

1 Jan. '10--The year is off to a blustery start, with wind and squalls so constant that we haven't been able to get out on our daily walk around the n'hood. C has used the time to look up eating places on our Tucson trip, and I've mauled together some preliminary income tax figuring. Not exactly fun, but we're not taking any harm from the indoor day either.

I'm trying to use this long holiday weekend to get a bit of a jump on chores, as I sense a spate of busyness coming--book- and speaking-related, medical, financial. I'd still like to get the first 2 chs. of Miss You shaped up by the time we go to Tucson, but doubt that I can make it. Shall see.

2 Jan.--Windy again today, although not rainy and we were able to take our regular walks, morning and early afternoon. I've spent the day figuring out how to move chunks of ch. 2 around to give the storyline more momentum. Am pretty sure I see how to do it.

The day of brainwork on Miss You is a contrast from y'day, when I mulled taxes and wrote checks for \$50,000 of investments.

4 Jan.--Back at work, a pretty good day on the ms after the figuring out over the weekend.

Rainy day, all day. C and I are just glad it held off until today, instead of complicating our Bainbridge trip y'day--to Sydney Kaplan's 70th birthday party--more than it already was. As C said, when Syd and Linda lived on this side of the water, we'd drive to a party like this in ten minutes, spend an hour and a half, come home all fine and dandy; instead, it was a 7-hour excursion. Waterfront parking--it was a Seahawks football Sunday besides--starts the problem. No spaces available on any of the streets, but when we pulled into a lot it was going to be \$20, so we pulled back out and C drove north along the waterfront again, and damned if she didn't hit it lucky with a car pulling out, north of the aquarium. Ten-minute walk to the ferry terminal, but that was okay. We had about 20 minutes to kill, so we gulped most of a beer in Ivar's bar, where the barmaid told us (a) the place was dead before the Seahawks game, an accurate reflection of the 'Hawks themselves, and (b) football fans

4 Jan. sent.--are lousy tipplers anyway, "they may know sports but they don't know how to add." In the ferry terminal we met up with Mary Kay and Michael Feather, and at Linda's suggestion, Mary Kay had arranged 2 vans to take a dozen of us who were walk-ons. It worked slick, and we were at Linda and Syd's shortly after 4. Nearly 40 people there, all in all, and we chose conversations and corners with care. Enjoyed Chris Fisher, whom C knew from Shoreline days, and her partner Judy; caught up a bit with Rick Kenney and Carol--Rick effusively inviting me to Rome when he and Carol and Syd and Linda are there for the UW spring quarter; and we were quite entertained by Ed Kaplan, on hand with his Roger to watch his son Fred cater the celebratory meal for his ex-wife Syd. They are all miracles of civility. Syd was glowing, on her occasion. Linda had a couple of pieces of news. Her Putnam editor, Marian Wood, had called just hours before to tell her there's a rave TLS review of Flight. And, I'm a little staggered by the honor, I've engendered a poem by Lin, by sending her a pic I came across in my Butte research--a horse being folded and trussed in a leather rigging to be sent down into a mine in the phone-booth-sized cage that usually carried men. So with that, and my remark that copper is the peacock of ores (a line I'm using in Work Song, I've told her), she has written "Pavo," the title coming from ~~an ancient tradition~~ the peacock constellation in the Southern Hemisphere, linking things as only her genius imagination can do.

6 Jan.--Weather has moderated, and tomorrow we'll once again look at going to the Skagit flats to see the snow geese.

Our Tucson trip is nearing, a week from tomorrow. I'm pegging away at the same damn second chapter of Miss You that it seems I've been on forever, having found a revision that I think carries things along better.

My mood is pretty good, about as good as I can do with the nagging of Thalidomide's side effects. Both C and I grateful that our little world here is as steady as it's been. On the broader level, it's hard not to think this country isn't on the skids. The unemployment, the rabidly divided Congress, two ongoing wars; Obama and his people simply inherited an overwhelming mess.

11 Jan.--Last night we went to the U Book Store's 110th birthday party, where I was unexpectedly the star attraction without doing anything except coming late. The Laskins had asked for a ride, so that delayed us a few minutes in going to what we all figured was a drop-in open house, 6 to 9, and then we couldn't find a parking spot, so it was about 6:45 when we walked in. The crowd, probably 150 or so, were around the central staircase and people were reading the 110-word selections various of us had written for the occasion. Stesha Brandon, the events person, spotted me, said something about having read my piece for me, and there was a big round of applause and and laughter, to my mild puzzlement. It turned out she had royally messed up the reading, stumbling over my line about Tacitus' Annals--turning it into Anals. She'd also told the crowd I was the only one of the presumably 110 writers she had dealt with by surface mail instead of e-mail--probably true enough--and that mine was the only typewritten contribution, though it was actually computer-printed. Of such are legends made, I guess.

There were some notable absences from the 110 collection and participation of any kind--Sherman Alexey, Jonathan Raban, in particular. Can't be bothered with the folks who helped make you, guys?

21 Jan.--We came back from Tucson on the 19th, full of sunshine and good spirits. The trip still is sustaining us even though there's a mini-blizzard of things that needed tending to--pension and IRA distributions, travel plans for the Lake Oswego trip, Becky's request to set up a phone meeting with Riverhead's publicity team, food shopping by C, on and on. Somehow it all seems more handlable after the rejuvenating trip.

Mark and Lou Damborg were easy to travel with--all 4 of us patient and low maintenance. Mark likes to drive and so drove the entire trip, with the otherworldly help of Ms. Magellan, his guidance system. He and Lou are more avid birders than we are, and they got off to a flying start at a friend's place in Scottsdale the day before we came, with egrets and herons in a backyard pond. The quartet of us had sublime weather at the Desert Museum, where the daily raptor flights featured a feruginous hawk

21 Jan. cont.--and a pair of Chihuahan ravens that swooped and dive-bombed the audience like stunt pilots. Then on Sunday the 17th, Betty and Pete Bengtson took us to White-water Draw, 2+ hours southeast of Tucson (south of Wilcox) to a spectacular show of sandhill cranes, the air alive with their rattling cries as they came in from feeding in the fields, undulating Vs and other formations quite high until a final plunge to lose speed for landing. The cranes lit in the field right beside the road, a grand view of them, and eventually there was a mighty gyre, up and up.

That night we had Pete and Betty join us for dinner at Feast, which inexplicably was not nearly as good as the terrific lunch we'd had there the day before (though the Bengtsons' meals were both dandy, thank goodness). That was the only dud dining of the trip, El Minuto as good as ever, Poca Cosa still a knockout at dinner and lunch both, and Tavaline very good on our final night.

On the 16th, we were invited to dinner by Barbara and Jay Kittle, whom we've met here in Seattle through their daughter Marjorie and hubby David Williams. Two other couples were on hand: John and Tillie Mornock, writing (composition/rhetoric, it sounded like) profs at the U. of Arizona, and Gary and Karen Fry, he's a retired lawyer and she works for a public defender in Cochise County, way to hell and gone south where they live. I mostly visited w/ the Mornocks, whom I immediately liked. Tillie, long and tall and still a bit of Georgia in her voice after an academic career at Wyoming and Arizona, had picked up from my acknowledgments that Liz is my agent, which I always think is a pretty swift trick. John has had an interest in creative nonfiction--that damned phrase--and was around McPhee a bit when McPhee did some rare readings at Wyoming by way of David Love family connections, I guess it was, and he's at work on a memoir about growing up in Tucson during the Cold War. I don't know if it was visible to others (besides Tillie), but John is definitely striving, maybe struggling, with the writing, which he took 40% teaching time to do--he has some sweat on the inside of his forehead, I'd say, the book means that much to him. More power to him. He and Gary and Jay were in high school

21 Jan. cont.--in Tucson at the same time; they'd just had a 50th reunion, which would make them 68. Gary, as C said, is charming, although I overheard him talking about medication for depression etc. This dinner bunch was heads-up enough that everyone knew Heart Earth, and Gary said during his Phoenix lawyering days he represented the outfit doing the redevelopment of the Alcoa plant/Alzona Park area.

The politics of the evening were a pleasant surprise, as I at least was braced for some brand of Arizona Republicanism. While it may have been there in Jay, he graciously tipped the topic the other way by saying he was disappointed in Gary's old law school classmate, John Kyl, for being such an ideologue. Gary said Kyl had been aiming into politics, as distinct from public service, even back then. Then he and John Mornock both had anti-Rehnquist stories:

--Gary's was that when he was starting out as a junior lawyer in a Phoenix firm, he was on the opposing side to Rehnquist in a trust case. Rehnquist presented him with something he wanted signed, and Gary, new at the job, managed to fumblingly fend him off by saying he'd have to read it over first. He took it to a senior partner in the firm, who exploded at Rehnquist for trying to pull a fast one.

--John's tale is considerably more serious, from the period when Rehnquist was head of the Office of Legal Counsel in the Justice Dept. John had gone to law school before turning to teaching English, and had clerked for a 9th Circuit justice, rising fast enough that he was interviewed by Rehnquist for a job at Legal Counsel. The interview did not go well, and at last Rehnquist asked him, "Do you think you can play on our team?" That sounds to me like exactly the kind of illegal political winnowing that the Gonzalez Justice Dept. got caught at.

So, a good and even instructive evening at the Kittles. C sat next to Barbara and liked her a lot. The house is a beauty, with great touches everywhere, unto a pair of Fritz Scholder prints on the wall. A good time was had, in concert with the whole trip.

25 Jan.--I seem to have come through the latest blood tests without catastrophe. The serum protein results were unchanged, the lambda light chain result which replicates the urine protein was slightly lower. Now to see if Dr. Chen concurs, tomorrow, that I'm still stable.

This was supposed to be the day of the treecutters, next door, on the fringe stuff in the Kastners yard growing up into our view, but a little after 7 I got a call that two of the guys had called in sick, so it's rescheduled for day after tomorrow. I had deliberately set aside my work, after a couple of productive innings over the weekend, to deal with the tree crew, so I was working on the more interruptible Lake Oswego "Whistling Season" speech, and damned if I didn't get it all ready, a nice gain in the weeks ahead.

