Tom Holden 12/10/11

Tom, hi--As you can tell from the mistletoe missive, the novel has evolved considerably. I had to shuck my original title, Miss You When I'm Gone, because last spring some inconsiderate SOB of a writer came out with Miss Me When I'm Gone, can you believe it? I actually like Bartender's Tale better, and am waiting with fingers crossed to see if it gets past the sales and marketing people at the publisher. I can always throw a fit in defense of my own preference, but if they say people aren't gonna buy a book with a title like that--well, God never told nobody to be stupid, right? I'm pretty pleased with the book, quite a lot of shtick and theatrical wannabe-ism in it, and would you believe, fellow Faulknerite, I worked in "bobbasheely." (I re-read The Reivers to make sure I savvied the context; still a a helluva performance, slyly funny throughout, by Count No 'Count.) It apparently will be late next year before publication, simply because the Penguin Group, of which my publisher Riverhead is something like a peninsula, kind of operates like the Red Army, massing its forces across the calendar, and my opus pocus goes on their autumn list. Meanwhile, back at the footlights, a repertory theater here in Seattle, Book-It, is staging my Prairie Nocturne (in Feb.) and damned if Carol and I aren't going to be hanging around a few rehearsals and consorting with actors, shades of Krauss-Schneideman--Benjamin etc. Very luckily, I believe, one of the Book-It founders and moving forces, Myra Platt, is taking the role of Susan herself--among other things will play a snatch of Chopin onstage, a la the Ft. Assiniboine scene in the books--and would you believe, she was an NU speechie. Oral interp or whatever it was called, took courses from Wallace Bacon (do I have that right, or was that the English prof) and I've-lost-her-name Heston. I think Myra must be around fifty, not quite our vintage. Well, that's the main stuff from here. I'm rumbling on to the next book--Carol more accurately calls it the next next book--a sequel to Work Song, starring Morrie again. Gonna keep at this until I drop, I guess. I hope you and Beth are doing okay, no basement floods, no naughty behavior by the honyocker pup.

All best,

Jo! Prestbo 12/10/11

Dear John & Darl--Thanks for keeping in touch so well, we avidly follow John's DJ Index employment saga. The two of you seem to be doing a great job of staying on the move. We're staying steady here, healthwise and otherwise. I'm approaching five years since my stem cell procedure, and the myeloma remains suppressed, albeit by the minimum dosage of Thalidomide I take every night. (At astounding cost. Thanks heavens for health coverage, I don't care what the Republicans think. If that's not an oxymoron, those last two words.) As you can guess, there are some side effects to that--numb feet, cranky hands--but I can get by. I still haven't made it generally known that I'm in cancer treatment, and so the world and my little part of it go on.

A sidebar on the Santa Fe story on the other side, John. During one of the swanky dinners--in an art gallery, no less--I was talking to my fellow novelist Jane Smiley at one corner of the table when I noticed Carol, at the other corner, was going into increasing hilarity with her dinner partner, Larry Kirshbaum, long-time big-league publisher (Time Warner; Little, Brown) who runs Amazon's newly hatched publishing division. What's up, I finally asked; the two of them had been trading Chicago memories until they put two and two together and figured out Larry was one of our (not one of yours, but close) Cherubs in '61.

Let's see, what else. While I'm waiting for The Bartender's Tale to be published, probably late next year, I'm working on another Butte book, sequel to Work Song, starring Morrie again. Gonna keep at this until I drop, I guess. I hope you guys stay well and active, and yes, if anything brings you to Seattle, we have a postponed dinner date to make up.

Craig & Kathy Lesley 12/17/11

Dear Craig and Kathy--

Here's an early warning: the Doigs are descending on Portland when I talk to the Bella Voce book club on May 24. We intend to come down a day early, on their money, so here's hoping you'll be available for some chow and catching up. I must say, whatever this outfit is--a Vancouver bank sponsors the book club; 300+ members, meeting at the Multnomah Athletic Club--they pay okay. We look forward to hearing your tales and adding a few of our own to the Santa Fe adventure alluded to on the other side of this. One I can tell you in a hurry, Craig. We've all known Jane Smiley's roving reputation, right? So she's there next to me at dinner and next to her is her guy, Jack, who looks about like what he is, a hardy carpenter--they haven't been able to keep their hands off each other at dinner or elsewhere during the doings--and so I ask, heh heh, well, how long have you and Jack been together? Since 1998, says Jane. Oh-kay, longer than a good many modern marriages, so much for the reputation of flittering.

Well, I'm glad to report I've got next book done, called The Bartender's Tale, I hope, I hope. I had to shuck my original title, Miss You When I'm Gone, because last spring some inconsiderate SOB of a writer came out with Miss Me When I'm Gone, can you believe it? I actually like Bartender's Tale better, and am waiting with fingers crossed to see if it gets past the sales and marketing people. As you so well know, I can always throw a fit in defense of my own preference, but if they say people aren't gonna buy a book with a title like that--well, God never told nobody to be stupid, right? It apparently will be late next year before publication, simply because the Penguin Group, of which my publisher Riverhead is something like a peninsula, kind of operates like the Red Army, massing its forces across the calendar, and my opus pocus goes on their autumn list.

Meanwhile, back at the footlights, a repertory theater here in Seattle, Book-It, is staging my Prairie Nocturne (in Feb.) and damned if Carol and I aren't going to be hanging around a few rehearsals and consorting with actors. This takes me back to college days when I loved going to the Northwestern theater department's rehearsals. Lots of lessons of craft. A formidable doyenne named Elvina Krauss directed one of my housemates, Richard Benjamin (later of the movie Goodbye, Columbus) in an Odets play where at one point he comes onstage, says something like "Here's the lox, Ma" and puts the paper sack in the refrigerator. Krauss made somebody go downtown for lox in that sack every damn time, no faking it whatsoever.

That's the main stuff from here. I'm holding steady against the myeloma, about the same as when I last saw you, still on minimum of Thalidomide and coping not too bad with the side effects. Could be worse. By the way, I'm still not being public about my health, and probably won't as long as I can still function in front of a crowd, a la Bella Voce. So, see you in May, love until then and all best wishes for the new year.

p.s. Hey, where are those Lesley short stories that were going to be anesthetized, I mean, anthologized?

20 Oct. '01

Kirshbaum

Dear Larry--

Congratulations! We see that you won honorable mention for editorial writing at the 1961 institute of journalistic cherubs. Obviously, even then we knew editorial talent when we saw it, right?

I say "we" justifiably because in '61 not only was Carol a counselor, so was I. Looking back at room assignments, you were way down the hall from my bailiwick in Sargent Hall, at John Kolbe's end of the corridor. Besides the group picture--the quick-copy place I used couldn't handle the width, so it's segmented, but you're in both of them in the back row--I'm sending along copies of some of the stuff from that summer. (Carol says The Doig Archives have come through again.) You might also be interested in what's become of some of the rest of us from that golden summer of fifty years ago:

The counselors: in the left-hand segment of the group pic, at the far end of the front row in the skinny tie and crewcut is John Kolbe. An Arizonan, Kolbe was one of the original Young Americans for Freedom, a Goldwater Republican all the way, but for all of that, a guy I really liked. He became a political columnist for the Phoenix newspaper, the Arizona Republic, and for all of his leaning to the right was instrumental in bringing down one of Arizona's dismal Republican governors, I think it was the inept car-dealer one, Evan Mecham. John died way before his time, a dozen or more years ago, I think. His younger brother Jim was a longtime closeted gay Republican congressman from the Tucson district now held by Gabrielle Giffords.

The woman next to John is Maxine Mills, head women's counselor, whom we've lost track of, and next to her, the third one in that row, with glasses on, is me. In the dinnertime conversation Carol may have told you that summer and the next at the Institute was our start together, although it took a few more years of military and journzlistic peregrinations before we both ended up back in Chicago, crazy in love and then married.

At my left is Dick Croake, head men's counselor, beloved by all who knew him. I met up with Croaker again some years ago when I did a reading at the Borders mothership store in Ann Arbor; he was, I believe, a development officer for the U. of Michigan med school. Gone too soon, too, a couple of years ago.

Next to Croake is Kay Piper, whom we're still in occasional touch with. She married a star of my journalism class, Bill Pride, and still lives in Denver where he had a career with the *Post.*

Shifting to the other segment, Carol is third from the end in the front row, sensationally brunette, and of course Ben Baldwin is on the end. Between them is Brian Grant, whom we believe became a minister.

Two counselors aren't pictured. Jerry Ackerman, a large round redhead who was also my freshman year roommate, now retired from the Boston *Globe*

over

and teaching writing for techies at MIT. And last and sure as hell not least, Dot Sattes, a blade-thin southern blonde who went on to a career I think on the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and ultimately became president of the League of Women Voters; Dot showed up on television at a presidential debate, possibly Clinton and the first Bush, that was sponsored by the League.

As to the cherubs, a few have stayed our lifetime friends. Linda Blair, as she was then, was active in the early days of the National Organization for Women, and her famous poster of Golda Meir with the caption *But can she type?* is in the Smithsonian. Jan Bateman, probably the best softball player of any of us, female or male, taught high school in Oregon and was the photographer when Carol and I got married in Evanston in '65. One we've lost track of, Mike Whitney, went on to a broadcast news career of some sort, maybe as a newswriter, in New York City, I think.

So there it is, a few bits of auld lang syne, and a good time it truly was. Glad we crossed paths at the Campfire version of an exceedingly good time.

Best wishes,

1 Jan. 2011--Cold clear start to the year. Now at 4:15 there's still a bit of sun, and the Olympics in full profile. I've not done much today except tinker in the garden room, ordering most of the year's veg seeds--actually a fairly productive thing to be doing, I guess. Fine gathering last night at the Laskins, us and David Williams and Marjorie. Kate wowed us all by serving rabbit, and I wrote a thanks note today citing her as the Julia Child of Innis Arden.

So, we go into the year with some medical work ahead, and also with the prospect of some sunny time off in Tucson.

3 Jan.--First day back at full-time work on Miss You, and a tough one, trying to frame the rest of the plot for Becky and Liz. Seems like it shouldn't be this hard, but there are a hell of a lot of threads to handle, and it's not the kind of work I like. It'll get done, but it's a labor.

Tomorrow is C's cataract surgery, and this afternoon after walking the n'hood we finally got a break in the blood pressure readings she's had to do here at home, a result that wasn't elevated. Onward to tomorrow.

4 o'clock now, the sun about to set, and likely this stretch of clear weather along with it. It's stayed cold--high of 40 today--but it's been nice to have the mountains (I just now interrupted this to put a drop in C's eye, as we've had to do 4 times a day in prep for the surgery)--to have the mountains crisp against the sky.

4 Jan.--Whew. Carol's been through her cataract surgery, evidently in fine style. She has a patch and plate over her left eye, but reports it doesn't hurt or itch so far. We left the house at 6:30 this morn, were at outpatient surgery by about 7:20, and on our way out by 11:10. The operation itself seems to have taken about ten minutes; I was watching the waiting room monitor when it went green/surgery on her case number at 10:10, and I was summoned to the recovery area and talking to her by 10:22. The staffwork impressed us--the RNs Denise and Lisa in

Jan. 4 cont.--the prep area in particular, although the one minor glitch happened there when C consented to have a trainee nurse insert the IV needle and she pushed through the vein in the right hand; it hurt some, and C and I both expected a spectacular bruise, although the recovery room nurse (whose name I didn't get but was also really good) provided a hotpack to use on it on the way home, and the hand doesn't look bad. So far this all looks highly promising, giving C a chance at her night driving vision back, as well as ~~xxx~~ better distance vision.

Jan. 9--Afternoon of unsettled weather--sleet a while ago, rain with some snowflakes now--at the onset of what is forecast as a snowy week, just as we want to get out of town to Tucson.

