

2 Jan. 2013--A cold sunny day, of the kind C and I have lamented a shortage of in recent ~~years~~ times, at this turn of the year. Apparently the clear weather will linger only today, so we intend to take advantage of it this afternoon with a mild trip to Edmonds, to walk and do a few stray chores. We similarly treated ourselves nice y'day. New Year's, by going to the Seattle waterfront and in one of our sometime traditions, becoming the first customers of the year for lunch and a beer in Ivar's bar. (Unlike the old days, the drinks weren't free to us firsts.) With this break in the weather--December had something like 27 rainy days--we're both feeling pretty good about life.

I returned to the Dog Bus this morn, and have done a decent page. Will try for a bit more, but that's about the pace this book seems to want. So be it, at least for now.

5 Jan--Saturday, five days of the year gone already. Been a spotty week of writing, what with the first sunny weather drawing us out as mentioned above, but y'day I roughed out a couple of pp. of Donny and the waitress that feel pretty promising. Today I'd very much like to get going on finances, taxes, etc., but lack the year-end statements for any of it. At least I can look at re-alloting my Vanguard IRA and Roth holdings, with the Barron's and its stock tables that C has just brought from the QFC.

6 Jan.--I broke off y'day's entry, and am not sure I can get back to it as fulsomely now as then. Had a rough night, the worst leg cramp in a while, the kind that sends me flailing out of bed to stand on it for some relief. This is Sunday, so as rundown as I felt this morn (and quite a bit improved this afternoon) I haven't really lost a workday. The Seahawks playoff game begins in DC in a little over $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour, and we'll watch some of that. The weather still has us cooped up, damn it.

8 Jan.--This has been an up and down day, consistent with this run of Revlimid. Y'day, after a sleeping pill got me through the night without leg cramps, I felt quite good, and sharp. Today I'm more flimsy emotionally and likely intellectually. Toughest it out at the ms, though, and managed a page. Weather has really curtained in, rain most of the day. We've been trying to make up our minds about risking a trip to Arizona for some sun--with the ALA panel looming just beyond the key time to go this month, I'm probably shying away from it. C is going to look at March possibility.

Got Bartender's sales totals to date from Becky today--16,450 "physical" (what we used to call hardback, ~~withinxix~~ which is a Bookscan total and therefore not reflective of my strength with independent stores who don't report to B'scan, and 5,036 ebook. Pretty good, could be better, I think.

9 Jan.--A better day, although I had much the same kind of choppy night of sleep, go figure. The writing has gone better today, and I, and for that matter C, met the weather better too, waiting until afternoon for the rain to ease away after an all-night storm, sideways at times.

And there was good news on the book front, although it has to stand in the hard light of y'day's figures of how damn hard it is to sell a sizable amount--the Bartender rose a notch on the Jan. 6 PNBA bestseller list, to #9.

12 Jan.--Whew. Nearly 4 o'clock, and I've just finished a marathon day of financial calculating, which will send \$155,000 out of the house in investments and another \$25,000 in est. tax payment. It's glorious that we have such resources--~~just~~ just below \$7 million in my yr-end calculation--and it's time we invested a bunch of it we've been sitting on.

Weather has turned cold--28 this morn--so it's been a good time to hunker in and do arithmetic. And last night the Damborgs lifted our spirits yet again by inviting us to dinner, always something new, this time oyster stew a la Alice Waters; excellent if a little short on liquid.

The previous day, I went with C to the Rodens, to see

12 Jan. cont.--Jean in the aftermath of her hip replacement and say hello to Cindy, here from S. Carolina for a week to pitch in on Jean's recuperation. Jean is almost exuberant about how well everything has gone, the medical treatment etc., so that was all fine. And John?--never showed his face, as the rest of us had coffee and pastries and gab. As C said, he doesn't want to see me just like I don't want to see him--a big relief for me. Jean mentioned that his hearing is getting really bad--it's been going that way for what, 15 years--and that may be part of it, but I have to think the Xmas incident is the main reason, whether he's sheepish or ticked off at me; it could be either.

Lastly, couple of nice book bits. Becky emailed "look what Geoff spotted on the F train home!" with pic, which was a NY subway rider with The Bartender's Tale held up wide-open over her face. Since Geoff is the big cheese, Riverhead publisher, this was good. And Glory sent along a heads-up about a Shelf Awareness item linking the Bartender to Heart Earth, which surely must have come from Marilyn Martin Dahl herself.

So, it's somehow been a grindstone week, but things have come out reasonably okay, and there's still half the week-end left, very welcome.

15 Jan.--Putting in long days on the Dog Bus, but steadily producing a page or so. We're still hunkered in watching the weather, pretty well resolved to go up to the Skagit flats to see the snowgeese tomorrow. Luck is where you find it, so by deciding not to go to Tucson this time of year as we've often done, we missed a record cold snap there, high in the 40s. Hell, that's no better than here!

Besides work and routine, we dealt with Steve Charlston on some stocks this morn, as we endeavor to put money to work--over \$90,000 in this morning's dealings, and I have about \$160,000 of rearranging in a Vanguard account tomorrow.

And, last note, this was my final day of Revlimid in this go-round.

16 Jan.--Today we finally got to the Skagit, in wonderful sunny weather, Mt. Baker out like a schoonerful of sails, plentiful birds--pintails, merganser, eagles, hawks, shorebirds--except for snow geese, and we didn't even care. As a bonus, the pizza and beer at the Laconner pub were the best ever.

Besides that, I essentially did a day's writing before we left at 9:30. We'll see if this stays a good idea, but I decided to have Donal meet up with soldiers on the bus, dug out dialogue material and other stuff I've had for the Rainbow Rope book idea I'll likely never get to. Much cussing and I hope some humor.

21 Jan.--Inauguration Day and Martin Luther King Day, propitiously rolled into one. We watched the ceremony this morning, and have ducked in and out of the parade etc. It has been a great day, Obama--the Obamas--carrying things off in style, Blanco the poet doing a great job, Beyonce singing the national anthem miles better than it deserves, Chuck Schumer running the doings like a genial Tammany boss, New York plastered into every opening on the schedule. Obama's speech, corded with liberal policy objectives, had feisty moments for the Republicans, the obstructionist bastards. Notably, this was the first gay inaugural, Obama citing equal rights at one point and terrifically more strikingly, "from Seneca Falls to Selma to Stonewall." It also was not coincidentally, from the Democrats' demographic standpoint, Hispanic flavored, in the benediction, Sotomayor swearing Biden, and so on. ~~and so on~~ Tomorrow it will be back to political mud wrestling, but today at least, this warped country that a person so often is just about tempted to give up on did its ceremony of leadership just fine.

And, a footnote but a big one, this morning early I got done the half-page insertion which I think now makes the first chapter of the Dog Bus, gives it ~~lots~~ depth and polish, both.

To cap the day, Ann and Marshall Nelson are coming here tonight for our monthly dinner and hilarity together--drinks and meatloaf ahead.

23 Jan.--Yesterday's happening: C and I were on our daily walk of the n'hood, with me wearing the Tucson jacket I've had for probably twenty years, with the pseudo Navajo designs and bright colors. We were just starting up the 175th St. hill when a car pulled up across the road. The driver was a twenty-something, chin patch, ball cap, and all; fully fifty years separated across that road. He rolled down his window and told me, "That is the coolest jacket I have ever seen!" I gave him two thumbs up, said "Thanks!" and off ~~he~~ he drove.

Well, from that to the mix of good news and much less so around here, the past day or two. Y'day I ~~went~~ made the trip to Capitol Hill Group Health to pick up my next Revlimid dosage, and despite what I thought I'd been told, it hadn't come in. Not good, since I'm supposed to start the next Rev regimen today. Worse, it didn't come in today either. This is not fatal (I'm pretty sure!) since Dr. Chen gave me a one-day extension on the last go-round so I wouldn't have to start on Christmas, but if the medication doesn't come in tomorrow morn, we're going to have to go up there and get a "partial," which a pharmacist kind of reluctantly admitted they can give me if they have to. Tomorrow will tell that tale.

Okay, the good news, a surprise victory: Simon & ~~Schuster~~ Schuster backed down from their original e-book agreement, in the face of my balking and sending Liz alternative contract language I got from the Authors Guild--damned if they didn't take it all, while specifying to Liz that they weren't going to make this into boilerplate for all of her clients. What I balked at was the reversion terminology, or what I saw as the lack-of-revision terminology, that could have given S&S everlasting rights to my 8 backlist books they have, by simply claiming as long as those were in e-book form they were in print, "physical" books (trade paperbacks that still sell 45-6000 copies a year, I calculated) be damned. I knew Liz didn't want to tackle them on this, but her e-mail today with the news that we'd (I'd) won blithely begins, "Ivan, pays to ask."

27 Jan.--I guess I have to say it's been adventurous lately. I noted in the last entry the surprise victory over S&S on reversion rights, and about the same time, the Bartender clambered back onto the PNBA bestseller list, #13. All well and good. And since, my ALA panel gig went really well, more on that in a bit. What didn't go worth a damn was the re-supply of my Revlimid, which turned into a Murphy's Law nightmare. The main culprit seems to have been Dr. Chen's nurse Kyle, who didn't send my Jan. 14 routine request in to the pharmacy until the 16th, and with the 21st as a holiday and the inconsistent Rev delivery schedule anyway, the medication wasn't there when I went to Capitol Hill to pick it up as usual on the 22nd. Nor did it come in the next day, when I was scheduled to resume taking it. It came in after noon on the 23rd, putting me nearly 30 hours behind schedule in resuming the regimen, and while this shouldn't be ultimately vital--Chen gave me an eith day off it, at Xmas--I've had a really rough start with it this time around, leg cramps that have made me get up in the middle of the past 2 nights and soak my legs and feet in a hot bath, and the worst hand cramps in a while. Today I'll do a full set of stretches, and tonight use Vaporub on my feet as well my calves, and we'll see if that helps. Meanwhile, I've had my blood tests, and Chen will debrief me by phone on those late tomorrow. And, damn it, I've had considerable depression along with this spate of bodily side effects. C has rallied to the need, doing the driving, going with my moods etc., bless her. But Jesus, I miss the me of early last week.

Enough of that--nobody ever said cancer is a breeze. On the 25th, we went to the ALA convention, in town 10,000 strong, where I was on the opening-session panel with old friend Terry Brooks, novelist Ruth Ozeki of British Columbia, and crime writer Gregg Olsen--everybody did a fine job, no mike hog among us, good big crowd. ~~And~~ And after, I signed 150 books (the Bartender) at the Penguin booth for avid librarians from all over the country--good exposure.

28 Jan.--Couple of cute things today, which I've inserted into the back of the diary. Main one is that my line to the American Library Association convention, "Rain is the ink of the Pacific Northwest," led the Publishers Weekly story. The other, also library-connected, was an inquiry from a reference librarian in River Forest, Illinois, about the rest of The King's Remembrancer "fable" in Rascal Fair--which I told her is in my head.

Today I'm much better than the past 2 or 3, my head clear and energy and ambition up to usual, I think. Had a better, although still not really good, night by using Vicks Vaporub on my feet as well as my calves, rubbing on more in the middle of the night. Will try the same tonight, along with a sleeping pill. C and I have looked at my blood test results, ahead of Dr. Chen's phone call in an hour or so, and they look pretty good to us, serum protein down some and free light chains up some but still short of ~~ix~~ much higher readings in the past--I'm hoping wildly Cool Hand Chen thinks that's stable enough.

Good decent day of work on Dog Bus. And I got to some other things, such as calling Tony Angell to set a lunch date with him this Thursday, and hearing his tale of falling down a flight of basement stairs, without harm to his two replaced hips or even a concussion, the lucky muscleman.

29 Jan.--Chen's evaluation of my blood tests should have me exultant, almost. The heavy chains result was down, which he outright said was good, and the serum protein percentage also was down from 2 months ago. But the damnable light chains result, the least reliable measurement, was up, and so he wants me to do another 24-hr urine test, which is more accurate. Tomorrow I'll pee in the jug and see what happens; it is a cloud of worry on ~~another~~ an otherwise pretty good horizon, Chen having agreed we can do the tests every 3 months instead of 2. Meanwhile, I'm still tussling with cramps, having to Vaporub my salves and feet, a 2nd time, in the middle of the night again, despite a sleeping pill that I'd hoped would conk me out for the night.

30 Jan.--Just quickly: managed some ms work early, but mostly today was the biz of books. To back up my request to Liz to try to get Recorded Books to pick up my reading of *A River Runs Through It* from sleepy Highbridge, I calculated sales of that audio--61,550--and pulled together other material, such as PW notice of its Audie Award. Then the mail brought the 8 e-book agreements we conquered Simon & Schuster on, and so I signed those up and got the files squar@d away. Damned if it doesn't feel like a day's work, particularly with e-book #9 thrown in--my initiated deal with HMH to bring out *Winter Brothers*.

And in late afternoon, David Laskin called with his latest title jam, the sales and marketing people not liking the subtitle of *The Family*, yearning more toward things like epic and journey, he reported. Did we have any ideas? Quicker than quick, C came up with *The Family: Three Epic Journeys*. David seemed happily dazed, and I sure as hell couldn't do any better, so maybe that's that.