A further Tucson note: the timing of our trip was wondrously lucky, as the days right after left brought rainstorms of half an inch and nearly an inch, and 50-60 mph winds.

28 Jan.--Dr. Chen concurred that the blood tests show me to be stable, and doing well enough that we can try cutting my Thalidomide dosage from 100 mg to 50 mg, starting with the next re-order in late Feb. This will mean checkups every 3 months instead of 4, so he can keep a sharper eye on the blood readings, but it's worth the try.

And this morning was the Pamidronate infusion, my 22nd, only 2 more to go and am I ever tired of 'em. The stuff didn't arrive for $\frac{1}{2}$ hr this morn, stretching my time in the chair to well over an hour and a half.

Chores, chores. Y'day we did get the tree trimming done on the Kastner property, although Lynn showed up out of nowhere--we haven't seen a sign of her for weeks--and gave the crew hell for not having her written permission. This despite our getting an okay from her dad before he went into dementia, checking with her by phone when we were lining up the crew, and getting her say-so in a phone message. What the hell is her gripe, she's just had a free trimming of all the junk trees around a property that she's going to try to sell.

Well, it has been a hectic week, and I've been thankful for the equanimity the Tucson vacation provided, and am trying to hang on to it.

6 Feb.--A week that I haven't much liked, with not much to show as progress on the Miss You ms. Have to remind myself other things got done: C and I finished the 2nd (& evidently final) pass of Work Song page proofs, a dozen small fixes); I had a conference call with Michael Barson and Matthew Venzon of Penguin Group publicity, along with Becky, about what I can undertake for Work Song (inevitably more than I want to); and we managed to do some yard work, laying newspaper and bark over the part of the front lawn we're planting to heather and juniper.

The weather remains mild, 50ish, El Nino driving the storm track south to California.

Brave new world: this morn I e-mailed Michael Barson to turn down the Durango art festival invitation, to get it out of the way before the work week, and within minutes he had replied, also working on a Saturday. So far I quite like him and am impressed--he's managed to read Whistling Season as well as Work Song, and was starting This House of Sky, enough so that he parsed through the finding-a-publisher intro with me.

All in all, this household seems to be doing reasonably well, while the country continues to go to hell. The Senate is dysfunctional, and the Democrats are going to catch the misery in the fall election. The economy is woeful, 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ million people out of jobs is a tragedy. We try to be apprised of such matters, but things keep cropping up to surprise us. Bob the painter was here to estimate our next project, upstairs bathrooms and bedroom etc., and his business plummeted so much with the Sept. '08 financial meltdown that he's let his two helpers go, it's just him and his wife now. A person would think his high-end kind of customer would still be doing some spending, but huh uh.

12 Feb.--A better week of writing, the story moving better as I get to the Fort Peck reunion. On the Work Song front, news was not so hot--no ALA speaking gig. On the other hand, I'm to go to the Public Library Ass'n convention in Portland, and that might be okay.

It's turned showery, while the East Coast is getting smothered in snow, but I managed to plant a coldframe of New Red Fire lettuce seedlings between sprinkles this afternoon.

15 Feb.--Presidents' Day, so the phone has been quiet and I've been able to spend a pleasant day finishing up a re-read of *The Whistling Season* before we go to Lake Oswego for their celebratory event. I have to say, the book seems to me so good that I misted up. The big raft of characters, including all the schoolkids, have personalities or at least circumstantial outlines that seem clear and right. I am one pleased author at the moment.

C has just left for some kind of lawyerly conference at Margaret Svec's. Earlier, somewhat to my surprise she turned down Bob the painter's estimate for doing the upstairs bathrooms, closets and our bedroom; \$5700 did strike us as too steep. I was ready to be a good sport about the project and put up with what likely would have been a couple of weeks of painting mess, but am glad not have to face the disruption yet.

The weather has stayed mild. I did some more grafting on the old apple tree over the weekend, a total of 6 new grafts this spring. (Rather inelegantly, in shaving the scionwood to approximate wedge shape; anything worth doing is worth doing poorly.) And I've plant@d lettuce seedlings started indoors, putting 'em in the ground both in a coldframe and out.

Tony Angell and Lee were here on the 13th for a crab feed to celebrate Tony and Marzluff's \$100,000 book contract with Simon & Schuster (Lesley Meredith, the acquiring editor) for another crow book. At the same time, our buddy David Laskin was bushwhacked at HarperCollins, with the offer of \$70,000 on his next book, down from \$200,000 on the one just coming out, *The Long Way Home*. Yipes.

19 Feb.--C's diary entry caught the essence of our Lake Oswego trip, which went smoothly in miraculously springlike weather. And we brought home a \$5000 speaking fee. The Lake Oswego experience was another instance of Oregon citizenship, much community cohesion going into the book-related events. The extraordinary quiltwork and paintings based on *The Whistling Season* brought home to me how much people find a reality in what my imagination has produced. Also, this speaking gig was a test run to see if my

19 Feb. cont.--medicated self can handle such events, and I think I did okay. I definitely felt in control of my speech. And as C said, I had to be engaged with people all afternoon, and am not aware of flubbing any of that.

That said, the event has entirely taken away the week from my work, which I'll need to get back to on Monday. Today is another bonus of early spring, so I want to get outside and plant the pea crop. Another sign of spring: I looked out at something on the downstairs deck that appeared to be an animal turd, but on closer inspection it's a mouse with its head bitten off. A timely reminder, from some passing cat, that I need to start trapping mice to protect the peas.

23 Feb.--I've been jumpy, today and y'day, about extraneous stuff crowding out my work--requests to do this or that, United Airlines changing a perfectly logical flight to Des Moines etc.--until a phone call from David Williams showed me I don't have anything worth fretting about, comparatively. His Jolly Old Beast book proposal was rejected, as Laskin's also was. Tough times are really hitting home to our writing buddies, damn it.

Rain began just after lunch, the first in ten days or so. We made use of the nice weather in yard work over the weekend, for one thing moving my little Jonathan apple tree--bonus from the grafting class I took--from the front bank where it has never grown much, to the downslope area where the other fruit trees have done well. We also pruned the prune plum tree. And another mark of good weather, we grilled salmon last night.

On the 19th, David Laskin came for dinner while Kate was in NY for her father's memorial service. He was recasting his family saga book proposal, and today it was sent out, to my Becky among others.

3 March--Busy life, but the main news is that after 3 days at reduced dosage of Thalidomide--50 mg. instead of 100--I seem to be steadier, my mind less jumpy and frettish. So far so good. On the work front, I'm still paddling atop other chores to get the writing done, but it is adding up by 4 or 5 pp. a week.

13 March--Saturday, a cloudy chilly one. March has asserted itself, after the past mild two months. C and I feel we're ~~in~~ pretty well caught up on yard work, although we're both always yearning to get outside.

I'm now about 2 weeks into the lower Thalidomide dosage, and am markedly more clearheaded; C says she's so glad to have me back to myself. The foot neuropathy and hand cramps may even be a bit better. I have 5 weeks now until Dr. Chen's verdict on whether we can keep getting away with this minimum dosage.

Now that I'm sharper, so is the writing, I'm pretty sure. It's still slower than I would like, mostly a page a day, but this week's work produced $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. pp. of insert--Tom Harry and Rusty on their way north from Tucson--which seems to me fine and funny.

On the writing front, we've been cheering from the sidelines as David Laskin has been switching publishers, by way of a terrific \$300,000 auction of his next book y'day, from Harper to either S&S or, lo, my very own Becky.

9:30--Just now, the first sailboats of the big race that always takes place this time of year are passing. the spinnakers of many colors parading on the gray-blue water. We'll have a day of seeing them go and come.

16 March--Sonofabitching weather. Around 2 this afternoon, the wind came up terrifically--C had just noticed the big whitecaps on the Sound--and I looked out to see my coldframes being blown apart. I got shoes and a sweatshirt on, and salvaged the awry pieces--one lid and one back side--into the house to C, and hauled the two at-risk coldframes into the shelter of the downstairs deck. The other one, I bolstered with compost bags. The coldframe parts don't seem damaged, but the wind blew some of my lettuce seedlings to bits before I could get them covered with the wheelbarrow and some battened-down boxes.

23 March--Longer and harder days than I'd like, lately. Ch. 2 of Miss you has been tough to get going in a smooth way, although I think I'm now getting it whipped. Beyond the writing, there's usually something to be juggled, to do with the publicity for Work Song, the book biz generally, or as today, the damned changeover of servers at my website. C has done huge work in preparing reading group questions etc. for the updating of the website we intend, and there's still a lot of time--and \$\$\$--to be invested as we have Carol Solle do it for us.

On the national scale of life, the Democrats seem to have finally passed health care legislation--as soon as it survives the procedural gauntlet of the Senate. The bulky package no doubt is unfavorable to us, whacking as it will at the Medicare Advantage portion of our Group Health insurance, but it is an effort to give millions of people a fairer break, and so be it.

28 March--A showery Sunday, after a busy week with a landmark in it. Friday, the 26th, I had my 24th and last monthly Pamidronate infusion. In theory at least, my bones have been strengthened against the onslaught of multiple myeloma. On that same medical note, tonight I begin the second month of diminished Thalidomide dosage--50 mg. instead of 100--and on April 22 will find out from Dr. Chen whether I can get away with this lesser dose; I will be surprised if I can.

On the 25th I flew to Portland, to be in the Penguin Group booth at the Public Library Association convention. Signed and gave away at least 75 ARCs of Work Song, to a good geographic dispersion of librarians--Arkansas, Tampa, New Hampshire, and the first time I ever signed a book for someone from Yonkers. I seemed to be a hit with Alan Walker and Dominique Jenkins of ~~the~~ Penguin Academic Marketing, which may have been as much the point of the publicity people sending me as meeting the librarians. I strolled around the floor booths before my own hour of signing, and was surprised by the amount of lionization, people wanting their pictures taken with me etc.