Y'day we had an enjoyable afternoon, checking in on the football game as belated fans of this year's erratic Seahawks, driven to root for them by factors such as 3 NY Times columnists in one day pissing and moaning about the unfairness of the losing-record 'Hawks being in the playoffs instead of the Giants; one story lumped them in with worst playoff teams of all kinds down through history--wouldn't you think they'd have waited with that until after the fame was played? It sure as hell was played, one of the best we've ever watched, Marshawn Lynch's touchdown run shedding 6 New Orleans tacklers downright astounding, and so we laughed and clapped and when it was over, I opened the Oban single-malt scotch the Nelsons gave us for Xmas. Almost as an afterthought, I asked C if she wanted to hear the radio news, and she shrugged and said why not. It was some minutes past the hour, so we tuned in on the middle of a report of someone shot in Tucson--Janet Napolitano, we wondered? AZ Gov. Brewer? No, Gabrielle Giffords, whom we've regarded as something like our "other" member of Congress through our times in ~~x~~ the north Tucson district she represents; C has contributed to her campaigns and recently had a card of thanks from her. So here it is the American pathology of political assassination, Tea Party version.

Jan. 11--Scuffling along, in chilly gloomy weather which is supposed to produce overnight snow but then turn to rain all the way to our departure to Tucson, thank goodness.

I actually got back to fresh writing on Miss You this afternoon, and made a requisite page, after all the time spent on the synopsis of the rest of the book.

Other news: in preliminary year-end financial calculations, we are now worth more than $6 million. A lot of it is froth from the stock market runup, but so be it.

And as C said, the eyes have it around here, with my visit y'day to the optomestrist, Dr. Anderson, about the sensation in my left eye as if something was in the corner of it. A stopped-up gland, he determined, and soaking it and putting salve seems to be bringing it back to normal.

Jan. 12--Quite a spate of weather has passed through, 3-4 inches of wet snow last night followed by a lot of rain, taking away all the white stuff by now, 4:15. I drove C to Capitol Hill Grp Health this morn, Seattle having turned into Slush City but at least the streets were plowed, for her one-week checkup on the cataract surgery, and all is well. This afternoon I went back to the ms, which is like immersing into a cold bath just now, and managed to get some dabs done. I really look forward to Tucson, actual time off, and then the long stint which will finish the book.

Should note that last week after C's eyework we listened to the audio of Heart Earth, which wowed us--it's really written, if I do say so myself.

15 Jan.--7:15, waiting for daylight. We'll walk the n'hood as ever, then we have the flight to Tucson a little before noon. As is our habit, we've prepared excruciatingly, y'day and this morn, in my case fitting shoes and Birkenstocks into my briefcase, taping together a roll of quarters to buy newspapers with, and so on. Y'day I shipped the 200-page chunk of Miss You ms to Becky and Liz and also my college buddy Tom Holden in Ann Arbor, to see if he has anything to add about 1960 slang or being stage-struck. I've been bothered that the writing seems tougher and slower as I've reached what will be the last third of the book, but I should soon be at a point where I can attack this part anywhere day by day to make the word count as needed.

23 Jan.--Tucson is behind us, a good trip despite the savage colds we brought home. I came down with mine a week ago today, Sunday the 16th, and while it tired me and had me honking my nose a lot, it didn't readhxxx its worst until y'day and the day before. C's seems to be at its most dreadful today. Anyway, here we are, trying to resume life after those several days of glorious sun.

When we settled back into the house the night of the 20th, I looked around at the spare clean lines of the living room in contrast to the arched doorways and other Spanish touches of Tucson buildings. Different worlds indeed, our cool north to their baked circumstances.

There were hiccups in getting the usual room at the Windmill Suites, as C has no doubt noted, but other than that, the trip went quite well. We lucked out on the day trip with Pete and Betty Bengston to the Boyce Thompson Arboretum, lovely thing nearly 3 hrs north of Tucson, when they delivered us back to the Windmill and then on the way to their house the car began to xx sputter. It would have been no fun spending the night in the nowhere little places of northern Arizona. A bit similarly, on our morning hike with Barbara and Jay Kittle the next day, Barbara had suggested the Finger Rock trail off the end of Alvernon Ave., which sounded interesting to us because it might provide us a nice in-close place to hike in the future, but Jay talked us all into Sabino Canyon. The chilly shadows in the depths of the canyon are the problem there, and for the 2nd time in our lives, C and I were not dressed warmly enough for the tram ride to the top--we really should learn. But the hike, stroll really, down the road went well and the scenery is terrific, so all went well. And when C and I tested out the Finger Rock trail on our own the next day, we found it a daunting obstacle course of rock scrambles, too much for our sense of balance.

Tonight we're to go to dinner at Mark and Lou's, and can tell them they were right to be on last year's trip for greatly better birdwatching, although this year's raptor flight of half a doz. Harris hawks at the Desert Museum was the best ever.

25 Jan.--"It's over." That was the first terrible thought that flashed through me on Sunday, the 23rd, 10:30 AM, as Carol stood gripping the dining room table an quivering. We had just put lunch on the table, she'd poured the chicken-&-muschroom soup, and strangely asked if I would take the pan from her, it felt heavy. I got the hot pan into the ~~sink~~ sink and asked what was wrong, and that's when the unresponsive frozen posture and quivering started; I thought she was having a stroke, and life as we had known it was over, changed forever in some vascular moment.

Not so, thank all the stars. 31 hours in the hospital for her, but she just now did the nearly 2-mile walk of the n' hood with me in better fettle than she was in on the weekend. It seems what happened was a combination of dehydration from the hideous cold we both brought back from Tucson and more vitally, the high blood pressure that has been showing up in tests ever since her cataract surgery. So, when I managed to ease her into chair and she still wasn't responding to me, it was not a stroke but some radical change in the flow of blood out of the heart, making her blank out. When I was sure she would not keel off the chair, I got to the phone and dialed 911, talked with the dispatcher for probably a couple of minutes describing how she seemed, and then in just a few more minutes, amazingly fast, the first Shoreline medic van was here. The 2 men kept taking her blood pressure and coaxing responses out of her, and when they got her laying flat on a gurney, she was promptly more alert. Even so they called a 2nd medic unit with more sophisticated equipment than they had, and after a heart test and more blood pressure readings (one of the medics looking over the earlier printout said "She had a 40?" which we take to mean incredibly low), it was off to the Virginia Mason emergency room. In the hospital stay she was tested in what seemed every way imaginable, 2 CATscans, an MRI, X-rays, frequent blood draws--the section of the hospital is called the telemetry unit, and it indeed seemed to measure her bodily workings every moment. The long and short of all the tests, as her Dr. Dunn said when he finally discharged the impatient patient late

25 Jan. cont.--yday afternoon (we got home about 7), was that the one test he'd thought would not produce anything indeed did indicate the heart-blood pressure situation. All in all, from the response of the Shoreline medics to the hospital staffing, both of us thought it was hugely heartening to see at least that segment of this society performing in exemplary fashion.

3 Feb.--A big breath of relief. Today was my 4-month checkup by Dr. Chen, and he found my blood test results steady enough (although the electropheresis reading had jiggled upward slightly, enough to unnerve me) that he spoke of cutting the checkups to twice a year, after the next one in June. So, I remain stable, and must simply set my mind to coping with the Thalidomide side effects in my feet and hands and forge ahead with life.

It is coming up on ten years of these nerve-twitching doctoral readings of my blood, and while that adds up to a lot of times of gulping and bracing for the verdict, as C said in triumph as we left Group Health this morning, ten years and no damage to me.

And C just walked in from her IMac and added to my good day with the latest PNBA bestseller list, Work Song hanging in there.

9 Feb.--Somehow it's a scramble to keep up with things recently, I think partly due to the terrific cold that's saddled me the past 3½ weeks. Today it's finally feeling like it's letting up. I am back plugging away at Miss You, making pages but not as many as I'd wanted to these past couple of weeks; I hope like hell the pace picks up.

Wanted to get down what surely is a record in my nearly lifetime-long habit of clippings. David Williams may do a book on cairns, so I dug out for him a Country Beautiful article from 50 years ago--the article itself, not a copy. How that survived the various moves etc. I have no idea, but the old files came through again.

16 Feb.--Life has settled down a bit, although C is in for another medical blitz next week, with cataract surgery. February had gotten over being mild--rain is being blown practically sideways in the backyard as I write--but while it was nice we charged into yardwork and got several things done. On the book front, I'm back at making a regular page or so a day. There was disturbing news from Liz's direction, though, a "new configuration" of the agency, more bluntly, a downsizing with Leigh Feldman leaving. And hitting closer to the pocketbook, Darhansoff & Verrill as it now is are ending the grandfathered 10% commission that I've benefitted from for 30 years, 15% across the board now. Hard times on literary row.

22 Feb.--Today was C's 2nd cataract surgery, on the right eye, and it went as well as the first one--we were back home about 3 hours after leaving. Glad to have it behind us. C said her blood pressure wasn't even mentioned this time.

We bestirred ourselves Saturday in a way we hope to do more of, going to Edmonds for a 2 p.m. matinee of The King's Speech. Thought it was terrific, Rush and Firth both wonderful in their roles and the film with a fine fidelity to the era.

Workwise, I've kept at the ms a page a day, sometimes a bit more, the story loosening up a bit now that I at last have Francine on the scene and am creating her a little more every day. Did some writing over the weekend, as I'll keep doing until the weather lets up--snow showers today, and chilly days and freezing nights forecast for the next several days.

A really welcome note of friendship today from David Laskin, who delivered a whopping container of sauce, spaghetti, and salad for our post-operation dinner tonight. We're really lucky in the camaraderie of the Davids, Laskin and Williams.

4 March--3:15 Friday, end of big day of work, the ms at last beginning to add up by a couple of pp. a day. I'd intended to make this entry about y'day's session with Linda Bierds' "Writers On Writing" class at the UW, but I'm too beat--it'll have to wait until tomorrow.

8 March--The weather and a spate of good deeds have kept me from getting back to this. The weekend and y'day were just warm enough for us to work outside, and so we crammed about 5 days of work into three, on fertilizing hedges, mulching the back blueberry patch, and in my case, dogged work on getting seedlings of peas and New Red Fire lettuce into the ground. (Which brought an immediate attack on the peas by mice, which wiped out half the crop in one night; I've retaliated by doubling the number of traps to about ten, and last night got two mice--the running total is now six--with no further devastation.) A little bit ago I reached the point on the deeds list to call Mark Wyman, who'd emailed us about some flagrant plagiarism of Eva's book on Chilean poetry, and in the course of the phone conversation Mark, in his way, reported he'd just had good news, the lymphoma he's been diagnosed with can be "cured" with six months of chemotherapy. I swallowed hard and thought, well, now's the time, and told him about my myeloma and my experience with chemo and told him to call anytime if he wanted to talk anything over.

Now then: Linda's class. It went really well, the students greatly more attentive than I anticipated, and it of course helped that I was scripted and rehearsed and was pretty much on in my reading of the opening scene of Miss You. Questions were good, such as how do I recapture how people talked 50 years ago? Part of my answer harked back to Sea Runners, and when I explained about making some stuff up, including how the characters swore, my mention of the Journal of Verbal Abuse brought down the house. Linda took me for coffee afterwards, the two of us deciding to duck into the old architecture building out of the rain on the chance that there'd be

8 March cont.--a coffee shop (my impression is that every building on campus does), and as ever talking with her is one of the great privileges in life. She passed along the inside skinny from the English dept. that the younger faculty, the ass't and associate profs, are being asked by the dean to meet and give their notions of what the future of the dept. ought to be, given that the Humanities is going to be reshaped. This of course is the kind of thing administrators do when they've already decided on the changes, and when I asked Linda what this portended, she said maybe no more courses on literature before a certain century, fewer specialized courses, etc. in short, job losses. One more time, I was glad I chose not to tread the academic road.

C is now 2 weeks past her 2nd cataract surgery, and this eye is taking longer to settle in, but still, she maintains, so far so good,

14 March--It has been raining ferociously, days' worth, until about noon today. I managed to slip in a quick garden stint a few days ago, in about 45 degree weather, and get the lettuce seedlings I'd started in pans in the garden room into the ground and the coldframes moved onto them. Meanwhile I've been in the usual springtime war with mice at the pea patch--have caught 8 so far, but early on they ate half the seedlings in one night, the entire 7-foot row. Seed potatoes are here, awaiting a little drier soil.