10 to 10, Sunday morning, Feb. 3--Another book done. In the sense that I've finished going through the copy-edited ms of *Sweet Thunder*, and it now reads as I want it to, my tweaks and the copy editor's resolved. What a feeling of relief, that the book comes across as well it does--if the reader will go for Morrie's voice and persona, this is a tale that moves right along, with a lot happening and some of it I think really unpredictable. So I am a happy writer, and also a tired one, the Revlimid effects waking me around 2-2:30 every morning, with maybe some more sleep after getting dressed and maybe not. The effects also have been raising hell with my hands--it's easier to type than to handwrite, the ms receiving some of each--and so I'm glad to have handled a 295-page ms as well as I did.

10 Feb.--Sunday morning, fog along the far shore but we've talked ourselves into going up ~~time~~ to the Skagit for lunch at the Rhodie and then birdwatching even so,

I see I did not get back to the diary this past week, a medically consequential one, unfortunately. Dr. Chen does not like to see the spike in protein in my urine, so I am to add Dexamethasone to my Revlimid intake. That's going to raise some side-effects hell, starting on Tuesday. If there's any good side to this, besides possibly prolonging my life, Dex in the past has made me very single-mindedly focused, which can spur the writing output. On the other hand, it may make me even more unsequenced, able to do one thing at a time but the next thing has to be freshly thought up. I've already had fairly rough week from Revlimid--until today, when I feel pretty good--leg cramps waking me at 2 or 2:30, and a lot of hand stiffness. The one bright sign recently is that we were able to work outside twice this week, and I felt much better after physical labor.

Great lift of the spirits last night, dinner at the Laskins, pot roast and mashed potatoes which we tied into as if stoking up for the rest of the winter. Good talk as ever with those fine funny people. Couple of reports, one we found really funny and one not. Kate and David told the story of their deciding to get married, after attending a friend's wedding in Door County, Wisconsin. They were at the dunes there somewhere, David disappeared for a while and then called Kate over, and had written in the sand, Will you marry me? Kate the lawyer/law professor told him, "Insofar as you mean it." At the other end of the human picture, David had picked up the gossip from David Brewster that Jonathan Raban is dying--leg amputated because of gangrene etc.

12 Feb.--The Dex report, first day. I took the 40 mg. dose at breakfast, to keep it as far from bedtime as possible, and nothing too dire happened until naptime. When I woke up, it took an hour and 15 minutes for my vision to unblur--really very blurry, it was all I could do to make out the words on the computer screen. By now, it's fairly well restored, although the far distance--the other shore of the Sound--still isn't sharp. Other than that, I feel a bit fuzzy, but seem to be thinking clearly enough and not showing any anxiety, at least yet. My voice is drying out, as happened with Dex before. Will take max sleeping pills tonight, 2, to try to get past muscle conniptions from this combo of two drugs. Then to tomorrow, to see what the second day is like, which I think I remember as rough.

Meanwhile, today's writing went fine, that part of me not necessarily affected, it seems.

13 Feb.--Dex report: I'm up 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ #, that didn't take long. Pretty sure I'm retaining water, and haven't had a bowel movement, so I'll see if this sorts itself out by the weekend. I have felt quite wired today--helping the writing again, I think--but otherwise not bad, maybe a little surer in the head than when on Rev alone. Last night was a bit rough, the 2 Temazepam tablets not kicking in until nearly 2 hours after I took them, and then enough series of leg cramps that I got up in the middle of the night and came down for a hot soak. Also am slathering my calves and back of knee with Vicks Vaporub, which helps at least temporarily. The Temaz at least had the effect of getting me back to sleep quicker than otherwise.

Life proceeds around here, lateday e-mail from Becky congratulating me and Bartender's Tale for making it onto the ALA longlist (50!) for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence in Fiction and Nonfiction. Odds are too big, but nice to be noticed.

Beyond that, C and I made a run to Sky nursery this afternoon, she buying flowers for pots and me stocking up on planting mix, compost, etc. Spring is teasing us.

11 Feb.--Last night I decided, from the binding feel of it, I'd better do something about the constipation and so took a medium dose of Milk of Magnesia. It worked, as it turned out it really needed to, in the morning, and my insides have been in a bit of commotion ever since. Will lay off the M of M until I see how tomorrow goes. Other main effect of y'day was a terrible handcramp about 9:30. last night, practically crippling me until I could get to the bathroom and soak it in hot water, loosening it enough to put Vaporub on it. That handled it, as did the 'rub on my cramp-prone calves and backs of knees, although my legs were on the verge when I woke up about 2:15 this morn. Got up after about 20 min., thoroughly awake, and have had a reasonably okay day--the writing better than that, 3 pp. done. So, I'm functioning, with this and that to put up with.

17 Feb. - Sprained the back of my left hand in yard work on the 15th, so quick entry until I can type again. Bowels loosened up on 15th, reasonable since. Feeling pretty good this weekend, hiatus between medications, but bored & frustrated with having to ice the hand endlessly. Luckily, it's working.

25 Feb. /Dex report. To try for sleep, I stayed up til nearly 9:30, taking two sleeping pills an hour before and then soaking my legs before coming to bed. Even so, couldn't get to sleep and legs acted up in about 45 minutes. I moved down to the guest room and used VapoRub, then read for half an hour or more, and still had trouble getting to sleep until about 12:30 (when I went to the bathroom during this, I had a bowel movement; unlike the constipation I experienced with the last onset of dex). I slept for about an hour before the legs acted up again, and I applied more VapoRub (I rubbed it all over my feet as well, putting socks on). Went back to bed about 2, not expecting much sleep, but dropped off soundly until 5. Not sure what to make of this, whether or not to take sleeping pills next time the first night of Dex or wait until the second or third night to try catch up with a big night of sleep.

12 March--"You know what," I told C y'day morn, "when you get up at 3 and go to work, you can get quite a lot done." Levity aside, that was the situation when a violent leg cramp set me hurtling out of bed and I stayed up, fortified myself with a mug of coffee, came down to the Dog Bus ~~and~~ ms and fixed up the final 10 pp. of the 88 pp. chunk of ms C can now read over for me. Now today's adventure, after 2 sleeping pills that gave me at last 8 hours of sleep, is the next round of Dex, as per the above diary entry, and dealing with ~~cranky~~ legs cranky that they didn't cramp enough last night to hurl me out of bed. So it goes.

This gap in the diary has been frustrating, despicable really, coming as it did of having to nurse my left hand for a reason having not a goddamn thing to do with the battalion of side effects. I evidently strained the tendons in the back of the hand while pulling crab grass. It swelled up, as we'd have said in Montana, like a poisoned pup, and after the divine Dr. Kato examined it and told me not to be bending the wrist, I used an elastic bandage wrap to type on the computer in makeshift fashion & got away with it. This is the first typewriter stint, and so far so good.

17 March--The diary has suffered along with my hands in this Dexamethasone regimen added to the Revlimid, and there's not much I can do about it, more's the goddamn. The left hand sprain finally is about gone, although there's still a bit of mysterious ~~was~~ swelling there where it was broken playing football. Achy and stiff as the handwork has been, I've been able to keep writing, in fact working hard and productively on The Dog Bus, and C has put in a couple of dump sessions for me on my computer, adding notecards and some dictation into the sum of the rough ms, which is now well over 100 pp.

So at least that's good, although the medication side effects currently are lamentable and I have to really hope the Dex takes down the urine protein spike in a few months and I can plead off it.

Aside from coping with my body, things are pretty good. We've just done a marvelous week of friends, starting with the wedding of Linda Bierds and Sydney Kaplan last Sun. To us that literally was a blessed event, two of the best women in the world able at last to marry as societal common decency at last allows, here on this corner of the left coast. I worry about about the troglodyte Supreme Court rightist majority and whether they will strike down state laws on same-sex marriage, despite a huge and fast sea change in public opinion on it. In other socializing, this morn we walked Carkeek Park with David Williams and Marjorie, and last night had David Laskin and Kate here for dinner, good visits with best of friends. David L. is missing a front tooth, ~~which~~ making him look kind of like a 6-year-old, from a dental misadventure, but he's off to New York and I think a great chance of success, ~~is~~ in meeting with his editor Kathryn Court and the marketing cohort to talk ~~for~~ plans for The Family.

And just quickly, We've worked on the property a good deal this month, the front yard greatly spiffed up with the lawn sod excavated etc., and I've managed to get everything underway in the veg garden that should be at this point of spring.

19 March--Big day, days. Y'day brought the 1st publicity bonbon for Sweet Thunder, a Library Journal preview that included "Septuagenarian Doig has been writing admired ~~some~~ books for decades but lately seems to be breaking out, with mentions in New York and V Magazine and activity on the New York Times best sellers lists. Great expectations for this work..." I did have to sigh seventyishly, but as Becky emailed, "Wow, hits all the right notes!" Also, the dummy of the Sweet Thunder cover got here y'day, and with the clearer detail and richer color than the printout from onscreen, it's a knockout. Today, the arrival was Verano in English Creek, good old summery Spanish translation. Today's progress closer to home, C and I put 2+ pp. of Dog Bus new stuff into the computer, and I had the morning brainstorm to ~~to~~ change Katy and Herman to Kitty and Herb.

What this day will hold later on is going to be something to find out, as it's Tuesday, ~~Ex~~ Dex-taking day, and maybe because I'm at the one point of the month where I haven't been on anything--Revlimid doesn't start again until Thursday--and feeling markedly better, my hand cramps easing etc., I ~~thru~~ decided not to take Dex with breakfast as I've been doing, and then suffering the consequences on into the really sleepless (sometimes 2-3 hrs) night, but waiting until the night's first bathroom call, almost always about 10:30, and downing the pills and a banana and some milk then. After that, if the Dex kicks in and keeps me awake, I'll have gained a few hours of sleep ahead of it, at least. Worth a try, I think.

20 March--Dex report: the radical adjustment as per above, downing Dex at 10:30, worked really quite well. Went to bed by 9 as usual, slept hr and $\frac{1}{2}$, then after taking the stuff, it was another 3 hrs before it began to kick in with signs of leg cramps, so I made it to about 3:15 before getting up, 6+ hours of sleep. NOTE: also smeared glycerine on my calves and up behind knees there at 10:30, and who knows, that seems to have helped, too. ALSO NOTE: whether this schedule can work as well when I'm Revlimid as usual, unlike now in the once-a-month week's hiatus, will have to be seen, but it's worth a try.

22 March--Dex report: Again last night, 1st in the new Rev cycle, I got by amazingly well, a sleeping pill and glycerine on legs and feet permitting me 6½ hours sleep. Can this keep up?

Y'day I went to Third Place for lunch with Tony Angell, primed to pitch in on thinking about his House of Owls book, but he was one day off on the calendar, so I stuffed myself with a basil roasted chicken sandwich, cashed in the store credit from books I sold for new books, and stopped by the house. That probably was fortuitous, as Tony and I sat down without distraction and he outlined for me his plan for an intro, prologue, and 6 or so chs., and after listening, I told him to get rid of intro and prologue, just start the book with the compelling details--and he has 'em, in spades--of coaxing owls to come and live, for the next 25 years. He's taking me at his word, so I hope to hell I'm right, and I've offered to work on his lede and first page with him, if he wants, to get the grabber the book I think needs.

And here at the skunkworks, I've had another pretty damn good day, couple of pp. or close to it, on Dog Bus. Just past 4 on Friday now, I'm running down, and will do my every-other-day exercises and take a shower. Meatloaf for supper, restoratively, C has come up with, it having snowed, kind of, this 2nd morn of spring.

2 April--Having finished reading the Sweet Thunder proofs, my intention was to ~~xxx~~ take this as a calm day to catch up in the diary a bit. Then about 9:30, I went upstairs to head for the QFC for a few groceries and found Carol sweaty and somewhat dizzy in her chair where she'd been going over her set of proofs. It only took one look to send me to the phone and 911, and as on our previous 4 911 episodes, the team was here within minutes and terrifically proficient. It's possible a bonanza of strawberries now available at Central Market got to her; she had an acidy stomach earlier this morn, and the main 911 responder said it could be a vagal reaction. In any case, she checked out fine in blood pressure and heart rate, had Cream of Wheat for lunch, and now is napping an extra half hour, although I am going up to check on her in a minute.

2 April cont.--20 min. later: Carol is now up, seems pretty good if a bit wan, and has gone back to reading proofs. So far so good, I guess.

What I originally intended to put down was our somewhat gala Easter weekend, which began with a trip to the Skagit and lunch at the Rhodie on Sat. The food was as good as ever, but as we were about to leave, full and happy, the Carol of the Rhodie made sure we saw the sign out front, For Sale. It will be the end of Don and Carol's 29 years of the Rhododendron Restaurant, and of probably some 150 terrific meals, 5-6 per year, we've had there at our favorite eating place anywhere.

3 April--5:05 AM, waiting to see how Carol feels when she wakes up/gets up from 8+ hours of sleep. If she's not a whole lot better, I'll get her to Group Health to be looked at. For one thing, she's had very little to eat--cream of wheat for lunch, a potato and a small dish of apple sauce for supper--the past 24 hours.

This is worrisome, and of course it comes at the start of my Dexamethasone cycle atop the Revlimid, giving me my own bodily whimwhams. I changed my intention of moving to the guest room last night, wanting to keep an eye on C instead, and did manage a night's sleep until 3:30, although episodic, the ploy of taking Dex at 10:30 at night--first bathroom visit--with a banana and milk again paying off.

