

Jan. 1, '09--Whatever this year brings--and it could be another harsh one--with this day's work of ms revision, I now have 60,000 words of Work Song achieved.

2 Jan.--An organizational day, as I outlined the next couple of chapters of ms. Ran a word count on the two scenes I have waiting to be fitted in--the mineshaft and Section 37--and it's right at 8,000, making the ms total 68,000 total. I hope I'm $3/4$ along in the writing, $2/3$ at least, and that I can nail this ms down not too far into the spring, although I have a feeling that life is going to turn hectic not very damn far into this year.

Today's was the best weather we've had in weeks, some blue sky and crisp air, although the high was only 39. We are back to our neighborhood walk each morn as soon as there is daylight, as we've been doing ever since the snow went off enough to let us.

4 Jan.--Just before 4, and the weather is moving in with the dark, rain with an occasional snowflake in it. It's been a quiet Sunday of newspaper reading (such as that is, any more) and I came to the desk in early afternoon to do some sorting of file cards. Have thumbed through the Work Song ms, and by damn it looks pretty good; now if I can get another 15-20,000 words done, I hope by spring.

8 Jan.--I'm putting in a determined and gritted week on the ms, so the diary is not getting much affection. C has been choring indefatigably, among other things writing the checks for our charitable contributions, some \$12,000 worth. The weather still has had us ducking down and enduring--Seattle got $1\ 3/4$ " of rain in the last 48 hours, and that was as nothing to other places; there's record flooding, and all 3 Cascade passes are closed because of avalanches--but we went to Shun for lunch on the 6th, a good change of scene and great grub. Apparently we're not going to gather ourselves up and fly to Tucson, neither of us quite enthused enough to make that happen. I worry that I'm a drag on us, that my medicated self doesn't have the initiative or sense of ~~XXXX~~ fun that would get us out of our grooves. On the other hand, the grooves we've worked out over the years here have a lot to commend them.

12 Jan.--It's still proving hard to get to the diary, and when I do, there's usually something ~~xx~~ grim about the world to put in it. Now it's the death of the Post-Intelligencer, 170 newspaper people out of a job when the putative (for sale" period ends in two months. It seems to have been done with classic press baron brutality, the New York guy coming to the newsroom, announcing it, and taking no questions. We've called the Nalders, and will meet them for dinner next weekend, to get Eric's take on this.

I spent the weekend figuring up our financial standing at the end of the year. Looked at one way, it's not too rough, our total assets down about \$85,000 from a year before. Looked at another way, that just totally wiped out my record income of around \$320,000, which would have been added to those assets in a less calamitous year, goddamn it.

We put that aside y'day to walk Green Lake with David Williams and Marjorie, a good break. They offered to help C set herself up with a new computer if she wants. She's thinking it over, with Comcast coming in a couple of days to put us on-line onto cable instead of the DSL and Earthlink that have been none too satisfactory.

What else. I have pegged away at the ms, got 8 pp. last week, persevered today to make another one.

15 Jan.--A couple of days ago, Wayne Arnst called from Great Falls to let me know Tom Chadwick has died. Tommy Chad, as Dupuyer called him, reached age 73, and as C said, he made a life for himself. It has bothered my conscience that for the past twenty or so of those years I have not been part of his life, but I could find neither in the situation nor in myself a way to do any better than that. On some trip into the Two Medicine country, we were in Choteau and aiming to Dupuyer when I said to C that I was already feeling overwhelmed with the prospect of dealing Tom into our days of research--he was always wonderfully obliging and eager, but around him I had to split myself into a kind of caretaker.

C told me I did not have to beat myself up about this, I was under no obligation back in Montana except to my work, and so we made trips to Dupuyer from then on without picking up Tom. Whatever I was able to give him in life, different as our mentalities were, was mostly back there in high school and just after, when I melded myself into the

15 Jan. cont.--Chadwicks' household and Tom's rough-edged buddies. Thinking back on this, it occurs to me I must not have known the meaning of tantrum, acceding to that unmoored existence as a kid as I did. I can't gauge whether it made me a better or worse human to divide myself as I did back then, running with Tom's brain-limited chums after school and with my classmates during the schoolday--by sheer accident of ages, the two never mixed, thank goodness. There were a couple of almost magically fortunate free passes that helped me through--Tom never touched ~~in~~ booze (I think out of his dad's drinking days) and so I didn't either, and my ability to outscore the rest of the school on standard tests won me an aura. I was smart but didn't show it off, and people seemed to appreciate that combination. In any case, Tom and I shared four years, and bits afterward. Looking back into Sky, I see I went past his mental slowness--the handicap was ascribed to some ailment in his childhood I never understood--gently and quickly, and that still seems right. He was sweet-natured, and if there were two of me, I would have stayed more in his life; as it was, I could not stretch myself so radically.

And, to the present day. The weather has turned murky, a daylong fog. I'm grilling chicken breasts, in a late afternoon about ten degrees colder than intended. Y'day C oversaw the rejigging of an ~~on-line~~ on-line hookup, with Comcast technician Chris stringing 75 feet of cable to her Imac, and goosing up our TVs with, what, the translator boxes needed in these digital times. On the writing side, I've toughed out about 4 pages this week, harder than last week for some reason. And now to go encourage the charcoal grill and the chicken breasts.

21 Jan.--George Bush in a whining helicopter and Cheney in a wheelchair, the makers of eight years of nightmare left Washington yesterday. The mood of everyone we are around, and the samples we see in the media, is that we know we're in for a hard time but at least Obama and his people won't be the Bush bunch. The inaugural speech was trim and well-done--a quick but pointed rebuttal to the last eight years in several ways--and the Obama luck held for the day, cold but sunny across the two miles of

21 Jan. cont.--people on the Washington Mall. The speech, interestingly, sounded even stronger on the radio than it had been on television, when we heard it again on our way to the Damborgs' for a celebratory supper. (Kay and Steve Frank also there.) During the network commentary, I laughed when I heard one of Clinton's old speechwriters praise the down-to-earthness of Obama's language, saying there were no "reversible raincoat sentences"--i.e. Never fear to negotiate...but never negotiate... C and I were both elated with the coming of Obama, who we know will make mistakes, do things we disagree with, may not be able to pull this country out of the disastrous downslide, but who won't consciously set out to make America into a banana republic, as Bush and Cheney did.

24 Jan.--I now have 180 pp. of Work Song ms, plus another ten tucked away in the Section 37 scene. So, I am fairly far along with this book--we'll see whether 240 or 250 pp. will do it, on this one. It was a choppy week of work, with the day off for the inauguration, and the urine test and blood test intrusions. And I will lose at least a morning each of the next couple of weeks, to medical doings.

In about an hour, the Davids and spouses will be here for dinner, in a celebration of their completed books--David Williams' Stories in Stone, David Laskin's WWI book. David W. and Marjorie were here y'day afternoon to help C with her new Apple computer, and me with my on-line Social Security application.

As to a status report on myself, I suppose I am so-so; sick of being medicated. C tells me I am managing perfectly well, and I know I am functioning, but the constant awareness of my mental state (which I think is caused by the Prednisone; the numbness in my feet from Thalidomide is another matter) is aggravating. Thank goodness I have the writing to put my head to.

26 Jan.--Some bright news from Liz today, Recorded Books taking my audio backlist--9 books, 10?--for \$9,000 advance. That was nice to come home to, after my monthly morning of Pamidronate infusion.

27 Jan.--A big galloping day:

--Liz called at about 8:30 this morn with the news that Becky is now the editorial director at Riverhead, Viking Penguin's big imprint. C looked it up on-line and the list of writers goes around the bend of the earth, from the Dalia Lama to Walter Mosley to the Kite-Runner Hosseini to the ghosts of Kerouac, Cobain, and William Golding. More to the point, there've been frequent bestsellers. Now Liz and I see if we can tiptoe over there.

--Also this morning, an avuncular Mr. Wilson called from the Social Security Administration, making only passing reference to my Certification of Military Service (instead of the hard-and-fast military discharge I wish to heaven I could produce) and instead asking with kind concern just when I would like my monthly payments to start. We worked out that for maximum benefit of my turning 70, July will provide the first payment, which by his estimate should be \$2,540, a tidy \$30,500 a year. The lack of hassle there gives me a major sigh of relief.

--And John Updike died today. Of cancer.

2 Feb.--What I hope is the magic phone call from Becky came today. As her husband Marshall said, "75,000 lose their jobs, and you get one?" Indeed she has, in this hellishly tight time in publishing, and I told her to go ahead and start getting me over to Riverhead with her if she can.

The other big news of the day: my blood test results, on-line, look slightly improved (urine protein) or no worse (blood protein). Tomorrow, the new doc.

3 Feb.--Reprieved again, on the myeloma front. Dr. Chen considered the test results good enough to continue things as they've been and examine me again in 2 months. C and I liked him, and he was both frank and reassuring about laying out the treatment options ahead. More about that anon--it's late in the day. Suffice to say, \bar{u} my spirits are much lifted. Today's trend, as Dr. Chen put it, makes it more likely I can survive this year without drastic measures.

8 Feb., 10 AM--Foggy across the sound, and I'm a bit jumpy and unfocused, coming off y'day's Prednisone. Will try to get something done today, whether it is only small editing nicks in the ms. I took a look at our finances y'day, but stalled out on any fresh course of action. The country's situation--twenty thousand people a day losing jobs last month--is nosediving so sharply that nothing seems to make much sense except to keep as much in cash as we are. Last night we had a good evening at the Angells'--they cooked a goose, and there was joking about it taking so long that they'd cooked their own goose--and Tony's report on the Santa Fe gallery that handles his work was all too significant of the times. He said the gallery has laid off 20 people, added another 5% to its commission, told the artists they have to bear more of the catalogue costs etc. And he'd had a phone call from the gallery manager saying a couple wanted to buy Tony's jade owl sculpture but also wanted a 20% discount. Tony reluctantly OK'd the deal, and mentioned to us that he has "a lot of inventory" at the moment.