As to the real work, the Miss You ms has been going a little faster, finally. Months and months to go yet, though.

Out of the house, Sat. morn we went to the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park for the Central Asia lecture series the Dambergs loaned us their tickets for, while they're on a theater trip to London. Profs Daniel Waugh and Joel Walker had talks and pics about christianity in the empire of Genghis Khan, certainly a topic we had never given a thought. Waugh had stunning pics of art from the period, 125-1350 A.D., especially exquisite tilework with depictions of the phoenix which evidently filtered 4,000 miles west from China. As C said, it was a lot like sitting in a history class in college again,

14 March cont.--and we both would have liked a more macro-view of the world at the time, but the session was a good reminder of how big and deep the past is.

Sunday morn, David Williams and Marjorie came up for coffee and fresh bread and apple butter, and to catch us up on David's dad's medical situation--he fell a couple of times, the worst of those rupturing an eyeball, and it's become doubtful he and Jackie can keep living in their big old Capitol Hill house with all those stairs. As to the work of writing, David's possible book project with the Mountaineers on cairns got an unexpectedly expansive boost, if that's what it is, from the acquisitions committee that thought it should go beyond a sort of fact book of 30,000 or so words and be a narrative of 50-60,000. This gives David pause, as he's not sure the topic provides for that much, but we'll see; if they pay him enough to do some traveling, it could come off into something nice, it seems to me.

The Japan earthquake happened a few days ago, with boggling devastation, and we kept track of the tsunami prospect on this coast via on-line news sites, wondering if Ann and Marshall Nelson's Arch Cape house would be hit. It wasn't--the coastal damage seems to have been mostly confined to Crescent City and Brookings harbors--so we think we can have our monthly dinner with the Nelsons at Poppy in good cheer.

20 March--9:30, and while I'm hungry to get outside and work, as we managed to do y'day, there's a north wind and and the temp is still in the low 40s, so I'll need to wait until this afternoon at least. Y'day, Saturday, in the yard was good for both of us and for the property; C got the unruly lavender row trimmed and I planted the onion crop and prepped the SE bed for beets and probably Brunia lettuce. I haven't been sure of how much we can still handle this complicated yard, but damned if we don't have it looking pretty good by having pecked away at it.

Since the last entry, there have been phone conversations with a couple of old friends, tinged with ~~kem~~ melancholy as I suppose these things must be when we're all in our 70's. Mark Wyman reported that he has

20 March cont.--lymphoma, albeit a kind his doctor says can be "cured" by 6 months of chemotherapy. I find that kind of diagnosis astonishing, but here's hoping it turns out right. Y'day morn, a long phone call from Tom Holden in Ann Arbor, getting back to me about the ms chunk of Miss You that I sent him. The medical news there, first, is trouble with his eyesight, which he's to get checked this coming week, and mentions of SAD depression and "putting on too much weight" this winter. Tom was my most enjoyable friend in college, someone to laugh or do a bit with almost any time, both of us on binges of Faulkner and theater and so on, and we still have a soft spot for each other despite not ~~seeing~~ getting together for decades. (He's anchored to his neck in the blah Midwest, as I see it, and my times of passing thru Ann Arbor on books tours are almost surely at an end along with the Borders chain of bookstores.) I sent Tom the ms piece hoping he'd recall some of our 1960ish slang, which has proved surprisingly tricky for me to bring back for this book, although I think I about have it in hand, but he by and large did a copyreading, coming up with a few things I ought to clarify etc. Anyway, it was a relief to hear from him, as quite a lot of time had passed since I sent the stuff, and there were flashes--although not as many as I'd wish--of the fun we used to have together; he reported that the other day he scolded his new puppy, "What do you think you're doing, you little honyocker?", stopped to wonder where he got that word from, and realized it was from a Doig book.

To close off~~kkk~~ the medical organ recital, C this week saw the endocrinologist in followup to one of the tests run on her during her hospital adventure, and was told her thyroid is fine.

27 March--4 p.m., a strong squall moving through, wiping out the far shore. Despite the showery weather we've managed to have some sessions of yard work, and to my surprise, I think I have the veg garden planted up to schedule. Last Wednesday, the 23rd, we grabbed the best weather in a long while and went up to the Skagit for what we agreed was one of the best days in recent memory, the snow geese feeding so close by the road (near the dike on the North Fork) we didn't need field glasses, Mount Baker out in every white caret of detail, daffodil fields glowing golden, and good pizza and beer at the LaConner pub.

Since I've last written, C has finally been declared clear of all the tests brought on by her hospital stay and is brighter and happier. After the cataract surgeries she has 20/25 vision in each eye, doesn't really need glasses for distance or driving, although will get a new pair for reading and computer work.

We've been on a stint of DVD-watching 1960 movies for Miss You (which likely will need its name changed; more about that later)--The Alamo, GI Blues, and last night, The Misfits. The cast was really terrific except for Marilyn Monroe in a wobbly part written for her by the hubby of the moment, Arthur Miller. Also, I groaned out loud at Miller's ending, when she asks Clark Gable as they drive the desert at night, "How do you know where we are?" and he points to the sky and says See that brightest star, "It'll take us right home." Yecch, wrong, Arthur. How about instead: "We'll keep going until we find out."

The ms work has been going better, at least in page count, now that I'm writing anywhere in the last third or so of the book. It will all have to start hanging together in a month or so from now, so I can start refining the story and the language, but so far so good.

Tonight Tony Angell and Lee and supposedly daughter Larka are coming for a crab feed, so we should have a lively evening.

12 April--Drought in the diary, pretty good flow in the manuscript. C and I have just sent a memo to Becky and Liz nominating The Rainbow Year as at least the working title, now that Miss You When I'm Gone has been undercut by somebody else's Miss Me When I'm Gone, more's the pity.

So, the work has been going reasonably well, and as for the rest of life, we hold our breath and go on. C had a strange swelling around her right eye, and I nudged her into Group Health to have it looked at, with the result that it's maybe sinus-caused. On the 2nd, we went over to Eric and Jan Nalder's,and hit up against the news that is becoming way too usual among our generation, cancer. Eric is starting a prostate treatment, although while he plays it down there's also "escaped" cancer in the lymphatic tissue; may the radiation take care of it.

On the garden scene, this spring has stayed so chilly and damp that seedlings pretty much just sit there without growing noticeably. I'm particularly putting in an ungodly amount of effort on beet seedlings, covering them every night with porcelain Catalina pots to save them from mice and slugs. And the mice come and go in threat to the pea patch; I've now caught 13.

And a mark of where we are financially; we've just mailed about $80,000 in income taxes.

16 April--The eve of our 46th anniversary, with the weather traditionally dank and damp. Today has been cabin-feverish, both of us badly wanting to get outside and work, but showers and the temperature never breaking 50 kept us in. I've worked ~~off~~ and on the ms off and on, to considerably good effect actually, going back and fitting in some improved passages. And there's a new title candidate, which came to me on this morning's walk around the neighborhood: Tickling the Moon. It went to the top of the list, we'll see if it stays.

This evening we're going to David and Marjorie's, for what seems to be an open house celebrating a gin David has found. The gin we'll by and large pass up in favor of beer, but it'll be good for us to get out. Tomorrow night, we celebrate the mutual anniversary with David & Kate Laskin at Poppy, which should be scrumptious in all ways.

April 18--How nice life has been the past few days. Y'day was our 46th anniversary, with the reliably lousy weather of April 17 relenting enough to let us work in the yard in the afternoon, and then Kate O'Neil & David Laskin came over to mark their 29th anniversary along with ours; after champagne here, we went to Poppy, our treat, for a really fine meal and a good time. And today we woke to a full moon, turning coppery as it began to set, and the weather has warmed even more, luckily coinciding with the arrival of our two new Bluegold blueberry bushes and a freebie flowering pear tree. We're just back inside now, at 4, from planting those and feeling good about life.

April 25--After a fine Easter--rack of lamb at the Damborgs, the great added company of Linda Sullivan and Jeff Saeger--and a marvelous sunny mid-60s ~~day~~ Saturday when we spent all day on chosen outdoor tasks, it's back to the ms today and it's been tough, trying to work out the sequence of the last chunk of the book. Made some writing progress late in the day, luckily. Meanwhile the weather, after than brief bright break, has turned rainy and cool yet again, which means the garden seedlings, particularly the beets and onions, will keep just sitting there instead of growing.

April 30--An iffy morning, enough showers to the south that we've called David Williams and Marjorie and said forget about walking Carkeek, come on up for coffee and we'll try the neighborhood. They're to help us with computer advice, although my elderly PowerMac has been working just fine since shutting down randomly a few times a couple of weeks ago. I'm back to my original inclination which C really endorses, to eke this book out of the old beast.

As to how the now nameless ms is doing--Ann and Marsh at the monthly dinner at Poppy liked C's nomination of Bartender and Son, which I don't think has a prayer at the publishing house, over my fancier ones--I'm at p. 281 and trying to figure how many more pp. will give me a full work to refine. Maybe 40? 50? Either of those would be at least 2 months' work, most likely; with luck I might have things in hand or damn near by my birthday.

30 April cont.--Meanwhile, though, I've taken on the 1st magazine assignment in a hell of a while, $1100 for 700 or so words on Bob Marshall in Montana, which I'm hoping to yank together in a day or two from file material. And I'm to write a letter to booksellers for the Work Song paperback, something I don't look forward to at all.

All this on the eve of a downsized vacation, a couple of nights borrowing the Nelsons' house at Arch Cape and then a veer to Grays Harbor on the way home to see the shorebirds migration. So, today is considerable packing.

6 May--This has been quite a different week, starting with the couple of nights in the Nelsons' Arch Cape house. We lucked out on the chancy weather, getting in our hikes at Nehalem and one at Tolovana between squalls. A terrific dinner at the Nehalem River Inn. And an impressive viewing of the sandpiper flock on the Grays Harbor tide-flat on the way home. All in all, the brief vacation did for us what we wanted, and we came home with the best oysters--from Goose Creek oystery, if that's a word, on the Newiakum River near the road to Bay Center--which we're still eating, again tonight.

Otherwise, I banged through the Wilderness magazine assignment, virtually all of the 800 words y'day, and today I churned out the marketing letter to booksellers for the Work Song paperback. ~~The~~ As for ms progress? I changed the title page from the lamented Miss You When I'm Gone to The Rainbow Year.

21 May--I've been immersed in working out a knotty bit of the plot, the Jones/jones conundrum Rusty hears, and finally think I'm past it okay. It seems like nothing else has happened except ms labor, though that's not so--we've been out with the Laskins to Chloe, the restaurant where their daughter Alice works, and a few nights ago Kate was here to share the first Copper River salmon of the season (the first in more ways than one: Carol got the first fish out of the box at the Edmonds QFC that morn) while David is on book research in Belarus and Lithuania. The weather turned nice for a few days--back to gray and showery today--and we planted a pair of rock roses and a pair of pineapple sages to replace winterkilled ones. On

21 May cont.--the medical front, C had stitches taken out of her eyes and I've had my blood tests, although I won't look at the results until just before seeing Dr. Chen on June 2. A few days ago I was more afraid than usual of what the results of this checkup might be, but I am less so now--why I don't know, maybe the vagaries of Thalidomide working in me.

26 May--A provisioning afternoon, out buying paper, jeans, tomato plants, resoled boots, quite a trudge but needed to keep things functioning. I've reached the final scene of the ms, the fishing derby and dambreak, which is going to be tough to write. Am hoping to get it done by my birthday; in essence, 4 weeks of work, Probably not. In any case, I've pecked away at fixes in the early parts of the ms, am now past p. 70, giving me a good leg up on the final draft.

Weather has stayed cool and damp--and is forecast to continue--so we've had to wedge in yardwork when we can. We'll see if any can happen over this Memorial Day weekend.