Still no sound of C upstairs, so I'll wait until half past to sneak up and reconnoiter. As to the general household report, we both thought Sweet Thunder reads very well, although I still wonder if enough happens--quite a helluva lot does, but not in car-chase fashion--to pull in readers/reviewers at the Bartender's Tale level. There's also the question of whether Riverhead will just let this be a quiet book, put ~~put~~ out in the world without real push behind it. Together with that, I can no longer get out there on the bookstore trail and muscle a few thousand sales with my signing hand. This is sales conference week, so I'm likely to hear more from Becky pretty soon.

April 3 cont.--9:20 update, Carol looks much better this morn, although she's a little weak from y'day's spell and lack of solid food. I discouraged her from walking with me this morn, we'll try something shorter and flatter if she feels like it later on. Anyway, considerable relief to see her back towards normal.

Now, to me. I have bad hand cramps this morning from the start of Dex, and my mind zinging onto stray topics. I cursed during my morning walk that I was wasting my brain as I haven't yet got back into the Dog Bus and was through thinking over changes for Sweet Thunder--no writing to put myself to work on. Today in fact feels like a regrouping day, most of the morning as I live it already gone and the forecast promise of 60-degree weather this afternoon which I'd do well to get out in and work in the garden.

Wanted to get further into the social Easter weekend we had, starting with the Rhodie. About 5 that afternoon, phone call from David Williams, saying he had a 1st edition Sea Runners he'd like signed for their bookstore in Moab, how about getting together for a supper to do so. As we tried to sort dates, he said How about tonight? We said sure, they brought the entire meal--a terrific roast beets and spuds dish, trout left over from their seder dinner the night before, salad, bread, the whole deal--and we had the grand experience of drinks on the deck in March.

And next we went to Tom and Carrie Jones's place in far Snohomish, actually not that far east of Everett but in a treasure map series of back roads. A good time was had, as it always is with those longtime friends--Carrie showed the copy of Mariah Montana I'd signed to them on Easter at their Lake Sammamish cabin-like house some 20 years ago. Some frets, though, as happens with our set of aging friends, which no matter how you prepare for it is a downer. Carrie is in treatment against recurrence of breast cancer, on Tamoxifen(?), the 3rd try of medicines that have raised hell with her, from exacerbating her tendency to migraines to wrecking her teeth to the extent of huge dental work. She and Tom know of my myeloma situation, which I kept from them for years because they were always facing cancer situations in Carrie's family,

April 3 cont.--but made sure to tell them about when we invited them to the NW Bookfest and lunch last fall, so I could present myself as a survivor and perseverer to Carrie after a troubling phone conversation with her just after she was put on this wrenching medicine regimen. So we had the organ recital, of how we're all doing health-wise, C the one among us on no medication and given such a clean bill of health by Dr. Kato a couple of weeks ago (and has since had a scary 911 call; go figure). Thank heavens we got over that, piling into the good grub of ham, riced potatoes etc. Carrie provided. But we're also concerned about Tom, both of us separately arriving at the suspicion that he may feel--may be--stalled in his painting career. I said something, after our show-and-tell of the Sweet Thunder dummy and then presenting them a Montana one-room schoolhouse book--full of the kind of places Tom has painted so magically back in Ohio etc.--about being keen to see his latest work, and he shunted that off by saying it's on the walls. The thing is, the sensational Mt. Rainier painting on one wall was their Xmas card year before last, and a painting of flowers I also recognized from some time back. In a conversation about creativity and where we get our ideas, Tom in his roundabout jittery way about wondering whether he still "has it," although those are not quite his words. We suspect the market for his (we think justifiably) high-priced paintings has gone to hell, the Carmel gallery not handling them through some circumstance or another, & a Capitol Hill dealer his only outlet at the moment. And when I asked him about a show, he pretty much said he couldn't, or wouldn't, I'm not sure which was the decisive inflector, produce work that way. Wow, we thought on the way home, and I made sure to think out loud about the imagination and asking oneself "What if?" all the time, using my own example, to try to encourage him that, what, it's ~~not~~ ain't over until it's over.

4 April--Dex report: Y'day, 2nd day of effects, was one of the worst ever. Bad hand cramps, including one siege in my left hand that I had a hell of a time working out of, soaking in the sink. And that night, for the 1st time since I've been using glycerine on my legs, I had cramps, nasty ones. I bailed out to downstairs about 10:30 and soaked in the tub, then resorted to VapoRub. Still had off and on cramps, forcing me out of bed to stand. All in all, I had 4 stints of hour and a half sleep, actually more than I thought I'd get. Tonight, a sleeping pill.

13 April--Belated Dex report (this is Saturday, I take Dex @ 10:30 Tues. nights), better than the bastardly one above. I did have to bail out to the guest room again the 2nd night, because of leg cramps, but a couple of applications of VapoRub spared the legs, and Vapo on the hands and wearing brown cotton gloves all night warded off hand cramps.

Later: I don't want the diary to turn into a medical journal, but am not sure how much else I can manage, as things are. I work on the ms from pretty soon after breakfast--done by 4:45, in my case; I see C has aptly described my nights as "chaotic" in her diary, my body routing me out usually by 3--through the morning and then usually 2-3 hours in the afternoon, a heftier writing stint than I'd put up with if I wasn't saddled with Thal/Rev/Dex side effects. Thank goodness for the work, the mental occupation, so I don't just wizen into an illness victim. But there's not much energy left after that much writing, and so quite a lot of our doings ~~remain~~ goes unrecorded.

18 April--So it is 48 years ago yesterday that we were married in the classic little chapel on the Northwestern campus. What a distance it has been, from our second-rank magazine editor jobs ~~to~~ as we lived in a charming but kitchenless attic apartment in Evanston, to this glorious house 300 feet above Puget Sound with views from the mouth of Admiralty Inlet to the ~~to~~ south end of Bainbridge, all of it supported by writing and teaching. We celebrate y'day with lunch at a new Stone Way restaurant Carol had singled out from a S. Times review by Nancy Leson, one of her favorite and most unstoppable students, and it was a

18 April cont.--great choice, C's clams and my Idaho trout (which I almost never take a chance on in a restaurant, figuring no commercial cook can outdo the family ones who fried rainbow trout in bacon grease and cornmeal and who knows what else, and we ate 'em like heavenly corn on the cob) both superb. As was the croissant to begin with, and the 2-inch thick piece of zucchini cake brought as our anniversary treat. Even ~~x~~ the one glitch, no beer on tap because their CO2 delivery was late, turned out well with 16 oz. cans of Stiegl, an Austrian beer not known to us but just dandy. Great waitress, Rachel, who when I handed in my credit card went touchingly mushy, saying she's been reading my books forever. She~~x~~ pointed out the owners at the end of the counter--I see I've left out the restaurant name until now, The Whale Wins--Nancy Erickson and her guy partner whose name I didn't pick up, but she's the chef etc. behind other hot restaurants, the Boat Street Cafe ~~at~~ the Walrus and the Carpenter in Ballard. A great grub experience, and then we shopped at Central Market for coldcuts and cheese for supper, adding samples of salami and bologna to our ingestion if not digestion. A nap, then some yardwork; we agreed it was a grand day.

And now a DEX NOTE: 2nd night after taking it was fairly tough, even though I wasn't on Revlimid (I resume that today, with consequences looming tonight which I think will drive me to a sleeping pill). Could not get to sleep the first couple of hours after going to bed about 9, neuro'd feet began acting up, I sighed and ~~x~~ swore and got up and VapoRubbed feet and calves and packed up and went downstairs for the rest of the night. With one more Vapoing, I slept until 3 in hour or 2 stints. Coffee and breakfast fix me up pretty well, and I feel pretty game to start the writing day.

24 April--Dex report, the morning after. The 10:30 pm pills-banana-milk routine, along with Vicksing my legs then, worked well, decent sleep until 4:15. We'll see if ~~tonight~~ tonight is hell again.

Much keeps happening. Spent 40 min. on the phone with Glory this morn, parsing the reduced book tour I'll try to do. Afterward, told C--alarming her, but we need to be

24 April cont.--aware of it--my hunch is we'll lose Glory in the merger that's about to grind into action. I hope I'm wrong, but I suspect the Random House crew, generally more potent, will dominate the rejiggered publicity division, and Glory may not have enough seniority/scalps on her belt, as happened with perfectly capable Michelle in the Houghton Mifflin-Harcourt merger.

We've been on a social tear, Linda Sullivan here for crockpot supper last Sunday (21st), and we're going to their place at Pt Townsend this Sat., then to Black Watch at the Paramount with them on May 1. In a strange cosmic conjunction, Linda now spends a lot of her time on the Ivan Doig floor of the county office building, in her new gutsy job of overseeing the eastside rail corridor/trail project. She's still one of the personal favorites of both of us among our friends, forthright and smart and aware--Nebraskan, C says.

The night before, we went to Book-It to their Huck Finn UNCENSORED (their caps), which was really very good-- a field night for the veteran character actors they get in there to play 3 or 4 roles, great hammy parts penned by Twain (the Duke and "the rightful king of France), and a first-class performance by a young actor named Morson, who's still at Cornish, as Huck. Beyond those, though, the great moment for me was in the lobby swirl afterward, when we were talking to Patricia Britton & her guy Stellman, and out came Geoffery Simmons, my Monty so perfectly in Prairie Nocturne and superb again as the slave Jim. Geoffrey was in congratulatory hug with someone, likely Patricia, when he looked over the person's shoulder, saw me propped against the wall grinning a mile, and his eyes widened wonderfully and he let out, "I didn't know you'd be here!" Very, very nice.

29 April--C and I have just checked my latest test results, and the urine protein totals are both up, the SOBs, although not drastically. Dr. Chen is to call in about an hour, so we'll get a prompt evaluation, particularly whether the Revlimid interval made any difference on this test. On the face of it, the results are depressing news, the wear and tear of side ~~effects~~ from the Rev/Dex

effects

29 April cont.--regimen not even letting me hold my own against the pernicious protein. I always have to remind myself how relentless cancer is.

That aside, ho ho, life is going well, with us functioning despite our ailments and age. Went to Pt Townsend on Saturday (27th) for lunch at Linda Sullivan & Jeff Saeger's place, a good time with those good friends--and we're going to the Paramount with them a couple of nights from now to see Black Watch. Last night we went to the Rep for Boeing Boeing, in this surprise little theater season we've found ourselves in, and the casting and Alison Narver's clever physical-humor direction saved that 50-year-old farce quite nicely. On the home front, Will Lowell came today and trimmed the hedges and whacked the tall grass and the property looks great. Now if only my prospect would do the same.

30 April--Dr. Chen's analysis was nowhere as grim as my apprehension; he chose to see the test numbers as "essentially unchanged." I've put the rest of his points in my file on these phone sessions with him, but should not that he had come back from an oncologists' conference in San Francisco with good news about a new generation of myeloma drugs. To be continued, I'm sure.

4 May--C and I both feel we're dancing as fast as we can, and barely keeping up with things. Y'day she scrubbed the green scum off the deck herself--I simply can't pitch in on that, with my hand cramps--and ~~and~~ I've put in hours and hours on the veg garden & the watering system. Meanwhile, the email is active, Glory in Riverhead publicity setting up a speaking gig at the Northern California booksellers trade show just ahead of the PNBA & signings at Book Passage stores in Marin & the SF ferry terminal. To our surprise, C will go with me at publisher's expense, my plaint that on this medication regimen I need someone with me in strange hotel rooms etc. and it likely should be my wife. Have also done such stray publishing house chores as, in essence, a blurb for Penguin Classic bookmarks they're going to market at the BEA--going against the grain, I chose to do mine on Kerouac, On the Road, and Huck Finn.

more

4 May cont.--When we're not scrambling and my side effects aren't warping me too badly, life is going really pretty well. I can particularly say that today, a lovely mid-70s day with the mtns out clear and a diamond spill of sailboats on the Sound before lunch, when we inaugurated the season with a beer on the deck. To add to the day, HMH royalties came in the mail from Liz's office, \$7200 to us and \$800 to the agents.

Will try to catch up some more tomorrow, just noting for the record that we managed to get yard guy Will Lowell in here last Monday and he trimmed the south & downslope hedges and weewhacked the downslope tall grass, all of it just in time before plant life got away from us any more than it already had.

10 May--Friday, and while it is only 1:10 and I'm going to try to keep plugging away, I may be ~~now~~ about played out from what has seemed a very busy and wearing week. There's been some good results--this morn, an exterminator from Alpha Pest Control, the least toxic-looking outfit I could find in the phone book came, took a look at the carpenter ant sawdust that burst out at the start of ~~h~~ this week from the beam corner at NW end of the deck, ripped off about 3 feet of damaged underfacing, sprayed 'em, and for ~~m~~ \$108, that was that. We'll have to watch the spot for a couple of months and have some repairs done, but so far the damage doesn't look very bad.

And C just pulled from on-line the HMH royalty statement, showing Whistling Season has sold nearly 146,000 in paperback and is selling strong in ebook.

In the garden, I have persevered through 3 or so sessions of adjusting watering heads, until by damn, last night's watering seems to have given everything a soaking.

On the medical front, last night I was able to take a sleeping pill, and with $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours of sleep catch up ~~on~~ some after the first 2 really rough nights of this Dex regimen. Some of worst hand cramps ever, particularly in the left one, as well as leg cramps that kept me to 4 or so hours of sleep both nights.