~~On~~ Also on the book front, C and I last night listened to the Recorded Books version of Rascal Fair, the first 2 of 17(!) episodes, and it sounds terrific, both the writing and Robert Ian McKenzie's British voice, including wonderful accents for the minor characters.

April 4--Easter. A chilly, gray, windy one, and by a quirk of ticketing, we're missing out on the usual great dinner at the Damborgs' and seeing Fences instead on freebie Rep tickets passed to us by Linda and Syd. It's been that kind of off-the-usual track week, starting with Tuesday the 30th when we went to dinner at the UW ~~president~~ president's place. The Emmerts are skillful hosts, Mark and DeLaine each presiding over a table of 7 or so of us for most of the high-spirited meal and then switching. C C was at DeLaine's table, the most boisterous, the one with the women: she notes the main uproarers, Heather and Pepper in her diary, while Bill Holm, Shawn Wong, and David Montgomery and his wife Ann were also on hand. At Mark's table, I sat between Shawn's wife Erin (funny start to that she was startled to discover I'm me, I said something like well, yeah, so what, but you're married to a writer, she said "But he isn't you!") and Ken, an Asian-American kids' book writer whose last name I never learned. Marty Holm, Heather and Pepper's mates, and Bob Merry filled out the table. Mark was good at tossing out questions to us, ~~xxx~~ and in the go-round about whether we're concerned about how our works emerge in translation, Heather's mate, I believe his name is Victor, the Joycean in the English dept said he thought authors were quite forgiving toward translations but estates tended to be harsher. Quite knowing what I was doing, I innocently asked: "Is there a Joyce estate?" Fire in the hole! Victor emoted that there is, it's Joyce's grandson Stephen, who hates Joyceans and once prevented, by legal means it sounded like, Victor and his students from holding a UW Bloomsday reading of all of Ulysses. In another table inning, we (probably me) asked Bob Merry what he's working on after his James Polk biog. ~~That~~ (That book, which got good reviews in all of them I saw, was a good shrewd topic, although Bob had the advantage of DeVoto's grand grab-bag, 1846: Year of Decision. He said he wants to write about the 1850's, focusing on 2 states that did more than any others to ignite the Civil War, South Carolina and Massachusetts. He'd focus on certain figures from each, certain newspapers of the time. Seems to me historically sound, although not as punchy as Great Man stuff like the Polk biog, and I asked about his publishing situation. It's Simon & Schuster, the best-

April 4 cont.--seller manufacturer Alice Mayhew his editor-- I might have known--and while they haven't come to terms yet, Bob grinned and said "They will." I later got him aside to tell him what a shining light the Nat'l Observer was for C and me, in its short-lived career (and his there covering national politics with James Perry). So, a good mind-bouncing evening.

Then, on Friday the 2nd, we'd invited David Laskin and Kate for a drink to celebrate his \$300,000 contract with Penguin and hear about his Long Way Home booktour, and he arrived saying he really did need a drink, all right. Their oldest daughter, Emily, is in a NY hospital, a leg broken in two places and an elbow injured, after a skateboard accident in the middle of the night. Yikes.

Last night, New York came to us, Wendy Smith and hubby Joe Mobilia and long tall 14-year-old son Luca. 23 years ago, Wendy did probably the best interview and profile of me ever, for Publishers Weekly, when Rascal Fair was about to appear. We put on a crab feed as we tend to do on such occasions, and while Luca ate spaghetti instead, Wendy and Joe demolished what we'd thought was plenty of crab. Good fun to have them here. Wendy reported that at the Forks b&b where they'd stayed, one of the other customers, a computer guy, asked her what she does, and she had to say, "Um, I review books for newspapers." There are four outlets left, she says, NY, LA, Wn Post and Chi Tribune. She also let drop, with an encouraging elbow from Joe, that she's reviewed Work Song for Kirkus, and liked it. We'll see to what extent, but that should at least get the book past one possible pitfall.

I'm about to quit this for today, go do my every second-day exercise, change a few words in the Miss You ms, and otherwise monkey away the afternoon until ham supper and theater time, but it must be noted that tomorrow is the third anniversary of my stem cell transplant. It is strangely hard to hold that experience (which really began with the regimen of drugs the first day of 2007) in any clear light of mind; a lot of that memory has healed over. But while I have to contend with the hard problem and numb feet, and who knows what dire medication and worse ahead, I am ~~stunned~~ by damn alive and functioning, thanks to that medical gauntlet of three years ago.

April 13--C is upstairs reading my Des Moines speech, which was my latest tussle with that form. For all the talks I've made down through the years, it seems like there ought to exist a standard speech I can pull out, but invariably there's a ten- or fifteen-minute chunk that needs changing. The recent talks have been keyed to community reads of Whistling, but that book isn't central to this speech, and so, the reworking that took all of y'day and part of this afternoon.

Something pleasant in the interim this afternoon, though, a phone call from Dave Wittke in Des Moines, who worked with me in the dishroom of the NU apartments. Somehow I hope to spend a little time with him.

The past some days have been a grind, away from the ms; Carol Solle has begun updating my website, which C has done huge work toward, there were finances to tend, this speech, a blood test this morn and so on. With luck, I can get back to Miss You the next couple of days.

April 17--45 years ago, this April day, Carol and I were married. Today, as the weather stuttered between sprinkles and showers and mild clearing, we tried to remember any anniversary when the weather was actually good. C joked that we should have chosen some nice Septober afternoon. Anyway, we are playing this occasion very low-key, as I fly to Iowa tomorrow to speech-make, leaving for the airport at 5 in the morn. We went to Edmonds for a walk this afternoon, and C promises single-malt scotch and matchless cheese and crackers at 5, and both of us seem content. As to this long marriage, it remains a marvel to us. Sometime this spring, I said to her how lucky I was that she consented to me, rather than other chances she'd had, and she said, "You were compelling." Good enough.

April 20--I've been to Des Moines, in their speakers' series, done well and done us some good, to the tune of \$7500. Had lunch with Dave Witke, whom I worked with in the NU Apartments dishroom half a century ago, and had not seen since, even though we coincided at Lindsay-Schaub newspapers, he in Champaign-Urbana and me in Decatur. Someone I'd always liked, and as with the similar reunion with Chuck Hulin in Dowagiac, Michigan, a couple

April 20 cont.--of years ago, the life lived from then till now interests me. After four years with L-S, Dave latched on where he'd wanted to be, back home in Iowa at the Des Moines Register, and there was his career, with ~~some~~ what sound like some of the same bumps Bill Pride had at his chosen paper, the Denver Post. Wave was ass't managing editor, city editor, and so on, until Gannett bought the paper. He then went to the corporate level, I think overseeing computerizing the paper etc., and after that was done, Gannett wiped out that corporate level. Dave did better than some of his cohorts, he says, because he came from the newsroom and was willing to go back, and so became sports editor until he took a retirement-year buyout. Dave and Bill and for that matter Jerry Ackerman at the Boston Globe seem to me knights whom the round table of newspapering let down ultimately.

As to my talk in Des Moines, decent crowd of a couple hundred--the library marketing manager, Jan Kaiser, seemed very happy with it--and I quite liked the guy really behind bringing me to the gig, in that he ponied up half the fee out of the college coffer, David Maxwell, prez of Drake U.

April 28--YAY! My blood tests look unchanged, which ~~indicates~~ indicates I'm getting away with the 50 mg. dosage of Thalidomide instead of 100 mg., although we'll find out tomorrow what Dr. Chen thinks--it's been 6 weeks of that lowered dosage. Here's hoping.

April 29--I indeed had best possible news from Dr. Chen, confirmation that the deadly protein levels in my blood are unchanged at their lows of three months ago, I can continue with the minimum Thalidomide, and not have to be checked again for four months rather than three. I have gained a summer of life, a glorious outcome of any day.

12 May--Things have been careening along too fast and hectic to get down. All of it is good, with the exception of the jackhammering street project that caught us by surprise today. Briefly, the past ten days or so have produced:

--Ivandoig.com updated and complete, through the sorcery of C and Carol Solle.

--Work Song's starred review in Publishers Weekly and the highly blurbable summary: Charismatic dialogue and charming, homespun characterization make Doig's latest another surefire winner."

--Liz's news that the Spanish rights to Whistling have been bought for 3,000 Euros.

--Today's word from Becky that Work Song is on the July pick list of independent stores.

And our bedroom is painted.

15 May--A mellow Saturday, sunny (although clouds moving in this afternoon, high 60s. C is working in the yard and I'm lazing from small task to task inside, after we trimmed the downslope hedge this morning. We have Copper River salmon to grill for supper, first of the season in the regional mania for the wonderful fish that includes live TV coverage of the Alaska Airlines cargo plane arriving with the first shipment. Pretty damn nice.

And the zippity-doo-dah week of pretty nice things continued y'day when I was propped up at nap time reading the Seattle Times and happened across the headline, Works by Dickens, Doig in Book-It's new season, the first I'd heard that the theater is indeed doing Prairie Nocturne.

Elsewhere on the literary front, David Laskin and I have traded letters, inaugurated by mine to him urging him to write his forebears' epic story as if the devil is chasing him, as if we are belle-lettres gentlemen living on different continents instead of half a mile apart. Our other beloved David, Williams, had bad news, his publisher turning down his Jolly Old Beast book proposal. Without telling him to get his hopes up, I intend to run the idea past Becky.

24 May--This morning when I picked up our mail, newspapers, and packages from the Nesses after our weekend at the Oregon coast, there was the first copy of Work Song, a real book after all this wait. Of course it's lovely, the excruciatingly colorized cover photo looks fine, the pages have an inviting open look. A nice book to round out my baker's dozen.

The Oregon trip went pretty well--the weather iffy as usual; squalls this time--and we enjoyed ourselves doing pretty much what we always do there--hiking a bit on Nehalem beach, going to Fort Clatsop and the Astoria Maritime Museum, lunching at the Pig and Pancake--but as usual, a couple days of the intended three were plenty and we came home a day early. We did get to see Madeline and Alan Olsen's house in Manzanita, which wowed us with its architecture and wetland in the back yard.

