouldn't be allotted to them), 19 for Clinton. The hundreds of us were in the gym at Syre school, each ~~table with~~ precinct with a lunchroom-type table which seated 15 or 20 of us (C and I graciously included, thank god) and everyone else stood close around. The process was clumsy, from the long registration lines to the confusion of finding the right precinct table in the packed room and the difficulty of hearing, yet it did work--people listening civilly to each other as candidates were spoken for. (C, shaking her head, sat next to the guy who did the vote tallying by running his finger down the registration sheets--ultimate low tech.) Our precinct ended up 4 delegates for Obama (Peris Joyner one of them, goodo) and 1 for Clinton. Grass-roots democracy, not pretty but fervent about getting out of these hell years of Bush.

Lastly, yet and still, Whistling continues on the PNBA bestseller list, indeed moving up a couple of notches to #10.

21 Feb.--A day of afters. Home after an overnight stay in the Channel Lodge in LaConner furnished us two days away from the gargantuan sewer project digging its way past our driveway. And after the editing on the 11th Man ms.

The second $\frac{1}{2}$ of the ms with Becky's marks and remarks arrived at 10:20 on Monday, the 18th, and by 3:20 that afternoon I had worked it over, complete to the last comma. The next morning I photocopied it and FedExed it off as C and I headed north to the Skagit. This morn, and I hope tomorrow as well, I've set my head free into file cards and mullings toward the next book, Morrie's tale tentatively but I think nicely called Work Song, and the next next book, about Tom Harry and the Medicine Lodge, which I'm calling for now Miss You When I'm Gone. So, while all too much will catch up with me, probably sooner than later, right now is a pleasant space of time.

The Skagit did well by us, as it always does. There was some fog when we walked the Indian Slough dike the day before yesterday, but maybe because of it the birdlife was rich on the water: many pintails and dunlin, lots of teal, and the prize sighting, a pair of hooded mergansers. Y'day the weather was better, but the birdwatching was not nearly as good. When the fog began to lift in the afternoon, day before y'day, we drove to the Port Susan refuge in search of the snow geese and there they were, but out in a field beyond any road. We parked at the Conservancy buildings and walked out on the dike to check the duck situation in the slough, and here came a car on the dike. Proved to be the caretaker, Brian Scheuch (prncd Shoik), who lit up when I introduced myself, and said the last time he'd shaken hands with me was in Molly Cook's bookstore in LaConner. We chatted a bit and he urged us to come back at the end of March--early April when he will have lowered the water in the slough and shorebirds will be migrating through.

On top of the good outdoor stuff, we ate well--beer and pizza in the Pub up to the mark, supper at Seeds really very good and with Pilsner Urquell, and then gorgeous lunch y'day at the Rhododendron and catching up with Carol and Don

26 Feb.--"FedEx brought me a nice gift today," Liz said on the phone, and we hope that's what it all turns out to be, the book proposals for WORK SONG and MISS YOU WHEN I'M GONE. I want to do Song first, to get back to a first-person voice and to put Morrie back on the page as soon after Whistling Season as possible. I have been mining file cards from the unused holdings of previous books, and there are a lot of good turns of phrase and snippets of dialogue that should help give me a running start on this next book. C has been putting some of the stuff on the computer for me--it turns out she's highly interested in this part of the process, which she usually doesn't see, instead of regarding it as a chore as I do--and I've jammed some on as well, to the point where it's adding up a little. Liz says she'll put both proposals to Becky, maybe as soon as tomorrow, and we'll see what kind of "fabulous offer" she comes up with.

The weather has been mild enough that we've been able to do yard work, although a damp set of days is supposedly coming. This afternoon I put in the pea seedlings, scrupulously tenting them with net to (try to) foil the towhees and then putting ten or so mouse traps around to head off that threat. I've been slow to react to the fact that mice have been chewing the hell out of the south bed of Brunia lettuce this winter, and since I've started trapping I've accounted for four, and last night a cat wiped out three.

We entertained Saturday night, David Williams and Marjorie here to help us eat up the salmon C spied at Fred Meyer for \$3 a pound. David's feeling good, with a complete draft of his book Stories in Stone that he's read aloud to himself and liked, and I was plenty mellow myself with the crxed ms of 11th Man now in New York instead of her@. A good evening all around.

28 Feb.--The continuing good news: Whistling still clinging in there, #15, on the PNBA bestseller list. The new good news: Y'day I finished off the sonofabitching IRS ~~BAKSET~~ basket of things they called into question about our '06 tax return.

Short conversation with Becky this morn when I called in

28 Feb. cont.--this morn. to check on schedule for various 11th Man stuff:

--I'll be sent, overnight, a crxed printout of the ms.

--1st try at cover art was "too non-fictiony," and she's trying to get it down to a few strong elements. (C asks rightfully why nobody ever listens to her about this, "just a black cover with bold red type".)

--She's had the 2 book proposals put to her by Liz, says she's "so thrilled," loves the idea of continuing the characters as I intend.

And now we are about to depart for Chinook's and lunch with the Walkinshaws to mark Walt's 90-something birthday.

4 March--This morn I sent to Harcourt probably 75 pp. of the corrected printout that needed new corrections--some of it style of military address (capitalizing the rank in direct dialogue), some glitches by the computer, some by me (took me three tries to get the bomb load of a B-17 right), and so on. The printout didn't get delivered by FedEx until after noon last Friday, so I spent the weekend reading it over, and as I've said to C, I hope to hell I can quit working on weekends for a while.

Toward that end, C and I consulted the Dungeness tide table and singled out a set of days late this month when we can aim to D'ness Spit and the Hoh rain forest. It's about time.

Becky thought she and Liz would talk today about my book proposals, but I've heard nothing. She said Liz had lost her voice toward the end of last week, so that may account for no word. No rush on this, as it would take gunpoint to drive me away from Becky as editor, but I'm naturally curious how a deal might shape itself.

Wan sun--"light juice," I learned to call it this morn from the black woman flagger on the sewer project--this afternoon which still sets the heather ablaze in a couple of purples and a nummery white. I have lettuce starts sitting out there in the sunshine in their yellow and blue

Catalina pottery pots--found 'em down in the garden shed when we bought this house; this is the first time I've used them, but so far I like handling them--and earlier ones in one coldframe. The campaign against the mice in the garden continues, two trapped last night at the Brunia patch and one at the pea patch, total is somewhere around 18.

10 March--This is a day that ended with a high-powered whoosh. I spent the morning and top of the afternoon delving into file cards and leftovers from other books for any chance of using stuff in both Work Song and Miss You (and found some), then about 2 went to the yard just to get some air briefly. C stuck her head out the door to see how the working weather was, looked down and said, "Oh, FedEx!" Indeed it was--they never ring the goddamn doorbell any more for some reason--and while I expected it'd be the cover art, instead it's the sample layout etc. It's a very nice job, done by the same designer who did Whistling Season so well, Linda Lockowitz. So I admired it, looked it over in some detail, and about 45 minutes later Becky called, wanting to know if she could okay it to the production guy, David Hough. So, that's that.

The cover art is another matter. Becky has seen two tries, not passing either along to me because they're "too non-fictionary." Now both the Harcourt and Houghton Mifflin art departments are working on it, so we'll see. C has a good point about the half-title page type, stencil-like, as a good strong cover type. We shall see.

And, news I didn't manage to get down on paper last week, talk about shooting the moon. Liz called to say she had put in both book proposals I sent her, wants to do 2 separate contracts, and is asking for "big bucks." I said, can you hint at how big is big? She said, I'd rather surprise you. I said, Well, we've been a literary couple long enough I guess I can let you get away with that. She softened and said, I'm asking for over six. Needless to say, \$600,000 is a helluva lot more than I'd anticipated, and she did say she'd set it high so that if Becky came down from that we'd still do well, "but who knows, maybe she'll surprise me." Becky did not sound bothered about the negotiations when she called today--we agreed Liz had not given us any heads-up about heading off on vacation to the Dominican Republic. (On the other hand, Liz was about half-dead of flu and obviously seeking sun.)

12 March--Miracle of not so minor miracles, the cover art for 11th Man came today and C and I right away liked one of the three choices. Soldier on a runway watching three fighter planes fly away into the wild blue yonder--nice.

Bit of a scattered ~~xy~~ day other than that, with my early trip to Gp Health Northgate to have blood drawn to see if my new immune system is ready for immunizations--everything from measles on up, I guess. Got some work in toward the next books, then the cover came, then we did some necessary yard work before the weather turns again, and so on.

Addendum, that I didn't get to say in the previous entry about contract negotiations for the next 2 books. Talk about going for broke, we're all acting like I'm thirty years old and in the peak of health. Becky, Liz, C, me--we're all relying on the mantra, life goes on until proven otherwise. So, here at the point where if I stand on tip-toe I can see age seventy, I'm full speed on next books. Wild.

17 March--Good book news today, a blurb from Scott Turow: "THE ELEVENTH MAN is the compelling story of the World War II experiences of the members of a legendary college football team. Told from the perspective of one of them who is now an Army journalist, the novel is about loyalty and survival and sacrifice--and love--and remains intensely suspenseful and moving throughout."

This comes about thanks to Laurie Brown, the Harcourt sales director, who fancily bound up a copy of the ms and sent it to Turow hoping for a NYTBR piece from Turow. The god of timing was a shade fickle on that--Turow's p. 1 review of Tony Earley's THE BLUE STAR would have already been in the works--but C maintains to me that the blurb is more helpful than a review would have been.

And good social news: within the hour, Linda and Sydney will be here for dinner, nipping in ahead of their takeoff this Sunday for 4 months in Britain and Venice. Linda and I have cover art to show off to each other.

I put in a reasonably strong day on WORK SONG, shaping the first $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. pp., at last, to where they feel right, carrying Morrie's voice. Also put quite a bit of the

17 March cont.--gleanings from file cards etc. that I spent last week assembling, onto the computer.

A further social note: Friday night, the 14th, we were at dinner at Frank Zoretich's with Tim Egan and Joni Balter.

We'd never met them, despite decades of writing in the same town. And remarkably, Tim had just heard from Becky Saletan; he's a Houghton Mifflin writer, his editor there did not survive the smushing together of the two staffs, and Becky wanted to know, "Are you going to stay with us?" Tim seemed keen when I praised Becky, and I suggested he talk to somebody he still knows on the HM side--I named off Bridget Marmion and he said, "Yeah! I know her!"--and see what their view of the merger is. C remarked on how high-energy Tim is. At what we figure is 53--Lisa Roden's age--he looks a good ten years younger. He's working on a book on the 1910 fires. I kept my eyebrow from raising, as he's doing it right over the top of what I think is a terrific and definitive history--Steve Pyne's YEAR OF THE FIRES--but that's the biz Tim is in and it paid off big with the Dust Bowl book. It was a good lively evening--C and I had fun,

when we hadn't expected to--and Tim didn't show any ego cruises, saying how much he'd like Whistling Season and how well I'd caught that era, and when C mentioned David Laskin as we were leaving, he never flinched at all (believe me, I was watching closely) over David's giggling review of the Dust Bowl book in Tim's own New York Times, instead saying how much he'd like The Children's Blizzard. Thank goodness there was good lively talk, as Frank Z's cooking aspirations outrun his talent in that direction. Frank is sloping along doing some freelance editing--and, C and I fear, drawing down his money from selling his Alb'que house. It has occurred to me how much Frank likes games--mental ones--and how much he treats life like one. He'd been to Redding recently to visit Steve Brewer and his journalist wife, and in 3 days he and Steve played 20 games of Scrabble. Laid-back as he is, he's been able to maintain friendships with hard-driving types such as Egan, Eric ^Nalder, and for that matter, C and me.

18 March--The \$600,000 day. The contract offer for Work Song and Miss You When I'm Gone came in by fax from Liz this morn, and while there's a joint accounting of the books that

C and I would prefer not to have, the \$ is front-loaded enough--\$350,000 in advances by the time Work Song will be published--and various goodies are so woven through the joint bookkeeping, that I saw no sense in trying to pick it apart. Liz recounted on the phone the history of the negotiation with Becky:

L: I'd like to see Ivan get a million.

B: Half a million.

L: Let's meet in the middle.

B: \$600,000.