20 May--The Dog Bus has been getting everything I can put out, but today has to be noted:

--Brought in the mail, nothing much, nearly threw away a skinny nondescript envelope such as mortgage blandishments and hearing aid ads come in, but opened it and found a check for \$1800, advance from Terra Communications via some Pasadena credit union on the Longview speech.

--A forwarded email from Becky, the Penguin Group sales dept. announcing their $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. Penguin Selects for this fall, replete with a thousand slip-covered galleys to select accounts, Shelf Awareness sweepstakes ad, etc. etc., as Becky said all of it lovely in-house promo. And on there along with Sweet Thunder is Laskin's The Family, 2 guys from the 'hood making good.

22 May--DEX NOTE: after last week's miserable experience, I decided to take a sleeping pill at the same time as the Dex (10:30, 1st toilet trot) in hopes it would conk me out enough to override the feet's twitches and discomfort and leg muscle cramps. It took a little while of sitting up and reading for the sleeping pill to work--I'd had a frustrating hour in bed trying to catch some sleep ahead of the Dex, so I was tired or at least weary by then--but it did work, knocking me back to sleep after the customary couple of times of going to the bathroom, putting me under until 5, which is spectacularly late in my sleeping habit. Not only no leg cramp attacks, but ~~both~~ legs and feet both have felt better today--partly it may be how geared up my head is, but I haven't really noticed them. So, I'm going to try to further this success by doing stretching exercises and then soak in the tub, to see if that loosens things enough to help for tonight. (Y'day and I think the day before, my legs were very tight and annoying, just on the new cycle of Revlimid.) Here's hoping I've hit on something that will handle Dex night--I sure as hell must try it again.

And, just quickly, keyed up by the Dex I've had a really productive day of rewriting, things coming quicker and clearer than usual, the first 45 pp. of Dog Bus made to have that "right" feel.

May 29--A big Dex-fired day of reworking on Dog Bus, getting me to p. 150, although 6 or 7 of those are blanks I've left for further additions. On the other hand, I ~~like~~ have enough roughed pieces ahead to actually add up to the ~~month's~~ month's end goal of 150, maybe a bit more. Also, the squally weather had an opening just after lunch, so that I slipped between showers to plant lettuce and beet seedlings and douse some veggies with Miracle Gro.

It's nearly 3:45 now, and I started at the desk about 5:30 this morn as usual, so it's enough of a day, even on steroids. Last night the Dex-taking along with a sleeping pill and VapoRubbing my legs worked again, thank goodness. I didn't get out of bed until after 4, which I have to consider good, and no charleyhorses. On the other hand, out of nowhere, when I surprisingly got a bit of a nap this ~~Monday~~ first full day of having Dex in me--I usually don't, the mind will not shut down--quite a hell of a spasm got me up in about a half an hour.

We've been social lately, monthly dinner with the Nelsons at Poppy last night, good grub and talk, and on Memorial Day we went to lunch in Edmonds at Larry and Meg Fuells', Jean Walkinshaw's son-in-law and daughter, who seem drawn to keeping up the friendship we so long had with Jean (still do, although she was elsewhere y'day) and Walt, and I have no problem with that.

May 30--Here's a turning point. Today I turned down a \$10,000 speaking gig in Idaho Falls for the Idaho Humanities Council. Still not sure it's the right decision, but the travel, speech writing, and so on have to stop, except for easily reachable gigs (if there are such critters) sometime, and better too soon than too late, I think, in this case.

On a brighter note, I've begun reading over the Dog Bus ms so far, and will hand it over to C tomorrow--the first third seems fine except for really little changes I've made.

11 June--~~W~~hew. Life ratchets along, not particularly smoothly but probably better than I sometimes think. Today took care of what looked like a medication glitch, when Dr. Chen's nurse Kyle and I missed a meeting of minds on what constituted the monthly reminder to re-order Revlimid (which for whatever the hell reason ~~turns~~ turns out to be my responsibility) and it only got ordered last Friday and normally takes 4-5 days to reach the pharmacy. That would have put me a day or two, or much more if the weekend intervened as it sometimes does in ~~the~~ the delivery process, behind in the Rev regimen, and I was braced to ask Chen, Whatta we do? Damned if there wasn't a phone call from the pharmacy this afternoon saying the stuff is there--in 3 days, at most!--and C will pick it up for me tomorrow, right on time for me to resume it the next day.

In this same league of is-it-gonna-happen-or-ain't it has been the dealings with exterminators on the carpenter ant problem in the northwest deck post and beam. The first 2 I tried, rational franchises, were interested only in signing us up for several hundred dollars worth of repeated sprayings of poison all around the perimeter of the house, where we have lots of edibles planted. Nothing doing, and I finally singled out an outfit claiming to be more ecological, Alpha Pest control, and the guy came out and did hit the infected area without too much blather about a control program. Three weeks later, ~~the~~ i.e. last Thursday, the ants were back, sawdust ~~was~~ snowing down onto the marker cloth I'd spread on the downstairs patio. Now Alpha when I called would only talk about a bi-monthly program of sprayings, which they claimed would gradually eradicate the sonofabitching ants. The arithmetic of that seemed absurd, the ants back after 3 weeks and spraying every 60 days, looks to me pretty hard to make a gain that way. So much for Alpha, and wading into the phone book yellow pages again, I found the last alphabetical listing, Willard's Pest Control, which looked locally owned. I told the dispatcher we wanted one specific spraying targeted on the ant area, nothing more, and she sent a guy, Juan, out. Juan was fine with that, but didn't have the full equipment to blast the ants right then. Promised he'd be back Monday (yesterday). Ten minutes after he left,

11 June cont.--the weekend dispatcher called, saying huh-uh not Juan, he lives in Tacoma and covers only the south end of Seattle, we'd get Mark. I argued against having to start over with a new guy, but got nowhere, so sighed and said send him. Y'day he showed up not only on time but earlier than we figured, laconically looked things over and agreed the post and beam and perimeter of the downstairs patio, which seemed to be an ant runway, were all that needed doing, and he did it. Now we'll see if that killed the bastards once and for all. The ~~next~~ next go-round is the rot repair people, scheduled for this Saturday to work on half a dozen frail deck posts, and to tear off the facing of the ant-eaten area and see what the eaten parts need, so we'll finally have a look at the damage.

On a much brighter note, on the 6th we had David & Kate ~~Laskin~~ Laskin here for dinner and after hearing about their grand 2 months in Italy, I sprung the book dedication in Sweet Thunder--to them and David Williams & Majorie--on ~~to~~ them, to great emotional effect.

16 June--Don't know how consistent or complete this entry will be, as I'm running on lack of sleep (up at 3 again) and the push to be doing something, lots of things. Main news should be that I've again gone over the first 150 pp. of Dog Bus ms, feathering in Donny's fear of becoming a foster kid, and I believe it ups the consequence of the story a lot. Got a lot of revamping done y'day while the rot repair crew was here, gutting 6 deck posts and the carpenter ant-eaten deck support and beam and bolstering them with epoxy, kneaded like ~~bread~~ bread and then hsped into the cleaned-out rot holes. Huge relief to us to have this worked on, though it's not done yet, another stint including sanding and painting and the weather possibly turning rainy.

DEX REPORT, sigh. Last night, 5th since my last Dex does, I tried for a normal night in my own bed after 3 sleeping pill nights in the guest room, and by 10 my feet were bothering so much I had to give up, slather VapoRub on and head for the lower bedroom again. Woke up repeatedly--10:45, midnight, around 2--and had to slather again, but I suppose ultimately I got as much sleep as I need.

17 June--This has been a good day:

--\$4900+ in Spanish royalties for Whistling Season, after all the agents' cuts, taxes, etc.

--Terrific Booklist review of Sweet Thunder by Bill Ott, with one hell of a pull quote: "Think Shane but with dueling journalists instead of gunfighters."

--Letter from Cheryl McKeon, late of 3rd Place and one of my foremost bookseller champions, saying Marilyn Dahl has tapped her to write the Shelf Awareness review of SW. Also, Cheryl is now working at the San Francisco Ferry Bldg store of Book Passage, which can't hurt the event I'm to do there.

--Had lunch with Tony Angell at 3rd Place, comparing what we're working at, the (more & more) things we're turning down. Both of us going like hell with what we've got to work with.

--Beautiful weather, sunny & 70s.

18 June--Whopping damn day, which I could almost--almost--say fortunately fueled by Dex, in which I spent the morn out of chores, only one of which succeeded: a haircut! This afternoon, C and I ground thru email chores, including a list of alum mags, media people etc. for Glory Plata to get Sweet Thunder ARCs and story pitches too, and we made a start on updating the website.

More vitally, this is test result discussion day with Dr. Chen, and things look unchanged; we'll see if he reads it that way.

21 June--Ten to 10, and I'm just in from a spirited hour in the veg garden, after y'day's pretty decent rain, pouring fertilizer onto laggards, yanking beet seedlings ~~the~~ that haven't done anything into an indoor pan with some Vita-Crow, etc. Not to mention harvesting gorgeous lettuce, sugar peas, raspberries...

As noted in the previous 2 entries, it's been a busy week, but producing in various ways. I added 5 pp. to the Dog Bus, somehow, amid the Sweet Thunder publicity distraction and making a start on updating my website.

Lunch y'day in Edmonds, at nicely reliable Chanterelle,

21 June--with Peter & Margaret Atwood. Peter, my age and with some other similarities, is going through a medication about somewhat like mine, although his may be worsening.

He looked tough y'day, after a siege of viral bronchitis that was particularly worrying because, he said, it's like the onset of Wegener's Disease, the auto-immune system plague he has. His doc has been monitoring him month by month most of this year, trying to hold off on the infusion treatment that is the next step. Damn, it's rough to see so many friends--our age group, after all--getting hit with this ailment and that, and while I've long known it was going to happen and tried to mentally prepare for it, it remains wrenching.

25 June--Trying to persevere through the afternoon's work, here at 3:20. With 156 pp. of Dog Bus, half the book if I'm lucky, in really pretty damn good shape, I've started piecing together what is to come, using the few scenes I've roughed and dabs of dialogue etc. I'll print out by the end of the day, and have about 30 pp. of rough stuff to work from, not bad.

The weather, showering, downright rainy before dawn (and then while we walked the n'hood and got soaked), has turned somewhat humid, and maybe because of that, both of us are feeling an energy drain in the afternoons. Otherwise, I may be fending with my body somewhat better, no terrible leg cramps for some time now. Tonight is Dex night, so the next 2 nights will be the tough ones.

Life seems to have a hell of a lot going on (and this during a hiatus at the publishing house). The rot repair crew, in a 2nd long day y'day by the Hispanic workman Herbert, has firmed up with epoxy the deck beam, support post that was so far gone it was scary, and $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. deck posts. They need to come back for sanding, painting, etc., maybe another full day; expensive project, but lordy are we glad to have the carpenter ants gone and the repairs done.

And I've been gardening considerably, getting lettuce sequences in the ground, bringing waning beet seedlings into the house for some days to pep them up and then planting 'em again (seems to have worked wonderfully), and picking sugar peas and rasps along with the lettuce every blessed day. I'm doing much more starting of things inside

25 June cont.--this season, with so many of the crops behind because of the chilly spring.

Socially, we went to dinner at the Angell's Sat. night on short notice, no problem for us. Terrific meal fixed by Tony, salmon and so on. Other guest, Marty whose last name I've lost--former pic editor at Audubon, I believe--an old friend of Tony's who gives him back as good as she gets, which led to a ~~xx~~ long wrangle between them about how protective of daughters you should be, with C and I just sitting back out of range, but that's OK. A funny escape we made, brought off by C's quick thinking: During a discussion of gardening--Marty is something of a tomato snob, but that's another story--Tony in his impulsive generous way said to me, "You know what, Val Easton should do an article about your garden, a writer's garden. I'm gonna tell her." All too weirdly, ~~x~~ just a few days ago I snubbed an "interview" request for Val for the Crosscut website, a session about favorite books that she first wanted me to do last spring. We got off to a bad start, as she warned me not once but twice that her format would not be any kind of plug for my forthcoming book, and I figured then why the hell should I spend half a day doing her email bidding? Told her to nudge me closer to the time I'd be doing publicity for the book and I'd see what I could do, and when the nudge came in--still 2 months ahead of the book--at C's suggestion I played the ~~xx~~ age card, emailed to her that I just can't do as much of this stuff as I used to, sorry. Her reply seemed to take it in good enough grace, but now here was Tony about to fling me in her face, and while I was trying to think of how to turn him off, C fortunately came out with, "Don't do that!" and segued into how busy I am. Mission accomplished.

27 June--Today I am 74, which as they say is better than the alternative. This is, I think, my first birthday on both Revlimid and Dexamethasone, so the physical side has its own report--see the Dex note--but the rest of me is dandy. C bought me a new Mr. Coffee and added a couple of high-class kitchen knives, good stuff all around. And we went to lunch at The Whale Wins, where we marked our anniversary, and were wowed again. It's a place where I'll order things I'd otherwise never ever pick off a menu--I had trout the other time, sensation, and today sardines (about 4" long and thick) on toast with a luscious topping of shaved fennel and parsley, even better than the trout was. C has been having the roasted clams, in an exquisite sauce, and we both liked the Bavik pilsner.