14 Feb.--Valentine's Day, and I suppose the gift to us is that we came through last night's rear-end collision without discernible harm, although we're both tense-necked. We were on our way to Book-It Theater at Seattle Center, C driving the Civic, ready to make the merge off Greenwood at the 145th St. intersection, when we got a hard jolt from behind. In the VW Golf were a quarter of a ton of boys without a brain among them; the driver, George Raymond, repeated that he was sorry, sorry, sorry, and we took the insurance info and phone number etc. and went our way. This morn we've just had a look at the rear of the Civic and found only one ding where the paint was scraped off, so C thinks she'll just forgive the incident.

With that distracting start, we went on to Seattle Center, overshot the parking garage, and as we turned the corner swearing as we started to circle back, there was a parking place on the street. Walked past the base of the Space Needle to the Center House/Food Circus and had a decent serviceable meal at the Seattle Center Bistro as recommended by Patricia Britton, our contact at Book-It. We found Patricia in the lobby for our free tickets, she introduced us to Myra Flatt, one of the theater group's founders and movers and shakers, and we saw and were quite

14 Feb. cont'd.--impressed with the production of Moby-Dick. We shall see if the professed interest in staging one of my books--Prairie Nocturne was mentioned, and that would be my pick--ever comes to pass.

Given the Book-It expression of interest, I've been re-reading Prairie Nocturne and, who am I to say, but I find it a gem. The prose is distinctive, the atmospheric ring true, the characters are alive on the page, the pacing from scene to scene is expert--C and I have always been mystified that this particular book didn't get the notice we think it deserved. To me, it sits there in quiet glory.

As to Work Song, I spent this week working from the back frontward. I skipped to the final scene, so it will have time to settle in the mind, be tinkered with, whatever is needed. Then I went to Morrie's last scene with Sandison, who seems to be my favorite character to write in this book. I'll likely spend the next couple of weeks on the song sessions in the library basement, tricky to bring off. I'm at the point of feeling the completion of the manuscript, out there within reach.

21 Feb.--Saturday afternoon, supposedly on the brink of the weather bringing some rainy days instead of the longish dry spell we've had. C and I have put in afternoons of yard work; y'day I planted the first batch of peas, and I've been trying to nurse lettuce seedlings along.

Meanwhile I wait to hear from the publishing world. Liz had a phone message from Becky on the 17th, from an airport on the way to Florida, saying she'd be back in touch. I've heard nothing since, which I can't consider good news in the attempt to follow Becky to Riverhead.

And it was a pretty tough week at the skunkworks, the daily wordage harder and shorter than it should have been. I think I've solved a couple of transitions and some pacing, and maybe can make quicker tracks this next week.

On the 17th, we had a splendid trip to the Skagit, where the snow geese were east of Fir Island, and we got to see them take off en masse, a great undulant cloud.

23 Feb.--Y'day we went to the Walkinshaws for the celebration of Walt's 92nd birthday. We were quite flattered to be included in the family gathering--Chuck and Vicki, Meg and Larry and high school son Loren. Vicki cooked a sensational paella for the occasion, and there was much good talk. By now, though, Walt is confined to a wheelchair and much slowed down in speech. And I wonder what it is like for him mentally--whether he is still quite sharp inside the head and can't get it out, or life has slowed him down grievously there too. He has been a fine friend, and obviously adored by everyone in the family. C and I figured out he was born in 1917; was in Washington in the late years of the New Deal; and then on an escort carrier in WWII. Irreplaceable history in that good man.

26 Feb.--We woke to snow, which by now--late afternoon--is mostly gone. I managed to pick spinach and kale for a fruit salad supper.

On the 24th, Myra Platt and Patricia Britton came from Book-It Theater to talk about putting one of my books on the stage. C and I steered them toward Prairie Nocturne, and we'll see if anything eventuates.

I know the complexion of this diary has changed, short entries of this sort. I hope it's a temporary condition caused by the ms work, which is exhaustingly tricky right now--the penultimate section that has to line up the songfest, the disappearance of the feared Wobbly organizer, the Chicago letter that could spell doom for Morrie, and so on. I took some time just now to list out the sequence, and I think it may work. In any case, that's where the energy goes that would otherwise come here.

2 March--By now it feels like a brute of a day--4 p.m.--but I've managed 2 pp of manuscript. It must have been a good omen at the end of our morning walk, when we came down the hill with a colossal rainbow arcing over the house.

3 March--One more time, the trapeze somersault has worked, and I have ended up in Becky Saletan's hands again, this time at Riverhead. On this, her second day on the job! Liz called mid-morning to run by me the payout adjustment R'head was asking for--"it's the way they do things over there"--which was no small item, deferring \$25,000 of the ms delivery payment to the payment on publication, but I felt it was worth it for the new publishing prospect and continuing with Becky. Later today I left a phone message for Liz telling her I hope to have a full ms by June 1, info which Becky will tug out of me in her ~~xx~~ first phone conversation.

10 March--We're partway through an oddly crammed social 24 hours. Dinner with the Nelsons at Chanterelle in Edmonds is ahead, but meanwhile:

--We had lunch at the Angells', Tony carrying through on his notion of getting us together with Bill and Marty Holm. It makes for a distinctive occasion, all right, given Tony's artistic stature and Bill's role as wizard of Northwest native art. Bill is 84, Carol figured out, and uses a cane because of a balance problem, but also has a back problem after a bad fall some months ago. Nonetheless he navigates okay and is still mentally sharp. Marty meanwhile is as C says a livewire; she was just back from a skiing trip to Kamloops. The two of them are a charming little matched set; Marty comes to my chin, making her about 5' tall, and Bill is a few inches more. His white hair is long, and the part is nearly the same as hers, so that even their heads from the face back are matched. Bill uses a handsome cane ~~with~~ carved with a creature head and abalone eyes; the wood is Osage orange from Marty's family's farm back in Illinois. Finale of the exceedingly pleasant gathering was Tony showing us his taxidermed Ivory-billed woodpecker and the clay model he's made before making the stone carving.

--Last night we went to Third Place Books on 65th, for the meeting of Ron Sher's book group which had read This House of Sky. Nine men, all in their 60's or 70's--a couple of retired Foreign Service officers, a couple of lawyers, Gary Zimmerman the former mayor of Bellevue, Robert Anderson the former mayor of Everett, Jim Street

10 March cont.--the former Seattle councilman, and the like. They definitely had all read the book, and had intelligent questions. The meeting was in Ron Sher's hideaway office in back of the pub beneath the bookstore, a jewel of a room built out of the wood from one old-growth Douglas fir.

And while we were out last night, a phone message came from the president of Carroll College in Helena wanting me for an honorary degree in May. We'll have to see about that, what all they want.

19 March--Catching up:

--Becky was heard from y'day, in her new spot as editorial director of Riverhead. She sounds okay with the settling-in process, although the Penguin group is a huge outfit compared to poor old Harcourt. There just had been a companywide gathering to hear from the head of the whole international shebang, John Mackinson, and the U.S. chief execs, Susan Peterson and David Shanks, and Penguin hired the Great Hall at Cooper Union to hold everybody. Becky says it's a well-oiled publishing house, proud of not having laid anybody off in the bloodbath that's been going on industry-wide.

Surprisingly, she said the Riverhead list is not big, about half the size Harcourt's was. I asked if I was absolutely safely aboard with her even though I haven't seen any paperwork, and she said I am, the hangup has been some negotiating with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt over the interest it wants on my advance. When I told her I hope to send her the manuscript in June, she ~~wasn't~~ didn't even bother to act surprised--it'd only be a year ahead of schedule--and said, We'll publish it in the spring, i.e. 2010.

--Along the way Becky ~~was~~ asked how 11th Man had done, and I said I'd been keeping my head down and not inquiring but Liz would know; Liz passed the word to both of us today, 48,000 before returns. Damn good, I say.

--On the 17th, St. Patrick's Day, the Post-Intelligencer went out of business. As C says, we never could have imagine we would see the death of newspapers during our lifetime.

We've since heard from Eric Nalder that he's landed on his feet as prime mover in a Hearst investigative team, but about 150 other P-I staffers are out of a job. C has put into her diary what I will bashfully repeat here, that John Marshall in his final books column cited me as "Grand gentleman of

19 March cont.--Northwest letters...Still sending type-written notes after all these years." That trades on legend, as at least my last missive to him was nicely done on the computer, but I'll take the halo.

--The property: Susan the Bamboo Guru came y'day with two guys and trimmed back the bulging escallonia hedge by about half, and did away with the sprawly stickery hawthorn tree at the fence. The place is the better for it all. As the weather wasn't bad, in this run of cool showery days, I planted the insurance peas I'd started in the garden room; wouldn't you know, the batch I seeded in the ground on Washington's birthday finally started showing up after I germinated these others--in this weather, it took them $3\frac{1}{2}$ weeks to appear instead of the usual 2.