Liz sensed that was as high as Becky would go, on the basis that Harcourt did not want to be penalized for having done a good job on Whistling Season. I said that's unfortunately understandable (although C points out it happens all the time in publishing).

So, a record amount of moolah will flow in on us this year, what with the \$150,000 advance on signing, the Whistling royalties, the 11th Man acceptance and publication advances--higher tax bracket, here we come.

Social note: Linda and Syd came for dinner last night, we fed them salmon salad with all the greens out of our garden, our reward for all the effort that went into overwintering those plants. They're gearing up for nearly 4 months abroad, and meanwhile trying to nurse ~~the~~ Linda's aging Camano cabin through a leaking oil furnace. We had to laugh later--our neighborhood sewer project junk looked so appalling to them that Linda concernedly offered us the cabin, leaky furnace and eroded bulkhead and all.

Linda's new and selected poems will come out mid-October, close on to the probable pub date of 11th Man.

24 March--After a lost weekend--finishing up the goddamn income taxes, which all in all are adding up to about a week out of my year; got to try to do something about that--I settled in to work on Work Song today and have just done a printout of the rough material I have so far. It looks not bad, in size and otherwise. I can only peck away at it until the copyedited 11th Man comes and goes.

24 March cont.--I did have a terrifically useful research session at the UW library on the 20th with Sandy Kroupa.

She took me through 19th century books, giving me tips for the treasures Morrie might see in the Butte library and Sandison's home collection, a hell of a seminar. Sandy, who said she's 61, is my oldest ally at Suzzallo or probably anywhere at the UW--she started there in the Special Collections under the sainted Bob Monroe in the summer of '68 and claims she's going to die at her desk, sees no sense in retiring.

After the session with Sandy I went to the U Book Store, and while I was down in the school supplies department buying file cases to hold the cards I'll build up for Work Song and Miss You When I'm Gone, the cell phone vibrated and rang in my pocket. It proved to be Becky, jubilant that we're going to be doing two more books together. I asked if that meant she and Liz were done armwrestling over the contract, she said yes, as far as she was concerned.

Call from Liz the next day said she'd tweaked the final payment--\$50,000, no idle sum--from 6 months after p'back publication to payment upon h'back publication, i.e. moving it up about 18 months. Good-oh again, Liz. Also, \$71,000+ showed up in our brokerage account, the wired payment for 11th Man acceptance and something else Liz couldn't remember, "they don't let me handle the money." She also had the news that the 11th Man gets the cover of the Harcourt catalogue.

28 March--March is turning out be neither lamb nor lion, but a mungy beast all its own, ten degrees below average and snow showers today a week into spring. The weather canceled out our intended trip to the Hoh rain forest, and even the day trip to Dungeness we'd scaled down to. So, in our way, we've cooped up and worked. The Work Song writing has seemed tough--although I think some of that is the weight of the weather--but the opening chapter began to pull together yesterday, particularly in voice, and I've finished a 2,500-word version today, not bad. C and I are hoping for a turn of the climate this weekend so we can spend time outdoors.

1 April--8:20, the ~~Celebrity~~ Line cruise ship Mercury is emerging out of the lattice of branches of the big downslope maple, starting the season. More than 200 cruises are supposed to call at this port this year, so we'll soon be in the pattern of watching them come and go like odd glitzy neighbors.

The last week of March was reported as the coldest on record at SeaTac, average high of 47 vs. the historic average of 55. This morn has low clouds and fog but shows signs of clearing off--about time; at 4:30 y'day when I was about to light the barbecue to do salmon, it began hailing, and then rained for most of the next hour, dumping us into a so-so oven dinner of salmon--and if it warms up this afternoon, C and I will rebuild $\frac{1}{2}$ a veg bed so I can get beet seedlings in there in the next few days. There was a fairly heavy frost last night, and the temp went down from 35 when I got up at 4 to 32 by the time we walked the n'hood just after dawn.

3 April--Y'day was the day I did not win the Dublin Literary Award. I never felt I had a real chance--given the backgrounds of the judges, it wasn't likely any of them had a clue about homesteads or much else in Whistling Season--but no U.S. novel made the not-so-short list of eight finalists. Might one surmise there is a Bush handicap, out there in the world, for being an American?

April 5--One year ago, 700 million of my stem cells were infused back into me. Have been looking back at the '07 diary, for some sense of proportion of all that has happened since--I toughed my way past the painful mouth and esophagus aftermath, pegged away at the 11th Man ms, honored the Colorado speaking gigs and the South Dakota book festival, worked on through weekends across the holidays and completed 11th Man, 5 months and a week ahead of contract deadline, and now am into Work Song on the magic carpet of the \$600,000 two-book contract. A sizable dozen months.

8 April--Iiz called, almost purring with pleasure, with the news that the Japanese rights to Whistling Season have been bought, \$5,000. I asked her who on earth the Japanese publisher is, she laughed and said something called Village Books--so we don't figure it's the Random House of Japan but it's a welcome and rare overseas bit of biz.

Lunch at Chinook's today with Midge from Spokane, for her latest report on the two grumpy old guys, her brother and an illustrator, who are perpetually working on a children's book that looked really pretty good to C and me but who have yet to sign a contract with the publisher they're perpetually e-mailing back and forth with. Weird.

C has been doing a better job of recording the social side of life than I have, thank goodness. I will say of our visit to the Atwoods y'day that Peter did not look good. Couple that with John Roden's organ recital of his bodily woes now that he's a mere 87 (and walked over here the 3 miles from their place) a few nights ago and the shadow of mortality has kept darkening the corner, with our friends. I told C on the way home from lunch with Midge it was a relief to have an occasion with someone with nothing physically threatening.

On the work front, it ain't been great the past 3 days with all this socializing and other scatterings; I knew this was going to be a tough month to get wordage done. Tomorrow and the next day should clear out some.

11 April--The past two days I did bow my back and get the pp. done, but today has been fending, all the way:

- more shots, @ Gp Health Northgate, in the catch-up immunizations a year after my stem cell transplant.

- phone talk w/ Blaine Novak, verifying that I pried the Whistling script loose from him and it's to arrive tomorrow.

- sorted file cards for C to put on computer. This produced the only ms gain of the day.

- blurb nominees faxed to Becky, who's doing her own pre-ARC reading copies to try to land some more cover comments for 11th Man.

- long phone call w/ Ackerman abt their trip to Seattle in Oct.

--and, I don't know, other stuff which has consumed the day. Tomorrow is supposed to be 70ish, and I hope to spend damn near all of it out of doors.

14 April--Waiting not for Godot but for Blaine, having just faxed him my revise of the last 3 pp. of the Whistling script. For all of his labors and mine, it's maybe no better than a so-so script, even though we'd both like to bring off another To Kill a Mockingbird--neither of us is any Horton Foote at script magic. But we'll see. The important thing is, as Blaine said in his latest phone call, to "lock it down" and then for him to get on with shaking the money tree, a phrase I've contributed to his education.

I did get in some ms work this morning, not much, and I may be able to pry some time for Work Song tomorrow, but then that's it for probably at least a week, with our long-planned long-delayed trip to the Hoh rainforest slated for the 16th and our 43rd anniversary day, the 17th and then the page proofs of 11th Man are due to arrive. I feel like I'm driving a troika, with the threesome of Work Song, this Whistling Season script, and 11th Man.

And we've been socializing at a pace which is, for us, tooth and nail. Last night we used the theater tickets given to us by Linda and Sydney, absent to London, to see The Cure at Troy, Seamus Heaney's version of Sophocles' play about Philoctetes.

16 April--6:15 AM, on the cusp of anniversary 43. In about an hour we've leave for the Edmonds ferry and trundle across the Peninsula to the Hoh rainforest. First time in a lot of years, and while the weather is still grudging--forecast over there is overcast and about 50--it's time we give this a try. Favorable tide at Dungeness Spit early tomorrow, so we'll overnight in Pt. Angeles, eat in the bar at the Bushwhacker, and catch the hike at the Spit.

Favorable tides around here too, as far as I can tell. I signed off on the movie script after the phone session with Blaine and, a surprise I am mulling over, he's offered me shared credit on the script and a 50-50 split of the minimum (and upfront) Writers Guild fee--\$110,000 to \$150,000--that Jim Guercio's Caribou Films company would need to pay as a signatory to the Writers Guild. Subsequently, on the phone the Hollywood agent Mike

16 April cont.--Cendejaus reported that Blaine had told him and Lynn Pleshette that he couldn't have done the script without me and feels I ought to share the credit and \$. I pressed Mike on whether Blaine is blowing smoke in our ear for some reason, and he insisted he thinks Blaine is sincere. We both can see that Blaine has a vested interest in getting Guercio committed to a WGA fee, instead of whatever interior deal Jim would want to cut him within Caribou. ~~But~~ Also, as best I can tell, both Blaine and Guercio seem to think my name adds something to this project, although damned if I can see how, in Hollywood.

The other thing, and this from Blaine--I picked up no hint from Mike that he'd been told--he's sensing that Guercio has a yen to direct the film himself. Blaine is sending a DVD of the one venture of this sort Jim ever did--ElectroGlide in Blue, if I have that title right--back in the 70's; Blaine said Jim absolutely blew the press coverage with his rock-star preening back then. I have trouble believing that Jim's level-headed wife Lucy will let him, with that 4-way heart bypass, plunge into directing a film crew, but as C and I chronically say, we'll see.

Amid all this, pretty decent day of ms work on Work Song y'day, getting Morrie through the first part of the Dublin Gulch wake. And last night, socializers that we've turned into lately, we met Ann and Marsh at Stanfords for the annual meal. They're newly grandparents again, Sarah's lad named Tate.

18 April--We squeezed our 43rd anniversary trip into the one decent window of weather--right now it's trying to decide among rain, sleet and snow. It was 5 hr 20 min. from when we left the house, when we stepped onto the trail at the Hoh. C did a terrific description in her diary entry earlier today, so I don't have a lot to add. The ~~big, massive~~ great trees, big around as huge vats, are as awesome as ever, as is the carpet of matter on the forest floor, a mat of growth of all kinds. We spent a little under an hour on the trail, turning back where it began to be webbed with tree roots. The day was quite a magician of light, the green of the ferns so intense it almost stung to look at, the moss on the witchy trees C wrote about seeming lit from within. She mentioned the elk

18 April cont.--along the road, grazing right at the edge of the pavement, i.e. one car lane away from us. We laughed that they really know they're in the ~~unsafe~~ hunterless safety of a national park--they didn't even look up at us, whereas even tame park deer will keep an eye on humans.

The come-and-go sunny day gave great clarity to glimpses of the Olympic peaks as we drove toward Forks--coming down the curve into the valley of the Elwha was stunning with snowy peaks and dark regimented timber.

The Bushwhacker in Pt. Angeles, better than ever: the square-built woman bartender; the guy reading a book and hogging a whole table to himself, while nursing a coffee and eventually a dish of ice cream--we're sure we've seen him doing the same in years past. The Safeway near the motel was a study of another sort: looking along the busy ranks of 6 or 8 checkout lines, we could see almost nothing but faces and bodies that told of hard lives, strapped finances, likely some bad choices but only ever narrow chances, too. It makes you wonder how this society can hold together if

times get harder than they already are for so many people.

Dungeness Spit the next day, and a tough enough wind to walk back into that we held our hike to less than half an hour out. Yet it still was a holy place in our lives, having hiked there we figure at least 150 times across the past four decades plus.

So, that was the trip. C, just now passing, on her way from exercising, says to add that it added up to 335 on \$44.99 of gas.

Today, back at the desk to more reality than I wanted. Michelle Blankenship called from what is now Houghton Mifflin Harcourt publicity, saying through the tears she had tried to suppress that she was fired last Monday, damn, damn, damn. She was a terrific publicist, and we knew each other's moves so well from the Whistling hardback tour, thoroughly comfortable with one another. It's heartbreaking to see her out of a job in a shrinking profession. From my end of things, I'll need to talk to Becky about tapping the limited 11th Man booktour--Portland to Bellingham, I've said, plus anything single-shot sensation on the national level--into place with Michelle before I get handed off, likely to Taryn Hunter in the HM office in Boston.