Then, heavensent, the Kirkus Review came today, another big win for Sweet Thunder. Just emailed Wendy Smith saying Mr./Ms. Amonoyus (sic) has done it again.

DEX NOTE: Last night, usually the worst (2nd) night after taking Dex, was semi-tough. Took a sleeping pill at 7:30, which seemed to take about 3 hrs to really kick in, but it did. Slept downstairs, as 1st my feet bothered enough to need VapoRubbing and socking up, then my cramp-prone right hand (this came with this Dex cycle, hasn't been regular, thank heavens) acted up enough that I Vapoed the hands and put on the brown cotton gloves, and finally, maybe around midnight, my legs were cramp-chancy enough that I did them, after walking up and down the hallway 3-4 times to try to limber them. I did not have to soak in the tub this time, luckily.

2 July--At one point this morning, Aaron the plumber was running a power snake into the cloggy downstairs drain and Herbert the rot repairer was grinding away at sanding a deck post when the phone rang and it was the law office ~~wink~~ calling for Carol about Margaret Svec estate business. A fair measure of how damnably busy it has been around here, but as I write this, Herbert is finishing up hosing the downstairs deck and the \$4500 repair job on the ant- and rot-eaten deck post and beam and upper posts is done, 4 days of work. And am I ever ready for an end ~~f~~ to such projects, although we have Sandy the painter coming in a few days. Today I've been tired and jumpy, after an

2 July cont.--unexpectedly rough night, muscle spasms in the thighs and legs waking me for good at 2:30. This may have happened before, at the end of a Rev cycle (tomorrow the last day of pills).

In any case, it's been hard to get anything worthwhile done on the Dog Bus, the deck work one distraction but the hot weather the real culprit, ~~ix~~ increasing the garden work with watering and covering and the housework with routines of throwing everything open to try to keep the temp down. Today blessedly has been much better on that score, with a good breeze even though the thermometer is in the 80s.

5 July--Well, a lot is getting done around here, even if it's not words on paper. Sandy the painter is here, with $\frac{1}{2}$ doz. small projects all going at once, and the rot repair on the deck is over with. C is still trying to solve a drain backup ~~withe~~ which Aaron the Bible-based plumber couldn't get with his 50' power snake the other day. Y'day, the 4th of J, we worked on the property nearly all day, and I was out there most of the morning today while C was getting her eyes examined.

Progress did come in the mail today with the packet of Manitowoc research from Marcella in Helena, who is a whiz at such stuff. I'll be able to immerse myself in 1950s M'woc--it looks strangely like downtown Great Falls or anywhere else midsize of the time--as I work on Donny's time there.

Have wanted to put down an oddment of having the rot repair crew here, primarily the Guatemalan workman Herbert. Namely, that I am now the man in the big house, as the ranch owners were to me when the folks and I were the lariat proletariat workers. A strange switch, to my credit for having made something of myself in life, yet thought-provoking.

10 July--Just another quick gasping entry, helluva busy day but a good one for the household. N'hood college kid Conner Slack powerwashed the decks, up and down, while 2 of his buddies did sloppier but still effective washings of the driveway and front walk, then Conner came back and weedwhipped downslope for me. Chores we've really wanted done.

Now the main news: first copy of Sweet Thunder arrived today. It's lovely. Will spend some time with it, likely this weekend, in that pleasant ritual of reading through.

DEX NOTE: Made a big mistake last night, Wed., the bad one after Tues. Dex. Felt good by bedtime, forgot to take a sleeping pill in the course of the evening, and consequently got about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours sleep, with a hot soak and 3 VapoRubbing. Napped for about another hour after ~~break~~ breakfast, which helped. This happened during a Revlimid respite (I started that next cycle today), so the leg cramps and feet discomfort are all Dex.

15 July--A day when I ~~fin~~ finally got back to making some ms. Not a lot, as the veg garden took up most of my morning, and there's always a list of other stuff, but I managed about half a page of fresh or refreshed output, and reached what felt like a good stopping point.

Supremely blue weather again today, maybe up to 77 degrees but there's a strong breeze and the house still feels pretty good at 3:30. Saturday the 13th we had perfect weather for our visit to Camano Island and catching up with Linda Bierds and Sydney. Truly a delightful time with them, the two of us perched side by side with Syd ~~in~~ on the bed (the darkened bedroom best for seeing her laptop pics) as she took us through the images of their Rome stay. Great grub, chicken salad fixed by Lin, followed by ice cream ~~x~~ w/ fruit on the deck under the umbrella, watching the boat traffic pass by. And as ever, brainwork from Linda, who fearlessly is setting ~~the~~ out to write her next book of poems--after Roget's Illusion, which is in proofs for pub'n early next year--featuring Alan

Turing, the math genius of the Brits' enigma decoder etc. Turing later got interested in natural patterns that fit mathematics, and so I learned about Fibonacci numbers, which Linda explained are not only mathematically elegant

15 July cont.--but predictive of patterns in nature. She is working on the first of these "Turing" poems, about the Bletchley Park enigmatists using carrier pigeons, which ~~xxx~~ have in their wing feathers a Fibonacci sequence, one layer of which is called a covert--yes, to go with the spy theme! Lin chuckled and said she only has to write 30 poems beyond that one, ~~xxxx~~ and if fate will let her, she will, she will. What a great thing it has been to have the friendship of her and Syd--bless the night I went down to Elliott Bay bookstore to hear her read for a second time and hired her to look over Dancing at the Rascal Fair.

Another evening of invaluable friendships, Linda Sullivan and Jeff, joining us ~~xxxx~~ on the 11th for dinner at Ivar's Salmon House, C and I cashing in our birthday certificates ~~xxx~~ there in the little span when the time limits overlap.

Speaking of friends, a rather different episode to report. Carol, Jean^{Roden}, and Katharina Maloof are, with Ann McCartney, the final remnant of the GLASS group of Shoreline College women who for decades got together to celebrate each others' birthdays and so on. This time,

Ann invited them to Bellingham. Carol doesn't like that kind of outing-with-cumbersome-logistics, but neither does she want to disappoint Ann, one of her oldest faculty friends. So she grits and agrees to go, and then things begin to fall apart, the center cannot hold and in fact goes all to hell. ~~xx~~ The ~~xxxx~~ laser procedure C needs to remove the film behind her cataract-surgery-lenses gets scheduled 2 days before the B'ham trip, and I announce I don't want her driving the I-5 freeway for 4 hours that soon after her eyes have been worked on. Katharina announces she doesn't want to drive the freeway any more. Jean opines that if she ~~xxx~~ had a new car, she'd do the driving with no qualms--as it is, because John is such a tightwad she's driving a nearly 40-year-old stick shift Mercedes with glacial acceleration. C swallows hard on my objection and asks ~~x~~ Ann, how about bringing ~~x~~ her party stuff down here, they can use our house. Ann, not unusually, has her own agenda and comes back with, how about rescheduling, which does nothing for the long-drive dilemma: Katharina ain't gonna do it (as C says, a real game-changer about these gatherings, as she long has been steadily reliable transportation), I don't want C driving

15 July cont.--the sclerotic Mercedes in splitting the driving with Jean, and similarly, ~~xxxx~~ it doesn't look like a great idea for Jean, at 83, to be taking half a 2-hour shift in our Honda. At this point, I get fed up or inspired, it seems to have come to the same, and say to Carol, how about if I treat you all to a town car. C gulps, but she wants to get rid of this situation at least as much as I do, so she proposes it to the others. Katharina snaps it up, very good idea, they should all pitch in on the rental. Jean whinges, what happens to the town car during our party? If only I had a new car... None of which, C remarked, was an answer, and sure as hell not an offer to pitch in on the rental. I got back to Katharina that ~~yes~~ this is to ~~be~~ my treat, in a sense, but I'm going to ask her for some manuscript help. Jean's next whinge is, is a town car like those white ones I see around town, i.e. a limousine, and C handles that. All in all, this afternoon C made the Carey car reservation for just \$500 for the 8-hour outing, and on the one hand I feel extravagant for spending like that just to shoot the damn problem in the head and get it out of the life of this household, and on the other, I figure what the hell else is our money for if not to enjoy.

number

23 July--I finally got back to sustained writing on The Dog Bus today, and made about a page. Summer is a lot tougher writing season than simply hunkering in during the rains. The garden takes time, often an hour and a half each morning, and keeping the house cool with danvas drops and manipulating windows and so on somehow adds up, too. I guess we can tell ourselves we've made recent gains on things, C having disbursed \$ from the Svec estate and me having recorded via GarageBand app, and the holy patience of Mark Damborg, the voice-over for Sweet Thunder's video trailer. Tomorrow, Carol's birthday, number 8-0, is definitely a day off from such doings, a morning of blueberry picking and the like and then the noon doings at the Damborgs. More ~~xxxx~~ about that anon.

25 July--Talk about busy. Productive is another matter. At least yesterday, Carol's surprise birthday party at the Damborgs', was a roaring success. She never tumbled, but the jig had to be up when she and I walked in their backyard for what was supposed to be lunch for the 4 of us and glassware and tubs of beer etc. are lined up. Still, she had no idea who was coming, and sitting next to her, I swear she was newly surprised by each arrival--David, Marjorie, and Jackie Williams all coming separately, Tony Angell and Lee, Linda Bierds solo (Sydney on jury duty), Jeff Saeger solo (Linda Sullivan in an Everett meeting she couldn't shake), Betty & Roy Mayfield, Jean Walkinshaw, David Laskin & Kate, and ultimately Tiffany, our n'hood buddy who walks with us almost all mornings. Perfect weather--Mark said if not on July 24, when?--and everyone hit it off, great scenes of Tony telling Roethke stories to Linda B. and Laskin. Oh, and I nearly forgot Ann and Marshall Nelson, the last to arrive and the least expected to Carol, as Ann doesn't go in for large gatherings given her hearing problem. But there they were, wisely on either side of us at the dining room table as we ate gloriously of salads and cake. And I seem to have contributed satisfactorily by providing party favors--as I told the bunch, since my birthday shindig 4 years ago I've learned presents accompany birthday parties and so I always give presents--of inscribed Sweet Thunders for all. Carol was still pleased to the brim today about it all.

We got in some garden time this morn, she picking b'yard blueberries and me watering fruit trees and picking raspberries and blackberries etc., and then we've had a spate of emails from the publicity folks, adding up to 2 radio interviews (one quite a coup, NY WNYC) and the Helena I-R. Also a flurry from Glory back there about our goddamn video trailer GarageBand recording not coming through, which we hope Mark Damborg has solved by resending it as an MP3 file.

DEX report: another tough ~~Wed~~ Wed. Night, 3-4 hours sleep despite a 7:30 sleeping pill. And today I feel fine (helped by catching an hour and a half of sleep after getting up around 3, having coffee and then b'fast).

7 Aug.--I have finally struggled to the diary, after days when I never reached it on the list, only to begin with rotten news. My computer won't turn on, probably not coincidentally after a natural gas crew cut a streetlight power line out front. The control box of the watering system also did something weird, starting one segment of watering this morn. In any case, I (we; C is necessarily involved) now face this 17-year-old technological lunker that I've so successfully used as a word processor or lumbering through the process of getting a new one to suit my literarily eccentric needs.

Other than that, we have lately dealt with:

--Carol's eyes, 2 long sessions (95% of them waiting in the uninspiring hallway of the p Group Health ~~ambulatory~~ ophthalmology dept.) to have film sacs lasered out from behind her cataract-surgery replaced lenses. I went with her the first time to drive because her eyes were of course dilated, but the 2nd time she toughed it home behind the steering wheel herself while I was here for:

--David the carpet cleaner. The rugs look wonderfully brighter, but the 2 runner rugs in the kitchen curled at the sides, which appalled me, ever mindful as I am to not ~~fall~~ trip and fall in my side-effected condition. We left one ~~down~~ in place and it is straightening out, so I have not gone ahead with the very grumpy chore of trying to flatten it between a sandwich of cardboard and bricks, and we have it lain flat out of the way ~~in~~ by the living room bookcase to see if it'll work out or we have to pile it with phone books and heavy pic books.

--The All-City electrician, Skip, came another day and firmed up wobbly power outlets. Also tried to work on the downstairs deck external outlet that the rot repair crew blew with a power saw, but the goddamn thing is apparently wired to the one inside outlet behind hundreds of pounds of full filing cabinets. It'll cost a couple of hundred bucks to have a new one put in, backed onto a freestanding outlet in the TV room, but I'm having it done. As C and I keep saying to each ~~summer~~ other this summer of fixing stuff right and left, what's money for.

more

7 Aug. cont.--Amid all that, and my efforts ~~was~~ to make dabs of ~~my~~ progress on the Dog Bus ms and field the publicity chores for Sweet Thunder, we made 11 containers of apple-sauce from our faithful (most years) and never-quite-ripening mealy old tree. It took 2 sessions of milling and microwaving, but the 'sauce is delicious and great to have in winter with tomato-sauced pork. Also have picked blueberries whenever we can desperately get to it, up to 10 qts now, not much compared to our usual total pick of 40+. And today ~~it~~ I picked probably 30 or so red plums and will try to ripen them in a low flat box in the sun and freeze them. That tree has a great crop, and while I have put hellishly expensive racoon ~~are~~ repellent around it, I'm trying to make surer than than that ~~chance~~ of getting some of the crop for us, not little paws in the night. The garden generally is taking a lot of my time, often an hour and $\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 in the morning, which after we do our daily walk of the n'hood wipes out the morn except for whatever ms or other work I've done after my 5 AM breakfast.