This bonus day, I've spent mostly on the garden, planting beans, weewhacking, netting over the backyard strawberry bed against the towhees--and I've just now seen one darting all around the netting trying to figure a way in.

30 May--Memorial Day weekend, rainy. I managed to put in the posts this morn for netting over the front yard blueberries before the weather turned drippy, but otherwise C and I have been contentedly passing the time in the house, feeling good about life and each other.

6 June--Rainy again, this Sunday morn, although there's been a lot of sunny life since the last diary entry. C has caught our Ashland theater trip and reaction to the plays, right on. I read Hamlet the day before and on our dicey plane trip--we had to unload just before takeoff at SeaTac and transfer to another Horizon flight just in from Bozeman--and began to savvy what the production made clear, that the play isn't just Hamlet famously strutting and fretting but a large story, and the modern-dress version brought that across superbly. "She Loves Me" really was a trifle after that, although very well cast. How the Ashland actors manage to do double duty boggles the imagination, but after 3½ hours as Hamlet in the afternoon, there was Dan Donohue back and stealing the show as the headwaiter in A Budapest restaurant.

As C noted, the backstage tour, by a theater education

6 June cont.--guy whose name we think was David Thompson, was instructive par excellence. I'm interested in stagecraft for the kids in Miss You, so I'm transcribing my tour notes into my Ideas notebook, but here's one bit I may resort to myself. Someone asked Thompson about all the memorizing of lines actors have to do, and he said it's really not a big deal, all our memories are better than we give them credit for. He said there's no such thing as a prompter any more, actors are expected to be professional and know their lines. And, he said, if you do hit a blank moment onstage, there's always Hermia's excuse in perfect iambic pentameter: "I am amazed, and know not what to say."

As soon as we were back, Work Song publicity sprang to life again, primarily with an anguished cry from the NW sales rep for me to go to Powells in Portland. I suppose it makes sense, although I've asked that the Grahams store in L. Oswego also be considered, to actually sell some damn books for my effort.

The past couple of days before today were lovely weather and we got gobs of yardwork done--both blueb patches netted over, tomatoes bought and planted, the rosemary transplanted from the deck pot to the front yard slope, on and on.

16 June--It is time to draw a breath. Yesterday I finished the draft of Miss You're big 2nd chapter, a hump I've been working to get over for what seems like forever. I hope to be able to tinker with it--still my greatest skill--during the bookstore season. Skimming back over it, I'm happy with a lot of the writing, and have the comfortable hunch that I can enrich up characterizations and situations just fine. There's still a long way to go on this ms, and fate only knows if my health will hold out, but I've toughed through to not a bad spot in this book-to-be.

What I am unreservedly happy with is Work Song, which I just finished re-reading this very morning. It seems to me very smooth--hell, slick--and Morrie's voice sounds valid all the way. Speaking of tinkering, I'm turning things over in my head as to a next plotline for Morrie and Grace.

C is at the IMac, where we just had an email from Carol Solle saying Riverhead's video trailer for Work Song

16 June cont.--is ready to go on ivandoig.com, at last, at last. Meanwhile the publicity details plug along, and in my low moments the booktour seems to come down to the same old thing, me in stores signing books. (And with my achy hand, that's not something I'm wild to do.) I guess it'll get better, as the Riverhead veteran publicity guys work what territory for interviews etc. there is any more, but we're not far from the book having to make its way in the world. I'm afraid I got too edgy y'day when it was conveyed to me that Yellowstone Public Radio in Billings wanted me to call in for the scheduled $\frac{1}{2}$ hour interview, rather than a producer or host calling me ahead of time and setting things up; I fussed back to Michael and Matthew in publicity and I'm going to have to hope I don't need to niggle over details for a while. But as I said to C y'day, I do wish the publicity stuff would start simply clicking into place, instead of the blog request that came in from the sainted Robinson' Bellingham store, the U Book Store's cold feet and wanted to transfer my reading to the parking-sparse downtown library (I nixed that), and Y'stone Public Radio and so on. Thalidomide of course does not help my mood on any of this, although I'm quite a lot more stable on this minimum dosage.

27 June--Threescore and ten and one. I'm having a fine mellow 71st birthday, not as memorable as last year's gala of friends as arranged by Carol and the god of weather, but nice enough in its own way. In this mild weather we trimmed the downslope hedge and some growth along the front of the house this morn, our idea of a good time. And I had a good and lucky present in today's Seattle Times review of Work Song, Tim McNulty praising the book in good quotable style--"a reach of characters worthy of Dostoevsky." Tomorrow, lunch at Camano with Linda and Syd, always an upbeat occasion.

C has been diligent with her diary while I have been dogpaddling back and forth between publicity stuff and the Miss You ms, so she's likely noted the latest turn, the book idea after Miss You, a reprise of Morris and Grace and, sigh, Butte, to be titled Sweet Thunder. I called Liz at her summer place in Maine to ask her opinion about submitting a book proposal now or later, and she

27 June cont.--said she couldn't see why we shouldn't go ahead. So I'll see if I can get Sweet Thunder thought out into a few pp., maybe over the 4th of July weekend, and launched eastward to Liz and Becky.

Life is good, just now. We'll see how it wears as the bookstore trail begins, two nights from now.

28 June--Probably the best set of reviews I've ever had just came in, from the AP, Bookpage.com, and Billings Gazette. And the ^Nelsons, Marsh and Laird, have dubbed me Doigstoevsky after the Seattle Times review.

29 June--Publication day for Work Song at last. I finished the writing more than a year ago, and there's been what seems like a long haul of proofs and publicity stuff this year. Now it comes down to what it always has, my voicebox and hand, tonight at the first of the 9 or 10 booksignings. At least it's not 40 or so, as was the case with all 11 books through Whistling Season. Today has been quite an email ping-pong, with Becky citing to us the flashing

banner Riverhead put atop the Shelf Awareness site for the day, and the 2-column color ad coming in the NYTBR on the 4th, and an email from Marcella mentioning the crowd of 100,000 that the National Folklife Festival will draw to Butte, causing everyone to slap their heads and wonder how we can milk that.

This morning I marked up the script for my reading, which is to be Morrie's foray into the library. The weather is cool but I find it pleasantly so, a nice breeze when I picked sugar peas and raspberries a while ago. I'm feeling mellow, and as C said, this seems the most celebratory pub day we've ever had.

30 June--A roaring start for Work Song, with 400 people packing the Third Place reading/eating area, and 117 books sold. My reading selection, Morrie discovering the Butte library, seemed to be a hit. Today is a more strenuous outing, by ferry to Eagle Harbor, with a library-benefit reception schmooze beforehand.

1 July--Work Song's third day in the world, and a second printing of 2500.

July 4th--What a whale of a week, all of it good. The crowds have been full houses--125-150 at Eagle Harbor, by Mary Gleysteen's estimate--and all the reviews have been good, including a nearly fevered Chicago Trib one today by the Trib's cultural critic Julia Keller, under the heading "Is Ivan Doig's 'Work Song' the best emblem of the American spirit?" She writes: "If you were looking for a novel that best expresses the American spirit, you'd have to ride past a lot of fence posts before finding anything as worthy as 'Work Song.'" Quite remarkable.

The really good news, of course, is the back-to-press noted above. And maybe beyond that, the really really good news--we'll see--is that I used the ~~un~~forced layoff from Miss You during this promotional stint to put together the proposal for Sweet Thunder, the next book with Morrie. Got it done on Friday (this is now Sunday), called Liz to ask how she wanted it sent, she said fax it and I did. (She's at her summer place in Maine.) Luckily I was doing something at C's Imac late that afternoon when an email dinged in from Marshall Nelson, touting the Chi Trib review. We read it and whooped, and faxed that to Liz. About suppertime, the phone rang, Liz sounding, as C said, almost giddy, saying the review was perfect, the proposal was perfect, "and we'll have a present for Becky next week."

Interestingly, ideas for Sweet Thunder have been popping to mind, and one scene, where Morrie blunders into the bootleggers' warehouse and is mistaken for the Highliner, all but writes itself as I jot it down.

On top of all that, now that Work Song is at last in the world, we have the \$67,500 (x with Liz's cut already out) on-publication chunk of advance coming.

Things almost surely will not stay as rapturous from here on. Smaller signings probably are ahead--the U Village Barnes & Noble is an unknown quantity, and the U Book Store seems shakey about getting a crowd out. And while today's NYTBR has the lovely 2-column color ad announcing "The master storyteller of the American West returns," next Sunday is the review there, and I fully expect the book has been assigned to someone who refuses to be entertained.

12 July--Good news kept dinging in by email all morning:

--The Daily Beast picked Work Song as a Hot Read of the week.

--It's an Editor's Pick in the NYTBR next Sunday.

--Best of all, it's #11 on the next Indie list, a national bestseller, as we can now call it forever and ever.

15 July--Remarkably, the good news for Work Song keeps on and on. Today it was one of 6 New Releases in the daily NY Times, and y'day it received a first-class review in the LA Times. Last night's gig at the U Book Store was a full house, 65 people, validating my refusal to move the event to the downtown library. offer

And Becky is to make her ~~offer~~, sez Liz, on Sweet Thunder tomorrow or Monday.

22 July--Waiting to nail down a contract, as C and I have been through a dozen times before. Becky's offer is, no way around it, disappointing, down from \$300,000 for the current 2 books to \$250,000 and Penguin's gimlet-eyed view of royalty rates and sub rights. The royalty rate does sting, back to 10-12½-15% after the career-long climb to a flat 15%. However, damn it, I don't know that I can refute Becky's points in the offer letter Liz emailed along. The book business is on tough times, as we found firsthand on our Skagit bookstore trip; even Chuck Robinson at Village Books, as veteran and canny as any bookseller anywhere, professed himself stumped about how things are going currently. Despite all kinds of publicity and attention connected with the store's 30th anniversary etc. their business was flat in June, and had been down before that. Chuck said the comparatively well-off customers who have always led the buying habits upward after other downturns aren't loosening their pocketbooks this time. Things are even tougher at Patti's Watermark store in Anacortes, so we were particularly glad I drew a standing-room crowd and she sold out of her 41 Work Songs. All in all, the pattern is a more pronounced version of what I've seen on the past couple of books, crowds as big or bigger than ever at my readings but fewer books sold than in the old glory days when my signings averaged 70-75 hardbacks.