18 April cont.--On the writing front, David Hough of HMH production dept. called y'day to say he'd be a day behind in getting the 11th Man page proofs to me--that was wrenching too, as he said the week had got caught up in the logistics of getting fired--and they're supposed to be here tomorrow, Sat. morn. I hope to start right in on them, and continue on Sunday if the weather stays this dreadful; Monday the street project is shutting off our water, so we'll likely clear out of here mid-day, maybe to the Sculpture Park and Ivar's for lunch. Without the page proofs on hand, I spent my workday sorting filecards and entering them onto the icon sections where I hope to use 'em; kind of a skunky task, but it stimulates some thought and seems to pay off down the line.

20 April--Some sort of record y'day, when the FedEx driver arrived at the door with 2 identical boxes, one the revised Whistling movie script and the other the page proofs of 11th Man.

22 April--Latest "fast blast" from Blaine Novak about the Whistling flick: how about Johnny Depp to play Morrie? Depp is married to French singer Vanessa Paradis, they have three kids "about the age of ours" (i.e., the book's), the couple is looking for a project to do together, and--get this, sez he--she's a worldclass whistler. Just for further intrigue, Blaine says the Hollywood agent Mike is buddies with a producer (I think it was) of Brokeback Mountain, who in turns is a buddy of Depp--"so Mike has a way in, I can stay out of sight, and then I come in the back door!" This is all to be believed when seen, but at least Blaine and I have mushed a script together, he's giving me shared script credit and a 50-50 split of the scriptwriting fee (if things ever get that far) which he says is a Writers Guild minimum of \$110,000 to \$150,000. As C says, at least this movie stuff is entertaining so far.

24 April--2:15, and I have just finished going through page proofs of Eleventh Man. Damn, it looks good.

26 April--To start trying to catch up: I'm about to go out and photocopy the 11th Man page proofs and then FedEx them to David Hough, in charge of production, in San Diego.

It has taken the past week to get 'em done, although I wisely hammered out a few other chores--the booktour schedule, primarily--during the siege.

So, of the troika I've been driving, the movie script is at least momentarily under control, the 11th Man is on its way into final form, and I should be able to turn my attention for the next two weeks back to Work Song. Meanwhile, this is a fine-looking spring day, clear and heading into the 60s, and C and I are going to gallivant through some yard work once I get back from the copy shop.

29 April--I've fought my way out from under the various chores--the proofs, a roughed-out schedule for the booktour, the Montana Mag of History excerpt, and I think I'm overlooking some others--and at last got back to a genuine writing day, making some nice progress toward finishing the wake scene.

Oh, yeah: one of those chores I was shutting from mind was y'day's phone interviews. The second one, Karen Rivers freelancing for the South Bend Tribune, was okay, she'd prepared reasonably. The first one, Karl of the Kalamazoo Gazette--which I had the barely suppressible urge to call the Calumet Kazoo--showed no sign he'd ever been near The Whistling Season, the ostensible reason I'm speaking in Dowagiac a couple of weeks from now. One of his first questions set the tone, of him presenting me with a vague supposition and me telling him No, that's not it at all: "Now your genre is historical fiction and westerns?"

So, to try a bit of catching up, first with the "living legends" photo shoot at Charlie Cross's house, along with Tim Egan, on the 25th. I was pissed off at the UW photog, Mary Leven, for not having let me know she'd set the pic session for a different day than she and I had agreed on,

and so I was prepared to be unimpressed with her, and that pretty much remained the case. Yakking with Charlie and Tim, though, was a hoot. I came in saying, "Hey, guys, we've got to get the T-shirts," and cracked them up. Tim pointed out that the three of us, all trim guys of about the same size in blue jeans, didn't have the bellies a lot

29 April cont.--of the other 97 of Columns magazine's 100 "living legends" could boast, and we all had some more scone or coffee cake. Charlie and Tim, it turned out, both had been such UW Daily junkies that each of them took 7 years to get a bachelor's degree. Charlie told the formula: you had to be enrolled for 15 credit hours, so you'd make sure to get passing grades in the courses with 10 of those hours, and take an incomplete in the other 5. That way, you stayed a quarter behind every year. Tim said when he started at the P-I he still was 15 hours short of a degree, so he went to Alex Edelstein in the Comm school and asked, "Can't you give me some kind of test for those hours." And Alex, whom we all remember as decent and gentlemanly--C taught with him one summer at the UW, I think--did it. Meanwhile, the photog was trying to shoot us indoors and out, and all we wanted to do was talk to one another. The last setup was kind of bizarrely LAish, at a table beside Charlie's outdoor swimming pool, and in the course of our gabbing Tim asked me if I'd known Norman Maclean. I said sure, and recited the bit about his letter to me describing movie people as the kind of creatures who eat what's been run over on the road. Charlie chimed in that his fiancée recently found out she may be something like Norman's bastard granddaughter--she was adopted, and the info was new to her and Charlie, so he didn't have sure specifics on it. Tim and I figured out any lineage of that sort would have to come by way of Norman's kids, not him, wouldn't it? And so it went, rollicking along.

6 May--This appears to be the day we turned the corner on the long, long sewerline construction project; the Washington Asphalt guys paved the street y'day in glistening black, and today feathered in the paving to the very tips of the driveways. A really nice senior guy spent a lot of time this afternoon using ether and rags on the diesel spots on our paver bricks where the driveway meets the new tar.

That, and \$2001 in Sky royalties on the day--plus whatever the Whistling paperback royalties that have to

6 May cont.--pass through Liz's office.

On top of it, I managed a regular day of writing, the holy 2 pp. accomplished. Next week is the Michigan trip and speech preparation for that, so it behooves me to get done whatever the hell I can on Work Song this week. Over the weekend I thought of a couple of better sentences to get the flow going in the paragraph after the lead, and that still feels okay.

Some socializing lately, Betty and Roy Mayfield here on Saturday night, the 3rd. We had a drink and salmon spread, then took 'em to try Hill's, the n'hood restaurant near my barber shop. My food was pretty good, C's lamb shank less so. Betty told of one of Paul Allen's latest assignments to her and her staff--blow up the group pics of the Alaska and St. Petersburg trips so he'll know who he's looking at. The Piter one is doable, but the Alaska one was the entire stern of the cruise ship, shot from a height from a helicopter, and no way are the 400 and some blurred faces going to come clear on that. Betty said he comments on those trips, what a time they were, which intrigues C and me--they were magical for us, and it's somehow heartening that they ~~also~~ were the same for the guy who can have damn near anything.

7 May--One of the phone calls of a lifetime: Liz, not even saying hello, sweetly reporting "Today we got the nicest check for \$96,000."

Those Whistling royalties and whatever more she scooped in with the contract's accounting clauses are a greatly bigger payday than C and I had been guessing at. Yet to come, the signing advance on the next 2 books.

10 May--A quiet Saturday, something of a lull before the whirlwind of next week when I go off to the Michigan speech. Weather is cool and showery, so we're probably securely indoors for the weekend--it's nice. I've just transcribed jottings from my pocket notebook onto file cards or into ~~notebooks~~ 3-hole binders, and printed out one of the possible 11th Man readings (the Seattle scene) that C singled out for me. I may not do a hell of a lot else.

16 May - Dowagiac, Michigan - Passing time in the Baymont Hotel, out at the end of a nowhere street at the edge of town. Rick Frantz, who runs this program of bringing writers to this town of 6300, is picking me up for lunch in a few minutes. I've rehearsed my speech this morn, after spending as much time napping/sleeping as I could, and I feel pretty good given the malaise I find this kind of travel to be - as I told Rick about yesterday's hours of airport, plane and town-car (2 1/2 hrs drive from O'Hare to here), & amounted to a walking Fad Ex package.

Early dinner last night w/ Rick and Bellingham writer Michael Collins - they're buddies & Michael funds writing prizes for kids here. Michael & I didn't hit it off any too well - it's always a mistake to put 2 writers unknown to each other together that way - but so it goes.

Later: 3:50 now, ahead of 4:30 pickup to go to early dinner, then talk to the students, then make my speech. I've spent most of the afternoon sacked out, storing up all the rest I can. Passing the time is the hard part of this - life is the high wire, all else is waiting.

17 May - Done it. My talk went well last night, albeit to a medium warm audience, and now at 5:45 I'm waiting on a breakfast run with Chuck & Francis Hulen. Meanwhile it's started raining, after lovely weather the past 2 days. Gettin' out of Dodge just in time, Doris.

I have just scrounged a couple of Styrofoam cups of coffee from the motel lobby and had a banana from the room's goodies basket, so am feeling restored as I await actual breakfast. Last night I didn't have a drink of any kind after a beer at early dinner, opting for a sleeping pill to get through the night instead, & that worked OK but not great, the sleep still choppy than I wanted. But it added up to enough, & I'm in good spirits as I look toward home.

The session with the high school kids was tough - questions or responses could not be dragged out of them with wild horses. I carried on, vamping as best I could, & I suppose it went better than I thought, as they all eagerly, nay grinningly, lined up for pics with me at the reception afterward.

17 May cont. - A board flt 355, as people
heard aboard - thank god for a 1st class
seat. O'Hare is busy & hectic, match. I
had a Berghoff corned beef & beer for
lunch, on this 4-meal day. Breakfast with
Chuck & Francie Hulin at the Downy's
locals' cafe, the Wahos. Francie, polite &
pleasant, turned out to be the former U.S.
Attorney for central Illinois, which is to
say the fed who initiated the case against
ADM price-fixing, that ultimately sent one
of the Andreases to jail. When we met at
the motel I'd made some joke about
nothing ever happening in Decatur, but
it turned out to be the criminal center
of her jurisdiction! So, I enjoyed the
time with the Hulins, 50 years probably
almost to the week, since we last saw
one another.

27 May--Whew. It's been a struggle to get to this diary,
and I'm only here for a few minutes until we leave for
lunch at the Walkinshaws. I'm killing off chores as fast
as I can--just did the crx with Molly Holz by phone on
the Montana Mag of History excerpt, and various financial
dealings--to clear the way for (a) the verdict on my
blood by Dr. Ginsberg the day after tomorrow and (b) the
Missoula-Helena-Butte trip next week.

29 May--Today was a clout. Dr. Ginsberg is "concerned" enough about the rise in my urine protein reading (and the damnable monoclonal protein reading is up, too, although not as much) that he is putting me on Thalidomide and Prednisone when we get back from Montana. There's also to be monthly Pamidronate infusions, for 12-24 months, to build up my bones.

So, the stem cell treatment having bought me a trouble-free year--a very good year--I now go into a regimen of potent pills or worse, as Dr. G tries to suppress the protein levels of the slumbering myeloma. Today's news caught me somewhat by surprise, in spite of the usual apprehension I take to these sessions. The other blood test results gave no clue that I could see of any change, and indeed for I think the first time ever, Dr. G did not even mention those results, simply went to tracing the trend of the electrophoresis readings of both types of protein, and bang, was going through with C and me what might be done:

--another stem cell treatment would buy me about what the first one did, a year, "maybe a little less."

--a mini-allogenic stem cell treatment is not in the cards, as I have no sibling to provide the stem cells.

--the Thalidomide-Dexamethasone regimen he had me on in Jan.-Feb. '07 is an option. His preferred route, though, is to see if 50 mg. of Prednisone every other day and 100 mg. of Thalidomide (which I believe is half the dose he had me on in '07) will bring down the protein readings in the next four months.

As I put into the visit notes in the Ginsberg file, he stressed that I did respond well to that earlier pill regimen, and that he has patients who have been in remission for 7-8 years--and still are--on the Thal-Pred maintenance regimen. So, there's hope, he was telling me (and C resoundingly seconds) but there's also bodily travail of some level ahead.

And wouldn't you know it, we're going out tonight, to the ballet with the Damborgs. Jerome Robbins can lift my spirits.

3 June--My spirits did lift, after G-Day--Ginsberg Day--there on May 29, although as I said to C the next day, my medical situation had not changed one damn bit. Neither of the protein readings is anywhere near the danger levels of just before my stem cell adventure; ~~ix~~ Ginsberg said in 6-8 months they could be, and he's therefore trying to fight them down while they're still low. In this, there is no small element of gearing up to contend with the pernicious trend of the protein with scary medications for the rest of my life. But if that's what it takes, I must undertake it, with what philosophy there is in the fact that after $7\frac{1}{2}$ years of coping with this diagnosis of MGUS-indolent myeloma, no active cancer cells have ever been found in me.