--On the social side, David Williams and Marjorie came up Sunday morning and we waited out the snow and rain squalls until we could get a shortened n'hood walk in. David's about to put in a book idea or two, now that his Stories In Stone will be out soon. And on Friday the 13th, the other writing David, Laskin, ~~was here~~ and Kate were here to report on their 3 weeks of travel in Spain and Italy. We had invited them for drinks, so C and I had to not show our gulps when Kate arrived with a bottle of wine as their contribution toward dinner; by the reverse luck of Fri the 13, C had a crockpot soup going and we maybe carried off the occasion without undue fumbling.

--The Carroll College honorary degree: it's a go, they don't want a commencement speech, just a few minutes of remarks. C at the start of this week spotted the fact that seats were going fast on the Helena flights we want, so I chucked that information into the prez's office.

--Lastly, damnably, nationally: Obama is getting hit with what I was afraid he would, doing his utter goddamnedest and all in all doing it quite well, but events starting to swamp him. He's going to be lucky if the AIG bonuses aren't the bog for him that gays in the military were for Clinton.

27 March--I am beat, 3:45 on a Friday and a titanic day of writing, but let it be recorded: I now have a full draft of Work Song.

28 March--A day of rain, and we have hunkered in, C working her computer in behalf of our intended Oregon trip in June while I began a go-through of the manuscript. Getting Work Song to where I want it may be more of a task than I'd thought, given that I spent a lot of today on the 11-page first chapter that I had regarded as being in pretty good shape.

Y'day, the night of the historians; we went downtown to the Union and had dinner with Richard White and Beverly Purrington and Elliott West. The instigator of this, Patty Limerick, meanwhile was snowed in in Colorado. The others were in town for the Organization of American Historians convention--we hadn't seen Richard for a couple of years, Beverly for several, and hadn't met Elliott, who turned out to be a wonderfully straightforward decent guy. Richard remains a great piece of work, singular, sharp-faced and hair as long as Bubbalo Bill's (although at 61 it's good and gray). He still exults in teaching a big American history survey class at Stanford--"for that hour, the 19th Century is mine." Told a good story, too, of visiting his mother's Irish relatives and his uncle John remarking that he'd heard things were dear (expensive) in America. Mishearing just a bit, Richard turned professorial about how many deer there were in America... Both Richard and Elliott, like the rest of our friends, are dismayed at the wane of print. Elliott, from a newspaper family--his father was an editor at the Dallas Morning News--said he can't imagine not having a cup of coffee over a newspaper. Richard said books are tools to him; he gives away new texts to students and uses his faithful underlined ones. He writes "use" in the margins next to something that catches his interest; Elliott jots "GS" for "good story" and "CQ" for "good quote," and writes in the back of the book any words that have intrigued him.

2 April--A working week, hunkered in out of the dank weather, with the nice prospect tomorrow of lunch with Betty Mayfield and Paul Allen's uncle, John Grubbs. The ms is shaping up--it damn well ought to be, given the whopping days of work I'm putting in on it--although I

2 April cont.--don't know if Morrie's story can ever be as flowing a read as Whistling Season. Just do it to the maximum and see what eyes other than mine think of it, as always.

9 April--^Reprieved again. My blood and urine test results were okay, and Dr. Chen today said we should keep on the course we've been, with Thalidomide and Prednisone. I did him a list of side effects that plague me, but the only one to be tackled is the stiffness in my right hand, which I'll see a physical therapist about in the morning.

So, the overall news is good; I'm not yet afflicted with full myeloma. Life goes on until proven otherwise.

The health watch aside, it has been busy around here. I'm still making rewrite strides on Work Song, and the phone has been ringing--no to the U. of Nevada for its Laxalt lectureship, no to Penguin for a foreword on a Stegner paperback, and so on. On the 7th, I did a long-scheduled phone interview with the president of Boise State, Bob Kustra, which went very well--he's an adroit radio performer. Last night, one of our fine monthly meals with the Nelsons at Chanterelle, good food all around. And so it goes.

18 April--The day after a fine 44th anniversary, with our mellow mood a bit discolored this morning by a power outage in half the house, conking out the refrigerator, the freezer, etc. Ted Mager is coming up to take a look at the situation, so maybe we're on the mend from that.

Yesterday we celebrated with David Laskin & Kate O'Neill, also married on April 17 (27 years ago), on Dungeness Spit, a perfectly fine hike after a spritz of rain just as we started. We also took them shopping at Swain's general store in Pt Angeles, then a lunch of hotcakes and eggs at the Oak Table in Sequim--a medley of the Doigs' old favorite places on the Peninsula. And David and Kate amended our plan to take them to dinner at Olives in Edmonds by fixing a chicken dinner at their place, a wonderful evening.

Otherwise, we've each had a bit of medical tinkering, not serious in my case--some hand exercises from a physical therapist after my right hand acted up during computer hours on the manuscript--and I hope not ultimately serious in C's:

18 April--she had a couple of spots removed from her face, and the biopsy on one indicates it will need further surgery

And on Work Song, I am going over the last two-fifths to give it texture and make sure the arc of plot holds up. It's coming along okay, although the schedule ahead has some choppiness that bothers me; Monday I'll lose the morning to the monthly Pamidronate infusion, and in the last week of the month I'll need to fashion my remarks for the Carroll College honorary degree ceremony.

22 April--The start of the week was indeed choppy, with the Pamidronate infusion and the aftermath of Saturday's electrical miasma, which turned out to be a break in one "leg" of City Light's power feed to the house. The damned break is under a corner of the brick patio outside the kitchen, so there's been some back-and-forthing about how the bricks are to be got up and the hole dug, but this morning the City Light rep John Likes--who by happy coincidence is reading *The Whistling Season*, and once went to a one-room school in Kansas--called to say a crew will take care of it, no charge. Meanwhile we have a big black cable strung from the street and, we're told, free electricity.

Today and y'day made big steps in the manuscript, though, some 35 pp. polished up. I have 50-some to go, chunks of those needing quite a lot of work. C remarked during y'day's walk about the value of my "recasting" a ms this way; she gets it about what I'm doing, even without looking over my shoulder, bless her. As to how *Work Song* is shaping up, I'm pretty pleased with the quality of the language, less sure about the snap of the plot. We'll see.

A rude reminder of mortality this morning during our walk when Yolanda Stein and her daughter pulled over in their car and told us Marvin has died. The Steins, like us, have been neighborhood fixtures, walking up to the QFC and then strolling home with their cups of coffee. Marvin was 75 and seemed in good health--unnervingly, he was built like me and so resembled me even unto the beard that he joked he sometimes was mistaken for me and took advantage of it--but as we have the story, some weeks ago he came down with the flu, it became pneumonia and then double pneumonia, and then some mysterious infection. He was in intensive care, unconscious, for what must have been a month. So, a nasty stroke of fate, and the reminder that it comes out of nowhere

4 May--And now it is May and a turn of season, in a number of ways. This morning I've batted out what I hope is going to be my few minutes' of remarks at the Carroll College honorary doc occasion. I did so with the good knowledge that I have a full run of manuscript of Work Song, and am at the point of polishing, polishing, polishing. C is to read it when we get back from Helena, i.e. next week, and I'm on track to send it to Becky and Liz by June 1. So, whatever the hell the next medical verdict is, Work Song should be able to find its way into the world for sure now.

These past couple of weeks, swine flu has rampaged in the news; in answer to my e-mail query about whether it's smart to fly to Helena and shake hands with hundreds of people in these circumstances, Dr. Chen says it'll be okay, use Purell etc. So, we'll see.

On the social front, Saturday night we fed the Damborgs rib roast, and the week before, a crab feed for Tony and Lee. Y'day we met David Williams and Marjorie at Carkeek Park. David is getting great good early signs on his book, Stories in Stone--he had a dandy Kirkus Review to show us--and we're thrilled for him. He did the full marathon of research and writing, and by damn he deserves all the reward there is for his craftsmanship.

11 May--"Scholar of the American West, Author of Life... Doctor of Humane Letters"--according to Carroll College, that's me. We had a perfectly fine trip to Helena, where Tom Trebon, the Carroll prez, handled everything with a great amount of grace. Marcella, who was with us for it all, noted that he has that really rare skill of speaking extemporaneously with never an "uh." The finale of the long day was at Tom and Scottie's place, i.e. the Carroll presidential house, with him presiding in the living room as Father O'Connell of Catholic U. and Diane Evans of the Vietnam Nurses Memorial and I were presented with copies of Bob Swartout's history of the college. As I told C afterward, right then I was around more priests than I'd probably seen in my whole life. I simply called everybody "Father," even, I'm afraid, the bishop. Anyway, as Trebon listed "the Fighting Saints"--the Carroll football team has been NAIA champs an astounding 5 of the past 7 years, I think he said--and "the Talking Saints"--the debate team is the new national champ--he came to the point, with

11 May cont.--this degree, of welcoming me as a Saint. I exclaimed that I'd always wanted to be one, and who knew that it was this easy? The big personable pastor of Helena Cathedral, Kevin O'Neill, said I'd beaten Mother Teresa by a lot. So it went, a fine day often very funny, and I continue to be amazed at how much leeway me and my books are given. Not once did anyone squint at me and ask, "And what is your own religious persuasion, Dr. Doig?" C tells me I was invited to lend lustre to the college's centennial hoopla, in economic hard times at that, and I suppose that's the case. But I'm still amazed.

Some moments:

--Tom Trebon wears a large ring, indeed much bigger than anything on Bishop or Father O'Connell, and O'C spotted it and said he almost felt compelled to kiss it, what was that ring about? Trebon explained it's a football championship ring, and said he'd been on ~~an airplane~~ a plane trip where his seatmate wanted to know the same thing. Perking right up when told, the seatmate asked, "Are you the coach?" No, said Trebon. "Are you a scout?" No, said Trebon. This went on until Trebon owned up to being president of the ~~school~~ college. "Oh," said the seatmate and dropped ~~the topic~~ all interest.