May 31--So this chilliest spring month is about gone, and we're all but into June already. C and I have whaled into work on the property at every chance, trimming the downslope hedge on the 29th, weedwhipping and cutting the lawn on Memorial Day--do we have a funny idea of a good time on a holiday--and doing our celebrating by grilling cheeseburgers and Copper River salmon. Life is treating us pretty well, although my checkup looms. Work on the ms has been not bad, divided between first-drafting on the finale dambreak scene and polishing the earlier parts, where I'm now up to about p. 80. Remarked to C that I must be psychically linked to Montana, writing my flood scene just as the news of ~~kingmx~~ inundation everywhere there--Roundup! for crying out loud--has broken out.

3 June--Yesterday's session with Dr. Chen was not good news, although far from the worst. The urine protein count has crept up enough that he wants to check it again in 2 months rather than 4, with the prospect of upping my Thalidomide dosage if the count hasn't stabilized. I suppose I've half-suspected something like this was due, although it's hard to separate that from just general apprehension when these blood tests and sessions approach. Thank heaven for C, who was there with me as ever, and pointed out that there's a clear path of good doctoring handling this. And actually, today I'm in a better mood than probably a person with a blip in his cancer reading might have a right to be.

Coincidentally or not, this is at last a day of gorgeous weather, clear and high 60s. I've managed to get the tomato plants, 2 of which have lived in the house for 5 or 6 weeks, into the ground y'day and today, and this afternoon planted a coldframe-full of bean seedlings. Discovered the peas are starting to blossom, even though the vines aren't nearly as high as other years; the potato plants are big and vigorous, starting to flower abundantly; blueberries are starting; and so on, the gardening diligence beginning to pay off.

Y'day brought the Western Literature Association quarterly, and a hoot of a review mention of me and The Eleventh Man; I am declared not guilty of heteronormative masculinity, by dint of not having Ben resent Cass's status as a pilot.

earlier today

10 June--I said to C this morning that every time I look up, it seems to be Friday afternoon, and here it is. At least this one brings a considerable feel of accomplishment, the flood scene. It'll need some refining, but I was glad to find I still had some chops for a big action scene of that sort, situating the characters in a complicated sequence.

Maybe it's because the ms has been going well that my mood has been pretty good, despite the medical news in the last entry. Household life has stayed nice and steady, wonderful eating from the garden and the big Copper River salmon run. We celebrated the salmon last Sunday night by having the Davids--Laskin and Williams--

10 June cont.--and Kate and Marjorie here for drinks on the deck, their travel tales (Iceland for David and Marj, complete with terrific laptop pics, and Belarus and Lithuania for Laskin), and the gorgeous salmon salads for dinner. C said after, there are no four people she would rather have in her house.

20 June--I've reached the point in Rainbow Year where I can now fill in and polish at will. Still a helluva lot of work to do by mid-Sept., but it's becoming a full ms. I worked like crazy this morn on the last section, and dibbed and dabbed throughout the ms some this afternoon, but also got outside in the decent weather for sanity's sake and drove the 9 posts for the roadside blueberry patch netting.

27 June--And now I am 72. Threescore and ten and two. Living on borrowed time? That could be said since the first diagnosis, now ten years ago, so at least I am still borrowing without the final bill coming due.

We marked the day pleasantly--C is wonderful at coaxing me into a good time of whatever kind I can get around to imagining--by going to the ship canal locks, along with scads of multi-accented tourists, and then cioppino and beer for lunch at Chinooks. All delicious. I also got in some useful veg garden tinkering this morning, and with the weather turning iffy this afternoon, I went back to work in the ms for a couple of hours and, another gift of the day, shaped the rainbow year title graf. A damn good enough day.

July 4--Beautiful blue day, just under 70 so far. We're enjoying the quiet of our "summer place," i.e. this matchless house and outlook. The cruise ships go by just before dawn as palaces of light, and pass again in late afternoon in slow review. We're eating happily out of the garden--peas, beets, ever-present lettuce (this is the first day I've blanketed it against the heat to preserve it)--and both seem to like the exertions of yard-work we can still make; this morn, we trimmed the big south hedge again, and it looks pretty damn good.

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4 July cont.--Y'day was gray and cool, squalls coming right up to us on the Sound but not giving us any appreciable moisture, so I settled in at ms work (as I'm likely to do again after this entry) and now have 167 pp. in full printout, I think just over half the total. Have solved, I think, a lot of the small textural problems, what slang the 2 kids use etc., and the story seems to me richer all the time.

8 July--End of a highly successful week. I'm at p. 253 of the ms, the draft shaping up better and more quickly than I expected. The Work Song p'back chunk of payment is on its way,$67,500 after Liz's cut, and the trilogy has earned $2,300 in Scribner royalties. Possible speaking gig in Portland next year, through the Lyceum Agency there, in the $10,000 range. And Work Song is here in the house in paperback, being read by its grateful author with much pleasure.

Mention of the trilogy reminds me. A few weeks back, C and I listened in the evenings to the Recorded Books version of English Creek, on the strength of liking Scott Sowers' reading of Prairie Nocturne so much. English Creek is extensive and gabby, as I deliberately made it, but parts are terrifically grabbing, and after spending nearly two weeks of listening to those characters, I was moved very nearly to tears by the ending. Maybe I have known what I'm doing in this baker's dozen of books.

16 July--A Saturday with a rainy morning to it, clearing enough this afternoon that I went out and picked our first freezable quantity of raspberries. Still, it's iffy enough I'm dividing time mostly in favor of ms work, which has added up usefully through the day. I've had devilish small plot details to work in the past couple of days, at last getting them feathered in, I think, and the ms now stands at 320-some pretty readable pages out of what's looking like 400, with most of the rest in rough form.

What is not, and has me groaning, is the Canada Dan interview scene which has to be written almost from scratch. I hope by a week from now I can say it's done.

Meanwhile, we're eating well from the garden and the salmon runs, and thanks to divine intervention by the

16 July cont.--Damborgs one more time, we even socialized in high--which is to say Capitol Hill--style on the 13th. Every Wed. evening in July, Kay Bullitt opens her yard, really her estate, to a picnic. C and I went with Mark and Lou many years ago, but didn't remember the details. It turns out to be a sizable affair, with Kay renting an entire parking lot for the guests, and tables and chairs spotted around on what seems to be an acre or so of lawn. We had great good luck in the guests, Jean Walkinshaw and her clan there for her birthday. We spent some time talking to her grandson Brady, sharp young man working for the Gates Foundation; Brady seems not to miss a trick, recalling details about us from a dinner at the W'shaws probably half a dozen years ago. We can hope to get to know him better. Also met up with, in the Damborg orbit, Hyde and Cable Tennis, longtime near-holy couple of the Episcopal cathedral; and Carol Thomas and Richard Johnson of the UW history department. And I had some magnetism, Pat and Mary Ragen findint out I was there and coming over, and so on. In this odd July of cool damp weather, the evening was clear and perfect--Kay Bullitt may indeed have higher powers.

19 July--Landmark day yesterday. The $67,500 payment on publication of Work Song in paperback reached the brokerage account, and we also received the first copies of Una Temporada Para Silbar, The Whistling Season in Spanish.

24 July--Carol's birthday, 39 times two. To celebrate, we went to Chinooks for her breakfast of huevos rancheros, and I had a hangton fry frittata (an almost stupefying meal; I actually left some). The Rodens and Cindy's family from South Carolina are coming at 4 for drinks and snacks on the deck. And blessedly it is an ideal summer day, bright and blue, mid-70s with a breeze, the white wakes of power boats on the ripple blue of the Sound. Yesterday was just as fine, and we got a lot of garden work, including the start of the onion and garlic harvest, done in the morning and then an afternoon of reading, me in the deck chair down below with the New Yorker (Calvin Trillin's good piece on covering the civil rights saga in the South in '60-'61) and C in the sun on the deck above. These are hallowed fortunate moments, with

24 July cont.--medical tests ahead for both of us.

Friday, the night of the 22nd, we went to supper at the Angells, Tony having invited us on short notice on a night when Doug and Maggie Walker were coming. We had an enjoyable time, although according to Tony's subsequent phone call thaking me for injecting his and Marzluff's crow book into the conversation, he apparently bore the brunt of Doug's long narratives of Civil War and Revolutionary War history at his end of the table. "He's kind of eccentric," said Tony; well, aren't we all, I suppose, but I'm still just as glad I was at the other end of the table.

The ms is now at p. 368 of an approximate 400, the Canada Dan sheepcamp scene doggedly written from scratch the first 4 days of last week, nearly a dozen fresh pages. I'm at the point of the fishing derby and flood, and the pp. ahead are doubtless less polished than I'd like, i.e. will need more work. Still, I may be within a couple of weeks of a full ms.

28 July--what a day. On our morning walk, on the tricky berm verge of the street that we've disliked ever since the repaving--where the street makes its curve east--we were distracted by a garbage spill across the street, and Carol tripped and fell, splitting her left eyebrow 3 or 4 stitches worth. She got the bleeding pretty well stopped then and there with a tissue and insisted she was okay to walk home, about a third of a mile, so I held her elbow and we did it. Her favorite cousin Pat DePew is visiting, luckily a former registered nurse, and even more luckily, was with C when she then passed out while I was downstairs on the phone with the Group Health consulting nurse. Pat got her on the floor and I called 911, for the 2nd time in 6 months, and they were splendid again. Her vital signs checked out okay, and they advised us go wherever she might get the best job of suturing. We chose the Northgate clinic, and a topnotch physician's assistant named Shannon Ries did the job and scrupulously sent us on ~~the~~ to Capitol Hill for a CAT scan. Those results are OK, though C has to take it easy for a while. Scary, though.

9 Aug.--C's diary entry has the essence of the day, good medical news, the meningioma in her skull does not seem to be growing and she is free of surgery or whatever for that at least until another MRI a year from now. I am relieved beyond any saying of it.

We've been visited by Pat Depew and Marcella Walter, good guests both, and I'm now back tooth and nail at finishing the ms. That's what it takes, as the final scene is proving to be as hard as anything I've ever written, or so it seems as I go through ways to keep up the pace and yet have the plot unfold to conclusions. I'll get it, but it's taking cruelly long.

12 Aug.--6:25, under morning clouds settling in, ~~xxxxxxx~~ but it's a bright time for me: y'day I completed the draft of Rainbow Year. It still needs work, maybe across the next month, but it is something Becky or Carol or Laskin could tweak into a book if I fell off the face of the earth. Nearly a quarter of a million dollars comes with the accomplishment of those last pages. I've long had the feeling of racing against fate on this book, and there's a strong likelihood that my next checkup with Dr. Chen on the 23rd will mean stronger medication, if nothing else. At least I now have workable words in hand, come what may these next weeks and months.

20 Aug.--Likely the hottest day of the summer, 78 on the downstairs deck at 2:30. I'd thought I might get through this coolish summer without resorting to my lightest shirt, the old orange and white striped one, but I've just now put it on. We went to the Edmonds public market this morning, taking along David Laskin to that and lunch, a good outing and probably good for me. I've been working my head off at the start of the final third of the ms, spending most of the week on trying out scenes to make it flow. I think I have it workable now, although there are still some tricky moves just ahead. I am not going to have the ms in thoroughly readable shape by Tuesday's medical appointment, which I fear a lot. The last 2 blood tests have shown slight increases in monoclonal protein and I'm afraid the odds are that I'm in for some increase in

20 Aug.--medication. That means rougher side effects, more to put up with. We'll see.

23 Aug.--Spared again. Dr. Chen found my test results eminently stable and said the best thing to do was to leave me alone. Four more months now until the next verdict, in December. Huzzah!

For a full decade I have been dealing with the diagnosis of malignancy in my blood, one-seventh of my life, and I don't know that I get any better at it. I was quite glum this morning ahead of the appointment, much more so than I needed to be, in retrospect. Thanks heavens C is back to fine and alert, concussion gone, and giving me her usual star to steer by.

Sept. 3--At last we are at the point that C says is always the most fun in the book biz, reading the full manuscript. We began y'day, after I spent the past week or so inserting better phrasing or other bits from file cards and blue sheets of possible scenes; there seems to be more such extra material than usual, and I must be judicious about how much I load into the writing.