And now for the road. C and I have spent the day readying to head for Montana @ 6 tomorrow morn. Meanwhile the painters have arrived to do the outside of the house, and, natch, it's immediately turned rainy.

6 June--Helena, at Marcella's dining room table. We're about to start the 2nd day of Work Song research at the MHS library, and y'day went very well, C finding pics of miners etc. while I rummaged written sources on Butte. The MHS staff, although an everchanging cast throughout the day, was on the ball for everything we wanted. So far, so good.

Damp weather has followed us from Seattle, and there was day-old snow on Macdonald Pass when we came across y'day. Our first night, we fetched up as per tradition at Chateau Welch in Missoula, with Lois cooking buffalo steaks for us, Bill Kittredge, and Ginny Merriam. (Annick was missing because of what was likely a case of food poisoning, which caused Bill to run her to the emergency room earlier in the day.)

10 June--Beautiful morning in Butte, with a snowstorm coming--it's 32 degrees. We have luckily--luck as the residue of design--finished up our research and can scoot for home, although scooting is going to involve crossing snowy passes, Lookout and 4th of July. The weather has been tricky this whole trip, but it spared us on the highly memorable trip to the Deer Lodge valley and Anaconda and didn't stop C's photographing of Butte's picturesque decrepitude and our general traipsing around--mine headframes etc.--here. (Weirdly, an obstacle in the picture-taking was nasty dogs we had to keep a constant eye out for; a German shepherd in one of the old neighborhoods tried to beat down his chain fence to get at us.) We made a prime haul of research y'day morn at the Butte public library in its historical file on the old library where Morrie is to find a home among the books, and we had equal good luck at the Mont. Historical Society library, our old book-making stomping ground, in Helena. And Marcella blessedly provided us a major trove of Dave's Butte books from his incredible basement stash of Montaniana. So, we've bagged the Work Song makings; the rest is road surfaces.

16 June--In beautiful weather at last, I am back at work on Work Song as of today. Outside, the young workmen Kevin and Nick are grinding away at sanding the fascia, and up on the deck, Bob the painter has filled and patched holes in five of the railing posts that you could put your hand into.

So, we are more than apparently home, with a prosperous research trip to Montana behind us. Our week or so away was spent mostly in the hospitality of our widowed friends--Lois Welch in Missoula, Marcella Walter in Helena; and in Spokane, Midge McGilvray is a grass widow--with the grace that they each provide. In the library of the Montana Historical Society and that of Butte, C and I burrowed through files of old material--where Google doesn't go, as I thought to say in the q&a promo Taryn Roeder and I did for 11th Man--and we drove Butte, up hill and down, as she took pics of old neighborhoods and the headframes at the mine-shafts.

20 June--The first day of summer, 77 at 2:30 and no doubt heading higher, and I am on my 2nd dose of every-other-day Prednisone. Have just reported to C that the pit of my stomach doesn't feel quite right, and at her suggestion called ~~the~~ Ginsberg's nurse's line to ask if I ought to have Renitidine, which Dr. Eggert prescribed to palliate her Prednisone dose. So, things aren't bad, but this does seem to be a touch of what I dread about this medication level, that I am not quite myself.

This week--and this is Friday--I've managed to get back to writing on Work Song, each day except the medically lost 18th when I had to go to Capitol Hill Up Health for my first Pamidronate infusion and traipse through the procedure to be prescribed Thalidomide, which the pharmaceutical company understandably handles about like nitroglycerin. Once again, I went through the phone procedure of saying No three ways that I won't cavort with pregnable women. Morrie's trip with Sandison to Section 37 began to shape up reasonably today, and although as I've told C I'm getting tired--that may be part of the Prednisone symptom--I'm going to try to finish off 2 fresh pp., going back and forth between that and this.

Mainly the phone has been blessedly quiet, but there was a call this morning from Blaine of Hollywood, the message

20 June Cont. --machine reciting that he wanted to run something by me. As I said to C, just when I had written off the Whistling Season movie deal in slow-motion collapse.. What he wanted to run by me was a "slightly altered location"--Canada instead of Montana. I heard him out about the budget advantages of filming in Alberta, with the goodies offered by the federal and provincial governments, and said "Sounds fine to me. Scoop it in."

23 June--A writing day, peaceful, no phone calls. Over the weekend C and I got done an array of yardwork, including the delayed (by the housepainting) digging in of my tomato plants and her mowing of the lawn.

26 June--Well, it ain't easy around here, but we try to tell ourselves we're making progress. This morning, as soon as I put my feet on the floor the left ankle acted like I'd sprained it. I hobbled to the kitchen and through breakfast skipped walking the neighborhood with Carol and left the handling of the garbage cans to her, and came down to see if I could handle commuting between the typewriter and the computer. In a couple of hours, the ankle was mysteriously better and it's nearly normal now. Damned if I know what went on with it, reaction to all this medication or merely sleeping wrong on it somehow.

In any case, pretty much confined to the writing desk I've had a productive day on Work Song. I needed one, as y'day was necessarily sacrificed to chores, veg gardening first, then a haircut, then trying to straighten the damn office some, then a bit of correspondence. Meanwhile we're still amidst the painting, the smelly part, as C says--the deck paint y'day ill-advisedly coincided with Bob taking the living-room lower windows out to paint those, and he had to hastily put plastic over the openings when the odor seeped in. Now it looks as if another day and a half may at last finish the job. Hot weather is supposed to start about then, so it's going to be a near thing.

27 June--At some moment of this day, I become 69 years old. Nearly three hundred seasons on the face of the earth, and each season now is a medical measurement, my next assessment by Dr. Ginsberg nearly coinciding with the coming of autumn. Borrowed time, I have to see it as, given what myeloma would have done to me if it hadn't been assessed and curbed--for who knows how long--by the treatment thus far. Whatever is going on in the red war of my cells, I continue to feel fine, and have tolerated the Prednisone and Thalidomide combination all right, now nearly ten days in.

It is a spectacular blue day for a birthday, a few shy white clouds now peeking over the mountains, but all else clear and sunny, high 70s. Hotter weather is forecast for the weekend. This evening we go to the Damborgs, Mark and Lou having picked up on the fact that it's my b'day, and invited Linda Sullivan and Jeff as well. Good group, good friends. And tomorrow night we go to the Laskins'. Meanwhile the monthlong housepainting may be, maybe, drawing to an end as the garage door and front door are king being done, and the remainder of the north side of the house.

4th of July--A various day, with the weather now cloudy, now sunny, and maybe the household has fit the mood by tackling chores of different degrees. C has cleaned the house preparatory to our spate of company--Bill Lang and Marianne coming for ~~extra~~ salmon salad supper tonight, Linda Miller and Gabriel and Linda's traveling companion to Alaska for lunch tomorrow--and I spent 3 solid hours on the veg garden this morn, planting Jade bush beans as I always do on this day of the year, picking peas, lettuce, washing rain-thrown dirt off the newly painted siding along the herb bed, and so on. This is a Prednisone pill day, and I am somewhat wired--I think C has given me a few gauging looks--but am trying to use the intensity to knock off some chores. Workwise, the week has been okay, 8 pp. written amid a lot other stuff that seemed to pop up.

7 July--A good two-page start to the writing week, on a pleasant blue day, 72 degrees, our ideal. C helped me pick raspberries before lunch and we froze most of the season's first packet. Tonight, except for the salmon, our grill supper will be mainly from the garden, peas and beets, and always the bonanza of lettuces that make up our salad.

We had an ambitious social weekend, as C detailed in her diary, and now have the place to ourselves again. I would like this to be a strong week of writing, although to do so I have to guard against wandering onto the treadmill of chores. There's always my tendency to see tasks big and small as on the same scale of needing doing, and Prednisone doubtless intensifies that inclination. Thus far, the effects of the drug regimen are that sense of being an overcharged version of myself and more numbness in the left foot than I've had--I hope like hell the pills are having the potency they're supposed to against the protein cells.

14 July--I do believe this deserves noting: a payday of \$155,183 (less, of course, the 10% of my estimable agent). It's the signing advance on Work Song and Miss You...plus \$5,000+ of Scribner p'back royalties, and in this teetery economy is it ever nicely welcome.

18 July--End of the writing week, a productive one, and at last a crack at the diary. I'm working about as hard as I know how on Work Song---about 70 pp. worth, could be worse--and there's always going to be some loss of time, now, to the medical situation. I had the monthly Pamidronate infusion on the 15th, and it ends up wiping out the whole morning. And this time of year I'm always scampering to keep up with the garden. C just came in from a couple of hours of weeding etc. and sighed, There's just so much of it. Weekend weather is supposed to be good, so we have a couple of days to whack at it.

On the 16th, we met Craig Johnson at Ivar's bar for lunch, ahead of his booksigning at the Seattle Mystery Bookstore for Another Man's Mocassins. I've liked him, the bit we've crossed paths in Billings and Deadwood, and C and I had a good time with him there on the waterfront. He's bearlike, although not as tall as I'd remembered, not much more than me if any, and unbuttoned and funny. Said he has a Ph.D. in playwrighting from Temple (one of his

18 July cont.--students once asked, "What in hell were you going to do with that?") and 2½ years as a cop in NY's 23rd Precinct. Then, off to ranching in Wyoming, and on into writing mysteries for Kathryn Court at Viking, and along the way slapping himself alongside the head and marrying Judy, a buddy from Philadelphia days at Temple. He's plainly a keg of energy, and he knows how to write; we seem to have connected because when I blurbed this book for him I mildly--I hoped--nudged him toward trying fiction outside of the ~~genre~~ mystery genre, and he instantly wrote back saying I'd nailed him exactly. Without at all setting out to, and sure as hell not going the route of cultivating followers in writing workshops, I seem to be the elder statesman in a good small circle, the Davids--Laskin and Williams--every so often wanting to know at least some business stuff from me, ~~now~~ and now Craig J. along with Craig Lesley making up, I guess, the Craigs. It's not pontifical, we all kid back and forth, and I treat their work as seriously as mine.

All for now--we're about to sashay to a baseball game and the Paul Allen suite, fetching up with Betty and Roy Mayfield for a meal beforehand. They're great company, the only mar on the evening is how stinko the Mariners are.

21 July--Man oh man, life started to scamper today. Atop a somehow hectic morning when it was tough to gear up into the writing, here came a spate of good publicity news from Taryn:

- a PNBA gig
- a Shelf Awareness on-line interview
- a Book Page interview
- and an actually damn good Kirkus review.

Juggling like mad, I actually did get a close to normal amount written, too.

31 July--The end of July, bang and something of a whimper too, if the computer doesn't cure itself while I'm at this. The print function wouldn't work as I tried to get the day's work out in a fresh version, just as the insurance adjustor came to inspect the damages caused to the house by the shakings of the sewer project. Sigh. The day's writing went well, and I was on track to go smoothly into

31 July cont.--tomorrow's scene. Now it looks like salvage, and damnably, shopping for a new computer?

3 Aug.--Saved! The morning after the print function vanished, my doing away with several icons and rebuilding the desktop brought it back, same like ever. A reprieve, for however long.

All in all, the finale week of July was hectic but had some okay results:

--the ms work stayed on track, 2 pp./day, despite the yard crew here one day, the Pella windowshade guy tinkering away in the office another, the insurance adjustor going through the house with us looking over the construction-caused damages to the house. I'm now at 75 pp. of ms, with the feeling that it's going to get tougher from here on as pub'n of 11th Man comes closer. The inscribed book-selling outfit Daedalus, for instance, will take 500 copies if I'll sign that many bookplates.

--Just when I had again given up on the Whistling Season movie deal as having vanished into slow-motion collapse, Blaine Novak called to say he was about to have a phone round-robin with ten potential investors. In a followup, he told me the project has to have the cash in hand by Oct. 15 for a May 1 shooting date.

--Blaine enthused that 11th Man "was all over the Internet" and he'd love to see a reading copy, so C mailed copies to him and Guercio on the 1st.

--the property is greatly more tidy than it was, after Susan the Bamboo Guru and her helper Tim trimmed the big south hedge and cut down the pushy holly and laurel clumps there, and C and I trimmed the downslope hedge ourselves y'day morn just before the yellowjackets and bees got active.