So it is chore-chore-chore busy around here a lot--C also has had to keep handling the Margaret Svec estate, which is all too often like herding cats, and she just today finished (mailed) our ~~x~~ ~~passports~~ passport renewals, which was an appallint bureacratc gauntlet--and I am up and down in my medicated mood. Fortunately--Jesus, I never thought I would say this about the bastardly little green meanie pills--today I am on Dexamethasone, which wires me in a variety of ways but one of them is a Spock-like calm or focus or lack of panic or something; if the computer had gone to heaven a few days ago, I'd have been ~~x~~ beside myself. Anyway, we are persevering, which seems to be among our characteristics.

Aug. 10--After a hell of a fraught week, few weeks--I don't know that I even noted down C's 4 eye sessions having to do with lasering away the film sacs behind her cataract-corrected lenses, among all else going on--we maybe have hit a calmer time. Dr. Chen's latest phone analysis y'da; as I put it in that file, amounts to keep on with what we're doing, ~~thems~~ better the side effects devils we know than chancing new ones, and so that's that course until at

Aug. 10 cont.--least mid-Oct. I've had a couple of really hard nights after Dex this week, but again, that's that...

Today we actually managed to draw a deep breath and go out and pick blueberries from the backyard patch, 4 qt bags ~~worth~~ worth, huzzah. Also, my computer miraculously came back to life when I tried it one more time at the end of that day, and I'm keeping it on sleep while I back up everything onto floppy disks. Let's see, what else. Y'day when I was having a ragged time after a bastardly night, C and I went to KUOW for the feed-interview to the Joe Donahue book show in NY, and I did perfectly fine on-air. Bad gardening news here this morn, our first sign of deer depredation, tops of pea plants eaten off. And now it's 4 on a Saturday afternoon and I'm retreating to listen to Mary McCann play jazz the way we like it on KPLU and read until time from a drink and supper.

Aug. 18--Brief respite, very brief, before we entertain David Williams and Marjorie and Marjorie's parents, the Kittles from Tucson, and the Damborgs. C and I have chored and chored, her especially, getting the house and deck ready--and we're not even doing the food, David & Marjorie bringing the actual meal, not least because they know what the hell everyone eats or doesn't. This past ~~we~~ week was a whopper of doing things, getting 'em done, the high tide the morn of the 15th when we simultaneously had Julia the housecleaner, Will doing yardwork, and Skip the electrician here. In terms of other accomplishments, the 16th counts biggest, though, when C and I went to West Seattle to the lawyer's office and she did the 2nd and last distribution of Margaret Svec's estate, signing checks for more than \$300,000. Earlier, we were at KUOW for a feed-interview by Nancy Roth of Spokane Public Radio, which was incredibly shaggy and unprepared at Nancy's end but maybe went okay after I began pitching stuff in. Then to the U Book Store where, with Mark Mouser and staffer Anna's help, I signed up their stock of 146 Sweet Thunders. And y'day the 17th, I signed up 60 for Mary Kay at the Edmonds Bookshop. (An adventure there: stopped by a cop in Woodway--although thankfully not ticketed--for not having current tabs on the CRV's license plates. C and I can't account for it, the registration having been renewed etc., but she's

Aug. 29 cont.--books for sell-through (I signed up 80 or 90 ahead of time when I went over there for lunch with Tony on release day), but it's worrying whether I'm simply providing entertainment to more and more people while book sales dwindle and dwindle at the events, or whether people skip the full-price \$27.95 hardback, even inscribed, to buy on-line (Amazon) or at Costco.

In any case, we're tooth and nail into the booktour, the same handselling part of it as ever (with my crampy hands barely making it through the inscribing gauntlet both times so far), and we have to hope there is big and good national attention in reviews this weekend or next. Akin to those swelling audiences and trickling signing lines is the fact that I'M getting the best reviews of my life so far on this book, as on the last few, but with the exception of *The Bartender's Tale* at last cracking some kind of NY Times bestseller list and half a dozen others, the national sweep of success still feels missing. Maybe always will, and luckily it doesn't bother me in writing the next one and the one after that.

2 Sept.--Labor Day, 2:35, and have ever been laboring the past several days. Things went to hell on I think Aug. 29 when, after a mini-cloudburst, the electricity went off about 5:20 that afternoon. Showed no sign of coming back on, and afterhours at City Light, we couldn't get through to ~~anyone~~ actual human for information, ~~xxx~~ so we called Laskin to see if we could bail out to their house. He instantly said sure, help ourselves to the place, they were about to go out for sushi with visiting daughter Sarah. We went over there and read until just short of 8:30, coming home while we still had a bit of light but still no power. It came back on at 3 AM, then went off again at 6:20, and didn't come back on until past noon. We spent most of that time fending, none of it very reassuring for how things would go in a big emergency like an earthquake. But we recovered, had a lovely day the next day, were trying to have another one the day after that (y'day) until we were doing necessary dabs of paint on peeling spots out on the deck and discovered rot in a sill of the SW bay window, the one that gets all the weather. We've put in an email to carpenter/handyman

Aug. 18 remedying it with an application for replacement tabs.) Amid all this, the book news continues good, a nice review by Tim McNulty in today's Seattle Times and some weekend play in New York by NY 1 TV. On we go, if staggering a bit.

Aug. 21--Awfully quickly, too much so, the publication day report. Life has lurched on today, mostly with the damnable email, but y'day's advent of Sweet Thunder was, well, sweet, with a fine review in the Denver Post to start the day, then Third Place Books with a groaning cartload of copies when I went over there to sign up stock. Had lunch there with Tony, always good. And C pretty much, really close, got rid of the Svec estate executorship--it actually took until today, when she wrote a final check to the lawyers, but close enough to hoist a glass to. Today, the U Book Store sent a pic of its Sweet Thunder table, the big catchy poster Riverhead sent to the event stores unbeknownst to me, with the reading date and SIGNED BY AUTHOR signs on a big heap of Thunders. "Framable!" says Becky.

Aug. 29--At last, a day to catch up on the diary a bit. This is Thurs., one of the Dex-fueled days--after the usual tough Wed. night when I got about 3 hrs sleep, climbed out of bed at 2:15 for coffee and toast and apple butter, then up again for breakfast about an hour later, and at last a couple hours of actual sleep from 4 on--so I think I can wrap up the Northern Calif. trade show talk today, and move on across the Labor Day weekend to do the PNBA one. C and I have spent hell's own time emailing, y'dah and before, and we've finished the days wiped out by that and assorted other chores. Amid that, there's good book news--Sweet Thunder breaking onto the PNBA bestseller list at #2 and the Mtns and Plains at #9, in what was really a fore-shortened week with the Tues. release date; and the Edmonds kickoff went well, if not as gangbusterish as I'd hoped, with most of an hour's worth of signing line and Mary Kay estimating they've sold 80 Sweet T's in those 5 days--and not so hot, at Third Place. There I had a whopping crowd--likely at least 325--and about 20-25 minutes of signing line albeit with maybe half a dozen tailend Charlies as C and I were leaving. The store at least has a helluva bunch of

2 Sept. cont.--Mike Guenther, and we'll get it fixed one way or another, but damn, that was cruel cut after we've pounded away at fixing up the place (rot repair in deck posts, new power outlets exteriorly, the plumber, Sandy the painter...) do determinedly this summer.

Enough of that. Since I last managed to do a real catch-up entry, we have:

--Been visited by Marcella ~~Walter~~ Walter, a good busy couple of days when, given Marcella's penchant for questions etc., we probably talked more than we usually do in two weeks.

--Done the first 2 booksignings, quite good in Edmonds but a bit disturbing at Third Place, where I had a tremendous crowd of 325 or so but only 30-40 people in the signing line afterward. Sweet Thunder hit the PNBA best-seller list at #2, so maybe it doesn't matter how many folks actually line up for inscriptions any more, but the trend of the past few books of bigger and bigger crowds and fewer books sold by hand is spooky.

At Third Place, with the Davids in the audience, I did an acknowledgment of both of them before the q-&-A (text in the back of diary). Both couples came back to our place for a nighcap afterward, highlighted by what Laskin called the David-and-Kate comedy show as they mock(?) wrangled over whether he'd get a new suit or not for his booktour for *The Family*. What great friends the four of them are for us. Marjorie is a really funny sly one, getting off the best line of the night when David was protesting ~~that~~ he did not need a new suit to replace the one Kate after all had picked out for him not that many years ago--she suggested when he hits New York, find a tailor and tell him, "Vito, set me up."

Amid the choring we've done over this holiday weekend, something totally unforetold--C chuckled as she came out with the initial email--was Annie Proulx getting in touch about moving to Seattle. That's going to be ~~high~~ highly interesting if it happens.

15 Sept.--A foggy damp ~~day~~ Sunday, a chance to catch up a little here, although ~~ex~~ how much energy I have to put into it remains to be seen. Things stay busy as hell, because of the book tour and no doubt partly because of me, so that when I'm not soldiering in an evening event or the email etherworld, I'm trying to deal with the garden and any of the rest of the property I can get to. So how are we doing?--

--Sweet Thunder is perking along very well regionally, but lacks the national traction The Bartender's Tale got, as far as I can tell. Full houses at my readings, and I've felt pretty much at the top of my game in reading the Neversweat mine accident scene and fielding the Q&A, but the number of book sold in the signing line still seems to me still perturbing. ParkPlace last week was the exception, ~~65~~ 56 Thunders sold, and on Friday I went to the U Book Store to sign up another 57 copies, on top of the 110-some I did earlier for them, so there are good signs, including the book's presence--and the Bartender in p'back as well--on the PNBA bestseller list. In any case, the name of the game is still to go through the paces, achy as my hands and often some of the rest of me are. Busy week coming up, of Bellingham, the Skype Salt Lake event, and the Tacoma TV taping.

Meanwhile I contend/cope with the medication cycle, Wednesday nights and sometimes Thursdays a grueling endurance test to try to eke out, even with a sleeping pill and anything else I resort to, x 3 or 4 hours of sleep.

For all that, I am up and going, which has to be the ultimate measure of existing with cancer.

On the brighter side: story from the afternoon signing at the Hearthstone retirement home, which I'd reluctantly agreed to and turned out a lot better than expected. Toward the end of the line, a rangy woman asked to have a book signed up to her sister, as a birthday gift:

Me: "Sure, shall I say Happy birthday?"

She: "Yes, in fact say Happy 80th birthday." As I write, she ~~says~~ confides: "She's my younger sister."

Me: "Oh, really?"

15 Sept. cont.--She: "Yes. We've always been close."
Confides again: "On her birthday, we're going to jump out of a plane together."

Me, flabbergasted: "Skydiving? Have you ever done that before?"

She: "Oh, no." With a twinkle: "But I ~~x~~ can't wait to have a handsome young man strapped to my back."

16 Sept.--An actual good day of manuscript work, although as so often that mostly meant polishing the first section of the book. In my defense, that part felt better after my polishing, even though it's been polished however many times before. One of the mysteries of writing.

Not coincidentally, ~~time~~ I've felt better today, my legs aching less and my hands somewhat less stiff. Weighed myself before exercise and told C I've performed a miracle, eaten Katharina Maloof's great food and lost a pound. Indeed, there the scale showed, 153 much as usual on the 6th day after Dexamethasone, while the ~~x~~ 3-4 pounds it puts on me always shows up a couple of days before. The ~~x~~ evening at the Maloofs, along with the Rodens--my first time with John since his drunken episode here at Xmas of '12--went well enough, to this household's relief.

27 Sept.--Will make a start on a diary entry, although not sure I'll get back to it. Am now embarked on my two-week furlough from pills, ~~xx~~ with the Dex of 3 days ago not worn off yet. This grace period from Dr. Chen is to carry me through our San Francisco/Portland trip next week and the start of the one after that. Sure as hell worth a try.

It has been damnably busy, nearly all of it stuff I don't really want to do, more or less handselling (or mouthselling, by way of interviews) Sweet Thunder the same as I've been doing with books for 35 years. Should be noted, though, that y'day I started a serious file, with notes and dialogue bits, for what comes next after The Dog Bus (if ⁺ hold together that long)--Great Divide, with Dóde Withrow, Pat Hoy, Jick and Marcella ^McCaskill...it feels promising.

29 Sept.--Rainy blowy day, 2nd of the weekend, but a day off after y'day's journey to the Longview speaking gig, and a nice start to the afternoon as we watched the Seahawks come back from 20 points down to beat Houston 23-20 on an overtime field goal. C and I feel I turned some kind of corner with Longview behind me, a \$5000 fee but continually sloppy logistics by the ~~sponsoring~~ speakers' agency's Sarah Walker, culminating in C saving the day with a suggestion I call ~~the town car~~ Seattle Limo and make sure the driver had our correct address--he didn't, nor did he have our phone number. My ride down was 2½ hrs in sometimes terrific rain and I simply propped up in the back of the town car with my pillows and lap robe and napped as much as I could. Once I got to Longview and could resolve the logistics at that end, all went well, a hugely appreciative crowd of about 175 and a lot of books sold. The rain lessened on the haul home, 2¼ hrs and I was here by a few minutes after 9. We're due an added \$3200 (after the \$1800 advance), so I told C I at least made \$400 an hour on the day.