This odd summer is about to produce its warmest weather, forecast into the 80s across this Labor Day weekend and through next week. Besides the ms work, we'll concentrate on the property, watering and harvesting, and eating well. Sensational pork ribs and applesauce from our own tree last night, and this morn we're going to the Edmonds farmers market. It's very good living, out from under the medical shadow at the moment.

10 Sept.--I really owe it to the record to put down how swimmingly things are going lately. Today brought the $10,000 speaking gig in Portland next spring that had been hanging fire, along with a letter from the UW provost that I'm chosen as one of the 150 Timeless alums to be honored--also next spring--in celebration of the UW'S 150 years. All nice, very nice, but what really has C and me grinning is completion of the ms, to the point where I'm simply fiddling with small things ih it for the next week or so before sending it in to Becky, and with a new title that seems a lot better, The Bartender's Tale. All our smart literary friends love it, Linda Bierds, David Laskin,

10 Sept. cont.--Ann and Marshall Nelson, and I think I have Becky talked into it. So, we're in high cotton at the moment in the writing biz.

Dinner at Marcello last night w/ Linda Bierds and Syd, catching up with them after their London summer, a hoot as always. Linda is working a new book of poems, just had 2 accepted by the Atlantic. Our socializing continues tomorrow when David Williams and Marjorie come for drinks and then we're taking them to the community club salmon barbecue, and the Laskins are giving us dessert afterward.

We're in hot weather, far and away the warmest of the summer, 82 on the downstairs deck now at 4:15. And dry, dry, no hint of rain in the 10-day forecast. We're harvesting madly, 2 qts. of blueberries a day, apples piling up, many tomatoes, etc.

16 Sept.--This morning at 9:20, I clicked the Print command on the last chapter of The Bartender's Tale. In the great wise words of the bartender Tom, that's that.

19. Sept.--Well, it goes to NY tomorrow, to the other two women in my life, Becky and Liz. In my effort to write a good 300-page book I seem to have written a 400-page one, more the length of The Eleventh Man than Work Song or Whistling Season. It reads very well to me--C is very high on it--and so we'll see what Becky and Riverhead can do with it. (One thing is to start clanking out the further cash of the advance, $75,000 this year and next and the next after that.) It's somewhat surprising to me that the terrific word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence effort I've put in on the ms for two full years does not register to me either on the page or in my mind as I read over the finished work; it simply has become its own entity, its completeness of story and characters the only thing that stands out to me.

I've just embarked on some cleanup of office surfaces, pounds and pounds of rough draft to throw away, and I am deliberately not sorting through "promising" stuff that didn't get used, to free my head from this book and get on with life. Which, C and I both know, will soon, maybe very soon, mean moving on to Sweet Thunder, and seeing what Morrie has to say.

10 Sept. cont.--Ann and Marshall Nelson, and I think I have Becky talked into it. So, we're in high cotton at the moment in the writing biz.

Dinner at Marcello last night w/ Linda Bierds and Syd, catching up with them after their London summer, a hoot as always. Linda is working a new book of poems, just had 2 accepted by the Atlantic. Our socializing continues tomorrow when David Williams and Marjorie come for drinks and then we're taking them to the community club salmon barbecue, and the Laskins are giving us dessert afterward.

We're in hot weather, far and away the warmest of the summer, 82 on the downstairs deck now at 4:15. And dry, dry, no hint of rain in the 10-day forecast. We're harvesting madly, 2 qts. of blueberries a day, apples piling up, many tomatoes, etc.

16 Sept.--This morning at 9:20, I clicked the Print command on the last chapter of The Bartender's Tale. In the great wise words of the bartender Tom, that's that.

19. Sept.--Well, it goes to NY tomorrow, to the other two women in my life, Becky and Liz. In my effort to write a good 300-page book I seem to have written a 400-page one, more the length of The Eleventh Man than Work Song or Whistling Season. It reads very well to me--C is very high on it--and so we'll see what Becky and Riverhead can do with it. (One thing is to start clanking out the further cash of the advance, $75,000 this year and next and the next after that.) It's somewhat surprising to me that the terrific word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence effort I've put in on the ms for two full years does not register to me either on the page or in my mind as I read over the finished work; it simply has become its own entity, its completeness of story and characters the only thing that stands out to me.

I've just embarked on some cleanup of office surfaces, pounds and pounds of rough draft to throw away, and I am deliberately not sorting through "promising" stuff that didn't get used, to free my head from this book and get on with life. Which, C and I both know, will soon, maybe very soon, mean moving on to Sweet Thunder, and seeing what Morrie has to say.

22 Sept.--Blustery day, warm but overcast and windy. C managed to get out and pick raspberries and blueberries, and what's more, is taking me to lunch at Chinooks to celebrate The Bartender's Tale. I'm still cleaning off desk and other surfaces from the last year or two of work, but gave the garden a lot of attention the past 2 days, 3-4 hours each afternoon, much of it fighting weeds, i.e. running in place. But my mind is turning toward Sweet Thunder, as it must--that is, my head needs something to do, there is no such thing any more, if there ever was, as blank relaxation. Maybe it's the need to stay ahead of the footsteps that are out there--cancer, age, who knows what else--or the particle mode of thinking caused by chemotherapy and Thalidomide, or maybe it's just me, but my head is busy and doesn't want not to be. So, with the Bartender's Tale ms just now landing in NY, I find I have ideas perking for Sweet Thunder and am really gratified to see notions I ~~xxx~~ wrote when I conjured the book proposal. I am not real keen about spending the next year and a half or two in mental Butte, but that goes with the story.

As to any larger perspective at the moment, I look back through this year when C has had two 911 calls and two cataract surgeries but has come out of it all, and my several blood tests showing my myeloma threat still stable, and I can only think we're persevering not too badly. I am coming up on the five-year mark since my stem cell procedure, a milestone of survival I maybe would not have bet on back then.

26 Sept.--Highly interesting day. With the weather closed in--the first real rain since early summer--I hunkered in and began in earnest on Sweet Thunder, working up the opening scene from the sketchy components in the book proposal. It seemed to go very well, a couple of fresh pages' worth, and while I wouldn't expect this all the time, dealing with a cast of characters established in an earlier book has its virtues, I think. Then the mail brought, in a nicely hand-inscribed but otherwise unidentified envelope postmarked from San Francisco, the guest list for Bezos' Campfire shindig in Santa Fe. Neal

26 Sept.--cont.--Armstrong, T Bone Burnett, Werner Herzog, Lawrence Kasdan, Billie Jean King, Shirley MacLaine, Anna Quindlen, David Simon, Art Spiegelman...and among writers, Geraldine Brooks whose People of the Book I really liked, Margaret Atwood, Michael Chabon, Wally Lamb, George RR Martin, Armistead Maupin, Susan Orlean,, Jane Smiley, Amy Tan, Calvin Trillin, Abraham Verghese, Alice Walker, Isabel Wilkerson... A bunch full of possibility and maybe flaming egoes, I would suspect.

3 Oct.--Now it is October and already tending toward wintry, as the long-range forecasts foresee another tough La Nina one. The first real rain since I don't know when--early summer?--came last night and it is drippy today. Lucked out on the weather y'day at the back-from-the-grave NW Bookfest in Kirkland, a bit cloudy but dry; packed house for the panel I was on, and all of us on the panel behaved like grownups; good bunch, Jim Lynch, Jonathan Evison, Nancy Horan and Indu Sundaresan.

Beyond that, I await Becky's comments on Bartender's Tale--hoping first of all that she accepts and likes that title--which I may get when I phone her later this morn after my Group Health runs for new reading glasses and monthly Thalidomide.

11 Oct.--A disparate day ahead, not the kind I like any more if I ever did. Will Lowell, son of former Innis Arden folks, is coming to do yard work, a collection of chores I'll need to honcho. Meanwhile I'll soon have to turn my thinking toward the Santa Fe gathering, which we embark on 2 mornings from now. This comes as I've been making what feels like good progress on Sweet Thunder, mining some material--quite a lot of it--left from Work Song. And what a relief it is to be working with established characters from that book.

Later: it's just after 9 and Will is hard at power-washing the mossy north patio. He seems bright and competent, so, fingers crossed, maybe the yard work can go faily painlessly.

Still have not heard from Becky (or for that matter Liz; hmm) about the Bartender's Tale, which is not the best sign but it probably is on par with how things have gone in the

11 Oct. cont.--past. I'm taking the attitude that no harm is done until I know it is done, although if I don't hear by some point next week I am going to be asking what's what.

As to my mood, it's pretty good, riven every so often by worry about my health, our health, although both C and I are currently okay. Some time back, during one of my down moments about clumsiness from neuropathy, she told me I have a lot to put up with and I do very well at it, and I try to remind myself of that. I am proud that I've achieved another manuscript, and quite a big one at that, given the hand stiffness and other aching and wearying side effects of Thalidomide. I'm still up and functioning, and that's a lot for a cancer sufferer.

18 October--So it has come to this, in this remarkable life my words have brought. At the Santa Fe Campfire gathering, carrying our plates of lunnh in the lodge dining room where there were only a handful of early eaters, we saw a spot at a table with Jeff and McKenzie Bezoes and Neil and Carol Armstrong and asked if we could join them. Sure! So it was that, a little way into the meal, we eyewitnessed the first man on the moon asking the Amazon billionaire entrepreneur what his rocket project was all about.

Bezos' project, 115 engineers strong, aims for daily space launches--to make orbits safer, do it oftener, Bezos says. He believes the market will be there--payloads, space tourists--if launches can become regular and reliable. The rocketry involves vertical takeoff and landing, and from listening in it sounded like getting the thing back on the ground is the tricky part. Armstrong was reminded of the X-1 and X-2 aircraft in his test pilot days; those could to go "a million feet" but the last few hundred feet down to landing was the difficulty. In any case, Bezos is a fan of NASA, which he said caught a lot of criticism for "not doing anything," for a couple of reasons. What other gov't agency ever inspired a generation of kids, obviously including himself. And more to the entrepreneural point, the NASA computer tapes, if that's the correct description, are available to ventures like his.

19 Oct.--A few further thoughts on the Santa Fe jaunt, as the bedraggling effect of a cold is probably going to keep me from full note-taking (I'll put them in the file for the event) and the kind of long diary entry I'd ordinarily do.

24 Oct.--A hiatus, albeit a cold-ridden one. I'm in my 8th or 9th day of this, and looking back in the diary to to the cold I brought back from Tucson in Jan., that lasted nearly a month. So, something is going to have to be done about the duration of this hacking and endless nose-blowing--and maybe about plane travel?

Becky was in China last week and so did not get her ms comments to me; now they're promised to be overnighted so I'll have them tomorrow. I don't like the auguries of her response so far, taking this amount of time--it seems to indicate she has a lot to say. As Bill Stafford said about readers, and I'd include editors, all we want is for them to fall over backward in their chairs and kick their legs in the air in delight.

Rainy weather, which along with our colds made for a quiet weekend, mostly reading.

25 Oct.--My cold is letting up, fortunately. Still have a crashing cough, but a dry one that doesn't go on and on. My balance is much better and my mental state is calmer. We'll see if that withstands the arrival of Becky's comments later today.

The monthly dinner at Poppy last night with the Nelsons, always restorative. What a long good tradition that has been, and how good of them to persevere in coming from Bainbridge to do it.

2 Nov.--I was about to write that today I would see what I'd conjured in The Bartender's Tale (here's hoping that title sticks, in the bit of tug-of-war with Becky over it), but no, there's an e-mail from Becky saying sorry, a mis-communication, the ms and her comments will get here tomorrow. This has been remarkably ragged from her, for whatever reason, and I hope it doesn't show up in her editing; it likely won't, she's been really good on the preceding books, but it makes one's anntennae quiver some.

2 Nov. cont.--One decent consequence of all the delay is that I can come to the ms very fresh, not having looked at it for, what, six weeks or so. In any case, we're about to get a book--and nearly a quarter of a million dollars--out of this, sooner or later.

I remarked to C on our morning walk that I can't help but notice I'm at the calendar point of being a 5-year cancer survivor. She said thanks to my being an attentive patient and top-notch doctoring, I've done really well, and dire as myeloma can be and how doggedly I've had to doctor for it for the past eleven years (including the monoclonal gammopathy half-dozen), I have to say I'm lucky and grateful to be functioning to the extent I am. What lies ahead, of course, is always there like a cloud.