--I did a 15-minute phone interview on the 29th with Columbia MO radio station KFRU, the guy there--David Lile--really quite good, fetching back even into the 100 Montanans of the 20th Century stuff to ask me how it felt to rank ahead of Evel Knievel and Ted Turner; "Showed 'em some dust, didn't I," I said.

--On the other hand, there was a phone call from Jack Kaleas, preternatural CPA and pension-plan planner, that will end up costing me at least \$2300--\$2000 to Jack's office to

3 Aug. cont.--"totally recast" my Profit Sharing Plan as the tinkering of Congress, Gatt, or the IRS ~~causes~~ causes every 5-6 years, and an infuriating \$300 reading fee to the IRS for the review they require, i.e. paying the goddamn federal agency for doing what it's supposed to do.

I see along the way I didn't manage to write of C's birthday and the nice events we came up with, although she has them in her diary. For a birthday "Present" I scrambled together a couple of CDs and a new skinny radio for the bedroom corner to replace the ancient skinny one that fit so well there. In the general July birthday night at the Rodens'--Jegn's, Lisa's, Carol's--Lisa said she thinks Coleman will wipe the floor with Al Franken in the Minnesota Senate race, alas.

Out in the world, the economy is lurching to hell, and the Bush ideologues' misfeasance of office crops out again and again. We both think Obama has an uphill battle to be elected, the stated or unstated refusal of so many whites to vote for a black guy handicapping him.

And in the world of my body? Not bad: some numbness, particularly in the right foot, from the Thalidomide, and some quivers from the ~~Predn~~ Prednisone the day after I take it. The one big question, of course, is whether this pill regimen is doing the job on the monoclonal protein in my blood; 37 more days until I find that out from Dr. G.

6 Aug.--Trying to do a dab better with the diary. Strange toasty weather this afternoon, the temp probably not going to come near the forecast 90, but the air heavy, with high overcast. It's 3:45, another reasonable day of work behind me; I'm now at 80 pp. of Work Song. The phone has stayed blessedly still, August in the land of publishing, although there can be an eruption at any time. C and I are doing some cleaning of house--hers actual, mine mostly paperwork--toward entertaining the Williamses and Kittles this Saturday night. We're still perplexed by the deck paint that won't set up absolutely firmly, and we spent Monday afternoon on Aurora Avenue trying to come up with indoor-outdoor carpeting or some other answer to allow us to have people in chairs on the damn deck. Finally came home with a couple of whopping cardboard moving boxes; spread out, they seem to make a reasonable platform. Other than choring, we are doing

6 Aug. cont.--all we can to enjoy the heart of summer, eating magnificently out of the garden.

14 Aug.--Hot weather--85 now at 4 pm on the lower deck--and hotter the next two days, with the Laskins coming for dinner tomorrow night. We're improvising, planning on setting up a card table to eat off of here in the downstairs, a cold meal of salad from the garden and chicken from the breasts I'm grilling tonight. We hope to cope.

Doubtless the main news since I last struggled to this diary was Becky's a few days ago, her report that Costco is taking 7,000 copies of 11th Man and possible a thousand beyond that, along with 3500 of This House of Sky as Pennie gives that another inning. Those are never hard-and-fast sales, but they'll sell a bunch of both.

And in the morning, I have the first phone interview about 11th Man, with Alden Mudge of Bookpage, calling from somewhere in California at 7:30. I utterly botched the agreed-upon date a week ago, simply never copying the date and time onto my calendar off a list of items Taryn at publicity had reeled off to me. (When I told Becky, she said "That's got to be a first for you!" Well, probably not the first dumb thing ever, but certainly a good clean no-excuses bumble.) Which means I have to get my head out of Work Song enough to sound rational about the book I've been done with for most of this year.

On Work Song, I've reached p. 88, the start of ch. 5, the wildcat strike. As is chronically the case, the pages come more slowly than I wish they would, but they are adding up. I have to keep reminding myself that some, maybe most, of the fretfulness I feel is medical--the medications themselves, and the possibly decisive Sept. 9 doctor's appointment--and rationally looked at, as C blessedly is able to do, things are going well enough.

18 Aug.--9:45 a.m., a moment to mark: Becky's assistant Tom just called with the news that the first printing of The Eleventh Man is 55,000. That's as many as Whistling Season ultimately sold.

24 Aug.--Our weekend has consisted to a considerable extent of 18 qts of berrypicking, mostly the lavish blueberry patch at the head of the driveway. Luscious food, reward for all our efforts at growing, this time of year; tonight it's steelhead salad with our own varieties of lettuce, Sun Gold tomatoes, and baby beans.

This afternoon turned genuinely rainy, so C read my 28,000 words of Work Song thus far, liked it, had no problem with the jostling cast of characters. So far so good.

25 Aug.--First day of wholesale wordage on Work Song, maneuvering lines on the computer into whatever scene they seem to fit at the moment. Am going to try to yank the ms ahead considerably that way in the next couple of weeks, before the medical appointment, before sending the first chunk to Becky, before the 11th Man season really heats up. I have the feeling of a great amount of things impending, after Labor Day.

Today the phone was blessedly quiet, I got in a strong morning's work and now about an hour at the end of the afternoon, with some garden work in between before it began to rain. C and I, mostly C, picked more blues, I think 6 pints. Progress, progress.

29 Aug.--Last weekday afternoon before the Labor Day onset, during which the Doigs will undoubtedly labor. Around us, at as much of a remove as we can keep it at, general life lurches on. Obama's choice of Biden for Vice President has us wary, likely considerable ability there but also a major mouth. At last Obama nailed his acceptance speech last night, insofar as we could see or hear. Today McCain picked Sarah Palin for the ticket, a wild card into the game. Here within the household, Castle Doig, our listening habits have taken a real nick today as CBC radio dumped familiar music show hosts, Eric Friessen of Studio Sparks, Jurgen Goth of Disk Drive. We've had ten years of grace of music from such shows, and we're probably now more on our own--CDs--for anything similar.

The tune of the typewriter keys, Work Song? Surprisingly good day of writing, nearly 3 pp. Everything still is looming in Sept. and Oct., but until it starts to envelop me I plan to try to make Morrie and his story.

4 Sept.--The week has been a slog, much as I expected it to be, but today I finished the Work Song summary to send along with the 95 pp. of ms to Becky and Liz, and earlier I hashed together the 20 min. Whistling talk for the Columbia teleconference. So, I believe I have the main chores done ahead of the medical conference.

Speaking of things medical: y'day afternoon, for no reason I can account for, the Prednisone effects cleared away from me more than they have for the past month or so, and I found myself with the sense of fret (about Ginsberg's findings and what treatment I'm headed for next) gone, and calm and clearheadedness in its place. The weather has turned gorgeous, around 70 and sunny, and I spent part of the afternoon in my lounge chair on the lower deck, relaxed as I have not been in a hell of a while.

Despite the nose to the grindstone, we have been blessed lately with friends, entertaining here three nights out of four. First of all it was Tony Angell and Lee, and while I thought things racketed along pretty much as usual, the next morning Tony called to say he had the feeling I'd had something on my mind...i.e., something to do with my health. C shook her head in amazement, as it seems to her no one can particularly tell I'm as medicated as I am. In any case, I told Tony I'm on medications and they blur my edges a bit. Then we had David Laskin over, while Kate is in Paris settling daughter Alice into her overseas year, all good talk that evening and the news that David we think has hit on a winner for the title of his book about immigrants in WWI, To Be American. Next night, Ann and Marshall, the monthly meal, here this time, by all evidence wowing them with our fruit salad dinner, off the property. So, there are wondrous things about our life, and may we eke them out longer.

7 Sept.--Fine mellow September weather, the latest of several days of low or mid-70s, blue sky, and a touch of autumn in the air. As C noted, we--mostly she--hosted blueberry picking this morning, and toward the end of the afternoon we'll walk down the block to the drop-in gathering at the new neighbors in Janet Munger's old place. C right now is back out front picking more bluebs--we're at 37 quarts in the freezer and counting.

As C tidily noted in her diary, 95 pp. of Work Song and 15 pp. of summary went off to Becky and Liz on the 5th, to reach them tomorrow. She sees it as grand progress, and I suppose it is, although what I mainly feel is how much is impending, with the 11th Man about to be in the world. (This had better be the week bound copies appear, if the publisher's plan to have copies at the PNBA on the 16th is going ~~xxx~~ to work.)

And of course what I mainly feel is the trepidation about the session with Dr. Ginsberg, coming on the 9th. About 24 hours from now, C and I will go to my Gp Health website to see if we can get the electrophoresis test results on the protein in my blood, so that we'll maybe be better prepared than in the session three months ago, when we walked in feeling fine and suddenly were overwhelmed with dire treatment scenarios. I full well know Prednisone generates the jitters, although apprehension ahead of a medical verdict also seems to me inescapably natural. In any ~~of~~ event, much of tomorrow has to be medical prep, and Tuesday will tell the next chapter of the tale, now $7\frac{1}{2}$ years since diagnosis.

9 Sept.--Medical ups and downs since the previous entry. When C and I went on-line for the test results, the monoclonal protein result had actually declined a bit (from .3 to .2) but, having checked back in my notes, it was the urine protein reading that disturbed him last time, and that had increased from 14% to 15% ("a little worse," Dr. G called it when we saw him today). That of course made me wonder if I was in for more intense treatment, chemotherapy or whatever, and given the jitters that Prednisone causes, I was apprehensive enough by the time of today's session that my usually sensationally low blood pressure

9 Sept. cont.--was 11/0/70. Thank goodness I had written out a list of the medications' effects on me--"this is good," said Dr. G., "I'm glad you did this"--and after looking it over and seeing the number of events on my calendar in the next couple of months, he thought his way around from taking me off Prednisone entirely for that period to halving the dosage, from 50 mg. to 25 mg. I start that tomorrow and am to e-mail him on the 15th to let him know if it has helped diminish the effects. (One element in his thinking, he explained, is that a person sometimes experiences a real crash in energy after coming off Prednisone.) The 50 mg. Thalidomide is already a minimum dosage, he said; the average is 200 mg. And he remarked that my dosage likely will have to go up "some-time."

So, again, expectations ended up not counting for anything. Last time, C and I walked into Dr. G's office thinking things were going fine and were hit with his concern about the rising urine protein level and various possible treatments. Today, when we ~~xxx~~ were full of foreboding, I ended up with less medication--which, a few days ago, ahead of the urine and blood tests, I told myself would be the best outcome I could hope for, against possible dire ones.

In short, reprieved for a while, at least the next 6 weeks until I see Dr. G. again, with the next test results.

10 Sept.--First day of the half-pill (25 mg.) Prednisone regimen, and I seem to feel less wired and edgy.

And I got back to writing. Fairly tough day, to make about a page, but it's a tough scene, Morrie's reaction to the bombed-out Anaconda pay office. With the 11th Man so close, any gain is good. On that front, no harm yet in early reviews. I hadn't heard a peep from the publishing house about the Publishers Wkly review, to the point where I suspected it was a bum one, but when I nudged out a fax of it today from the Houghton publicity office, it's perfectly okay, "an old-fashioned greatest generation story, well told."

And yesterday, out of nowhere, which is where C and I figured the Whistling movie deal had taken up permanent residence, a phone call from Blaine going rat-a-tat-tat down his list:

10 Sept. cont.--He's in touch with 12 to 15 "financers" looking at the deal.

--Three directors have been or are being contacted.

Merely Bernardo Bertolucci, Cameron Crowe, and Robert Redford. The craziest of this, of course, is B'lucci, whom Blaine ~~was~~ worked for as assistant--in the course of the phone call, he whittled that to "flunky"--on the long movie 1900, and so he's known that B'lucci has long been laid up with back surgery and, by Blaine's telling, he got a copy of the script into B'lucci's actual hands--"no agents, no lawyers, Ivan!"--and had a phone call from him after the first 35 pages saying "it's strong-a and beautiful-a." I believe it's larger than lottery odds that Bernardo B. is going to make a movie of my gentle book, but as C says, it's at least entertaining to listen to Blaine. He said he has a letter from Cameron Crowe (who actually would be our commonsense--we think--choice of the three) which he promised to pass along (and seldom) does, and meanwhile "Jimmy"--Guercio--is supposed to be working on Redford.