21 May--Work Song is on its way to New York. The past ten days have gone to combing through the ms, making it be what I want it to be, with C eventually reading it over for me. Book #13. Phone conversation with Becky this morn, in which she reiterated that she intends the book for the spring '10 list. This will be interesting, getting published by the mammoth Penguin outfit after the small scrappy Harcourt operation.

Earlier this week I called Liz to nudge her on any contractual paperwork to cover this ms before I shipped it in (Becky explained that in Penguin's way of doing this when an author changes publishing houses, the contract simply changed hands; probably the only p'work I'll see will be an amendment on the changed payout schedule), she also had the news that \$18,000 in royalties from HM Harcourt are on the way.

And just now, C in celebration has come home with $1\frac{1}{2}$ of Copper River salmon.

24 May--Sunday of Memorial Day weekend (although C and I find it weird that the holiday comes as early as the 25th), in this span of wonderful weather. The past 3 or 4 days, we've worked outside in the mornings, then propped up and read or done some gentle work in the afternoons. C just now (2:5) has gotten established in the big green Citroen-like lawnchair I bring out onto the downstairs deck. I'm mildly doing a bit of ~~office~~ office-cleaning and starting to think of the schedule on through June. I suppose I've been slightly bereft in not working on Work Song, as I've done damn near every day for the past year or so, but surprisingly quickly--and coldbloodedly--I see the manuscript as being in Becky's hands, and my job from here on simply to be forensic about things she thinks it needs, or that I spot on the next read-through. Books go off to their own life really before I know it; it startles me to ~~think~~ realize it's only about 7 months since 11th Man was published.

As to what I'm like when I'm not writing full-tilt, I seem to be somewhat calmer (and my hands feel better when I'm not operating that instrument of the devil, the computer mouse). On the other hand, it doesn't take long before chore after chore after chore sets in and I begin to feel I'm not producing anything real. Luckily we have the Ashland trip not far ahead, and I've decided to have a 70th birthday party for myself on June 27, so there are pleasures on the way amid the chores.

26 May--Almost as if it was curtained off, the fine bright holiday weekend gave way to clouds today. Not coincidentally, C and I both are back at chores, getting the CRV serviced at Lynnwood Honda and, in my case, tackling some cleanup of the office. We topped off the holiday last night with cheeseburgers, still the best guilty pleasure the barbecue grill produces.

Meanwhile, waiting for Becky's response to the ms, I'm not touching Work Song, trying instead to set up file boxes etc. for the next book, Miss You When I'm Gone. Its total existence so far is a page and a half of prospectus, for which I have a \$75,000 advance; must be doing something right.

26 May cont.--Before I figure out how to stash it away somewhere, I want to record the wording of the Carroll College honorary degree:

Greetings in the Lord
to all to Whom These Letters Shall Come
Carroll College

by virtue of the authority vested in it by law does hereby confer on

Ivan Doig
Scholar of the American West, Author of Life
the Degree of
Doctor of Humane Letters
honoris Causa

29 May--Life is the high wire, all else is waiting. The Wallenda-ism is truer than ever, this past week since I sent off the Work Song ms. Much of my time has gone to chores--haircut, buying bluejeans, tax matters--and my head doesn't feel as if it's doing anything worthwhile during most of that. Just now, start of a Friday afternoon, warmest day of the year at 80, I've emptied some notebook jottings from my notebook onto the computer for Miss You When I'm Gone, for a bit of progress. Becky called y'day saying other events had intervened and she wasn't really underway in reading the Work Song ms yet, so I'll see if she manages to do so before we leave on our Oregon trip on June 3.

Meanwhile there's terrific news about 11th Man, today's mail bringing royalty statements that showed its sales total as just under 43,000. There's a catch in that, the returns that would've happened since the first of the year, so the ~~next~~ next statement six months from now can't be that pretty, but the book will have done well in the worst bookselling market within memory. The Whistling Season continued to march on, another 12,000 paperbacks sold.

The writing life aside, the gardening life is going quite well and the eating life is terrific, with C shopping Copper River salmon into our menu along with the exquisite salad makings from the garden. Bright fine weather, with everything in bloom--a good patch of time.

1 June--Waiting for something to happen. Not my best mode. Tomorrow we pack for the Ashland trip, and while that'll be hectic it will at least produce a result. This morn I had only two necessary chores--bimonthly blood test and stopping the mail--and they took damn near the whole forenoon. The Bitter Lake post office, always a stewpot of nationalities, was even more surreal than usual. Ahead of me in my long wait in line was a Hispanic woman, mailing something to probably a soldier son at Ft. Drum NY, and when she got to the counter the perky clerk with a rich accent of her own--Malay?--informed her that her ~~package~~ ~~sixty~~ box, so full it bulged the top up, couldn't go the way it was; the top had to be flat (undoubtedly to be read by a machine). The customer considered this for a few moments, then picked up the box, turned it with the top down, and slammed it on the counter six or eight times. That definitely reduced the bulge, but not enough, and with a perky smile the clerk moved her aside to, I don't know, repackage it or some such.

The weather has stayed dry and mostly clear, in the high 70s, a bit warm for our taste, but it's been good for the garden, peas and beans starting to blossom, berries forming, and the lettuce crop gorgeous.

Can't recall if I've noted that I asked for a gathering of friends for my 70th birthday, and C has had good luck in rounding up 7 or 8 of our favorite couples, only the Laskins committed elsewhere (NY, in their case).

So, we are trundling along reasonably well, and onward to Oregon.

9 June--The afternoon after we returned from Ashland. I'd intended to spend this part of the day recounting what a splendid trip we'd had, but the noon trip to the mailbox produced a note from the carrier saying she'd been off and not all our mail had been held as it was supposed to be and she'd noticed some of it in the ditch--i.e., the mailbox had been rifled. So, 2½ hours later, I have finished filing a report with the police, checking with the bank (thank heavens the monthly statement hadn't yet been mailed), and complaining to a supervisor at Bitter Lake. Unless C perceives a missing credit card statement or some such, we may have escaped serious harm from this post office screw-up.

9 June cont.--So, to try to get back into the trip mood, not easy after that. We hit cool weather in Oregon, foggy and drizzly in Roseburg when we overnighted there, but lucked out in Ashland when our June 4 Much Ado in the outdoor Globe-like theater was not rained on, for the first night in three. Three of the plays--Much Ado, Music Man, and Equivocation--were terrific, and the fourth (Dead Man's Cell Phone) was wonderfully acted, although the director didn't maintain a consistency of style. Jeff King as Gordon was naturalistic

10 June--Y'day's diary attempt was interrupted by more of the mail mess, and then dealing with an IRS dun for another \$300--some owed on our '08 taxes, which I think we don't owe. Welcome back indeed. Back to the Cell Phone play: Jeff King as Gordon was naturalistic and powerfully on the mark, but Brett Hinckley as his brother was stylized in a Pinteresque way--and the actresses playing the mother and the Other Woman were played broadly, cartoonish. Strange. Even so, the play was worth seeing, and we were enthralled by two of the others--The Music Man with Michael Elich as a more tuneful Harold Hill than the sainted Robert Preston was, and Equivocation with the small cast flowing in and out of many roles. That play's youngest actor, John Tufts, has the look of someone who might rise far.

C's choice of a place to stay, the Plaza Suites, came through for us again--an 8-10 minute walk to the theaters. We ate well, especially at Sesame and one of the meals at Chateaulin. On the way to Ashland we had lunch in Portland with Bill Lang and Marianne, and on the way back had dinner with Craig and Kathy Lesley, vital catching-up with those last two whom we hadn't seen since I started the stem cell transplant-medication regimen. C has calculated the cost of the trip and we've decided if we do it again we'll fly and save two days on the road.

15 June--Whew. My protein test results came out good; both the urine and blood test show a decline in the sonof-a-bitching monoclonal protein. There's now a third test, of light chains, which is a wild card and has at least one big scary number, but even that shows a better result than two months ago. So, we'll see how Dr. Chen interprets all this tomorrow, but from here it looks like a big relief.

15 June cont.--I don't know whether I've been more jittery and apprehensive about the tests results than usual, but I had a bad feeling about this set. Misplaced, thank heavens.

This morn I had the monthly Pamidronate infusion, and on the trip to the Gp Health pharmacy to pick up the usual 28 capsules of Thalidomide, the young man at the dispensing window looked at my name on the computer and said, "Mr. Doig, you're the most famous person I've ever waited on." He then said he'd taken a communications class from Carol at Shoreline; John Humphrey, exceedingly pleasant and a blessed surprise in that pharmacy area which someone elsewhere in Grp H once called a Petri dish.

Meanwhile C has also been doctoring, ~~micro~~ micro-surgery on a cheek for a spot of skin cancer which has left her with about a two-inch span of incision and ~~stitches~~ stitches, some bruises and a faint black eye. She gets the stitches out in a couple of days and we'll see what the skin looks like. Damn, she is a stalwart patient, again thank heavens.

C made a diary entry about another evening of grace at the Damborgs last night; it's either kismet or they have some kind of social radar that invites us for gorgeous food and good talk just about when we really need 'em.

And so, I can now get on with life through the summer. Becky is running behind in getting the Work Song ms back to me, but it'll likely be here sometime this week.