The weather has turned chilly, first substantial snow in the mountains forecast for tonight. We're now walking just before dawn, thanks to the kindness of a stranger, the second such episode of grace recently. (The other was on the flight back from Santa Fe, when my cold stabbed me with an excruciating pain in the ear, and a young woman 2 or 3 rows back volunteered her saline nasal spray, which rescued me.) C and I were walking early as usual, having just met up with Tiffany, when the Genessee oil company van that we often see commuting through the n'hood pulled up in front of us, the driver got out and handed us a reflective safety vest, saying it didn't fit him and we might as well have it. Actually it was his much-used one, but it serves the purpose for us, correcting something we're never got around to, making ourselves more evident on the dim road. It gives one hope for humanity, otherwise hard to come by in this era of a suicidal House of Representatives paralyzing the government.

6 Nov.--Sunday evening, as it now is at a little past 4 on the first day off Daylight Saving. Very chilly, high of about 46, and we waited until before lunch to do our daily walk around the n'hood.

I'm at work on the Bartender's Tale, going over Becky's suggestions, taking most but not all of her trims etc, confident as I am in her editing. My policy has always been that a good editor can improve a ms

Nov. 6 cont.--by 3 to 5%, and I think that'll be the case here.

Highly enjoyable evening last night, at the Book-It fundraiser for putting on Prairie Nocturne. Met Geoffrey Simmons, who'll play Monty, and really liked his singing. Myra Platt herself will play Susan, and that also seems like a great break, with her piano facility. Besides the music of the two of them, I read the scene from Rascal Fair where Susan makes her first appearance at Angus's school, and that went well. In between, Patricia Britton sang the socks off the Montana state song--she'd told us she did some summer stock, but we had no idea she was such a belter. Book-It's staging of my novel gives promise of entertainment in more ways than one.

21 Nov.--And so it's done again, another ms tweaked and polished, another book in the making ready to be sent off. The Bartender's Tale is 131,000 words, remarkably enough one of my longest books. As my cover letter to Becky tries to say, this ms go-through had a magnetic feel to it, word choice and plot nuance getting better every time I roved the pages. Whether or not readers and reviewers buy into some of the plot turns, I hope this is indeed an entertaining tale. And from the point of view of a 72-year-old wordsmith beaten up by cancer and its treatment, I can't help but feel triumphant at achieving a $300,000 book.

C and I have both had our noses down in ms the past several days, but we have done some nifty socializing. At Linda Sullivan and Jeff Saeger's on the 19th, along with Merry Nye and her W. Seattle neighbors Sue and Mike Byers, good company all around and sensation meatballs and spaghetti. Earlier in the week, we first attended Linda Bierds' really big deal Sol Katz lecture--one UW person a year is chosen--and were enchanted, nay awed, one more time by her leaps of genius to make poetry out of historic personalities and discoveries. Our writing buddies the Davids, Laskin and Williams, were there too, and it's a mark of esteem for Linda that both of them, formidably bright guys and wicked good writers in their own right and capable of critical opinions, both just

Nov. 21 cont.--admit to dropped jaws at listening to her. The next night, Linda had invited C and me to the thanks dinner the Simpson Humanities Center threw for her--chair fillers so she didn't have to face strange financial angels or such--and that get-together at Nell's was fine, too, Linda and Syd and Rick Kenney and Kathy Woodward of the Center and her husband, Herb Blau. Herb at 85 trails a helluva lot of directing and theater teaching behind him, and while I told C I was determined to talk to Linda and Rick in the course of the evening rather than let the occasion balloon off into bloviation by somebody else, Herb was a good conversationalist, didn't dominate. Everybody played nicely together, and unlike our last foray at Nell's, which is capital-P pricey, the meals were really good. Couple of marks of the evening: Herb told me about being a Stegner student at Stanford in the 40's and winning a playwriting contest even though somebody else was being announced as having won, and Wally marching off to right that after saying to gulping young Herb, "Mr. Blau, take (ie. teach) my class, please." Rick reported on teaching at Iowa last year, to a writing class of highly maybe overly educated Ivy League types, leading him to speculate there's such a thing as too much erudition too young; it sounded as if they should have shut up and wrote. I couldn't resist telling him and Linda about the NY Times Mag piece on Lynda Barry, who teaches a blue-collar writing class in which everyone writes in class on a topic she throws out to them, then each one reads her or his result, and no one else is allowed to comment except Barry, who is restricted to "Good, good." Although I don't know that it would work with poetry, that sounds to me pretty much like a writing class ought to work, instead of the standard workshop shark tank where the students get to slice each other's ~~work~~ creation; shared callowness is still you-know-what.

As this longest entry in hell knows how long shows, life has turned another corner with the sending off of Rusty and his bartender father, Thanksgiving is nearing with our old crowd, 18 or so of us this year, and to the extent I can make myself do it, I'm able now to juggle things a little differently, at least until the next medical verdict Dec. 27.

26 Nov.--We've hosted another Thanksgiving, maybe something like our 35th or more, evidently successfully--8 bottles of champagne, two broken glasses; after the 2nd one, I told the gang, "This is getting like a Jewish wedding." The food was if anything better than usual, and it really went; thank goodness for our maximum 22# turkey, all our oven--and for that matter our lifting power--will take. The guest list: Mark and Lou Damborg, stalwarts; Ann McCartney and Norm Lindquist, staying overnight per usual rather than making the drive back to Bellingham; Roy & Betty Mayfield, plus Betty's sister Cathy and bro-in-law Steven Lee from Victoria; John & Katharina Maloof, other long-timers; Bill Calvin and Katherine Graubard; Frank Zoretich; David Williams and Marjorie, and David's mother Jackie, newly widowed after Walt's death late this summer. Friends, friends, and what they provide. Mark by custom carves the turkey, and this time he was on hand when I groaned it out an hour ahead to check the grease level in the pan, and he took over the siphoning-off C usually does. As I tipped the pan for him, the bulb siphon he was working filled and then spurted as it's prone to do, only squarely at the midriff of my shirt. I love about Mark his sense of composure, maybe akin to my own, and so we more or less looked wrily at each other and proceeded with the job and then I went and changed clothes. David Williams is wonderful at seeing what needs to be done and doing it, sweeping up both broken glasses in a trice. So, a good occasion--a hell of a lot of work beforehand, but maybe more relaxed than some other times, once we conjured enough chairs and plates for 17 or whatever our total was. The only lack was the neighborhood walk, as it was possitively pouring and windy as well.

I'm in the involuntary fallow period that happens this time of year, with Thanksgiving etc., and also in the aftermath of turning in the manuscript and then following up with the devilish author's q'airre, always about a day and a half's work no matter how I slave at it. I haven't wanted to scramble Morrie and Sweet Thunder into all else that's been going on, but maybe I can get back to a regular writing schedule at the start of the week coming.

30 Nov.--This has been the first achieving day back at Sweet Thunder, what with Thanksgiving and y'day's odd medical detour when I merely went in to have ear wax taken out and was given a considerable workup by Dr. Chapman, resulting in a blood test for Vitamin D deficiency (relating to my neuropathy in the feet, I think fully attributable to Thalidomide) etc. So, things are starting to feel back on track, although not entirely there yet.

3 Dec.--Saturday, without much push to it. I felt logey after I got up, and ~~went~~ laid back down while C went out in the world for poinsettias etc. That bit of a snooze seems to have helped. The weather has been graying out, another fog blanket in a run of chilly unpleasant days. That aside, the week hasn't passed too badly, a page or so accomplished on Sweet Thunder each day, although I keep having the feeling a book with Morrie as its voice should spring to life more quickly than that. I may have said before, I don't yet approach this book with the compelling drive I gave The Bartender's Tale. That ms meant--still means--a lot to me both artistically, as a story-telling feat, and financially, nailing down (I hope) the $75,000 advance payments, less Liz's 10%, across the next two years. If I don't manage to meet the Sweet Thunder contract deadline a little over a year and a half from now, I think I can say, so be it, I've given it what I can. Which is not to indicate I won't peg away at it steadily as I've been doing, forever leery as I must be of more severe medication or worse ahead.

An obituary this week of a friend from what seems long ago, and a good one he was while it lasted--Archie Satterfield. Archie was a great books editor at the P-I, and caught on to This House of Sky immediately. Out of that, and his subsequent freelance life while living in Edmonds, we met for lunch every month or so for I think a couple of years, two guys from not much of anywhere--his was one of those Depression-era Ozark families; his mother gave away one of his sisters to a Detroit family, by way of a plea ad in the paper for someone to take her (as Archie said, ahead of local no-goods starting to sniff around her as soon as she was a teenager) who liked to

3 Dec. cont.--talk journalism and writing. He had the newspaperman's/freelancer's facility of writing fast, which I was in the process of curing myself from,and it kept him doing magazine pieces while he yearned to do substantial books. He also wished he could write fiction, and it may have been my switch to that with Sea Runners etc., or just that my star kept rising and his sputtered in place,that brought about the situation where I realized we weren't getting together any more. I'm pretty sure I made the effort. It's not the only time I've had a friend withdraw to the vanishing point that way--the photographer Chris Bennion also did--and when I once worried out loud to Carol about it, she said, well, "You can be formidable," by which she meant both what is stacked in my head and my on-the-march success. It was news to me, and whether or not that's the reason, I've had to learn to let some friendships go. Yet I am tantalized by details of Archie's late life, inasmuch as he was perpetually scrambling for income when I knew him and the obit mentions his renting a villa in the south of France and inviting a dozen close friends to mark his 75th birthday. Archie, maybe I hardly knew ye, nor ye me.

9 Dec.--Friday afternoon, which as I tell C it is every time I look up. At least this week I have quite considerable progress on Sweet Thunder to show for the time, a couple pp. per day the last couple and some fluent revising before that. It's now cold and clear, and we're going to the work clothes store on Aurora to look things over before finally getting our daily walk in; and then we head for the Damborgs and with them to Tulio's for supper and the downtown library for Richard White's talk on his big book, Railroaded. I'm not far into it, but it is caustic history, for sure.

14 Dec.--The weather stays chilly and raw, and we stay holed up with me writing and C tending to the household. This afternoon she wrote checks and mailed ten bills, not including today's for delivery of furnace oil, nearly a thousand dollars. As we frequently chorus, thank god we have money. As to the writing, it goes at a quicker pace--~~thank~~ [redacted] knock on wood, stroke the rabbit's foot-- so far than it did on Bartender's Tale, about 2 pp. a day instead

14 Dec. cont.--instead of one. Mostly I'm tackling it in spots where I have the makings of a scene and expanding on that, and before long I'm going to have to work at continuity, which is harder, but for now I just want pages to add up.

This has been a quiet and good day, productive for us both. Y'day I had to cope hard with my sinking spirit when C did an on-line investigation of meningioma, the nonmalignant brain tumor she's been diagnosed with, wondering if it might be causing her balance problem and, I heard from her for the first time, some concern over memory and word command. It spiked up the fear that is always in me--what are we going to do, in the time to come?--but today she is perfectly fine and feeling good, and I am trying to take an even keel for however long it lasts.

23 Dec.--Another of the Friday afternoons that seem to always be there when I look up. This at least is one with a feeling of accomplishment, for a couple of reasons:

--I've done a count of Sweet Thunder first draft, and while it is in chunks (although with 2 23-page start), it adds up to about 50 pages, which had been my goal by the end of the year. With the hope that this is going to be a shorter book, maybe under 300 ms pp., I am a fair way along.

--Becky e-mailed that she's satisfied, nay pleased, with my revised version of Bartender's Tale.

On the social front, I don't know whether C has caught up with these in her diary, but on the 20th we went to Poppy with the Damborgs and Mayfields, and on the 21st to the Laskins, together with David Williams and Marjorie. The best of company, in both cases; C remarked how great it is to be with people all of whom you like. She also just reported, after a quick but (we hope) minor trip to Group Health that she's put on 4 pounds, which is pretty close to what I've added since the holiday season started with Thanksgiving. A leaner January, we vow, after the Xmas blowout of roast beef and sandwiches after.