--And Blaine was full of Hollywoodese about the 11th Man, saying he had "tried not to read" the ARC I sent him, but gave in, did it in two long sessions, found "it sticks to your skin...gets inside your tear ducts" and from its message of courage, he got up his courage to tackle B'lucci with the screenplay. So there.

13 Sept.--What a week. It began with the tension over the medical conference, and buoyed from there to this morning, when I stepped out and found the baby left on our doorstep, the 11th Man in actual book form. By whatever legerdemain of paper, it is noticeably not as thick as Whistling Season, despite being 406 pp. to 345, and is an ounce heavier. Anyway, it looks very fine, and I am now going to have to accustom myself to its presence in the world.

Meanwhile, Work Song, which I did manage to write 4 or 5 pages of despite the week's medical distractions. Liz called the night of the 11th, saying the ms sample is "just terrific...compelling," she's "stunned again," the writing is seamless. Agentese for so far, so good, hurrah.

Sep 16, SeaTac, gate C24, waiting for
the shuttle flight to Portland and the
PNBA. Semi-nectic so far, my nerves some-
what jangled from medication, but I'm making
it. This morn went to trip preparation - ~~the~~
-except for a blessed stint in the veg garden
even picking tiny green worms off lettuce beats
air travel - and thank goodness I do not
face 40 or so of these events as on previous
book tours.

15 Sept.--This has been a beast of a day; the one thing that can be said for it is that I'm glad to have had the good luck a week ago, on the medical front, that what it would have taken on our finances today. We almost without doubt lost \$90,000 in the Lehman bankruptcy, and we may lose more if this cascade of Wall Street collapses keeps going. C and I are fairly calm about it, because our net worth is in the millions, but it is inescapably galling, that a preferred stock I bought way back there because Lehman was such a solid old unrisky firm went to hell as it did. And another disquieting fiscal moment when Becky called, with a generally highly positive response to the Work Song 100 pp., and I asked about 11th Man orders, and she wavered off into a general mention of "the economy," before saying "it'll be fine."

So, not a great day for the home team here. I managed a few small fixes in Work Song first thing this morning, and otherwise have spent my time getting together some talking points about 11th Man, in preparation for going to Portland tomorrow to the PNBA, and otherwise trudging through chores. I suppose the thing to do is keep telling myself, there was that medical good news.

23 Sept.--A pair of not very productive days to start this week, although y'day I did manage a few lines of characterization and description to add to Grace, the boardinghouse keeper, per Becky and Liz's wish to have more of her in Work Song. In half an hour, C and I embark for downtown and the teleconference with the Columbia, Missouri, audience that has read Whistling in that community's One Read program, so there's weird new studio territory ahead there. Meanwhile the stock market is still heaving and staggering, which we are trying to ride out.

On a personal level, we are doing perfectly fine, with an exuberant lunch and Starwood outing--Harvest Festival, in the drizzle--with Linda and Syd on the 20th, then lunch at Tony and Lee's y'day. Tony showed us the scratchboard originals of his quite nice illustrations for Bert Bender's Alaska fishing book, a dozen or so, and we marvel at his capacity for getting various kinds of art done. I gave Tony a heads-up that over the weekend his UW Press editor sent me her edited version of my intro for his

23 Sept. cont.--Puget Sound version, and when I looked at it and saw some niggle or more in practically every line, at Carol's urging I simply wrote back and said just run it the way I wrote it, thanks.

On the health front, I do better with the Prednisone effects on some days than others; this teleconference performance will be a test of how I do in public, I guess. Tomorrow, I am hoping for life to settle down so I can get back to actual writing on Work Song.

27 Sept.--Saturday, with a cloudy glum start to the day which I hope will wear off by the afternoon for garden work. I'm mildly choring in the meantime. Later today, we go to David Williams and Marjorie's open house and catch up with their report on their Siberian trip.

Last night we ferried across to dinner at the Nalders, a good evening, a good meal, although some news from Eric and Jan that has been tough on them--their daughter Britt has been diagnosed with lupis. As C noted, Jan and Eric look worn, and both have put on weight. Prednisone was a topic, as ~~Jan~~ Britt's doctors have been using it on her against the lupus; even the Nalders' dog is on Prednisone. On non-medical turf, Eric is deep in investigative reporting projects, and his digging on military housing contracts is going to be on PBS, on Bill Meyers' show.

The Whistling Season teleconference: it went okay, I guess, although the tech setup seemed surprisingly clunky from our end of things. Having to allow for traffic tie-ups and parking mystifications--the subterranean labyrinths that are parking garages are a bane to us--we got ~~thence~~ ~~into~~ to Two Union Square a little after 4, and nicely killed time in chairs in the lobby with decaf mochas until going up 42 floors for the teleconferencing, starting at 5. A guy led us into a conference room, with a not very prepossessing TV in the corner--no flat screen technology here--which split the screen into the Columbia library meeting room and the Fulton auditorium, with me in a smallish square down in the corner. The guy picked up a remote and started showing me how I was supposed to mute things and I said uh-uh, I can't be punching buttons while I'm making a serious presentation. So, the technicians at the Missouri end did whatever had to be done, and we soldiered through.

29 Sept.--A damnable day, the stock market crashing ~~xx~~ nearly 800 points. In a tiny bit of luck, we bailed out of Fifth Third bank stocks first thing this morning, salvaging some \$20,000 there, but there's no knowing how much the financial convulsion will ultimately cost us. C, staying level and aware it could be worse, points out we are debt-free and have a lot of liquid cash. I have trouble getting beyond being spooked, seeing years of careful accumulation beaten down, or worse, swallowed away as outfits go out of business. Somewhere between these attitudes, I suppose we will get through this.

2 Oct.--The financial crisis goes on, nobody seeming to know what they're doing except Warren Buffett, who is busy investing billions in preferred stock at 10%. We are sitting tight, to see what comes of the Senate bailout package.

Meanwhile the week has turned into chores. C and I just finished the signing and boxing of 96 ~~xxx~~ hardbacks of 11th Man for The King's English bookstore in Salt Lake. And I've had to get readings ready, which start a week from tomorrow night at Politics & Prose in Washington, and to spruce up a Whistling Season speech for tomorrow night in Edmonds. (At least there's some money--\$2,000--involved in that.)

Healthwise, I was feeling the Prednisone effects enough that I called in to Dr. Ginsberg at the start of the week, and he cut the dosage from 25 mg. to 20 mg. It seems to help, although there are still some jitters and mental dartings.

Tonight we're going over to the Laskins to watch the Biden-Palin debate with David and Kate. If anything good can come of the financial convulsion, it may be that McCain has lost ground. Polls show Obama with sizable leads in key states, and C just came down with the news report that the McCain campaign has shut down in Michigan.

Oct. 6--A draggy morning, due to the oscillation of medication. I began the day on the downslide of coming off day before y'day's Prednisone, and only now, nearly lunchtime, is this morning's pill picking me up and giving me some focus. I spent far too much of the morning fiddling with alternative leads to Work Song. With the Wash'n D.C. trip just ahead, and tomorrow a Pamidronate infusion day, it's going to be hard to get anything substantial done.

Later: and in the afternoon, things really went to hell. I came downstairs to a phone message from Taryn saying the Diane Rehm show had canceled our segment, unwilling to give airtime to "the arts" when so much else is going on in the news. As Taryn fumed when I called her back, "Stupid economy. Stupid Sarah Palin." So, that likely kills off the Washington trip, although I've put in a call to Becky to talk it over with her first. More to the point, it's a bad break for 11th Man, which already was not getting the run of luck that Whistling Season did. Somewhat on the other hand, Taryn had word from Bob Mintzheimer that USA Today is planning a review, as is Bloomberg News. The next minefield of apprehension is how the reviews will be. And meanwhile, of course, the financial world is still convulsing.

7 Oct.--Another day of financial slaughter in the markets, with consequences we can't be sure of here in our own bailiwick. We keep saying, thank god we had considerable assets to start with.

This was Pamidronate infusion day, which ends up taking virtually all morning. It went routinely enough; I napped or read the newspaper throughout.

Becky updated me this afternoon on what's being done for 11th Man, the Diane Rehm shutdown notwithstanding.

--37,000 shipped (5800 in stock, she says), nearly 10,000 more than Whistling had, so this book "has a lot more presence."

--At Borders, it has "lead bay" placement Oct. 14-27.

--At Barnes & Noble, it has "new hardback arrivals/ 20% off" placement until Nov. 6; then some discount dates.

--And it's to be in the PNBA catalogue.

All in all, though I lament for my independent bookstore buddies, given their low market share and the sales

7 Oct. cont.--results on Whistling, this still feels to me like the way to go, let the chainstores' muscularity do its work. Becky says the book "will stay out and be prominent," and "people still have to buy Christmas gifts." Meanwhile, she and the publicity people are "hammering on" reviews, Becky working on Robert Harris of NYTBR and Laurie Glazer on Dwight Garner there. There's to be a Wall St Journal review, which C and I think could go either way in that Murdoch rag.

So, my editor is somewhat sanguine, though as she said "We're used to being in a beleaguered business." Becky had a NY subway story, of sitting by a woman of about her age and style but "radiating tension" as she worked on what Becky figured was an unemployment form of some sort. What Becky could see was what had been filled in along the top: Previous position: vice president. Employer: Bank of New York. Salary: \$240,000.

13 Oct.--Publication day of 11th Man, long awaited, and now with much else going on:

- my blood test this morning, key to Ginsberg's next medical verdict on the 23rd.

- the financial chaos, which has wiped out probably the past 6 years of our painstaking investing.

- onset of the shortened but still intricate schedule of readings and signings; 3rd Place tonight, with a webcast interview beforehand.

- The Ackermans arriving, mid-afternoon, to spend 2 nights with us.

Luckily the weekend weather stayed dry, and I was able to plant lettuce seedlings and install the coldframes over 'em. The property is shaggy, but that's the way it is going to have to be during this busy season.

15 Oct.--We are back into the second season of painting, Bob and Kevin and Nick upstairs in the sealed-off living room, pounding and sanding away ~~xxxx~~ in repair of the damage the house took from the sewer project. The whole place is now an obstacle course, furniture stashed here and there and the hall closet with 35 linear feet of books from the central pair of bookcases stacked on the floor. At least it looks like a vigorous start on the project, however the hell long it ends up taking.

15 Oct. cont.--Kicking off this hectic week, I did the first reading of the (thank god) short bookstore season at Third Place on the 13th, to a mellow crowd of 250.

People in the bookbuying line afterward were extraordinarily nice, a bunch of friends were on hand, I was in pretty good command in my reading (and according to C and others, particularly so in the q-&-a), so it could hardly have gone better. A batch of reviews, led by Dave Shribman's very deft one for Bloomberg News, came in, no real harm in any of those either. So, life lurches on, with the emphasis on lurch in the financial world. I drew a bit laugh at the onset at Third Place by noting it was publication day of 11th Man, and "surely it can't be just coincidence that the stock market went up nearly a thousand points today." But today it went down 750, 8 or 9% shaved off a portfolio again.

Amidst all this we were visited by Jerry and Carol Ackerman, who thankfully were easy to have around. They were good sports about going to the Third Place reading and having food circus fare for dinner, and then y'day we managed--suburban hicks that we are--to tour them through the city a bit, to their tastes: the downtown library, the Stonington gallery where they bought a couple of NW coastal Indian prints (and we got hit with a parking ticket), and the Burke Museum, with lunch at Chinooks along the way.

18 Oct.--A rugged damn week, with an even more strenuous one coming. At the Eagle Harbor booksigning on the 16th, the crowd was as good as ever--75--but the bookbuying line was noticeably shorter than the past few times, as it also was at Third Place. There may be some countervailing effect as the economic pinch reaches people--they may do their bookbuying at chainstore discount tables--but I have the sense that The 11th Man isn't catching favorable wind in its sails as Whistling Season did. The book broke even in local reviews, which was actually better than I expected.

Mary Ann Gwinn's review had only a couple of quibbles, while John Marshall in the P-I didn't buy the plot premise of Ben being sent out on Supreme Team assignments; he huffed that he'd gone through Army public info training himself. Me too, as a skeptical enlisted man rather than an officer. In any case, John treated the book as if I'm a flatfooted realist, now allowance for

18 Oct. cont.--imagination; I doubt that in his military life he encountered anybody just like Yossarian of Catch-22 or Billy Pilgrim of Slaughterhouse-Five. In any case, the larger national reviews are supposed to come this next week, starting with the Washington Post tomorrow.