Ahead of us now are San Francisco and Portland, but also a very likely government shutdown the maniacal Republican congressmen are bringing about. We shall see how much flight delay and airport time the bastards cause.

I am now off pills for the next 10 days for this trip, and am avid to see how I feel. Pretty good today, legs not bothering much, but my hands are still stiff and somewhat achy.

Oct. 14--The gap ~~where~~ in here was filled with San Francisco, Portland, Antiquarian Book Show adventures, etc. All of it productive, some of it even profitable.

To start with the last: Andy Nettels of the Moab bookstore Back of Beyond came to town for the Antiquarian Book Show as he does every year, and since David Williams and Marjorie are junior partners, David set us up for Andy to try to sell a complete set of my books. I added a batch of other things we'd collected, plus some of my galleys, and the upshot was that Andy sold the full set the first day and probably another one the 2nd, after he and wife Marcee and David and Marjorie came here for

Oct. 14 cont.--dinner (bringing most of it themselves, as David and Marjorie have been doing) and like a kid in a candy store, he scooped up a batch of our collected books.

I have no idea how much \$ will be involved, but it'll sure as hell be more than what the stuff was earning sitting on our shelves. I took the opportunity to organize and inventory our holdings, so we have an 8-page list of such holdings now, plus 1 doz. boxes of paperbacks I'll try flog to local bookstores.

Boy oh boy, it's been busy around here, Brad the carpenter hammering away on our bay window piece (it had rotted in the middle) right now. 2 days from now we go to The Willows for that unusual gig.

I'm getting pretty weary--it's 3:30 of a long day--but to try to make a start on the West Coast tour. Main good news was, C got to go with me on the publisher's money, and she picked out a sensational hotel near the San Francisco marina, the Argonaut. As she's no doubt noted in her diary account, our room looked out on the Hyde St. cable car turnaround and the park there, with a view of the Golden Gate bridge and at night, the colossal Ghiardelli Square lighted sign, which one night had its i dotted by Venus. Ideal place for us, with the Buena Vista cafe up at the end of the next block, catty-corner. And we lucked out on the literary escort, Bob Wilkins, 76 years old and not as up San Francisco traffic and construction detours/blockades as he could have been (he lives in Mill Valley) but savvy in many other ways, including treating us to a celebratory glass of wine at the Fort Baker resort on our way back from the really good Book Passage reading/signing in Corte Madera.

16 Oct.--Quick few thoughts, before we leave for an unlikely event, at the fancy schmancy Willows inn and restaurant on Lummi Island. The morning pretty much has gone to packing, even though we're driving and can just load things into the car. I say that, although I also sold more than \$75,000 in stocks, accumulating more cash as the maniacal Tea Party obstructionists in Congress push the country toward not paying its debts, as well as having shut down big portions of the government. This is an

16 ~~xxxx~~ Oct. cont.--awful time politically. That aside, we're trying to stay afloat here in our own realm, both of us pitching in y'day to sand (me) and paint (C) the bay window facing replaced by carpenter Brad the day before. The weather luckily has been dry, giving us a chance to fix the goddamn rot etc. there.

As for me, I remarked to C how much I was going to miss myself after the 2-week furlough from Revlimid and Dex, and indeed the week I've been back on Rev has brought leg stiffness, some effect on my balance, and a less clear head. And tonight I must resume Dex, up there at The Willows; tomorrow night of our stay there could be very tricky. Anyway, I must try it, to see what I ~~ix~~ can put up with while traveling.

21 Oct.-- β :20, nearing the end of a rigorous day but at least one when I did Not feel as achy and ~~xxxx~~ down as y'day, when the Dex effects still were strong. Oh was I ever right about missing ~~x~~ my unmedicated self, and the prospect is that Chen is steering me toward a 3rd drug, Melphelan, to bring the protein count down. Today I turned in a 2h-hr urine test, which will be his measure--and possible justification--of that next ~~xxxx~~ step.

Be that as it may, I did manage to get back to work on The Dog Bus today, making a couple of useful adds. Life has been choppy, with the bay window work hitting us out of nowhere (but Brad the magical carpenter fixing it for us, leaving the painting for us) and what seems like constant other chores, but at least I am through with the booktour by the end of this week, with the dubious Lit-Crawl event the finale.

22 Oct.--This morning I am a Dex machine, struggling to get past grogginess from the 10:30 sleeping pill that buys me some sleep after taking the 10 little green meanie pills then. Along with the cloudiness in my head I have the item-by-item sorting, fixation, whatever the hell it is, and now at a little after 6:30 AM have done the Revlimid re-ordering and the monthly phone drill, along with some upstairs chores. Again I am a medicated facsimile of myself, or what I could be, undrugged. And that's the way it is.

25 Oct.--It is over and done with, one more time, the book tour. Last night's Town Hall kickoff of LitCrawl went well enough--crowd of about 100, decent sales afterward, Mary Ann Gwinn good and professional in her q&a--but I still find Town Hall tacky and unimpressive, maybe because both times I've been there they've dumped my event from the main venue into the basement, which is kind of like a tired nightclub.

Anyway, 2 months ~~xxx~~ to the day after the Edmonds launch, Sweet Thunder is now out on its own, evidently doing okay but not spectacular. That'll have to be its history, as I--Carol and I--did everything asked of us impeccably, the reviews were excellent, the indie bookstores seem to like the book, and yet sales may not keep pace with the past few books. I can't muscle any better results, so this morn I am simply settling back into the writing part of being a writer, tinkering with The Dog Bus.

Nov. 1--The ^{protein}urine test result I just looked at ahead of Chen's phone call is a wallop--doubled since June, to 22%. It's been that high before, even higher, but held around 11% the first part of this year. We'll see what Chen's strategy is, another drug or...? In any case, the news is a downer, a worsening symptom to contend with when I'm already contending pretty hard.

Health aside, hah, things have been going okay. Nearly \$5700 royalties today from Recorded Books, some decent tinkering on the ms, and C and I both putting in useful afternoon outdoors, tidying etc.

5 Nov.--Big day of work, best day of writing in a while, on Donn's tumultuous bus trip from Milwaukee to Manitowoc. Big in other ways too, a Whistling Season/House of Sky royalty check for more than \$12,000 arriving. And K I've felt quite good today, wistfully knowing this is the night for Dexamethasone again and the bodily woes that follow.

7 Nov.--Not quite 3 hours ago I started the next medical journey, the Melphelan chemotherapy pills (6, 2 mg each) to bolster the Revlimid, which I also began the next cycle of today. Unsurprisingly, here toward the end of the day--3:40--I don't feel so hot, not quite half-sick but some considerable fraction. Hell only knows what tonight will be like, as the Dexanethasone taken 2 days ago can still get to me with cramps etc., and Revlimid at the onset also usually does. Last night, Wed., always the worst Dex night of the week, we listened to the newly arrived audio of Sweet Thunder until well past 8:30, then C went to bed to read and I ~~x~~ moved downstairs to read and listen to the CBC's nifty jazz show, Tonic. I managed to stay up until nearly 10, went to bed in the guest room--saved these chillier nights by the electric blanket we've just installed--really quite sleep~~y~~, and at 11:15, came awake mostly due to my ~~xxx~~ brain rather than my body. All in all, I got maybe 3½ hrs sleep (this with a sleeping pill in me) and got up at 3:15 and started the day. Better living through pharmaceuticals, huh? Anyway, for the how manyeth time, onward.

Had a strong afternoon of ms revising, thank heavens, after a morning that mostly seeped away into emails. Should report that I took David Laskin to lunch at Chanterelle in Edmonds to compare notes, gossip, whatever about our mother ship, Random House Penguin as it now is. He proclaims himself pretty happy with Penguin's efforts to promote The Family, admitting it hasn't taken off like they'd hoped--17,000 originally shipped, and they've gone back to press for 4,000 more, modest good news. C and I went to his Third Place reading the other night and found it jammed to standing room only because it was in the small reading space rather than the big stage. David reported that Kate got into it ~~with~~ hot and heavy with the Events person Wendy, and properly so, I say. Over fish tacos (his) and cioppino (mine) y'day, we swapped booktour tales. He had a pair of good ones:

--Radio interview with an East Coast guy moved to Pocatello station, not tooswift or smooth. He asked, "Did any of your relatives end up in Birkenstock?"--so much for Buchenwald--and "In talking to people, did you find any Holocaust survivalists?"

Nov. 7 cont.--Beyond Mr. Tongue-tied in Pocatello, he also had to fend with the radio show host who proclaimed, "I remember those Maidenform ads so well--'I went out and about in my Maidenform bra.'" When David cleared his throat and clarified that one of the famous ad campaigns in history actually was, "I dreamed I was (in some ~~situation~~ situation or another, there must have been hundreds) in my Maidenform bra," the host told him No, no, he really remembered those ads, the women would say they went out and about, wearing the bra over their regular clothes. Again, David tried to correct to the famous fact that the models wore ~~nothing~~ nothing up top but the Maidenform--he said it nicely funny at Third Place that he had learned about women's bodies back there at age 7 from those ads--and again was contradicted for his trouble. Ah, the booktrail travails.

4 o'clock, and quitting to read until supper, which I hope my stomach is going to welcome as much as ever.

11/12/13--As the people lining up to get married today, apparently to cinch an impossible to forget anniversary into memory, refer to it... To me, it's the 2nd day after the first (4-day) go-round of Melphelan added to Revlimid, and I'm still somewhat queasy and off-balance. Tonight starts the next Dex cycle on top of that, so it may be a rough rest of the week. I guess I have to rate the Melphelan as tolerable, on Dr. Chen's scale of that, inasmuch as it hasn't flattered me, in fact so far I haven't had to resort to the stomach drug supposed to ease that side effect (although that drug comes with its own list of possible whimsies). When Chen first put me on Dex, the result was a "dramatic" drop in the monoclonal protein in me, and I have to hope for something similar with this one.

Onward to better things: y'day the Damborgs called asking us to come to supper and help them finish off a beef stew, and so came another elegantly cooked, gallantly done evening with those most terrific friends. And on the ms front, I have a big day of progress on Sunday and so have

12 Nov. cont.--finished going over the 161 pp. of completed ms. Now I have to lace together the rest of the plot, which I pretty much know, and I hope my skippety mental state is up for that. (For the darting around in the head that helps revising, it's quite good.)

Food note: salmon tonight, which I grilled y'day afternoon during decent weather, and our own spuds, kale, and salad makings. Pretty damn good for mid-November.

14 Nov.--MELPHELAN NOTE: by now, 3rd day after it, I'm pretty much back to normal, i.e. usual regimen, now Dex-fueled, normal. Sox it is tolerable enough, this 1st go-round.

18 Nov.--It has taken 3 days, since C read thru the Dog Bus ms to date and I had what I hope is the inspiration to have Donny swipe a rare arrowhead, but I've now tuned up the ~~pages~~ pages sufficiently to charge ahead into the rest of the book-to-be tomorrow. As the tone of this may indicate, I'm feeling pretty good, although the Dex gauntlet starts again tomorrow. And I've just now seen David Laskin's lovely, lovely encomium to me on the PNBA website. Just told C she maybe didn't know she was married to such a saint, and she grinned and said, Probably not.

26 Nov.--Things have been damnably busy, mostly of the pecked-by-ducks variety. I have persevered on the ms some every day, although not writing with continuity yet. Had hoped to enter the tale of lunch with Annie Proulx, but too late in the day, after an afternoon of veg garden work-it'll have to wait.

28 Nov.--Start of a diary entry, although probably only bearly. 10:45, with coffee to be set up and the turkey to be checked in a few minutes, we've been hustling all morn to ~~get~~ get ready for our crowd, despite it being 11 guests this year instead of 14 or 16 or... Fog has moved in and is persisting, but at least the day is dry and supposed to stay that way.

Usual rough night from Dexamethasone--Wednesday nights, always, 2nd after taking the stuff--but not as rugged as

Nov. 28 cont.--sometimes, 3 or 4 VapoRubbing getting me through without resorting to a hot tub soak. Maybe $4\frac{1}{2}$ hrs sleep, whereas it's sometimes been more like 3. We deliberately stayed up later than usual, watching CD of Maverick (hilarious) but that didn't help in dropping me off to sleep at 10:15 or so, even though I felt sleepy but the Dex-fueled mind would not shut down.

And there goes the timer, for coffee and turkey chores.

7 Dec.--I've been through a rough patch which I hope is easing up. The aggravating factor, literally, has been a muscle pull at the bottom of my ribcage, suffered in a sonofabitching out-of-nowhere freak accident that has hit me, in mind and body, like a nail of fate. 3 or 4 days ago, C and I were walking the n'hood as we do daily, bundled up against the cold weather which is also an element in this hard time, when a young cat--damned if it wasn't black--spotted us and raced across the street to be petted and made over. We don't do that ever, and instead were trying to shoo it away and out of the street, but it twined around my shins, rubbing for affection, and in attempting to get rid of it in my bulkiest coat and walking boots, I stepped lightly on the goddamn cat and it ran off yowling, but it had got under my feet enough that I stumbled for a step or two and had to catch myself in mid-air so I didn't fall face first on the pavement. That wrenched the muscle, and the past couple of days, particularly y'day, certain movements of the body like getting out of bed or even reaching too suddenly for something would send a pain ripping through me that would nearly knock me to the floor. Last night might have been the turning point for the better, as I went to bed exhausted at 8, with a sleeping pill in me and VapoRub on the sore area, and slept, with 4 or 5 trips to the bathroom, until 5 this morn.