22 July cont.--So, we're waiting by the phone to talk this over with Liz, but my inclination is to take the offer, which at least would sew up a contract for Sweet Thunder before the book biz goes any farther to hell.

C's diary entry catches the magical weather and sunset and twilight we had on the Skagit trip, thank goodness. I started going to those stores in 1980, and there were times back then when I would be driving home for two hours from, say, Patti and Norman's old store in Oak Harbor in the rain and the dark and vowing never again. Ultimately C and I managed to schedule all that as we did this time, using the Channel Lodge--pricy to us, but no NY publisher has kicked yet--as the central spot and go to all the extant bookstores across two days. They are old friends, those booksellers; I am much in Chuck Robinson's memoir of the book biz, I notice.

A note on the audiences this time around, and the people on line; people are wonderfully nice and patient, and practically worshipful to my work and, accordingly, me.

Later: C and I did talk to Liz, after it finally dawned on me I had left this morning's message on her office phone in NY rather than her Maine number, and the result is that she wants to wait a few weeks (probably more, given what happens in the publishing world in August), to see how Work Song's sales numbers go and whether Penguin can get a little nervous. We said OK, though I told her I'd like to get things resolved pretty soon after Labor Day, if nothing else for psychological reasons, before the book biz goes any farther to hell. ~~She~~ In this strategy of waiting, she said she didn't think the contract offer would be any worse by doing so.

25 July--A sunny Sunday, the day after Carol's birthday, and, she decided after ~~the~~ yesterday's preparations for hosting the Rodens to mark Jean's 80th birthday of a few days ago and the usual gauntlet of having John as a guest

(a coughing fit that made the question of calling 911 dance back and forth; coffee spilled on the deck, which he was going to ignore until Carol pointed out that wasn't great for the deck paint; crumbs in a radius around wherever he sits; he really is a bad dream of a guest), a nice day to really mark the event. So we picked the first of our

25 July cont.--blueberry crop, and did some backyard work which helped the veg garden greatly, and tonight we're eating crab. This indeed is better.

The Portland trip, which I was reluctant to make, was an absolute hit. It didn't start off that way, when the Horizon flight attendant spilled a bottle of water down my back, and I was still soggy when I went for the radio interview at KBOO. But the interview was very nicely done by Dmae Roberts, and the escort Sandra Rafalik didn't miss a stitch on anything, and the reading at Powell's was a roaring success. When Sandra and I walked in about 7, the audience area was already half full, the Oregonian having got the ~~7:30~~ time wrong, and when we actually started at 7:30, the fire marshal limit of 300 was in some kind of effect, no more chairs being set up and people standing. It was far and away the best-handled event I've ever had there, as Powell's often has seemed to me jaded or lackadaisical. This events handler, Frances Miller, has a great speaking voice, had written out a well-crafted terse description of the book, and most of all, tucked into her introduction of me the line: "one of the greatest novelists living or dead." It cracked me up, and brought down the house in hilarious and enthusiastic applause. I think I was in top form in my reading, and the audience questions were good, including one about why readers outside the West don't get it about Stegner, Doig, Lesley, etc., so I got the chance to recite my answer to the NYTBR's "what is the future of the Western."

So, all in all, from Portland to Bellingham, bookstores jammed full; capacity is my middle name, eh?

Had dinner with Craig and Kathy Lesley before Powell's, and they seem in good shape other than expectable whimsies about their daughter Elena's upcoming wedding and then a visit from the groom's parents who insist on staying with them. Yikes, to put it mildly. Craig is writing short stories these days, toward a collection the OSU Press wants to do, although as I pointed out to him, you don't want too many stories in a book like that--I forget if he said he has 15 or 30 published ones, but in any case, a dozen or so sounds about right to me.

Two more bookstore events--the Whistling Season reprise tomorrow night and the Park Place mercy mission on Thursday--and then it's onward to renewed life. I'm ready.

3 August--It's more of a struggle than I think it ought to be to get to this diary. But the Miss You ms continues to be tough, a hard-won page or so a day. Yet I can now be at it full-time, with the book tour behind me and, lo, a new quarter-million-dollar book contract.

The Work Song signings ended with a terrific night at Parkplace Books, which I'd have predicted would be the weakest of the 9 or 10 events. Instead, 180 people packed the store--50 of them standing--and the books sold out, along with the dozen we'd brought for that eventuality. Meanwhile, Liz let me know Riverhead was better at the waiting game than we could be--they wouldn't let the contract offer sit there much longer--so I told her to take it, and the more C and I think about it, the better off we feel to have it in hand, even if the money up front is less than the past pair of books. Today there's a warm "Welcome back!" email from Becky, and tomorrow I'll need to nudge Liz to find out how big an advance she managed to wheedle.

9 Aug.--C has just done what I am sure is a triumphant diary entry, and I'll do one too. After about ten years, we have prevailed in the hazardous damn situation of the tree leaning over us from the Kastners' side. Henry died this summer, and daughter Lynn ultimately signed off on the tree work estimate we had done a year ago, and hallelujah, the ~~xxx~~ limbs swooping toward us are gone by dint of Ken and Cliff of Seattle Tree Preservation sawing out about a ton of wood, and most vitally, installing a set of cables which should keep the dangerous trunk nearest us from falling on us. The tree is an old giant--Ken estimated it at 125 years old and 75 feet high--and now we think we can live with it.

23 Aug.--Bone-tired, at 3 this fine summer afternoon, but I believe I have the ms chunk--129 pp.--ready for C to look over. I was deadly determined to get this much of Miss You in hand by Labor Day, and by damn I think I have.

25 Aug.--Beautiful summer day, maybe the last of its kind, cloudless and warm but with a nice breeze. It's a little after 3, C is in the financial affairs room propped up starting to read the first 129 pp. of Miss You--we've just discussed what Tom Harry should like like, with me agreeing that my try at a Spencer Tracy-like face isn't quite right; fairly easily fixable--after a dogged morning of caulking and painting in the everlasting annual upkeep of the deck posts and railing and the weather-tortured big southwest windowframe. Meanwhile Chuck of All-Clear was hear cleaning moss off the roof and then cleaning the gutters. Snotty chores, all of it, and thank goodness we got it done.

I'm now at a point where I can regroup--if the doctor's appointment on the 31st doesn't change the picture--and work away at the rest of the ms in more reasonable fashion, I think.

We entertained in fine style last night, fed Mark & Lou Damborg salmon salad dinner with everything but the fish and mushrooms from our garden; it was a fine clear evening, great on the deck.

Aug. 31--Spared again, by the blood tests, the ~~mx~~ serum protein statistically unchanged and the urine protein a bit better. This is terrifically good news, freeing me from appointments until late Jan., after our intended Tucson stay. Today's visit to Chen turned into a marathon, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Hrs. late, but then the validation of the test scores that we'd ~~mx~~ checked on-lint was quick--"Don't rock the boat," said he.

Taste of winter today, rain this morning and a lot of wind this afternoon. The house really feels it, as we do. Luckily y'day was nice when Jean Walkinshaw and daughter Meg were here for lunch. Jean is always an amazement; she'd just unsold the big old Capitol Hill house, going back for one last look after signing the sales contract and finding she really didn't want to sell it. Incredibly, the buyer let her off the hook and the real estate agents didn't take any commissions.

So, now that I am not imminently in harm's way, I have to make tracks on the Miss You ms and come up with the 2 Oct. speeches; the MSU one I've decided to try to whip this week.

9 Sept.--Labor Day has been and gone, by everything but the calendar this is now autumn (the weather certainly thinks so), and I am back at writing hard, and so far quite well, I think. As C no doubt has recorded, we've managed some socializing lately, timely invites from the Laskins and Damborgs. And we had to cancel out on Betty and Roy Mayfield's invitation to ride their boat from Anacortes to LaConner for a lunch, because I forgot to take my Thalidomide the night before--the first time ever; we'd been at the Laskins and I guess I went straight to bed--and had to take one that morning instead. It blunked me out, a revelation to both C and me. Anyway, here we are, back at life approaching usual.

18 Sept.--Theater night ahead, to see Pt. 2 of Cider House Rules at Book-It. Should be fun. We've earned some time off, having put in 6 1/2 afternoon sessions of power-washing the front sidewalk and the north patio with the Nesses' borrowed machine. We've actually done quite a hell of a lot to this place this year, getting three rooms painted, the damnable looming tree cabled, the roof cleaned and the deck maintained, along with the customary garden and yard work.

As to my work, Miss You is still stubbornly slow, a page a day at best. And maybe that is what it is going to be.

30 Sept.--A new typewriter ribbon, and a day off, more or less. We've tried to look farther afield, but the tide is wrong to go to Dungeness Spit and what the TV forecasters blithely call patchy fog is sitting ~~over~~ from horizon to horizon and yesterday didn't burn off until mid-afternoon, so that took away a jaunt to the Skagit or Whidbey Island. Instead, we're going to tinker along outside in the garden etc., which actually feels like a nice way to spend the day. For whatever reason, I feel less hassled today than I have for the past several. Now to try to hang onto the mood.

C just checked the email and Becky reports Work Song is hanging on in the PNW bestseller list, #10. Good enough. As to Miss You, I'm right at 150 pp., and while it seems it has taken a hell of a lot of work to reach there from the 129 pp. C read at the end of last month, the material is getting close to critical mass, I think.