Meanwhile the painters are here and the living room is a tarp jungle, unusable. C and I hole up in the TV room a lot.

19 Oct.--Will try to get back to this diary later today, this comparatively uncluttered Sunday, but in case I don't, the main report is that the Elliott Bay reading/signing was a hit. Crowd of 75, which (sigh) is nothing like the jam-packed couple of hundred that used to come to the store, but Rick Simonson and the clerks were revved at having to set out that many chairs. Lots of friends there--C and I met the Damborgs for dinner at the Collins Pub beforehand; Laskins; David Williams and Marjorie; even my cousin Dave, who is looking more and more like a grizzly, wasn't much of a trial--and Rick himself did one of his inimitable

introductions, and in the reading and Q&A I felt I was on the beam as much as I can be. Even so, it was a fraught undertaking, with us caught in a freeway slowdown on the way to downtown and C having to navigate us cross-country; then the hassle of finding a parking spot in the seedy area (I was ~~kick~~ panhandled almost before I was out of the car, and I just paid the woman to go away); then afterward, the walk back to the car through that same shadowy neighborhood, and the steering wheel locked on C as she tried to start the car. Oh yes, almost forgot: in trying to navigate our way there, the Alaskan Way viaduct was closed--no way to get there from here!

22 Oct.--Whew, I think. ~~Saved~~ C and I went on-line for my test results, and both the urine protein and the monoclonal protein seem virtually unchanged or a little better. Everything depends on Dr. Ginsberg's reading of the figures, we too well know, but maybe so far so good.

Meanwhile life here is like dogpaddling through chaos, with one corner of the office tented in plastic where Bob the painter patched the worst of the cracks in the ceiling. Upstairs, Kevin and Nick are working on the dining room. We now have the living room back, thank goodness, and it

22 Oct. cont.--looks spectacular in its fresh paint and cleanliness. Elsewhere in the house, 272 books wait in the garden room for signing and boxing, the 1st edition batch consigned to The Alabama Booksmith in Birmingham. C is watching the commentaries on the latest stock market lurch--down 500+ points--and then we'll do the first $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. boxes of 16 each.

23 Oct.--My test results were indeed a reprieve, for another six weeks--the urine protein down a bit, the blood protein the same as it's been. And after my description of Prednisone side effects I'm still contending with, Dr. Ginsberg cut the dosage from 20 mg. to 10 mg; he remarked that there's a lot of medicine manipulation--which would probably mean an increase in the 50 mg. Thalidomide dose--that can be done if necessary, to keep the myeloma "from progressing."

So, a good day on the medical front.

31 Oct.--This rugged damn month is at last at an end, perhaps fittingly on Halloween. The financial debacle has cost us a lot, and almost certainly will hurt 11th Man's sales total. Meanwhile the painters spent 15 days in the house, the last couple incapacitating the office. And the Work Song scene I've been ~~xx~~ laboring on, Morrie in the mineshaft, has been a hard one. So I am ready for a turn of the calendar, am I ever.

For all of the upset in the house, and the seemingly eternal chores such as signing books and trying to dispatch them, some pleasant things have happened. The night in Bellingham, the 24th, when C and I were dubious about the Village Bookstore's radio show instead of a bookstore signing, damned if they didn't have a sold-out house--300 people--and a quite strong signing in the lobby. And two nights ago, we met the Damborgs for dinner at 10 Mercer (the meal service was shakey, with C's pizza arriving way ahead of anyone else's meal) and went to the Intiman for All the King's Men with low expectations, and it was a terrific show--as C said, operatic in scale. Also, as 11th Man reviews trickle in, there are some raves, and so far nothing toxic. USA Today may weigh in this coming Tuesday--election day, Pamidronate infusion day--and the NY Times Book Review the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

Nov. 3--The eve of the election. Polls are strong for Obama, although C and I are leery of Republicans stealing key electoral states as the sons of bitches have in the past 2 elections.

With the painters at last out of the way, I got back to regular ms work today and managed to finish the mineshaft scene, finally. Tomorrow, though, is another mostly lost day, with Pamidronate infusion taking up the morning, then voting, the daily walk, and so on.

Nov. 5--A page of some kind has been turned. With Obama's election--more to the point, McCain's defeat, the Bush legacy's defeat--this again begins to seem a country worth living in.

Nov. 7--3 p.m. on Friday, the close of another week of struggling to get any writing done amid all else that drains away time. At least today's task--the KUOW "Week-day" interview with Steve Scher--went well; he is laid-back but good with questions and timing. And as promised, Tony Angell called in, with the question he didn't get to ask at Third Place because I did not see him waving his hand--it was about how I drew on my high school football experience for the players on the 11th Man team, and gave me the chance to say that back then I loved to catch the football and so I gave Ben that touchdown pass in practice, with the line about his fascination with the grace of gravity that keeps a propelled object aloft, and the grasp of desire when the ball meets his fingertips.

12 Nov.--A day gray in just about every way, but at least the wild weather that was in the forecast a few days ago hasn't come. Tonight's event, the next to the last of the book tour, is at Town Hall, and I have zero enthusiasm for it, regarding it as another David Brewsterism whereby the writer works for nothing and he charges the customers several bucks a head. Add to that the continuing dive of the economy, which keeps taking down our financial holdings in a way we couldn't imagine. Given that this is a once-in-75-years calamity, maybe inadequate imagination can be forgiven, but it's still gut-wrenching to sit through, day after day. My pension plan accumulation is the hardest hit, with years of excruciating investment

12 Nov. cont.--work gone as supposedly safe huge enterprises go bankrupt and my preferred shares become worthless. C and I are thankful we piled up as much money as we did, and the house and all else is debt-free, but it's still a crappy feeling. On a lesser note, the 11th Man's sales total is sure to feel this national crimp.

Trying to grit past all this, I've managed about a page a day on Work Song this week. And a couple of nights ago, on the 10th, we went to Third Place Books' 10th birthday party and socialized in good style. Tony Angell and Lee were there and we spent some time with them. Our congressman, Jay Inslee, was there, and a Third Place staffer told me he'd exclaimed afterwards about getting to meet Ivan Doig. C and I visited a bit with Ron Sher, the brains and money behind Third Place, and as we were leaving, Jim Lynch ~~came on out~~ caught up with us and introduced himself; seemed like a nice guy, which would fit well with his good book, The Highest Tide.

14 Nov.--The 11th Man booktour is over, as of last night with ~~60~~ an audience of 60 at Parkplace books. The store sold out of the book, and struggling as it is in these hard times, I don't see how that last independent store on the Eastside can last.

When I called in to Taryn in HMH publicity to report, she said she might be getting an advance copy of the NYTBR treatment any minutes, and indeed she did and faxed it along. It's not a killer, which is always the danger there, and in fact is respectful, calling me the Gary Cooper of Montana literature. The reviewer, a New Yorker staffer, takes off on my dialogue/slang, which I cannot get past some of the critics this time; I would bet none of them have been in the military or grew up with Montana saloon talk in their ears. So be it. No harm, no foul, if maybe not a helluva lot of good, from NYTBR.

As C said this morning, this was the first day of the rest of my life, and I settled in fairly decently to the writing.

24 Nov.--I am having a hell of a time getting to the diary lately, the struggle with the manuscript or simply the chores of life eating up all the time. Just now I've left off signing bookplates for the Country Bookshelf in Bozeman to dab in this entry.

The ms work isn't going too badly, although slower than I want. I still may--maybe--be able to reach 150 pp. by year's end. Meanwhile there have been financial frets--this morning I redeemed \$50,000 from a mutual fund sheerly because the amount there has become too big a proportion of our diminished portfolio--and yard work when we can get to it, and so on. Saturday started off with a scare, when C's eye felt grainy and wouldn't stop watering. When the consulting nurse told her to go to Northgate for emergency care, physician assistant Rick Ehle found she had a corneal abrasion, i.e. a scratch on the eyeball. He put an eyepatch on her for the rest of the day and I dropped antibiotic drops into the eye for her twice a day over the weekend, and this morn she checked out fine with an ophthalmologist.

C has made a diary entry quoting Becky's report of how well The 11th Man started off this rough book season, at least, so I won't repeat that. The economic crisis the country is wallowing through is truly gruesome. One week the question is whether the auto industry will survive, the next week it's the giant bank Citigroup--and by dint of the preferred stock in my retirement account, we're on the hook for tens of thousands of dollars every damn time. So, this is qualifying as a year I'd like to have skipped: the protein threat in my blood came back, the IRS hounded us on a tax return, the sewer project gave us noise and house damage for months on end, and now, as a farewell from Bush and his bunch, whatever investment gains we painfully made in the last 8 years or so are vanishing.

25 Nov.--And I thought things were grim yesterday. I opened the NY Times business section this morning to the story that Houghton Mifflin Harcourt is not accepting any manuscript submissions. That looks very much like the first symptom of going out of business.

25 Nov. cont.--Later: Liz thinks HMH is not going out of business, thanks heavens. In the phone conversation with C and me, she said I'm in good shape because we're not bringing any book to them currently (and she told me not to be in any hurry on the next one--"lollygag on this one"--i.e., we don't want it published until the economy looks better, which C and I conclude might mean late 2010 or into 2011). She added that I'm a "known quantity" in the business. Now if the business will just survive in decent enough shape to recognize that.

1 Dec.--Every month and a half comes this day I dread, when I must check the Group Health website for the results of my protein tests. That will be done this afternoon, so as not to jangle the entire day. As of now, I am less jumpily apprehensive than sometimes, having realized that Dr. Ginsberg is flexible on my medication dosage--i.e., it seems he'll rely on Thalidomide and Prednisone rather than doing something more drastic. But if there's a sharp spike in either protein reading, all bets are off.

Meanwhile C and I both have dental appointments this morning, and both today and tomorrow (with its medical sessions) shape up as trudging from one chore to the next. Over the weekend, particularly on mostly weathered-in Saturday, I did get some ms revising done; as I told C, I hope I have speeded up the first 4 chapters of Work Song by adding five pages this past week. Y'day, Sunday, turned balmy and we did some yard work, mowing down the browning ground asters and then C pruning the hydrangea while I fussed over my coldframe lettuce. The afternoon was mild enough that I barbecued salmon for supper.

And now we have done Thanksgiving, 14 of us as noted in C's diary. Financially horrendous as the times are, our bunch did not seem moany or down-in-the-mouth. And thus far, healthwise we're all still up and going.

Later: the mail brought a kick in the gut: Dr. Ginsberg is leaving Group Health at year-end. Eight years of coping with myeloma, and all the understanding and short-hand we've built up, go with him.

Dec. 2--6:10 AM.--What a hideous sonofabitch of a day Dec. 1 was. After the news about losing my doctor, Becky called about 5:40 with the news that I'm losing her, too; she's resigned as publisher of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. So, on that front I'm now editorless at a publishing house that's up for sale. Back on the medical side, my urine protein test result--the crucial one--has not been posted on the website, so C and I are going to have to walk into the conference with Ginsberg unprepared.

Oh yes; and the stock market lost 9% y'day.

3:20 PM--The medical session with Ginsberg--sadly, damnably, the last one--did not bring dire news, although it was a mixed verdict. Both protein test results were up a bit (details are in my medical file notes) but not drastically; enough, though, that he increased my Thalidomide dosage to try to bring the levels down in the next test, 2 months from now. Steve, as he's had us call him, said how difficult it is for him to leave his Group Health patients--it's the first time he's had to go through this. He cited "Terrific stress" of this year, without giving us any details of whether that was bureaucratic or what, and said he'd simply had to decide what was best for his life. ("It's time for a change.") He did us one last Ginsbergian favor, handing me along to Dr. Chen even though the dept'l letter announcing Steve's leaving and the options available to his patients did not at all indicate Chen was a possibility for those of us wanting to do our doctoring at the Capitol Hill facility.

And then home to call Liz about Becky's leaving of HMH. What it comes down to:

--We'll follow Becky to a new publisher if we can. Liz on the one hand says she can't imagine Becky won't get a new job quickly, but on the other hand things are worse in publishing than she's ever seen them.