Christmas--Windy and unsettled. This year it's our turn to host, the Rodens and Lisa and Jerry Clemens and the Rodens coming at 5, 3 hrs from now. C and I went downtown this morning to the Eheraton to see the gingerbread architectural creations, half a dozen whimsically elaborate creations by local architectural firms and a chef apiece--this year, railroad stations, with the fantastically towered Flinders St. station of Melbourne and New Zealand's Dunedin station our favorites. Came home and opened our presents to each other, C maybe finally solving my perpetual search for good mittens and me giving her the book on typefaces etc. that seems so tantalizing to us print people, and I added in a safety vest for either of us on our dark early morning walks.

And so, how do we stand, as this year draws shut? C y'day read my first 25 pp. of Sweet Thunder and thought it was dandy, so I seem to be off to a good start on the next next book. We have an interesting event coming up on the 27th, Book-It Theatre's meet-and-greet of the cast. We have some leeway to get out and do one of our favorite thihgs--go to the Skagit delta and see the snow geese--and so on. At the moment our health is about as steady as it gets--mine dependent on my next blood test a few days from now, hers more stable now that exercises have helped her balance--but we're certainly in the risk zone of age. This year's Xmas letters reported at least 4 falls among our friends, and with C's and Lou Damborg's earlier, that's getting to be a lot. Still, depressing as that is, I have to remind myself how lucky we are to be still up and going, given that terrifying moment last Jan. when Carol stood frozen and quivering at the table and I could only think that she'd had a stroke. Time graced us past that, and we're still here coping.

26 Dec.--To get this out of the way and move on: John Roden was a disaster throughout our Christmas gathering and dinner, belligerently profanely drunk after one hefty martini in a way none of us had ever seen him, and even after Mark and I got him to the table, both of us lacing into him about behaving himself, and keeping alcohol from him and getting two cups of coffee into him, he still was

26 Dec. cont.--bombastic and kept taking over with whatever topic popped into his head, insofar as we--particularly me--would let him. This is three out of three in Xmas dinners at our place with the Rodens and Damborgs that he's been one kind of pain in the ass or another--the first time, he insisted on running here the 3 miles from their place, in the dark, got lost, and Mark and I had to go find him, which we did mostly by luck; the second time, he carried on so much at the table that his daughter Lisa went to the kitchen in tears--and this time does it. C and I have decided we'll offer to bring food to any gatherings at their place--next year is the Rodens' turn to host, anyway--but no more of John turning into a werewolf when he leaves his own environs. There's a tragic lot going on with him--he's 91 and hates the erosions of age; deafer than hell but admits he's too vain or stubborn or whatever to wear a hearing aid--but he's always been, as C says, difficult. I spent much of last evening coping with him, up to including and pulling him back onto his feet when he half-fell into my sidetable and lamp on his way to the table, and Mark and Lou pitched in magnificently--what wonderful friends they are of the other sort. John became so much a mean drunk, ranting "fucking" into every other sentence, that Lisa jumped to her feet and told him if he didn't quit it, she was going home. He didn't change at all, and out she went, her husband Jerry after her, fortunately just to walk it off and wait in the car until things settled down somewhat. John was so shocking it makes me wonder if he is losing mental grip. In any case, there's the Xmas report, one to remember.

On a more level note, C and I did well by each other as noted in y'day's entry, and we're back on track with life this morning. I'd give a nickel to know what's ensued at the Roden household; Lisa and Jerry fly back to Minneapolis today, so there's no time for things to simmer down. And I'm curious; will John ever apologize? does he even remember any of it?

28 Dec.--First, the financial note: I nudged my estimable agents this morning about the advance on acceptance of the Bartender's Tale ms, and Chuck Verrill came through with a wire deposit of $67,000+, alleviating our tax situation for next year. (We've already paid estimated tax on that money, and so are spared having to pony up for it again next year.) With my pension plan minimum distribution and both our IRA distributions flowing into the brokerage account along with this sum, and a bunch of cash there we've been sitting on, that account is now well over a quarter of a million dollars. C meanwhile has written over $14,000 in charitable checks, and we still have $60,000+ in the bank checking account. Strange damn times, when what has seemed the safest thing is not to invest but just hang on to the dough.

Y'day we had the great pleasure of sitting in on the first rehearsal, a roundtable reading of the script really of Prairie Nocturne. Some of the cast already are very good--Myra Platt and Geoffrey Simmons as Susan and Monty especially, thank goodness--and it was eye-opening to see what all is involved in bringing a play to live, a couple of dozen people around that table, stage manager, dramaturge, cast manager, director Laura Ferri, adapter Elena Hartley, and some others as well as the cast of I think nine, plus a few interns who'll be the ensemble. I could have about walked through the air on the respect I felt in that room, really very moving. The script seemed okay to me except for going a bit flat at the end, denying Wes his role of redeeming himself as he does in the book, and I called Elena today to suggest a very short scene preceding the final one where he can have his moment. She sounded enthused and grateful, and I was glad to hear from her she's putting back in something she'd taken out, Wes's unsent letter to Susan, which will be interspersed in the scene where Susan and Wes confess their love to each other (which I thought happened pretty fast in last night's version).

And C had good news from the physical therapist, told that she's mastered some of the balance exercises better than some 30-year-olds can. She's been in a topnotch mood with that and the charitable checkwriting, and I've been fine myself, hunkering in with this windy rainy weather and making headway on a couple pp. of Sweet Thunder.

Dear Ivan,

As the risk of wearing out my welcome with more fulsome praise for *This House of Sky*, I feel compelled to weigh in again – this time on paper. When I read a book that truly speaks to me, I often find myself composing letters to the author in my head while I walk or swim or brush my teeth. This is the one time I actually have the author's address right at my fingertips. Too good an opportunity to pass up.

You know, I picked up "This House" again with a vague notion of seeing how you did it so I could pick up some tricks for my own ongoing project but very quickly the book took me over and I ceased trying to pull up the floorboards and just surrendered to the sweep of the thing. The only analysis I did was at the sentence level – and it was more or less along the lines of putting a coin against the molars and chomping down and concluding "yup, 100 percent solid gold." Every time.

There was many a passage in which I whistled softly under my breath at the idea that young Ivan did THAT – herding and counting sheep, huddling on someone's couch with a suitcase tucked in the corner, making the rounds of the bars – while at the same age that I was doing brave and heroic stuff like watching "Billy Bang Bang" on TV and throwing dirt bombs at the neighborhood bully and smoothing out the huge box that someone's new fridge came in to make a kind of cardboard ski slope on the neighbor's hill. Pretty paltry compared to the Rainbow saloon.

But what really held me spellbound was the portrait of your father – or rather of your bond with your father. If there is a finer, realer, more reverent and tough-minded and fully realized portrayal of a father and son in American literature I haven't seen it. Just life size – no whitewash and precious little analysis. Your father steps right out the book and into our living rooms (I imagined he would have liked the cabin by the river in Eastern Oregon where I read his story) – and I found myself engaged in interior conversations with the old man, a bit shy and halting on both sides but propelled along by our shared admiration for you. "Hell of a writer that son of yours." "So you picked that up, did ye?"

All of this is humming particularly urgently through my head just now because one of the things I'll be doing back East is standing at the small mountain ringed (you'd call them hills) Jewish cemetery outside Lake Placid while we put my dad's ashes to rest. Toward the end of "This House" you write of your reluctance to speak to your dad about how it would be better for him "to pace out an active but shorter life rather than an inert lingering": "We could not talk about this in so many words – a failing in our family perhaps, yet none of us ever had seen much reason to say aloud what made itself plainly known – but my father had proclaimed as much with his earlier life." There was a lot my dad and I did not, could not talk about, and I wonder whether all of it was plainly known by and between us. I hope so. Once, a friend who lost his father young urged me to have The Talk with my dad – before it was too late – telling him how much I loved him, admired him, learned from him. I started down that line on the phone one evening but my dad, as close to a teetotaler as you can get without being totally abstinent, cut me off. "Have you been drinking?" Said not cuttingly, not even really suspiciously, maybe a bit fondly – but it walled off that avenue for good. And yes, probably for good.

Well, I better clam up before I exhaust your patience entirely. I'll just close by saying: Great book. Great friend. Thanks for being down the hill – and right there on the shelf above me.

David



Attendees at Campfire 2011

Conrad Anker and Jenni Lowe-Anker are America's most celebrated mountain climbing couple. Conrad, author of *The Lost Explorer*, located the remains of British climber George Mallory who vanished on Mt. Everest 75 years ago. Jenni is a noted artist and widow of famous mountaineer Alex Lowe who died climbing 12 years ago. She told their story in *Forget Me Not: A Memoir*.

Neil Armstrong is a businessman, Navy pilot, engineer, and university professor. And he is also the man who made that 'one small step' to become the first person to set foot on the surface of the moon. Neil is attending with his wife, Carol.

Margaret Atwood is best known as the author of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Margaret is also an environmental activist and poet with 15 published volumes to her credit. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has been presented with the Norwegian Order of Literary Merit.

Dayna and Robert Baer were both CIA officers when they met in Bosnia while working on an assignment to track down Hezbollah operatives. They fell in love, married, and together detailed their lives as spies and decision to 'leave the firm' in the book *The Company We Keep*. They are attending with their daughter, Khyber, 4.

Beck has been hailed by critics as one of today's most creative musicians. He's a four-time platinum recording artist and his albums, *Odelay* and *Sea Change*, have been included in *Rolling Stone's* list of the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time. Beck is attending with his wife, Marissa Ribisi.

Geraldine Brooks is an Australian-born journalist who covered crises in the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans for the *Wall Street Journal* before turning to fiction with her 2005 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *March*.

T Bone Burnett, musician, songwriter, and record producer, started as a guitarist in Bob Dylan's band and went on to become a renowned figure in the music industry. He's a 12-time Grammy Award winner and won an Academy Award for Best Original Song for *Crazy Heart*. T Bone is attending with his wife, Callie Khouri.

Michael Chabon is a novelist, screenwriter, columnist, and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*. His book *The Wonder Boys* was made into a critically-acclaimed movie. Michael is attending with his wife, Ayelet Waldman and children, Rosie, 10, and Abe, 8.

Harlan Coben's thrillers use unresolved events from the past to gild current mysteries. Harlan has 50 million books in print and his last four novels all debuted at #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. He is attending with his wife, Anne Armstrong-Coben.

Ivan Doig is the author of 11 books. His nonfiction books include the highly acclaimed memoir *This House of Sky*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award. He holds a PhD in history. Ivan is attending with his wife, Carol Doig.

Eric Drexler popularized the potential of molecular nanotechnology. An engineer, researcher and author, he is currently exploring nanotechnology-based solutions to global problems such as energy and climate change. Eric is attending with his wife, Rosa Wang.

David Eagleman, a neuroscientist at Baylor College of Medicine, is known for his work on neurolaw - how neuroscience impacts the criminal justice system. He is also a best-selling author published in 23 languages. In 2011, he was named a Guggenheim Fellow. David is attending with his wife, Sarah.

Juan Enriquez is a best-selling author and bio-engineer. One of the world's leading authorities on genetics and the changes genomics will bring, Juan was the founding director of the Harvard Business School Life Sciences Project. He is attending with his wife, Mary Schneider Enriquez, and daughter, Diana.

Shepard Fairey's "Obey" street art campaign evolved into an underground empire. A distinguished artist, Shepard created the Obama Hope image, one of the most famous political posters in American history. He is attending with his wife, Amanda, and daughters, Vivienne, 6, and Madeline, 3.

Neil Gaiman has been called 'one of the top ten living post-modern writers.' His novels, graphic novels, comics, and films have won numerous awards including the 2009 Newbery Medal and 2010 Carnegie Medal in Literature. Neil is attending with his wife, Amanda Palmer.

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Seth Godin writes about the ways ideas spread, leadership, and most of all, changing everything. He's earned the reputation of 'America's Greatest Marketer.' Seth is attending with his wife, Helene, and son, Mo, 15.