17 June--The ~~protein~~ protein test results were even more beneficial than I'd hoped. Dr. Chen was encouraged enough that he offered me the chance to drop the Prednisone dosage and to lengthen the time between checkups from 2 months to 3 or 4. As much as I dislike the Prednisone whimsies, I deferred quitting the drug until after the next checkup, in Sept. Psychologically, it would be a terrific downer for me if I'd laid off the medication and the Sept. test results spiked high; I want one more downward or at least steady result before we tinker with the regimen. (Dr. Chen did joke that my current 10 mg ~~dosage~~ dosage is almost a "homeopathic dosage," so maybe I'm overcautious about not abandoning it, but so be it.) Thalidomide of course is still with me and probably always will be. Another gain, though, was that I no longer have to do the 24-hour urine

17 June cont.--test, the blood test for light chain now accepted as a substitute for that. All in all, a good day for the myeloma patient.

And that same morning, Becky called to say Work Song is "so good...it's a winner." Her line-edited ms is to reach me tomorrow, and I'll get back to doing what I do. Today Liz called from her Maine summer place, simply coming on the line saying "What a wonderful book." After some more enthusing, she said "And I'll get you your money." That's \$75,000, and with the book now into the publishing house process, it's another \$75,000 on publication next year and a further \$75,000 when the paperback comes out the year after that.

It's fortunate that the major stuff had been coming out so well around here, as we've been in a plague of lesser annoyances. The mailbox rifling, a dead toilet, and when C went to check the e-mail in preparation for Becky to use it, there was no incoming capacity. Last night and today she worked her way through Comcast and Apple, back and forth, and got it functioning again.

One more grace note from y'day, lunch with Craig Johnson as he again passed through on a promotional tour for his latest mystery book. Same as last year, we met at Ivar's on the waterfront as soon as the bar opened--11 a.m!--and started lunch with a beer; Craig proclaimed how glad he was to be in our company, as when he starts lunch by ordering a beer people think he's a barbarian. What he is is hugely enjoyable, starting when he showed up in his cowboy hat and boots and handed us a brown paper bag with a bottle of wine in it. He's bright and funny and a real worker; a French booktour was saddled onto his U.S. one, and when I said my god, you can't have any time to get any writing done, he said no but he has the next mystery done and a couple of chapters of the one beyond that, he always wants to stay that far ahead.

24 June--A quick catchup, at nearly 4 in the afternoon. We've been in a spate of pepping the place up--Susan the Bamboo Guru and her two helpers came today and trimmed both big hedges, and Aaron the plumber has been here, and C and I have scrubbed the deck, on and on. Meanwhile I have the Work Song ms back with Becky's editing. She's a wizard with the pencil again, and while there are no major changes she's asking for, the three or four additions she wants will take some time and tinkering. I've been processing her editing marks into the computer version--accepting probably nine out of ten--and will focus on the more substantial stuff after we get past my birthday bash.

29 June--And now I am seventy, after a birthday gathering that went perfectly. It was C's inspiration to have the party start at noon, so we wouldn't have to contend with late-afternoon glare and heat, and the weather was ideal--people spent hours comfortably on the deck. We invited seven couples, oldest and closest friends: Tony Angell & Lee Rolfe, David Williams and Marjorie Kittle, Eric Nalder and Jan Christiansen, Roy and Betty Mayfield, Linda Sullivan and Jeff Saeger, Mark and Lou Damborg.* The Damborgs were pivotal as ever, providing the spice cake and French rose shopped for us by Mark.

*miscounted above; left out Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan
Tony and David presented me with copies of their brand-new books, Jan gave me a whimsical piece of artwork showing me musing by a Montana campfire with Carol peeking from a tent, Linda and Jeff's gift was a six-pack of wine, Linda and Syd gave me a gorgeous little wooden box for paper, they joked, my paper clips. I told the bunch this was the first birthday party of my life, and of course Linda Bierds right away grasped the full meaning. She got me aside after a bit and said, "Your mother died on your birthday, didn't she." I ~~wasn't~~ said, Yeah, it was never celebrated. Anyway, claiming that I was new at this birthday business, I had presents for all of them, an inscribed and dated pristine This House of Sky for each couple. I could not have asked for a better day, better friends, or a better wife to put the occasion together so grandly.

17 July--The long furlough from the diary is best explained in these words: the twenty days of polishing up WORK SONG ended this afternoon at 3:30. It feels like a book.

21 July--So far this morning, I have:

--boxed up the polished Work Song ms to go to Becky.

--got a haircut.

--mailed the \$600,000 agreement by which Riverside assumes my two-book contract from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Now begins a new era. eh?

C and I spent what we felt was an enchanting weekend each reading a copy of the revised ms. Knock on wood, but Work Song now does seem to me to have some of the charm of Whistling Season. The three weeks of revising included slipping an entirely new character (Dora Sandison) in, with two new scenes; a lot of finessing what already seemed good language into better; and in re-reading ch. 11, where Morrie is to go to the vigilante grove with Sandison, I decided

"This chapter needs a gun." All in all, I feel topnotch about how I reworked the manuscript; it still seems to me my best talent.

And in y'day's phone call to let Becky know Work Song was on its way to her, I told her I won't do signings for the book (although I can do interviews, talks if major appearances come up, etc.). Not a pleasant decision, after 30 years of all-out effort on behalf of bookstores, but as I let Becky know I simply have to face the situation of hand cramps brought on by Thalidomide; I'm convinced I really have no business any more sacrificing myself to put people's names into books. I don't know that I can continue the determined writing pace that produced 11th Man and Work Song in the past, what, three years, with the stem cell transplant and Thalidomide/Prednisone thrown in, but that is still the direction I should go.

1:30--And the afternoon started with a phone call from Becky saying the Diane Rehm show's on-air book club will talk about Dancing on the Rascal Fair, Aug. 26, and they want suggestions as to who the three panelists should be. After a little scrambling, I came up with: Wendy Smith, Bob Mintzheimer of USA Today and his predecessor Bob Wilson Andre Bernard if he'll do it, and two Washington Post

21 July cont.--bylines, Bk World reviewer Dennis Drabelle and reporter Pat Sullivan.

--Later still: starting to dig out of what's come in the mail etc. the past some weeks, I came across the case of the easiest blurb I've ever done. Tom Booth of Oregon St. U. Press called some weeks back and wanted to know if they could re-use a blurb I'd given U. of Idaho Press on an H.L. Davis collection. Cosmic silence on my end, as I had no memory of what the hell I'd said. Tom and I laughed and he read it to me and followed up by mail, so from that out-of-print earlier effort, here's the reborn panegyric:

"As a chronicler of life in our corner of this American land, H.L. Davis was colorful (how he would have snorted at being called that), ornery (he'd have loved that), opinionated (that went without saying) and splendid in several other civically purifying ways. The Northwest misses him more than it knows."

25 July--Y'day we celebrated Carol's birthday, with major help from Mark and Lou with a cheeseburger supper in their backyard. During the day, C chose for us to go to the ship canal locks, then to hardware stores (Stone Way, and Hardwick's twice!) to find an electric grill lighter to replace my lamented busted one. Characteristic of us, we got a kick out of the funky hardware places, a burly ball-capped clerk at Stone Way dug around in nails and screws to find us the dozen of each we wanted. And at Hardwick's, we were overheard bemoaning the namby-pamby charcoal lighter all stores now carry--short straight rods that don't fit a kettle grill such as ours--by a guy, maybe the owner, who said he might have leftover sales rep's sample of the kind we wanted in his warehouse, he'd look. So we stopped in again on our way to the Damborgs' and by damn, the thing he'd found was close enough to what we wanted.

So, as of C's day, we are in summer living, the temp heading to the low 80's today and supposedly the 90s the next four days. We had a beer on the deck before lunch, the Sound specked here and there with small boats, declaring to each other we can't think of a better place to be. The morning's farmwork, besides the usual picking lettuce etc., was making applesauce, 4 quarts.

29 July--Brutal heat, maybe Seattle's hottest day on record if it goes above 100. Tomorrow does not sound much better, and the day after only slightly less hot. We're mainly using the downstairs, which is about 8 degrees cooler than the main floor. Coupled with this is a long, long dry streak, no real rain since May 18. We're fighting to keep prime parts of the garden alive. I cover the lettuce rows with frost blankets (stretched over half hoops, so air can circulate) and am running the watering system nightly. C has a lovely small rhodie in one of the big deck pots, and we're similarly draping it against all the hours of un-sparing sun. And we use a hose to give selected plants extra water. So we're fending, but it's a bit rugged, with the heat sapping energy and initiative in both of us.

Having said that, there is the fact that we're trying to get some chores done. C has just left to pick up her new glasses, and y'day I had my eyes examined. (Good luck there; the incipient cataract has not gotten worse in the past two years, and only my reading glasses needed a slight change, as I knew they did.) Tomorrow morn I again go to Grp Health to have the wart or whatever it is between my first two fingers on the left hand looked at, and to buy new underwear and socks as well at Nordstrom's.

30 July--It's still hotter than the bifurcated hinges of hell, but apparently not up with the record of y'day, 103 at SeaTac. It was in the high 90's here, and we gratefully enough bailed out after supper to the airconditioned room at the UW law school where David Williams did his slide show and talk for his book, Stories in Stone. He did really a nice job, knows his stuff, is good at impromptu; it's great to see him flourish like that.