--Until Becky's situation clarifies, we'll stall within HMH. As Liz put it, the less I have to do with any editor I might become committed to there, the better.

--In connection with that, an insight C had, we agreed I'll ask Becky to send back or destroy the ms sample she's seen, so that version won't be representing me to whoever her successor is; as I told Liz, I've revised it enough, tightening it and giving it more snap, that it's probably 20% changed.

Dec. 8--A somewhat better day than usual in my medicated world, the sometimes rocky descent from the previous day's Prednisone not so rugged today, and I've had a pretty good writing stint. The world has not intruded, either, although the 11th Man sales chart I requested from HMH is even more disappointing than I was set for; if I'm reading it aright, the book won't sell half as many as Whistling Season. As C points out, and I've known, the book itself probably won't be really blamed, given the catastrophic season for booksellers and publishers, but it still hurts.

A good social outing on the 6th, dinner at Betty and Roy Mayfields'. The ripple of not great news there is that Paul Allen has not been well, getting a pacemaker etc.

Dec. 11--The days go, so much so into the manuscript instead of the diary. 4 p.m. now, Sunday, snow and 30 degrees outside. I have just handwritten a note of thanks to Tony for yet another Angell gift, an utterly charming small bronze weasel. We put on a crab feed last night for Tony and Lee just ahead of the weather getting tough--it was snowing by the time they left--and the food and the company was just great. The linguistic highlight was when Tony began telling us how he sometimes fantasizes before going to sleep, snuggling ~~under~~ under the covers as he imagines himself a mountain man or some such, and C and I hooted and chorused practically together, "Now I lie myself down to sleep, huh, Tony?"

With this big cold snap coming--the worst since 1990--C and I put frost blankets and tarps over the lettuce beds, and with snow over them they look like quonset huts seen from a distance. The freezing weather may last all week. I'm content to hunker in and write--have managed some progress on the ms both days of this weekend--but C is supposed to go out tomorrow to a party at Margaret Svec's.

Now for the record, my note to Tony:

"The winter light, the silver of snow behind it, just now is fully reaching the sideboard where Carol has put the weasel with the rest of the Angell sculpture menagerie, and the creature seems to be lifting its head to bask in it. As we are basking in the glow of your friendship. It is a wonderful gift, and a miraculously timed

Dec. 14 cont.--reminder of the lasting value of certain things--friends, art, good times--in a tough year. Thanks, buddy, yet again; we look forward (that's dangerously close to "foreword," isn't it) to more such times with you and Lee."

Dec. 15--The ice-cold morning is spectacular, jewel-like in its clarity. The mountains are skirted with snow all the way down to sea level, and the water of the Sound has a dramatic inky tone within the blue. Scenic compensation, I try to tell myself, for this bitter weather which may go on for more than a week yet.

18 Dec.--We've been snowed on solidly, 2" on the driveway when I just now stuck a yardstick in. In the past 15 minutes it has finally let up, about 3:30, and the far shore and foothills are showing up for the first time. We have hunkered in, C reading my revised version of the first part of the ms and 30 or so fresh pages beyond that, and I have pegged away at what I think is the 8th chapter, the Miners Day potpourri. After working myself blue, yesterday, reworking interior mood paragraphs, today I cut loose and did the parade description from sheer imagination and made some page progress. Being weathered in this way does direct me to work on the ms, although whenever I'm not, it's confining and boring. A day like today, though, the world outside is very quiet, and we feel lucky to be here.

21 Dec.--We are considerably snowed on, and snowed-in. 7:15 Sunday morn now, and I'll likely go out at daylight and knock snow off the suicidally limber rosemary plants and see what other precautionary gestures I can do. The truly good news is that we did not lose power, which was the threat given the strong east winds in the Cascade foothills. We left the furnace on all night, so the house temperature isn't bad, albeit with a little feel of chill around the edges. Y'day at 1, C and I took the Honda CRV, a quite sure-footed vehicle, and picked up Jean Roden for her to do her Christmas meals shopping at Central Market. \$188 later, we deposited her back home, hugely grateful; with John's old pickup apparently permanently defunct in the driveway, the Rodens' only rolling stock is their old Mercedes, which is a hog on ice. Now we'll see how things

21 Dec. cont.--eventuate by Xmas Day, when we're supposed to join the entire Roden clan for dinner.

22 Dec.--10 a.m., we're just back in from shoveling the colossal drift off the deck in front of the bedroom and the ridge of snow piled at the head of the driveway by the snowplows. Today is dry, the only day without some kind of tricky precipitation in the forecast. By now we have 8 or 9" of snow heaped on everything; the covered-over vegetable beds look like quonset huts. One of our daily chores still is to bat snow off the rosemary bush.

Hmm, well: Blaine Novak just called, wondering why he hasn't heard back on his request that the movie option be extended through 2009 without further payment. I told him to call Mike Cendejaus, he and Liz are supposed to handle it.

Christmas--In a little more than an hour we go to the Rodens for dinner and celebration, both of their daughters home with the spouses and grandchildren. The big snow is turning to universal slush, but at least it's not black ice--we hope.

We were canceled out of the much-anticipated holiday drink with the Mayfields and Hemstocks at some classy bar on Christmas Eve, all of us snowed in somewhere, but other than that we've fared reasonably well through the worst snow and coldest snap in a dozen years. C and I had our own holiday ceremony with a scotch before lunch and opening our modicum of presents, from the Nelsons and to each other--books, books, books, in blessed summary. And this morning I did some rewriting on the Miners Day scene, enriching it and gaining half a page.

Today's weather has been act after act in something Wagnerian, every little while a squall forming in the convergence zone northwest of us and then advancing over here to give us another shake of snow and some rain thrown in. There's another session of this forming over Kingston right now.

Boxing Day--3:20, with the Damborgs due here for dinner within an hour. The weather has turned to mostly rain and some sleet, but not freezing, so we hope they'll make it here okay from Capitol Hill. Our trip of three miles to the Rodens' last night for Xmas dinner was tricky; took three tries to get out of our driveway, and then the slush we encountered all along the way was slick. The Honda CRV came

Dec. 26 cont.--through for us again. The entire Roden clan was on hand: besides John and Jean, Lisa and Jerry from Minneapolis; Cindy and David and daughters Abigail and Natalie from South Carolina. Best line of the night came from Abigail, high school freshman. The table talk, which in that household scats all over the place, turned to music, and John, at 88 and hard of hearing, asked us at large: "Rap music, what is that about? Being black? Politics? Climate change?" Abigail said: "Girls." I heard a story from Lisa about her job at Cargill which tells a lot about this fearful economy. She's on a high-level committee in the company, 3 ~~of~~ members based in the U.S., a couple of others in Europe and one in Sao Paulo. To get together for their three-day meetings, they priced out various travel options, and found if they met in London, it would cost \$2,000 more than ~~going~~ gathering in Minneapolis but the Sao Paulo member because of a schedule conflict wouldn't make it to Mnpls. Lisa ran this by her boss and was told to take the cheaper option, and there was various corporate praise for saving that \$2,000.

All in all, a pleasant Christmas at the Rodens, and with the weather now turning rainy we're hoping to put the past two freezing weeks behind us.

28 Dec.--Rain is taking the snow, nearly all of it up here but still a lot on the ground down on 10th in our old neighborhood, we found on our daily walk. Y'day and today were the first outings in 2 weeks, because of the treacherous footing. I've uncovered the veg beds, also after 2 weeks of being igloored under frost blankets or tarps and snow, and things came through surprisingly well after that long deprivation of light--the spinach is pretty much okay, the Red Sails lettuce in the coldframes is probably 90% okay, the onion patch is not as utterly squashed as I feared, and there's still some Brunia lettuce, although that bed suffered the most.

The night of the 26th, the Damborgs braved the streets and came for Boxing Day roast beef dinner.

Today, Sunday, means stints of reading the NY Times, and David Streitfeld has a piece about on-line book sales--the Craigs List effect that's fatally subverting newspapers, really--that adds up to a rapid death of bookstores and, who knows, publishing houses? C asked me what I thought of the

28 Dec. cont--piece, and I asked the same of her, and I suppose what we conclude is that the "print is vanishing" trend that we're aware of is happening faster than we can keep track of or maybe imagine.

31 Dec.--This morning, Carol said: "Well, dear, it's New Year's Eve--we've made it." So we have, although there's been some ground lost in this hard year. Putting that aside at least for the day, I have buckled down hard and pounded out a final couple of pages of the Miners Day scene--a conclusion we are in charge of.

King County Council remarks, jan. 25¹ '08:

What a singular honor this occasion is for me--I have won some literary awards in my time, but never before have I been the first among floors.

And it seems to me a very substantial floor. Supportive of its citizenry. Open and welcoming to the distinguished floors above.

William Butler Yeats said/a poem/should close/with the click/of a well-made box--if we are lucky, that sometimes happens in the prose of life too, as it has for me, thanks to Bob Ferguson and the other County Council members. On a crystalline summer day in 1966, my wife Carol and I first drove into King County and Seattle across the first floating bridge we'd ever seen, in a gunboat Buick, our magazine editing jobs in

Chicago thrown away behind us like confetti, as we came west, to stay.

That stay began at the UW, where I began Ph.D. study on the history of the American West--and quite specifically, on its modes of government.

My dissertation was written about John J. McGilvra, he of McGilvra

Boulevard--the U.S. district attorney for Washington Territory when he came west from Chicago in 1861, and a lawyer and civic figure and

shaper of Seattle until his death in 1903. McGilvra's land claim was

what is now primarily the UW arboretum, including Foster's Island, and

the Lake Washington neighborhood for about a mile on southward from

Union Bay--Madison Street slices through the grid of First Hill as it

does because McGilvra had it cut through the forest as the road to his

house and his land.

So, that rather long-ago dissertation on "the life and times of an urban frontiersman," as I titled it, seems to me to be echoed now in well-made fashion in the click of this day and this ceremony. I am historically pleased to be the name ~~that will greet~~ people will turn past to go ~~at~~ the elevators to ascend through the constellation of floors of my fellow ~~king~~ ~~county~~ honorees. Thank you all.

7 Feb. '08

Dear Walt and Jean--

Here's a bit of pre-birthday entertainment, the full list of us 'floors' at the new King County office building. Isn't it awful that they didn't name the whole building after me and instead chose some guy named Shnook? Ah, well, one takes what one can get, I suppose. Seriously, it seems to me an "only in Seattle" list, mainly social activists, no kowtowing to big names--no Bullitt, Ellis, Gandy, Evans, Boeing, Gates etc. I'm the only artsy-fartsy one in the bunch, and again, no Hovahness, Hendrix, Kurt Cobain, Katims, Mark Morris etc. This came out of nowhere, with a phone call one night from Bob Ferguson, the King County Council member for our district, asking if it'd be okay to name the main floor for me, and I modestly said sure.

Well, to be continued when we see you at Chinook's (that name again) at 12:30 on the 28th. We're hugely pleased Walt could not think of anything better to do with the day.

Hugs and tickles,

Montana
June 2008

June 4, Wednesday to Missoula.
Stay at home of Lois Welch. (406) 549-6713.
cell (406) 360-2346

June 5, Thursday to Helena.
Research at MHS. stop @ Marcella's, lk over Dave's books
Stay at home of Marcella Walter. (406) 442-0306.
key in envelope taped to cell (406) 431-7963
inside of storm door

June 6, Friday MHS
exercise stop by MT mag ~~11:30~~ lunch w/ Flanders?

June 7, Saturday day trip to Deer Lodge (56 mi ea. way)

June 8, Sunday to Butte
exercise
Visit World Museum of Mining (if archives open Sun)
*Holiday Inn Express Parkside (406) 494-6999 or
1-800-465-4329
June 8,9,10. \$118+ senior rate
2 beds, NS, table and chairs. Cancel to 6 p.m.
day of arrival. Visa guarantee.

June 9-10, Mon-Tues. Butte Public Library. 9 to 5. 723-3361.
exercise 226 W. Broadway.
Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives and historical society.
9 to 5. 406-782-3280.
17 W. Quartz St.
Headframes. Mansion.

June 11, Wednesday To Spokane
Stay at home of Midge McGilvray. (509) 448-7441.
5904 S. Helena St.

June 12, Thursday arrive home