Philippa Gregory was an established historian and author when she wrote the blockbuster *The Other Boleyn Girl*. Philippa, who was born in Kenya, is also the founder of a non-profit that has constructed 140 wells at schools in Gambia. Philippa is attending with her husband, Anthony Mason.

Werner Herzog is an iconoclastic German filmmaker, producer, screenwriter, actor, author and opera director. He has directed more than fifty films, including *Encounters at the End of World* for which he received an Oscar nomination in 2009, and as many operas. Werner is attending with his wife, Lena.

Kambiz Hosseini and **Saman Arbabi** are Iranian expatriates who have garnered international attention for their weekly satirical show *Parazit* (Static), which is broadcasted directly into their homeland despite the Iranian government's best efforts to block it. Saman is attending with his wife, Azadeh Tajdivand.

Sarah Jones is a Tony and Obie award-winning playwright and actress, best known for *Bridge and Tunnel*, which was produced off-Broadway by Meryl Streep and then went to Broadway. A monologist, Sarah slips in and out of as many as 14 characters in her solo shows. Sarah is attending with Laurie Sandell.

JR brings art to improbable places. His giant images, often portraits of the people who live there, are pasted in unexpected neighborhoods such as 'the slums in Kenya, favelas in Brazil.' JR's guerilla art is massive in both size and impact. JR is attending with his fiancé Prune Nourry.

Lawrence Kasdan began writing for the movies, earning credits for some of the most iconic films in history including *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. He turned to directing with *The Big Chill*, *The Accidental Tourist* and *Grand Canyon*, among other films. Lawrence is attending with his wife, Meg.

Callie Khouri's first screenplay, *Thelma and Louise*, won her an Academy Award. She's gone on to direct *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* and *Mad Money*. Callie is attending with her husband, T Bone Burnett.

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Wally Lamb's first two novels *She's Come Undone* and *I Know This Much Is True* leaped to #1 on the *New York Times* bestsellers list. Both were named *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year, and were featured titles of Oprah's Book Club. Wally is attending with his wife, Chris.

Shirley MacLaine has written several autobiographical works on her career and about her beliefs in new age spirituality and reincarnation. A Hollywood icon, Shirley is a five-time Oscar nominee and won the Best Actress Oscar for her role in *Terms of Endearment*.

Yann Martel is a Canadian writer. He won the 2002 Man Booker Prize for his novel *Life of Pi*. It is being adapted to the screen by Ang Lee. Yann's latest novel is *Beatrice and Virgil*. He is attending with his companion Alice Kuipers, and their children, Theo, 2, and Lola, 4 months.

George R.R. Martin was named one of the 'most influential people in the world' by *Time* Magazine this year. An author and screenwriter of fantasy and science fiction, his series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*, was turned into the acclaimed HBO series *A Game of Thrones*. George is attending with his wife, Parris McBride.

Armistead Maupin is perhaps the most famous chronicler of gay life in the 1970s. His *Tales of the City* series broke new ground for, as Armistead himself put it, 'placing gay people in the context of the world at large.' Armistead is the author of nine novels and is attending with his husband, Christopher Turner.

Ghislaine Maxwell is a venture capitalist with a record of successful investments in start-up and growing small-cap companies. Ghislaine is part of a major global ocean initiative with a goal to create marine-protected areas.

Kevin Mitnick was the world's most wanted computer hacker. He hacked into some of the country's most seemingly impenetrable agencies and companies before he was apprehended and spent five years in prison. Kevin is now a computer security consultant and best-selling author.

Moby is a Grammy Award-winning DJ, songwriter and musician. In 1991, Moby released his first single, *Go*, which *Rolling Stone* declared one of the best records of all time. Since then, his records have sold over 20,000,000 copies worldwide.

Susan Orlean is a journalist who writes for the *New Yorker*. She is the author of several books, including *The Orchid Thief*, which formed the basis for the film *Adaptation*. Susan is attending with her husband, John Gillespie, and son, Austin, 7.

Amanda Palmer rose to fame as the lead singer, pianist, and lyricist/composer of the duo The Dresden Dolls. She struck out on her own as a solo artist with her 2008 album *Who Killed Amanda Palmer*. Amanda is attending with her husband, Neil Gaiman.

Anna Quindlen started her career as a journalist. Her *New York Times* column, 'Public and Private,' won the Pulitzer Prize in 1992. She later became a novelist writing five bestsellers, three of which were made into movies. Anna is attending with her daughter, Maria Krovatin.

Jane Smiley's 1992 Pulitzer Prize-winning adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, *A Thousand Acres* was made into a film starring Jason Robards. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she is a contributor to numerous distinguished publications. Jane is attending with her partner, Jack Canning.

Art Spiegelman is best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning comic book memoir, *Maus*, a Holocaust narrative. In 2011, Art won the Grand Prix at the Angoulême International Comics Festival, marking only the third time an American has received the honor. Art is attending with his wife, Françoise Mouly.

Neal Stephenson explores areas such as mathematics, cryptography, philosophy, currency, and the history of science in his writing. He is the author of the epic *The Baroque Cycle* and numerous other works of fiction and nonfiction. Neal is attending with his wife, Ellen Lackermann.

George Stroumboulopoulos is the host of Canada's most highly honored talk show, 'George Stroumboulopoulos Tonight.' George's show delivers a hybrid of news and celebrity, reflected through in-depth conversations and dynamic production. George is attending with Tania Natscheff.

Amy Tan first won international recognition with her 1989 novel *The Joy Luck Club,* which was made into a film and translated into 35 languages. The success of *The Joy Luck Club* was followed by five more best-selling and award-winning novels. Amy is attending with her husband, Lou DeMattei.

Calvin Trillin is an American journalist, humorist, food writer, poet, memoirist, and novelist. Since 1990, Calvin has written a piece of comic verse weekly for *The Nation*. He is the author of 26 books, many of which were *New York Times* bestsellers.

Jeff Tweedy formed the hugely popular band Wilco in 1994. As the leader of Wilco, Jeff has been the recipient of two Grammy Awards including one for Best Alternative Album. Jeff is attending with his wife, Susan Miller Tweedy, and sons, Spencer, 15, and Sam, 12.

Abraham Verghese, MD, MACP, is Professor for the Theory and Practice of Medicine and Associate Chair of Internal Medicine at Stanford University. He's also a novelist. His first book, *Cutting for Stone*, became a runaway bestseller. Abraham is attending with companion, Cari Kapur.

Ayelet Waldman, a former attorney, is a novelist and essayist. She has written ten novels, including *Love and Other Impossible Pursuits* which was made into a film starring Natalie Portman. Ayelet is attending with her husband, Michael Chabon, and children, Rosie, 10, and Abe, 8.

Geoffrey West is a physicist working on fundamental problems in biological and social sciences. He is a Distinguished Professor and the Past President of the Santa Fe Institute. He was named to the *Time* 100 list in 2006. He is attending with his wife, Jacqueline.

Isabel Wilkerson served as a correspondent and bureau chief for *The New York Times*. Her book, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, won the Pulitzer Prize, making her the first African American woman in history to win the award. Isabel is attending with companion, Brett Hamilton.

From Amazon:

Jeff Belle, Jen Belle, Katie 5, Tommy 4
Jeff Bezos, MacKenzie Bezos
Bill Carr, Lynn Carr, Maddox 6, Evan 4
Daphne Durham, Craig Doberstein
Russ Grandinetti, Hanouf Grandinetti, Zade 3
pub Victoria Griffith, Keith Griffith
Don Katz, Leslie Larson
Steven Kessel, Sibyl Frankenburg, Simon 12, Theo 9
pub Larry Kirshbaum, Barbara Kirshbaum
Dilip Kumar, Sucheta Kumar, Rohan 7, Mihir 4
David Naggar
Ed. Tom Ryder, Darlene Ryder



Campfire Information

Welcome to Santa Fe!

Sessions: All adult guests are encouraged to attend the sessions on Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You'll find a program schedule in this packet. Please note that all sessions and activities at Campfire are off-the-record, so please no blogging or posting.

Hospitality: If you've forgotten anything, would like a bottle of water, soda, wine, or need anything printed, please stop by Hospitality located in the Central Lodge. We are there daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you need anything outside of these hours, please call Barbara at 206-601-1349 or Eve at 917-312-0677.

Medical/Safety: An EMT will be on-site and stationed at the Thunderbird Lounge (the children's center) on Thursday from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.; on Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you have any safety or security concerns, please call 206-369-8398. In extreme emergencies, please dial 911.

Photographers: Photographers are here to take photos for our guests. (These photos will not be used by Amazon in any way.) If there are special photos you would like taken, feel free to tell a photographer.

Gift Bags: If you would like to exchange a size, please stop by Hospitality.

Shipping: If you would like to ship any items home, we'll be happy to arrange that for you with our complimentary shipping service. Simply bring your items to Hospitality, or let us know if you'd like us to pick-up any items from your room.

Transportation: There are vans throughout the property to take you to your room or drive you to town. If you don't see one, please dial x3612 from any Lodge phone.

Questions? If you need anything at all, please ask anyone with a red circle on his or her nametag.

Be sure to drink plenty of water as it helps with the dry climate and change in altitude.



Campfire Schedule

Thursday, 10/13

5:00	Meet at the Lodge front desk for transport to the Mesa. (Dinner will be outdoors, so please bring a coat and wear warm layers.)
5:15-6:00	Cocktails on the Mesa
6:00-7:30	Dinner on the Mesa
7:30-8:30	Storytelling and music around the campfire *Neil Armstrong, Jeff Tweedy and Moby*
8:30	Transport back to the Lodge
8:30	Drinks in the Lodge bar

Friday, 10/14

7:00-9:00	Breakfast in the Bishop's Lodge Dining Room
7:30-8:30	Yoga in gym
9:00-12:30	Session I in Pavilion (light breakfast available)
12:30-1:30	Lunch in the Bishop's Lodge Dining Room
2:00-5:30	Activities
6:00	Meet at the Lodge front desk for transport to dinner
6:30-7:15	Cocktails at Gerald Peters Gallery in Santa Fe
7:15-8:30	Dinner at Gerald Peters Gallery
8:30-9:00	An interview with Shirley MacLaine
9:00	Transport back to Bishop's Lodge
9:30	Drinks & Tequila Tasting at the Bishop's Lodge Bar

Saturday, 10/15

7:00-9:00	Breakfast in the Bishop's Lodge Dining Room
7:30-8:30	Yoga in gym
9:00-12:30	Session II in Pavilion (light breakfast available)
12:30	Meet at Lodge front desk for transport to town for lunch
12:45-2:15	Lunch at Luminaria in Santa Fe
2:15	Transport back to Bishop's Lodge
2:30-6:00	Activities
6:30-7:30	Cocktails on the patio at Bishop's Lodge
7:30-8:45	Dinner in the Bishop's Lodge Dining Room
9:00-9:30	Storytelling in the Pavilion *Armistead Maupin, Amy Tan, Calvin Trillin*
9:30	Drinks in the Pavilion

Sunday, 10/16

7:30-9:00	Breakfast available in the Bishop's Lodge Dining Room for early departures
9:00-11:00	Brunch in the Bishop's Lodge Dining Room
10:00-2:00	Call for a van to take you and your luggage to the front desk for airport departures

Amazon will cover all gratuities.

CAMP FIRE '11

Session Programs

Both sessions take place in the Pavilion.
A light breakfast will be available.

Friday, 10/14 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

- Kambiz Hosseini and Saman Arbabi
  interviewed by George Stroumboulopoulos
- Eric Drexler
- Shepard Fairey

break

- Dayna and Robert Baer interviewed by Susan Orlean
- David Eagleman
- Werner Herzog interviewed by Neil Gaiman

Saturday, 10/15 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

- Kevin Mitnick interviewed by George Stroumboulopoulos
- Geoffrey West
- Conrad Anker and Jenni Lowe-Anker interviewed by Anna Quindlen

break

- JR
- Art Spiegelman interviewed by Sarah Jones

There will be five minutes for questions following each presentation/interview.

Please remember that all presentations are off-the-record and to turn-off your cell phones and mobile devices.