Today C is off to a birthday gathering that made her grit her teeth, the ladies get-together at Margaret Svec's to mark C's and Jean's birthdays of last week. It'll be hot, much food in the middle of the afternoon, etc. But she'll come home to a cool salad supper, and our blessed downstairs, which is 8 degrees cooler than upstairs these blistering days. The heat badly slows both of us, but by damn we are getting some things done during it. The plumber Aaron Schuster just left, having installed a new

30 July cont.--toilet in the master bath (and moved the temporary one there to the hall bathroom). Both of us have had our eyes examined and our glasses tended to. This morning Denise Schaeffer, the nurse practitioner at Northgate, sprayed the actinic keratosis between my first two fingers on the left hand with frozen nitrogen, to start getting rid of that damned thing. I totally replenished my underwear and socks at Nordstrom. Day by day, we've kept up with the garden harvest and concentrated on saving favorite plants during this long blazing drought. And I'm making some progress in cleaning up my desk, making file cards etc. of ~~my~~ pocket notebook jottings and the like. Plus, Work Song will be published less than two years since 11th Man appeared. 11th Man in paperback will be out in Sept. As slow and muddly as things seem to go, the evidence is they do move.

31 July--The big heat broke, with clouds and cool marine air this morning; even so, the temp eventually is supposed to be 85. I spent all morn laboring in the garden, transplanting 4 rows' worth of Red Sails lettuce seedlings that had been so slow coming up I thought the planting had failed, tearing out the pea vines and morning glory that had invaded it, picking raspberries, and pulling up weeds and grass. C meanwhile was out buying salmon, and at least we'll get a glorious grilled summer supper tonight.

3 Aug.--It's still hot, although not as blazing as it was. This point of the summer always turns into house chores, and the morning's was replacing the broken cord on the big canvas blind outside the living room. Tomorrow's ~~is~~ is to caulk the spots where the heat has caused cracks in that weatherstruck southwest thrust of the living room exterior, damn it. Still, I find myself in a pretty good mood today, having calmly and thoughtfully gone through the pile of clippings and letters that accumulate at the far corner of the desk during the writing of a book; what needed filing, I've filed, the rest was tossed. The file cabinets, the archival boxes, the books and books, remind me what a place of mental work this is.

4 Aug.--This morning I did a chore I hate, caulking the cracked spots around the outside of the big living room windows, and on the deck posts. With last summer's paint job and the obvious expertise we watched the painters apply, I'd hoped not to have to do the damned stuff, but the weather against that side of the house is just too fierce.

So, all morning went to that, and this afternoon I jumped the other direction to what I should be doing, thinking about the next book. After sorting some file cards and notes, I sat down with Carol to talk about the voice to tell the story, and we agree it ought to be Tom Harry's son, Rusty. It feels right so far.

10 Aug.--This was the monthly Pamidronate infusion day, and along with picking up new reading glasses at the Northgate clinic, there went the morning. The afternoon similarly has gone to choring--noticeably, new typewriter ribbons, and damned if C's didn't need rejigging on one of the spools, just when we thought we had a nice new on-line source of supply. Anyway, I'm now hoping I can get back toward writing tomorrow.

The weather has turned coolish but sticky and unpromising. Some rain was in today's forecast, but it seems to be faint showers around the horizon. We're nearing the third month without real moisture. Hank Kastner's damned tree next door has both of us spooked, it looks so stricken, but we haven't been able to catch him or Lynn at home or even reach either of them by phone to talk about getting some tree care done (probably at our expense).

But for all those nits, we're up and functioning, getting things done, and eating superbly out of the garden--dinner salad of our own lettuce, berries and fruit tonight.

12 Aug.--Rough morning, maybe the effects of medication, maybe the three rounds of mosquito breaking up my sleep, but damned if it hasn't turned out to be, as C said, a signal day:

--Becky did the "launch" of Work Song at the publishing house, the presentation to the sales and marketing people. She reported a very positive feeling in the room, they all seemed "to completely get it." Afterward, a couple of sales reps thanks her for bringing me to Riverhead and Penguin.

12 Aug. cont.--A few minutes ago, just before 4, here came the package containing the paperback of The Eleventh Man, book number two of the day, looking handsome and substantial.

--And number three, Miss You, had some progress on its first three pages.

We seem to be in the book business, full speed.

18 Aug.--This sunny afternoon, C read the first 4 pp. of Miss You and said it was fun. That represents the past couple of weeks' work, along with some sorting of file cards and other material for the ms. I was glad to hear she likes the voice of the book, which so far feels pretty comfortable--not as stylized as Morrie's, not as intellectual as Paul's.

Good news in y'day's mail, a note from Andre Bernard saying "Yippee", he'll be on the Diane Rehm show talking about Rascal Fair. Wondered if I have any anecdotal stuff, and today I FedExed him a couple of pages.

Our social life has slowed way, way down, with people thither and yon in these last summer weeks before Labor Day, but we seem not to mind much right now, easing back and enjoying grub from the garden.

20 Aug.--A decent day of writing, about 2 pp. roughed. The work still feels hoppity-skipptety to me, but that may be due to medication; I hope like hell I'm able to get off Prednisone in Sept. and see what life is like then.

Y'day C and I at last managed to make our try on Henry Kastner about the threatening trunk of his tree that looms over us, to no effect so far. "I wouldn't hold my breath," he told us at one point, and my phone call to his daughter Lynn asking her to come over and take a look at what we're talking about hasn't produced her, either.

Y'day was hot, around 90, and it's heating up close to that this afternoon. We're going to repeat last week's outing to Edmonds, go eat tapas at Olives on bargain night.

News from the book biz: the copy-edited ms likely will reach me next Tuesday. And the Rascal Fair lineup on the Diane Rehm show looks good--besides Andre, Deidre

Donahoe of USA Today and Mark LaFramboise of Politics and Prose.

24 Aug.--The start of a book biz week. I've just mailed signed 1st editions of Rascal Fair to Diane Rehm and her producer Nancy Robertson, in thanks for picking the book for their monthly Readers Review show. It's a parlous venue, though; last fall I got canceled off the show with the 11th Man, and now Diane Rehm tripped crossing the street and cracked her pelvis, putting her out of commission for who knows how long.

We now have a touch of autumn in the air, weather in the 70s. It has let us pick blueberries, I think 7 qts over the weekend, and do some hedge trimming and so on. With the berries and fresh fruit and salmon betweentimes, the eating is superb.

26 Aug.--Rascal Fair has just had its hour of dancing on national air, and C and I are pleased with how it went. The substitute host, Katty Kay of the BBC, was first-rate, sounding knowledgeable (I imagine by way of producer Nancy Robertson's canny computer prompts) and more crisp than Diane Rehm could have been with her voice problem. Andre Bernard we thought was terrific, providing historical perspective and the insight which I suppose I agree with, that Angus was me a century earlier. Deidre Donahue of USA Today had a number of good phrases:

--Gros Ventre wasn't even a one-horse town, more like "a half horse town."

--Angus's love for Anna: he's hit with "lightning like Michael Corleone!"

--Stanley Meixell is "laconic to the max."

--in the reservoir drownings, she felt "sad for the horse."

Kathy Kay had a fine turn of phrase too when Mark LaFamboise was talking about the Crofutt emigrants' guidebook--"the 19th Century Rough Guide." Surprisingly, Mark who was the events person at Politics and Prose the last time I was there was not as comfortable as any of the others in speaking up.

To our relief, there weren't any listeners' calls until past 8:40, and the ones that came in (a couple from North Carolina; Napierville; Cleveland) were okay, no windbags. So, a good day for the book and its grateful author. In my re-read of Rascal Fair these past days, I was struck by how many dimensions it has; its pages are a world of their own, and I can't ask for better than that.

26 Aug. cont.--E-mail from Linda Miller after hearing the Rehm show, picking up on something C had heard but that got past me--the host's name is Katty Kay, not Kathy. And with that Brit accent, producing what Linda accurately calls Dahncing at the Rahscal Feh.

1 Sept.--C reports that Costco was putting out the artificial Christmas trees this morning, so this must be the first of autumn. Showers set in this afternoon, are in the forecast through Labor Day, nearly a week.

We've been holed up reading the copyedited ms of Work Song. It's both gratifying and exhausting. I'm astounded (I suppose I am on every book) at how much there is to be done, on language I've worked over and worked over. But it undeniably does become better for all the nitpicking. Not to mention catching flaming mistakes. C spotted something I'd read past countless number of times, Becky had read past three or four times, the copy editor read right over--Grace covering her hand with her mouth.

5 Sept.--Y'day morn we woke to a golden full moon setting behind the peaks of the Brothers, taking summer with it. Today had been blustery and showery.

After what seemed like a long siege--actually only about a week--the copy edited ms is done. I'll ship it back to Becky the day after Labor Day.

That holiday comes really late this year, the 7th, and as I said to C, after Labor Day the month will be damn near half over. We've made strong use of the favorable weather up until now, taking down the netting and harvesting blueberries, planting spinach and kale and the next rotation of lettuce. We have felt good about being in this wondrous place, eating spectacularly.

And we had two touches of the financial magic wand, the Lake Oswego library coming up with my \$5,000 fee for a talk next Feb. and \$4,000 in audio royalties on 11th Man.

6 Sept.--As C suspected in her diary, I've used this stormy afternoon to start clearing the decks for the next book.

Pounds and pounds of yellow rough sheets of 11th Man and Whistling Season are getting tossed, and I've also cleared the research shelf of the Butte books that went into Work Song. Starting over, once again.

Right on schedule, the weather has turned obstreperous for Labor Day weekend. Short-lived rainstorms roll through every hour or so, and it's gusty. Despite that, we did sneak in a second walk of the day, this afternoon.