11 Oct.--It's been a scramble the past several days, complicated by a hellacious cold and a sensitive back tooth, which while not really aching is ominous enough that I have a dental appointment in the morning. Except for the ms--except!--I've managed to cope, so far. The PNBA breakfast talk on the 8th was a close call, however. The cold deepened my voice at that point, and after telling the audience of 180 I was not really doing a Darth Vader impersonation, I intoned my talk in pretty good style, I think. The next day, I could barely squawk, the cold had me by the vocal cords so bad. Y'day was a lot better, today is better yet. But I've had to spend the day, and part of y'day too, chopping my MSU speech to about 25 min. My own damn fault, for not seeing Patricia Dennison's stipulation of 20-25 min. in the notes I took after lunch with her last summer. Anyway, the speech is now trimmed down and marked up for delivery.

The PNBA breakfast went well, as my email to the River-headers sketches out. The moderator, whose name I've lost, asked if there were booksellers I'd like to have at my table, and so I was able to have good congenial company on either side of me, Nan from Village Books in Bellingham and Mary Harris from Parkplace in Kirkland. The hotel, though, the Airport Holiday Inn, was a clunker--airless, shabby around the edges, and the escort Kevin Spruger said the hallways smelled musty and the main floor men's room smelled so bad it about drove him out. Feeling so draggy from my cold, I didn't even think about going out somewhere for a good meal, just got by with pork loin in the hotel's odd grill--a s-l-o-w dinner which began when I ordered a beer and was told they couldn't pump anything on top, so I had a Stella, then when I wanted a second one, was told they were out of Stella, but could give me a Hefeweisen on tap. Shaking my head at the place, I was back in my room barely a minute when room service arrived with a colossal fruit plate and a bottle of pinot noir, along with a warm note from the hotel manager. Alas, there's no feasible way to carry a bottle on an airplane any more, so Kevin got the pinot.

17 Oct.--Spectacular weather has greeted us back from the Bozeman trip, y'day bright and blue and beautiful when we arrived home about 9:30 and today just as clear overhead while a fogbank has been forming on the opposite shore.

The trip went well, apart from some motel glitches at the Hampton Inn which has C at her computer right now checking out the Homewood Suites next door. I was "on", my voice working the way I wanted it to despite my cold, in my speech at the MSU Libraries fundraiser, and was lionized there and at the Country Bookshelf booksigning to an embarrassing degree. C dissented when I remarked on that, though, saying I've earned it by the natural way I respond to Montanans--she claims that if it were her, there'd be some New Jersey elbows-out attitude in spite of herself. Well, whether or not, we socialized ourselves through at least a couple of hundred people at the pair of events--the fundraiser actually was two receptions and then the banquet--with having only two instances of dodging gabby types who would have taken up all our time.

The booksigning: Mary Jane DiSanti was mortified at running out of Work Song, although I guess it was not entirely her doing. She had 150 copies on hand and 85 more ordered from Ingram's western warehouse, but by the time of the signing she was down to about 70 copies and the Ingrams warehouse was out of stock, so a last batch of customers got signed bookplates. I was busy the entire hour and a half, people very patient in the long line from the front desk to the middle of the store. As ever--shades of Aunt Elsie, who used to drive the bookstore staff nuts--there was plenty of distraction if I didn't keep my head down, this time mainly a very elderly man with a walker, seated in a chair not far from my signing table. He turned out to be a former judge whom the bookstore staff seemed to think well of, so his couple of one-sided conversations with me were tolerable. One moving moment was when a square-faced fellow, nicely dressed and polite, stepped to the table and said, "Ivan, I'm your cousin Ed." He seems very nice, which C and I marvel at because his father--also Ed--was such a blustering old phony. Ed had for me a pic of DL Doig's homestead house, now tumbling under the weight of time, and an emotion-stirring one from last

17 Oct. cont.--Memorial Day when Ed and daughter Pam went to the White Sulphur Springs cemetery and put a tulip on each family grave; the sight of Dad's and Grandma's there together makes me tear up just thinking about it. So, as ever, the Country Bookshelf signing was a roaring success--Mary Jane now has sold over 300 Work Songs--and memorable in other ways.

C is getting down some of the details of the fundraiser banquet, and for now I'll just do this one incident. Before things got underway, various people came by our table to talk a bit--~~me~~ including the MSU president Wadid Cruzado, very impressive, had done her homework on me and Mike Malone and staying firmly seated during all this to spare my knees and back, I found myself looking up, not very far, at a ~~man~~ large-headed man with that half-hunched half-thrust forward posture Churchill had. "I'm Patrick Hemingway, Ernest's son," he introduced himself robustly. I was astonished. Coincidentally I had just browsed back through Scott Berg's biography of Maxwell Perkins, having intended to just look up something and instead spending a couple of evenings

following Perkins trying to deal with--expending his life, really--Fitzgerald, Wolfe, and Hemingway. Nor did I have any idea Patrick lived in Montana. I just checked in the Berg biography and it says Patrick was born in the summer of 1928, Hem and Pauline's first child; certainly he has his father's physical cranium and a big forthright voice, but he was very pleasant. Full of praise for my work, particularly Bucking the Sun; he and his Carol have a place there at Fort Peck. Another guy who was one of his hunting buddies had appeared by now, also citing Fort Peck, and I asked, what is it with you guys, you don't get enough wind elsewhere in Montana and have to go to Fort Peck. Patrick laughed and explained that the hunting they do--for sharp-tail grouse--has moved farther and farther into the outback. Kidding again, I warned him to watch out or he'd end up in North Dakota. In the spirit of it now, he said "We meet those guys coming our direction! Someday we'll all be at the state ~~line~~ line, all of us trying to gun down the last sharptail grouse!"

Oct. 21--Something funny in the NY Times today: Tom McGuane has a new novel coming out, Charles McGrath trotted out to the Montana ranch to interview him, in the course of which

McG said "There's a view of Montana writing that seems stage-managed by the Chamber of Commerce--it's all about writers like A.B. Guthrie and Ivan Doig...It used to bother me that nobody had a scene where somebody was delivering a pizza." But now it only bothers you when you want to look clever in the NY Times, hmm?

Nov. 2--2:30 on a beautiful blue afternoon, and while I am still trudging to get the day's ms page done, it's timeout to say how lovely the scene is right now, the blueberry bushes redder than fire and my lettuce patch in various greens and purples and the kale bed a deeper serene green. C is at the front of the house, weedwhipping something, an industrious hum as background. Incongruously, as this is election day and almost certain to be catastrophic for the Democrats, I feel better about life than I have in some weeks, having decided to call Becky and tell her the ms chunk will reach her in mid*Jan. when we go to Tucson, rather than yet this fall, giving me leeway to pat things into better shape.

Nov. 7--The first morning off Daylight Saving Time, and the clock rhythm feels better to us, not so much darkness as we start our usually very early day. This is Sunday, and I may or may not go to the ms, having worked on it y'day. I'm at the Fort Peck reunion and refining and refining to make it move fluidly. Becky when I called her sounded if anything relieved that the ms chunk will reach her after the holidays rather than during. So, I can concentrate on shaping up the nearly 200 pp. I'll have by then, though I also must get Proxy and Francine onto the scene; as ever, I wish I had another 2 or 3 weeks in that span of time, but these things usually work out.

Just now I've readied a \$70 gift certificate at Third Place Books for Tony Angell's birthday, and as we're not sure of the precise date, I went back into our diaries to ten years ago when we hosted the big blowout for his 60th. Reading those entries truly brought home what a wallop

Nov. 7 cont.--this decade has been. Back then, the 2000 election had just happened and still was undecided, and C and I were commenting with some amazement about the Supreme Court taking on a state(Florida) election rules argument. Little did we know that would bring the judicial coup d'etat that gave us Bush, Iraq, the Wall Street hogs at the trough, corporate torrents of money into this year's election, the whole stagger of this country to rightwing nuttiness. Those ten years also brought us Carol's polymyalgia rheumatica and giant cell arteritis, and my myeloma; financially, it bought us a lot of rise and fall, ultimately more of a rise; it brought me two new publishers and, blessedly, Becky again; it brought a set of books I am damn proud of--Prairie Nocturne, The 11th Man, Whistling Season, Work Song. Glimpsing back, this way, tells the old truth that there's no predicting what's ahead. I likely won't see another total decade; and so, to make the best use ~~day~~ of day-by-day life.

10 Nov.--I am a sight. Dr. Shors lasered the sun-damage spots on my cheek and worked over my nose for good measure, two days ago, and I'm a splatter of purple bruises. Tomorrow night I go out in public, when we meet the Nelsons for dinner at Poppy, and I'm hoping C can camouflage the worst of me with makeup.

Today was an unexpected break in the weather, clear but chilly, and I'm just in from fertilizing seedlings in the coldframes, putting porcelain Catalina pots over other seedlings that the slugs or mice would work on, and, yes, setting mouse traps.

So far this has been a nice orderly week, with ms work going at the slow damn pace it insists on but at least going, and perhaps as encouragement, HMH royalties of \$7200 arrived, largely courtesy of 4,000 sales of Whistling Season. And one other sum in there, which means a lot to me in more than financial terms: a permissions fee for use of a small section of This House of Sky in grade-school achievement tests, the very ones I took as a grade-schooler.

21 Nov.--The Sunday before Thanksgiving, 38 degrees, and what is probably a snow shower shearing across the Sound from Kingston to Edmonds, coming our way. This dip in weather is to go on for 3 or 4 days, a time for us to hunker in, and C has just finished her morning ~~fix~~ of buying the holiday provisions, a turkey and a ham, the pair of them totaling nearly 40 pounds, safely on a refrigerator shelf.

As for me, I'm finally making the Miss You ms scoot along, having persevered on the troublesome start to ch. 2 until I think it works at least decently, and I'm now rewriting and filling in well past the hundred-page mark. Much better.

23 Nov.--Snow and cold, the high today in the mid-20s. Lots of ice, traffic a nightmare in y'day's evening commute, according to tv and the Seattle Times, and for that matter, Kate O'Neill who took 4 hrs to get home. We're successfully hunkered in, eating off the 9# ham, although I'm starting to ponder how to clear a safe path down the driveway and into the house for the Thanksgiving gang--I need to start on that tomorrow, even though it's still supposed to be colder than hell.

The ms work has gone well the past two days--the past 4, really, as I did useful dabs last weekend, too--with 130 pp. now in quite good shape and most of the next 40 or so in reasonable draft. I'm still going to have to push, but I think I can have the chunk I want by the time we skedaddle to Tucson.

27 Nov.--And so we have done Thanksgiving again, with a break from the weather. The snow and cold that came on the 22nd and threw Seattle into traffic connotations as usual began thawing Thanksgiving morning, the 25th, and to my surprise the bunch of us were able to take the usual neighborhood walk after the big meal. The lineup was much the same as last year: Mark & Lou Damborg, John & Katharina Maloof, Bill Calvin & Kathy Graubard, David William & Marjorie Kittle, Ann McCartney & Norm Lindquist, and Frank Zoretich. Everyone is holding up reasonably well, in fact John Maloof is much better than during his health trials of a year ago. As ever, C and I

27 Nov. cont.--did the turkey--C went out a day ahead of the storm and bought a 20-pounder plus a 9-pound ham--and the reliably delicious potluck dishes showed up from everyone else. There really is much to be thankful for in this bunch of old reliable friends.

The weather now is chilly and rainy, making it hard to get outside except for our daily walk of the n'hood, but I found that my lettuce in the 3 coldframes survived, as did the evidently aptly named Siberian kale.

On the ms front, I'm now past the 160 pp. mark, and must close in on the mudjacks reunion and the coming of Proxy and Francine.

6 Dec.--Start of a gray damp December afternoon when it feels very snug to be in this house and in the not-bad shape we're in. Upstairs, C is starting to read my 187 pp. of Miss You ms, which I have spent the past several days comfortably spiffing up. I can't remember ever doing a book quite like this, the first 2/3 in very nearly publishable shape while the rest is somewhere in the corners of my head. As C points out, I now have 7 months (and actually more if needed) to come up with Proxy and Francine and the rest of the story. As it became clear that I was going to have almost a couple hundred pp. done, I've steadied considerably, feeling less driven and eggbeatered by the writing. Now to see if that can last through our Tucson trip in mid-Jan.--and not incidentally, produce Proxy and Francine.

Dec. 11--Sat. Morn, with a Pineapple Express on its way with heavy rain that's supposed to last until Monday. Time to hunker in. I've been doing that anyway in working on the ms, which C very much liked. Y'day I got the start of the next (and last?) section, bringing Proxy into the story. There's still enough work ahead to be daunting if I think about it in the wrong mood, but health concerns aside, there's also no particular reason why I can't keep pegging away at it until it's done sometime next summer.

Y'day I took David Laskin to lunch at Chanterelle in Edmonds, in the aftermath of his father's death. I knew he would want to talk, and we had a long conversational

Dec. 11 cont.--session, in which I learned a lot about his family background--his father in charge of licorice (! for flavoring in cigarettes) for a Ron Perlman company). Even now all I can say is, wow.

Dec. 18--C is in the financial affairs room reading the 5+ pp which bring Proxy into Miss You, and if those hold up, that will finish the ms chunk I'll send in to Becky and Liz in mid-January. Took me all week (this is Sat. morn) to write the scene, this manuscript rather maddeningly producing itself at a page a day no matter how much effort I put into it. (And I am putting into it all I've got.) Still, here I am at essentially year's end, having put in time on Work Song ~~and~~ promo and other book biz matters, and I have perhaps 2/3 of a book.

A disappointment y'day on another front, Jane Jones of Book-It called to say they have to switch in a cash cow play--a Sense & Sensibility version that I guess is one of their old standards--in place of Prairie Nocturne, which puts PN off until Feb. '12, an 8-month delay. I'm unhappy with that, but I don't want Book-It to go out of business, and Jane claimed that the adapter Elena Hartwell and the actor they've cast as Monty remain committed despite the delay, and given how much work has already been put in on the play, I think there's a decent chance they'll make it happen. If they survive these tough times; if.

So, C and I watch the vagaries of other art forms--Book-It, the movie deals that never come to anything--and shake our heads, at the comparative stability of books. Two days ago, Liz's office wired us \$56,250, the signing advance on Sweet Thunder, which Riverhead/Penguin won't see a word of for maybe a couple more years. My income this year is \$198,000, and next year there's \$75,000 on p'back publication of Work Song and another \$75,000 when I hand in Miss You. This would be more glorious if I weren't 71 and have myeloma, but it's pretty damn good in any circumstances.

Afterthought: y'day without ~~too~~ much thinking it over, I turned down the CM Russell Heritage Award, proffered by board member Christina Blackwell, next March in

18 Dec. cont.--Great Falls. (C thought going to Great Falls in March was reason enough not to accept.) I knew I'd be window dressing for their big annual art auction, and that didn't feel right. But also at the forefront of my mind is the lesson I think I derive from Wally Stegner's later years, when he kept going to events, at a lot of physical cost. I intend to be highly choosy.

27 Dec.--We went through three days of Christmasing in good style. Xmas Eve, as we're making it a tradition with Betty and Roy Mayfield, we met at 3 at the Sorrento Hotel for martinis, in the case of everyone but me, sticking to beer so I could drive home in decent shape. C and I had a surprisingly smooth run through traffic getting there, so we arrived first, and to our further surprise we easily staked out ample gathering space--C's feet did not touch the floor if she sat back on the mammoth sofa--while around us in the dark-wooded fireplace room were small groups sedately having afternoon tea. Betty and Roy and Betty's brother Jim and wife Nancy soon showed up, and we were having a good time when it got even better with the arrival of another couple, Tom and Jean(?), and most of all, Sister Patricia. She's a nun and lifelong friend of Nancy and Jean, and somehow put Nancy and Jim together after divorces, as we have the story. She's broad and boisterous, with black hair frizzed out almost in electric-shock mode, and she presented C and me with a bottle of champagne and told us to crack open the orange juice in the morning and have a mimosa for breakfast. When we finally had to go, I announced I had never kissed a nun before and planted one on her on our way out.

Next, Christmas dinner at the Rodens, just the 4 of us because Lisa came down with an ear infection and couldn't fly. I was apprehensive about an evening with John without Lisa and Jerry's leavening effect, but he was not bombastic and off on political rants as he was last year here at our place, and I joked to C afterward that he only turns into a werewolf when he leaves his own house at night. C meanwhile did inspired kitchen duty, nudging Jean into taking out our filet mignons well before hers

27 Dec. cont.--and John's; "You want them bloody?" she asked in surprise, although in actuality the steaks were only nicely pink in the middle. Speaking of bloody, John had a nasty-looking red wound on his chin and a big patch over it, and I pretty promptly said, Let's get this over with, what happened to you, thinking he must have fallen on his face. No, a safety razor cut while he was shaving, which really made me blink; he's on blood thinner, which must account for how garish it looked. We had unexpected luck with our Xmas present for him, as he describes himself as a humbug type; an offer for a free Old Farmers Alamanac came with my usual gardening calendar, so I thought what the hell and got it to give to him. He skeptically cracked it open and immediately was riveted by the quack advertisements throughout the book. You never know.

And y'day, Boxing Day, it was our turn to do the dinner, the Mayfields again and Mark and Lou Damborg. It could not have been a more ~~xx~~ convivial set of guests, the four of them having sailed the same Canadian waters and so on.

And as C said--no surprise to me, though a relief to her--everything came out right, the rib roast perfect and so on. For the finale, the Damborgs lit the brandy on the persimmon "plum" pudding they'd brought, and here it came to the table, wrapped in blue flame.

As to other doings, C wrote \$13,000 in charitable checks on Christmas day, and I've been going over the ms chunk to be sent to Becky and Liz, to very useful effect--small changes, often only a word or phrase, but ~~xx~~ always better, better.

Later: C plucked the PNBA bestseller list off the computer, and the news is damn good. Work Song is #7, just below Steve Martin and Tom Clancy, above Ken Follett, John Grisham, Stephen King, Salman Rushdie, and Patrick McManus.

29 Dec.--Mere few days left in the year, and snow squalls are passing through with regularity, almost as though being dispatched through Admiralty Inlet. It's 38 and windy, i.e. in no way nice, but other parts of the country are getting such gigantic storms--the climate-

29 Dec. cont.--tortured planet in revolt--that we feel lucky. With the burst of Xmas holidaying behind us we are sticking close to home, until tomorrow when C goes to Group Health for preliminaries to her cataract surgery and I go with as her driver.

The past some days I've gone over the existing 200 pp. of Miss You word by word, happy work. That's probably as much as I should touch it until after Becky and Liz see it, and now I must turn to the last third of the book, mostly first-drafting which I am not nearly as keen to do. But if the roof doesn't fall in on me, I will.

C just came down and provided the news that Work Song is still--Xmas week--on the PNBA bestseller list, #8.

31 Dec.--The year is going out with something of a medical bang, with C's preliminary examination by the ophthalmologist Dr. Diehl y'day producing cataract surgery 4 days from now. It's much earlier than we anticipated, but Diehl gave her ~~an~~ the okay to go to Tucson on Jan. 15, so we agreed it might as well be done sooner than later. It gives C an unexpected spate of medical appointments across the next couple of months--2 dental appointments in early Feb. to cap a cracked tooth, the usual skin maintenance with Dr. Shors, and a blood test to monitor for polymyalgia Rheumatica--and I hope I hold together well enough to pitch in on all the Grp Health runs. We know all of this could be a lot worse than it is, so we'll set our jaws and do our best.

The year in summary? Since my health seems no worse, and I'm still getting by on a minimum dosage of Thalidomide, that news is probably as good as it gets. Work Song has done well, although not the roaring success Whistling Season was--it's doubtful anything from here on can be. I have what I think is a pretty good couple of hundred pages of Miss You When I'm Gone, achieved at a slower page-a-day pace than I want, but it is being achieved. All in all, a steady enough year, I suppose.

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **A night out**
Date: April 5, 2010 4:21:14 PM PDT
To: sydney kaplan <sydneyk@uwashington.edu>



Hello, dears. We hope the sun is shining on you in Rome and that you're having as good a time as we did last night, impersonating you at the Rep. I'll leave the reviewing to Ivan, except to note that Fences was wonderfully acted and that the cast earned the standing ovation it received.