8 Sept.--Yikes, rugged damn day at Gp Health for my monthly Pamidronate infusion. I stopped first at the lab for blood tests to save myself a trip to Northgate for that (ahead of seeing Dr. Chen in 10 days), which put me 20 min. later than usual to the infusion center. The place was busy on the first day after a holiday--another miscalculation on my part--and all the semi-private cubicles were taken, leaving only the bullpen room with four chairs out in the open, which I'm wary of because it leaves a person wide open to any loudmouth. Nurse Karen said no one else was scheduled in there for a while, so I settled in--and it took 45 min. for the Pamidronate to show up and get started. With nearly 2½ hrs in the chair I got stiff and bleary--saved mostly by listening to Anne Murray on my old Walkman--but I did narrowly dodge a bullet, four of them of the loudmouth variety. Just as my infusion was ending, in came a heavy-set guy for his, with his really hefty wife and even heftier two daughters--one of them had thighs damn near as thick as my body--and yammering away about who was in what magazine. I vow to go back to my get-there-early routine.

Lunch and a nap pretty much revived me, and we have a supper coming of crab and beans from our garden. Could be worse.

17 Sept.--Whew, I think. The on-line results of my blood tests look good--the serum protein result unchanged, the lambda light chains actually declining again--and now to see if Dr. Chen sees them that way tomorrow. If he thinks I'm stable, that should free me of test dread until late in January.

Quite an excursion y'day, when we and the Damborgs went to the BirdNotes gala in Sammamish, Eastside terra incognita to all of us and boobytrapped with construction delays and a monumental traffic backup. Mark, who drove--thank god he loves to drive!--pulled off a miracle at the traffic tie-up, taking an exit and going back on immediately into the express lane which was moving okay. In any case, the BirdNote event pleased us all; I got a kick out of watching John Kessler edit--that is, computer-edit--a two-minute show into being. The place was a knockout, Frog Pond Farm, 64 acres or so owned by Mary Pigott, we assume of Paccar money. Some deja vu: Gordon Orians was on hand, whom C and I hadn't been around since he was collaborating with Tony Angell decades ago. And during the show-editing, the woman next to me turned my way and said, "Oh, the Doigs!" And it was Noel Angell. So, quite a full plate there, and a more savory one waiting back at the Damborgs', where they had a soup supper ready when we found our way back from the mysterious Eastside.

18 Sept.--Yes indeed on the blood test results, said Dr. Chen. They were favorable enough that he took me off Prednisone, theorized that I could go off Thalidomide but he'd rather not take a chance with that, and agreed on a four-month span between visits--"I'm not doing a damn thing for you," he jokingly justified that. So, my prospect~~s~~ seems better than any time since the successful period after the stem cell procedure (although I must always be aware that turned around, in time), with the Thalidomide--damnable as it is in side effects--suppressing the mutant blood cells enough that it would likely take a couple of worsening test results (i.e., 6 or 8 months worth, most of next year) to invoke more severe treatment. A status quo I'll settle for.

Becky called today to say a Work Song cover will come to me tomorrow. Unusually, she lobbied for it before I've laid

18 Sept. cont.--eyes on it, saying she and the design dept. really like it and hope I will. I sure as hell share that hope.

Dinner last night with the Williams clan, David and Marjorie hosting both sets of their parents and us. Great grub, chunks of root vegetables with a peanut soup of some sort ladled over. Pretty much everybody talks in that gathering, and the funniest bit of the evening was when Walt Williams, whom his family calls Buddy, got going on how hopelessly stupid the congressional Republicans are, until wife Jackie buried her face in her hands and warned, "Buddy..."

This is a gorgeous day, mid-70s and blue and the air is crisp. I spent the morning in the veg garden, transplanting lettuce and spinach seedlings, then this afternoon began calculating our finances, which at last look miraculously better than at last year-end. This is a good moment in this household. It's likely too early to really tell, but I maybe am less fretful and mentally herky-jerky now that I haven't had any Prednisone for a few days.

22 Sept.--The first day of fall, cloudless and into the mid-80s. Given the temperature, C and I changed our minds about going to the Skagit today and instead made our first visit to the sculpture park. Fine vistas, in perfect weather as early as we went. This afternoon I've covered the youngest lettuce against the sun, which I doubt that I've done before this late in the year.

The Work Song cover: Becky's preference proved to be a guy sitting on a hillside looking out over shanties and mining operations in the distance. Good enough in concept, except it doesn't look anything like Butte, no iconic hill or distinctive headframes rising on the horizon. I said as much to her in a phone message over the weekend when she was in the Berkshires, and we had another conversation on Monday, before the art dept. got back to her to vouch that the scene is indeed Butte, from the Library of Congress collection. It still puzzles C and me--by now we've seen hundreds and hundreds of Butte pics--as to where this 1905 shot takes place, but since it's vouched for, I've signed off on the cover. AG

29 Sept.--A burst of rain, at last, although I can see through it to the far shore. Fall definitely arrived these past couple of days, the weather cool and blowy, the forecast always for showers but none produced.

C has done a comprehensive diary entry, particularly on our situation with Hank Kastner and his damned tree, so I'll stick to the book biz. It does seem one hell of a long time until pub date of June 29 for Work Song, so the best thing I can do is keep my head down in wordmaking on the next book. That feels promising, although the writing so far is slower than I want it to be. As C recounted, a lot of last week went to details Becky and her assistant Elaine needed, and added to that was a reference letter I did for Diane Josephy as she tries for a stay at Ucross.

And we have done really a lot of yard work, much of my part of it handling seedlings, trying to get the veg beds tuned up for winter.

Oct. 7--This has been a medical week, never my favorite.

The Pamidronate infusion y'day took up all damn morning, because Dr. Chen hadn't thought to renew the order for it (Ginsberg had originated it) and it couldn't be administered to me without his say-so. And today I saw Dr. Kato about a rash that mysteriously flared on my forehead two days ago. Evidently nothing serious, it's already going away and she prescribed a hydrocortisone cream for me.

I've been pecking away at garden chores, transplanting some spinach and lettuce seedlings this morn and setting up the first coldframe. We're still getting raspberries, and overflowing with tomatoes,

And at the desk, I'm still working on the opening chapter of Miss You. It's going slow so far, but at least it's going.

21 Oct.--Work Song page proofs were read amid the gap in this diary, and returned to Riverhead as of y'day. They were quite clean, but as ever, there were a couple of dozen fixes to be made.

Fortunately, C has done a good full reeap of our ferry-riding weekend of seeing people. (I particularly like it that Eric Nalder goes for weeks without having to put on socks.) A day or so after our brunch at their Bainbridge place, Linda Bierds called to say she'd woke up in the night

21 Oct. cont.--with a poem in mind from one of the Butte pics I'd sent her. I figured it might trigger something for her: an early 20th century set of 3 pics showing the process of encasing a horse in stiff leather to send the animal down a mineshaft. So, I can feel I chipped in a bit creatively there.

23 Oct.--Dark and stormy. At 4:15, the Sound is lidded with gray all the way down to the headlands, whitecaps here and there, and half a dozen sailboats with spinnakers full have been playing around.

It seemed like a slow go, but I did reach the end of a scene in the ms today, Rusty counting the booze for Tom in the back room of the saloon. Meanwhile C is e-mailing a response to Becky, who wanted any contact info for Tim Egan, whom I think she hopes to persuade to write something about me for the benefit of Work Song. We're providing Joanie Balter's Seattle Times e-mail address, all we've got.

1 Nov.--A turn of the calendar, in various ways. Last night was Halloween, and the end of daylight savings time, and the holiday season is imminent, starting with our Thanksgiving bash with 16 or so people here, and then Xmas with the Rodens, Lisa and Jerry Clemens, and the Damborgs here. I have plugged away at the first chapter of Miss You When I'm Gone to get it in hand before all the holiday social life, and the Tucson trip, claim the time, and I think I'm within a day of achieving that. Meanwhile there's been a spate of friends suddenly getting in touch--Jerry Ackerman, Bill Robbins, Mark Wyman, even Patricia McDonnell from Tacoma Art Museum days--and I have to try to muster myself to tend those friendships a bit. It's hard, as the thalidomide side effects tend to make me withdraw into myself. I'm somewhat better off without the Prednisone dosage, but there's still some slowing of my brain, lapses in going from one logical point to the next step or two, besides some tremble in the hands, and always the damnable neuropathy. The upside is that I am functioning--C tells me I'm doing so quite okay--and as yet, nearing 9 years after the fateful diagnosis, I haven't suffered bodily ravage from cancer.

7 Nov.--Raining blue blazes this morning, after the same kind of weather yesterday. C is shopping at Lowes, while I've been plugging through Sat. Morn chores--towels, dishwasher, lightbulb over my desk. We managed to get some sizable things done ahead of this turn of weather, the two of us planting a heather amid the dead patch of lawn and spreading bark over the blight, and the window washer Kory Tideman slicked up all the glass in the house and changed the damnable stairwell lightbulb that we can't reach.

On what I hope is a more meaningful scale, I have a 7500-word first chapter of Miss You When I'm Gone and must confer with Liz pronto in the new week. I spent y'day winnowing file cards accumulated for past books, looking for sparks of dialogue and character, and C spoke of how good it was to see me at that work.

C's diary chronicles our social life lately, of which there's been quite a lot, but I'll add the detail of getting together with Bevis and Juliette. We chose Shun, with Japanese food we've really liked, to meet them at. Also it has a wonderfully convenient parking lot, which we pulled in to a few minutes early, and found the restaurant dark, even though we'd had a call from it confirming our ~~xxx~~ reservation. Mystified, I peered through a window and saw the interior was empty, dead, dead, dead. C used the cell phone and managed to decipher from the accent on the other end that the place had moved a couple of blocks away. Blessedly, Bill and Juliette were on time, so we left their car in the dead parking lot and headed to the new Shun location which has no parking lot at all, and after an unsuccessful foray or two, I spotted a miraculous parking space in the crowded residential neighborhood and we made it to dinner. Sayonara to Shun from the Doigs, though; it's not worth it to us to fight that parking situation in the future.

17 Nov.--Main progress since the last entry was Liz's enthusiasm for the 1st chapter of Miss You--"I love those two guys (Rusty and Tom) already. Can't want to meet the little girl (Zoe). And Proxy!" She was to pass it along to Beeky y'day, so I'll now await that reaction.

Haven't managed to get to the writing today, as I started with a Gp Health visit to the dermatologist, Dr. Shors. I was greeted like a rock star, one of the nurses waylaying me to enthuse that I'm a great writer, keep it up, her favorite is English Creek. And C fielded a phone call today from a 65-year-old New Mexico woman who'd grown up in tough circumstances and said This House of Sky gave "voice and respect" to a life such as hers. Maybe I am doing something right.

The book biz is never any kind of a cinch, though. Harcourt royalties y'day were just \$1500, with Whistling down to 1700 p'back copies sold and Sky with 300 returns. All the more reason to keep pegging away at the manuscripts that bring in the advances.

25 Nov.--This sporadic diary is the thinnest in years, maybe ever, and I'm not sure whether a resolve to do better can fix it. Here on the day before Thanksgiving, I'm trying to take stock of myself, and I can't get away from the assessment that the Thalidomide jars me a lot, from the foot numbness and the cranky hands to some mental jangle. Yet as C would be immediate to say, I am functioning, apparently reasonably. In that spirit, here's a brief catch-up on recent happenings:

--Becky called y'day with her reaction to the 1st ch. of Miss You, and the vital thing is she approves of the voice. Says she is "so excited" about the book, editor's lingo for OK so far. Wants me to expand the opening chapter a bit, even though it's already 7500 words. As C says, everybody wants a doorstopper out me, evidently. Whether they'll get one, I dunno; apparently I am free to be garrulous, although that runs against my intent on Work Song and since, I think.

--For better or worse, the Des Moines public library will pony up the \$7500 speaking fee I quoted (by snaffling half of it from Drake University, whose prez is said to be a big fan of mine; I guess maybe so), and thus I am in for a three-day trip to deepest Iowa next April.

25 Nov. cont.--This is the 3rd speaking gig on next year's calendar, all for substantial fees in this hard economy, and with Work Song coming out, I am going to have to be increasingly careful with my time to make real progress on Miss You.

--I've had a look back at last year's diary, to try for perspective on my feeling that I'm somewhat worse off physically than I was 12 months ago. I do see that the numbness and some sense of discombobulation had already started then, when I had to begin the Thalidomide/Prednisone regimen, and I had some hard woes back then when I was signing big numbers of books. So maybe I am not fraying as much as I sometimes suspect. Here's hoping.

3 Dec.--Cold weather, which both of us are feeling in the house, and it's due to get colder. Still $2\frac{1}{2}$ weeks until winter.

A so-so week of writing, one day lost to the monthly infusion routine and our trip to Scan Design in Lynnwood to order a new living room chair for me. December is always tough, no matter how ruthlessly I try to schedule.

A note on Thanksgiving; which by and large was mellow. I knew there'd been some good news in the group--Roy Mayfield winning the medal for the best civil engineering paper of the year, David Williams' estimable book, Frank Zoretich astoundingly getting a job ~~xx~~ managing the guides of Underground Tours--so when everyone was gathered and equipped with champagne, I announced we had achievements to toast. I had just reached the point in the encomium to Roy of "the best civil engineering paper of the--" when Frank Z, near me, knocked a glass of champagne off the sideboard, shattering it at my feet and splashing my pantleg to the knee. I will say for myself, I didn't move a muscle, simply said "year" and kept on with the ceremony. When it came Frank's turn, he was busily on hands and knees cleaning up the mess, and I could point straight down and declare: "And this klutz got a job!"

11 Dec.--Sunset, streaking the southwest quadrant of clouds with orange and pink, on this Friday of a cold, cold week. We've also been hit with construction noise again, Verizon crews drilling and spaghetting fiber optic cable into the street. On my work front, a week mostly of rewriting which has improved some chunks of ms but didn't do much for the page total.

22 Dec.--4:15, a day of moderate progress on the ms, after timeout to meet Tony Angell for lunch at Third Place. An adventurous start, as I got there and Tony didn't show and didn't show, and I began to wonder if he'd forgotten, when one of the bookstore clerks called me over. Tony had phoned: Lee had taken his car keys with when she and the girls went skiing, could I come get him? So, off to the house, and then a lunch with some laughs and some comparing of our well-being or lack of; his hip is really troublesome, and he thinks he'll get a hearing aid, his left ear is so bad he can't pick up bird sounds any more. An old friendship, and I wish we were a dozen years younger at it.

C meanwhile had the housecleaner Julia spiffing this place up for Xmas.

25 Dec.--A clear and frosty Christmas. The Damborgs and the Roden clan are coming at 5:30 for dinner. Meanwhile I've used the morning on a few pieces of correspondence and doing a blurb for Verlaine Stoner McDonald's book on the Plentywood communists. All in all, C and I are mellow enough this holiday, and the placid weather helps mightily.

On the 23rd we continued the quirky enjoyable tradition of meeting Betty and Roy Mayfield at the Sorrento for a martini (for them and C; I stick to beer). Full of dark wood and decorous dimness, the bar etc. could be, as Betty said, anywhere in the world, and the four of us find it hilariously cozy.

28 Dec.--Christmas has been and gone. Our hosting of it was by and large a success--C's rib roast was terrific--although buffeted by John's bombast, which bursts out of him any time he feels like it. He's 89 and grumpy about that, and getting deaf as a post and refusing to do anything about that, so he's no model guest, not that he ever was. Fortunately C had the insight, a few Christmases ago, to include the Damborgs when we host Xmas dinner, and they deal wonderfully with John, professing to find some entertainment in it.

With that behind us, we're back to usual life; I've had a pretty good writing day. Tomorrow is medical, the monthly Pamidronate infusion.

30 Dec.--The eve of New Year's Eve, and I may not get back to this before the calendar turns. This year has been a thin diary. I suppose I can tell myself one of two things.

--I've had a writing year, finishing Work Song a year ahead of contract and getting 12-15,000 words of Miss You underway, that hasn't left much time and energy for these pages.

--Or, likely closer to the truth, the medication side effects drag me down enough that I don't have the heart or spirit for as much diarying as I used to do.

Nonetheless, here I am now, at what's being talked about and endlessly listed and reprised as the end of the first decade of this century. It has been a rugged enough set of years, with financial convulsions (which we've largely come out of okay, thanks to my book contracts and some investment common sense we showed), C's polymyalgia/arthritis episode, and my incipient blood cancer condition since 2001. We've accomplished a lot--The Whistling Season in itself justifies the decade, Prairie Nocturne and Eleventh Man are both good books if under-recognized, and reading the galley of Work Song gives me the hunch it could do quite well--under the load of all that. Thank goodness we have each other, and this house, and our pattern of life, because the past ten years have been awful on this country. A hell of a lot of it goes back to the rightwingers' coup d'etat by way of the Supreme Court that gave us George Bush as president. A Paul Krugman column bears out the national consequences of the Bush years of tax cuts, wars, and deregulation--actually I thought the tally might even be worse--~~by counting~~ in spades: housing prices, stocks, incomes, employment, all are the same or worse than ten years ago. The Obama administration may be doing as well as any could to overcome the mess it inherited, but the country's downhill slope may be just too steep.

So, goodbye to the miserable political decade. I live with a wonderful woman, in a wonderful place, and in our surroundings as close as we can hold them, I look forward to as much time as fate will give us with one another.

Carroll College, May 9,¹ 2009

PAGE

Time and again, old Helena town, as one of the more poetic of the snoose-chewing ranch hands I worked with as a kid used to call it, this city has been a starting point for me. Those teenage seasons of piling bales or driving a grain truck or herding sheep would bring me ^{to town} here from Ringling or Dupuyer with my summer wages to outfit myself with school clothes. (I never dreamt that one day those would include this kind of regalia.) As my working life became also a writing life, my books often had a beginning in research at the Montana Historical Society here, and before long Helena became one of the neighborhoods of imagination where my fictional characters spent chapters of their lives.

In the initial novel of my trilogy about Montana's first hundred years of statehood, Dancing at the Rascal Fair, two young

Scotchmen "green as the cheese of the moon," Angus McCaskill

and Robert Burns Barclay, alight downtown ^{AS THE} ~~at the time of~~ statehood,

CELEBRATION BREAKS OUT
in November, 1889.

In the centennial novel, Ride With Me, Mariah Montana, Jick

McCaskill is coaxed out of a crying jag about his family's fateful

past by one of Helena's icons, Dave Walter, the late great researcher

and scholar at the Historical Society, and my great friend.

And finally, in Prairie Nocturne, Susan Duff from her house on

Highland Street, up past the capitol, looks out on Monte Rathbun

down there under the streetlamps of 1924 polishing a rich man's

limousine, and in her mind's eye, ³ and mine, across town to the twin
spires of the cathedral and beyond, to this historic college.

So, for me it is a magical circle of journey to be here at Carroll on
this occasion, in this old town, a starting point not only for me but for the
young men and women graduating today. The way-above-average class
of 2009, the centennial class, starts the next chapter of its story now, and
I'm proud to be a footnote to it. Thank you. FOR THIS HONOR.