For the context, you should understand that Easter evening traffic was light, we zoomed down to Seattle Center and found, yes, street parking! Already the evening counted as a success. The bar at the Rep was uncrowded and we discovered that the complimentary drinks included single-malt scotch, so we corralled a lobby table just in time to be joined by Cathy Ackert and her husband. She's just beginning what she described as "another" six month leave from her bank job, which she likes but which involves unscrambling computer problems during long, long days.

On to the theater where we admired your choice of seats, with an excellent view of the stage and quick exit if wanted. At intermission we discovered that Bill Calvin and Catherine Grobard were sitting a couple of aisles ahead of us. They've become regulars at Thanksgiving, and we made a date for dinner at Nell's next Sunday. They admit to NEVER cooking and astonish us by eating at first-rate restaurants all the time. They bring beautiful salads to our annual shindig, purchased goodness-knows-where.

Now on to the main event, and Ivan's comments.

Hugs and tickles, you two. The lead in Fences--the bullheaded gin-drinking ex-con frustrated ballplayer father (August Wilson weren't no minimalist)--is a powerhouse role, central to the dialogue in every scene except the unexpected final one when, uhm, he dead. A burly middle-aged Minneapolis actor named James A. Williams, who was in Radio Golf when the Rep did it but damned if Carol nor I can remember what he played in that, performed it strongly and consistently, in people's faces all the time with his ton of attitude but not a caricature. But you had to think what that role must have been like with the original lead, James Earl Jones, with some weighty pauses and Mt. Rushmore stares and a bass scale of rumbles. I'd about bet James Earl landed August that Pulitzer the first time he opened his mouth. Anyway, it is a terrific play, full of terrific parts, and even the set was great, the back end of a brick house in a Pittsburgh ghetto looking for all the world like ghetto brick.

I notice that Carol, either because she forgot or she's still too busy grinning and chuckling, neglected to report that in your absence, we've been to dinner at the Emmerts. "Writers of the UW community" on the invitation, although not very many of us--six couples and two solos, both males. We'll catch you up on this mini-gala at the presidential mansion when you get back, but here's a couple of tidbits. I was seated next to Erin, Shawn Wong's wife, who sang your praises, Linda. Question for discussion: doesn't she deserve better than Shawn? Carol sat at the other table, the raucous one, along with such major voices as Pepper Schwarz and, you guessed it, Heather McHugh. Heather's guy, Victor is it? the Joycean in the English Dept.? was at my table, and when Mark Emmert, who did a really good job of tossing questions out to us, asked in essence if we hovered or fretted when our stuff was translated or just ignored the result, Victor when his turn came around said he thought writers are pretty forgiving toward translations but estates can be harsh. Quite knowing what I was doing, I innocently asked, "Is there a Joyce estate?" Yes, in thunder! He told us about Stephen Joyce stopping him and his students, by legal means if I understiod right, from having a UW Bloomsday reading of the complete Ulysses. "He hates all Joyceans," said the Joycean. I kind of had the feeling James Joyce was smiling wintrily somewhere.

Well, enough, except to say love from us both. All best, Ivan and Carol.

From: Chuck Hulin <chulin@cyrus.psych.illinois.edu>
Subject: **for Ivan**
Date: November 4, 2010 8:22:56 AM PDT
To: cddoig@comcast.net

I thought I should tell you that I strongly suggested our PhD students in the Industrial/Organizational Psych program read Work Song. Then last night they were (nearly) all over to our house (lured in part by coffee, tea, cookies, etc.) for an evening of labor lore. We started out with about 45 minutes of songs of the IWW (mostly from the CD by Joe Glazer I sent you) and then about 45 minutes of mining songs starting with old coal mining songs by Aunt Molly Jackson and Sarah Ogan Gunning and working our way up to some modern ones. I tried to give them some idea of how the miners and other workers felt...not the intellectual history of the union movement. The songs reveal a lot about their anger at the institutions of society they felt were oppressing them...not just the bosses and mine owners. I don't know if I succeeded or not. But you are now a "required" reading author in a psychology program. I hope you can live this down

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: New escort in Portland**
Date: October 9, 2010 3:56:21 PM PDT
To: "Venzon, Matthew" <Matthew.Venzon@us.penguingroup.com>
Cc: Michael S Barson <Michael.Barson@us.penguingroup.com>, rebecca saletan
<Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguingroup.com>, Glory Plata <Glory.Plata@us.penguingroup.com>



Hi, gang, here's your vicarious experience at the PNBA--

First of all, we came this close (24 hours) to having a mute author purportedly giving a breakfast talk to a packed ballroom. I seldom get a cold, but this one is a demon--my voice is barely a croak today. But yesterday, my voice went the other way, really deep, and I was able to tell the audience I was not really doing a Darth Vader impersonation and basso profundo'ed through my talk to fine effect. Everybody was pretty wowed by the author lineup, which was maybe the best I've been involved in. Bonny Becker had a charming presentation about the writing and illustration work behind her children's books starring a grumpy bear and a relentlessly upbeat mouse. She puts into each book at least one elaborate expression which parents then tell her their kids pick up and use incessantly, such as "how extremely aggravating!" If you're around the smaller set, be warned that this time she stuck in, "Will this torment never cease?" Next up, Jonathan Evison, good and funny, too. He's edited at Algonquin by Chuck Adams, and they seem to be pushing his West of Here in Water for Elephants style; pub date is late Feb., and at least a month ago a friend involved in a bookstore in Moab, Utah, reported getting an ARC in a fancy wooden box. Next, Nancy Pearl, the only librarian with an action figure to rival GI Joe or Barbie, and she lived up to her billing by talking about how reluctant she is to leave the house but nonetheless wrote Book Lust To Go. And batting cleanup, I guess it was, your humble servant. I did my Work Song aria and told the booksellers to keep up the good work in maintaining the book on the bestseller list, but I also let them in on Miss You when I'm Gone and that Morrie will be back after that--mucho applause, in both cases.

So, I think the event couldn't have gone better for us. The PNBA exec director, Thom Chambliss, was ecstatic with the turnout, 160 tickets sold instead of their usual 120. I schmoozed through the trade show hall afterward, and that was busy and upbeat, too.

Last couple of things: the Portland escorts Sandra and Kevin were really top-notch again, and Sandra without any prompting sang the praises of you Riverhead publicity practitioners. And I received about a dozen requests, invitations, beseechings, for bookstore and library appearances, which I am confident the Riverhead Way of Publicity will have Disney Animatronics handle for us, while I stay home safe from cold germs.

Best

Ivan

On Oct 6, 2010, at 8:15 AM, Venzon, Matthew wrote:

Hi Ivan --

I'm attaching an updated schedule for your trip to Portland tomorrow. Sandra will pick you up at the airport as planned tomorrow, but something came up for her on Friday, so Kevin Sprager will be escorting you that day. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks,
Matthew

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: stuff
Date: June 17, 2010 10:12:36 AM PDT
To: "Saletan, Rebecca"
<Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguingroup.com>
Cc: Michael S Barson <Michael.Barson@us.penguingroup.com>



Dear editor--My, my. What a difference a day makes. Yesterday I could barely even spell YouTube sensation and now I am one.

The video is really slick, and I'm impressed at all the places it's infiltrating. Grand news about the orders and print run. (I see those drew capital letters from Liz, always a telling sign.) Out here on the ground, we'll keep tinkering along to do what we can for the book. In the meantime, though, kudos to all, starting with you for lugging Morrie and me under your arm to Riverhead.

Hugs and high fives,

Ivan

On Jun 17, 2010, at 6:53 AM, Saletan, Rebecca wrote:

Dear Ivan and Carol,

You're a YouTube star:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqgBpKkh9E4>

This is also posted to the Montana Facebook site (40,000 members!), various librarians' sites – Baker & Taylor home page, etc; our Facebook page; and it's been sent to Amazon and more.

We're running an ad in the New York Times the Sunday after pub (July 4).

A very good sign – Ingram reordered about 800 copies of the book.

We shipped about 31,000, printed about 35,000.

Reviews confirmed in NYTBR (sometime in July, they say), Wash Post, Chicago Trib, Seattle Times, AP, Feature in Pittsburgh Trib, in addition to smaller local stuff.

Amazon put the book in their "Vine" early reader review program, and a bunch of advance reader reviews are posted, mostly extremely positive.

Tucson

January 14-19, 2010

Mark's cell: (206) 550 0891.

Lou's: (206) 554-1209.

Alaska Airlines. (Add mileage at airport) 1-800-252-7522

Flt 632 at 7:25 a.m. Arr Phoenix 11:11 am. Seats 25 C,D. JXKWMR

Flt 649 at 4:20 p.m. Arr Seattle 6:47. Seats 22 A,C. IOMTSN
(Flt 648 arr 3:35 pm)

Windmill Inn - 5 nights. (520) 577-0007 or central 1-800-547-4747

AAA rate \$80.99 + Total \$453.75

Room 302 requested. Two beds.

Confirmation # 420762

Guaranteed by Visa. 24-hour cancellation notice.

SCHEDULE

Thursday: Arrival. Buy gel, bottled water and liquor.
Catalina State Park.
El Minuto, 354 S. Main, 882-4145

Friday: Desert Museum, Saguaro West.

Dinner at Cafe Poca Cosa, 6:45 pm.

Saturday: Saguaro east. Lunch at Feast, 4122 E. Speedway. Tohono Chul.
6 p.m. dinner with Barbara and Jay Kittle.

Sunday: Expedition w/Betty and Pete to see sandhill cranes at Whitewater Draw,
south of Willcox.
Picnic lunch. Dinner at Feast.

Monday: San Xavier del Bac. Agua Caliente.
Lunch at Beyond Bread. DeGrazia Gallery, Brian Beamish tile art.
Dinner at Tavolino.

Tuesday: Beyond Bread sandwiches for plane. Center for Creative Photography.
Lunch at Poca Cosa at noon.