Amid this, I'm in the Melphelan cycle, the weather is really very bitter for here, my carefully tended lettuce --and probably onions and garlic in pots--are being devastated by the cold, and it's hard not to be depressed. But to try snap the mood, I'll see if I can get to better news, later, on the next page.

13 Dec.--Friday the 13th, living up to its reputation, with a screwup at Group Health that left me without the blood protein readings Dr. Chen needs to evaluate how I'm doing on this three-drug regimen. Had to break my morning's work to go to the Northgate clinic for a blood draw, and Chen's phone consultation is put off for another week. This has been a tough patch even without any of that. and at 3:30 on a Friday I lack the energy or any other zing to go into it, except to say I hurt in a number of places, starting with my feet. Here's hoping I can get to a better report on the weekend.

14 Dec.--To try to put a bit of balance into this past week or so when I have generally felt lousy and had a Melphelan-induced rash on me like the illustrated man, here's a couple of good things that've happened:

--Sweet Thunder ratcheted way up to #3 on the PNBA best-seller list. Besides whatever its own virtues are, my opus pocus benefits from ~~from~~ some supposedly "big" books not catching on, Jamie Ford's Willow Frost among them. And meanwhile The Bartender's Tale toddles along at #15 on the paperback list.

--The UW alumni magazine Columns came out and the piece about me has been seen by a helluva array of people, all the way to Mark Wyman in Normal, Ill. Supposedly the circulation is 230,000, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised, but--

My side affects aside, we've been doing well on the social front, the Damborgs here for what is likely going to be our fallback meal for guests--Central Market cioppino --while Mark tutored us some on C's iMac, and another fine monthly supper with the Nelsons at Chanterelle in Edmonds. Linda Bierds and Sydney are coming for lunch the middle of this week, I'm lunching with Tony on Friday, and Carol had a good friendly lunch with Jean Roden, keeping that friendship patched together. So I should be in a better mood than I've generally been, these past days; today maybe is a turn for the better, as I've usefully worked on the Dog Bus all morning and a bit of this afternoon, and am about to adjourn to listen to Mary McCann play jazz on KPLU and mildly read.

17 Dec.--End of the day, 4 pm, good ms progress, closing in on year-end goal of 200 pp. 11 to go. Y'day may have brought not only the usual wordage but what I hope what may be the magic title that The Dog Bus doesn't quite seem to be: Last Bus to Wisdom.

20 Dec.--4:20, waiting for Chen's phone call to interpret my test results. The numbers look good to us, serum protein decreased from 25% to 14% in this stint of Melphelan added to the other two drugs. We'll see what the doc says.

Couple of inches of snow this morn, enough to discourage me from meeting Tony Angell at Third Place for lunch and signing up the store's latest batch of Thunders. We'll try again Monday. Meanwhile I've labored along, about a page a day, on the current Dog Bus--no, now it's Last Bus to Wisdom!--scene, still aiming for 200 ms pp.

--And Chen called with the great news that the test results are "really good."

21 Dec.--As Carol said first thing this morning with a big smile, "It's a new day." 'Tis, with the medical report from Chen that the "augmentation" drug, Melphelan, added to my existing pair brought down the blood protein readings a lot, from 25% to 14% on one and more than half on the other. So, we keep doing what we're doing, at least for one more cycle of Melphelan in the mix. The other good news of the phone session was Chen's offer to cut Dexamethasone in ~~hf~~ half, from 40 mg. to 20 mg., once we get the blood readings "as low as we can." That could ease up my one dreadful night of the week, Wednesdays, 2nd day after taking Dex, when it really kicks in.

C put it so well y'day when we talked over my ~~xxxx~~ medical situation ahead of Chen's phone call, that all this medication is ~~xxx~~ a load on me, but but I'm carrying it. There are going to be times ahead as n-esty as ones that I've already been through, but for now, I feel relieved that at least the side-effects-loaded drugs are doing their job against the cancer.

27 Dec.--Friday afternoon, which seems to come around faster in these Dex-fueled weeks. Since lunch and nap, I am taking this time off from the ms work, crashing from the Dex high of the past two days. Maybe I deserve the time off, maybe not, but brain and body are taking it, in their different ways. I'm reading a whip-smart book, On Poetry, by Glyn Maxwell, which at least keeps the buzzbox above my shoulders going, while the rest of me feels like it's been through the medication wringer, as it has. However that be, in my existence of lists I feel I should get down at least the black on white about our holiday season, which has been as close to ideal as we can make it. Two favorite couples, sets of old comfortable friendships, here for Christmas dinner--Mark & Lou Damborg, Linda Sullivan & Jeff Saeger--roast beef and good red wine amid our card-decorated setting, highlighted by the fold-out miniature of the White House from the Obamas, and our new Tony Angell sculpture of loons in flight. God bless. None of the obligation nerve-twangs of Xmas dinner with John Roden at the table, ~~skitxox~~ ours or theirs; just a celebration of friendships and survival, all ours.

And a very nice addendum yesterday, the visit from Lisa (Roden) Clemens and husband Jerry, the sane sound elements from those obligatory Xmas dinners past.

Pecking away at this, back and forth from reading, here's an odd urge I just fulfilled, one that just needed doing to make the year seem complete: I redid and printed out in 26-point boldface, just for my ms-in-process ring binder, the title page, changing from:

The Dog Bus

to:

Last Bus to Wisdom

Dec. 30--Today went to a Group Health run for Revlimid and Melphelan and assorted smaller remedies, and then some review of finances this afternoon. At least the finances are heartening. Actually, I am at most ~~more~~ undrugged and muscularly unafflicted at the moment, coming to the end of a Dex cycle (which resumes again tomorrow night) and in the week off from Revlimid, so I have felt somewhat better and maybe been more clearheaded. In any case, C and I both look forward to a night off, dinner at the Laskins.

I should try some summing of the year, although I'm afraid my starting point is that I'm likely worse off than a year ago--would need to check the '12 diary to see how I sounded then. Clearly 3 drugs to fight my myeloma instead of 2 is chancy news, although Dr. Chen's regulating hand may cut that back in the next couple of months, blood tests willing. But as C has said, I got through the book tour--some of it fairly vigorous, such as the San Francisco and Portland trip--and wrote a lot of the next book, and have functioned one way or another in the household and socialized with friends without stint. Those results look pretty good, as I must remind myself when I'm dragging along under the load of side effects. Well, enough citizenship for one day, maybe for the year.

Dec. 31--Maybe it's fitting that this eve day that closes the year was uneven, this morn a tough slog on the ms, but ~~this~~ this afternoon I went at it fiercely, adding ~~to~~ throughout to the remaining chapters. Whatever it takes.

From: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>
Subject: Re: No illusion--the proof is in the poetry, and vice versa!
Date: October 17, 2013 1:21:58 PM PDT
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Dear Ones,

I can't believe that we're "talking" by email! What next?

So good to hear from you and I'm glad that the bound proofs reached you safely. The lineation is a mess and "they" are taking a second pass at it, although I don't hold out much hope for major changes. I think that they had a designer who didn't understand how important it is to set a line of poetry the way it had been written, and not to have it so frequently spill over into an awkward looking one- or two-word next line. I never had this problem before and the designer had a model to follow in FLIGHT, since so many of those poems are reissued in ROGET (none of the lines spilled over in FLIGHT). I do love the cover, though, and also that they set the poems with more white space between the lines, hence giving the book about a 90-page heft rather than the usual 70-page heft.

So, you received the Smithsonian! Right after you told me that Billy Collins was the new editor, he wrote to me and asked me if I had any poems that might fit a "best kept secrets in American History" theme. I didn't, but I spent my time in Rome writing one. And they took it! I didn't want to tell you, just wanted it to be a surprise.

So, you're off to Lummi for what sounds like a glorious time. Eat well, take lovely walks. The weather's supposed to be grand. And, yes, let's get together the week after next. Sydney and I have been felled for the last three weeks by the worst cold in our long lives. But we're on the mend.

Must run, dears. The students await.

Love,
Linda

On Tue, 15 Oct 2013, carol doig wrote:

Linda and Sydney, a hasty hi--Just wanted to say we're tickled pink to have received the proof version of Roget's Illusion today. Just in time, as we are about to go off on an uncommon gig set up by Village Books in Bellingham--2 nights (and meals!) at the fancy-schmancy inn/restaurant on Lummi Island, The Willows, where I'm to do a reading, q-and-a, and "conversation" tomorrow night with about 20 people who're paying \$150 a head (mostly for the grub, is my guess). You bet, we'll take them poems with us. And I've been remiss in not saying how wowed we were by your appearance--both poetic and nicely caricatured--in Smithsonian. Looking good, Ms. B.

Among other breathless pursuits, we've been to San Francisco and Portland to hold forth to booksellers--around 250 total--at their fall shows. Good stuff, and Carol got to go with me on publisher's money. Let's catch up with each other's doings pretty soon--next week is hellish busy, but we're available to meet someplace for a meal after that.

Love,
Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: message for the mentor
Date: November 20, 2013 3:47:37 PM PST
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



We are ordering up more safe deposit boxes for the avalanche of royalties you have jarred loose in your bigfoot travels. Pleased to hear your book sales were good, after all those miles. Probably you're out of Baltimore and maybe even home by now--mucho thanks for the report, talk to yez soon.

The darling of NIH,
Ivan

On Nov 20, 2013, at 8:51 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Okay buster,

If you get a big bump in sales you know whom to thank. Cyperspace is aglow with my fulsome praise of you (okay a couple of tweets and a Facebook message from Becky). So wowers, we are too cool for school. I am killing time at Baltimore airport heading home wearily but with a buncha books sold and a cometlike trail of good will behind me. After reading last night, I went out for drink with distant cousin -- totally nice, really smart guy who works at NIH. And whose praises was he singing? Mr. Doig's! He told me to tell you that he is a MAJOR fan and loves Dancing, Ride with Me, etc. Has not yet read Whistling, House of Sky or Heartearth so I sent him home with a reading list of some of my favorites. Again, that spike in sales is all due to your humble mentee and sycophant, David

From: Linda Bierds <lbiards@u.washington.edu>
Subject: Re: me the mentor
Date: November 25, 2013 5:37:46 PM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Hi, you two,

Well, that's one lovely piece Mr. Laskin wrote. (But, hey, you hug ME!) His affection--and admiration--for you is so strong.

We're just fine, although more stressed than we've been in quite a while. At least I am. I must be getting older (can that be?)--just can't seem to juggle as many tasks as I used to.

We miss you! We're heading to Camano tomorrow, then in to Fred's for Thanksgiving, then back to Camano if the furnace holds out. We have to have it replaced on Dec. 13th, but the furnace guy says that it might limp through the turkey holiday. What about meeting for dinner at our Italian place on Tuesday the 3rd or Tuesday the 10th? It's just been far too long since we've traded stories.

I've just finished uploading 15 letters of recommendation! Fie on them! Too many for one sitting but I'm determined to clear out my backlog and free some days to complete a poem that I've been working on that looks at, ahem, pigeon wings using the Fibonacci sequence of numbers. I've been working far too long on it--possibly ever since I saw you last, which is far too long.

We don't have much email service at the cabin, but I'll have my cell phone on a lot of the time, so call and let us know how Italian food sounds to you.

Happy Thanksgiving, luvs.

Linda

On Tue, 19 Nov 2013, carol doig wrote:

Hi, pals. Shunting modesty aside, I thought you'd get a kick out of seeing this blog (link attached there in the tweety message) David Laskin did about me for the PNBA website. Told him 3 times not to spend his time that way, but hey, the man could not be stopped. How you doing, you two? We need to get together after Thanksgiving (you have your traditional date with Fred etc., right? If not, let us know and we'll welcome you to our usual table), if for no other reason than that there is a Christmas present all wrapped up awaiting you.
much love,

Ivan

Begin forwarded message:

From: laskin.david@gmail.com
Date: November 18, 2013 10:08:41 AM PST
To: "Carol Doig" <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Fw: Tegan Tigani (@ttigani) mentioned you on Twitter!
Reply-To: laskin.david@gmail.com

I think if you follow the link embedded in this tweet you will find my blog post on someone you know and love. I am in Boston - mid 60s and balmy. DLSent via BlackBerry by AT&T

From: "Tegan Tigani (Twitter)" <notify@twitter.com>
Date: Mon, 18 Nov 2013 17:41:42 +0000
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Tegan Tigani (@ttigani) mentioned you on Twitter!

[ribbon.png]

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: talking your learned head off
Date: December 5, 2013 3:43:33 PM PST
To: david laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



Whew, indeed, you are back from Buffler, as them mountain men used to call the critter. Welcome to terra firma for a while. Yeah, I think you're right to take on the Whatcom gig, ignoring the (lack of) money in tis situation. It'll raise your profile in what I think is the second most important reading constituency in the state, thanks to Western, Whatcom CC, and Chuck and Dee Robinson's Village Books itself. We've found just being around Chuck, a bookman supreme, is worth it. So go, pull something out the files and don't drive yourself crazy with super-preparation--won't quite a lot of your genealogical how-I-did-it serve?

On the same topic of honed speaking gigs, since you've decided you like literary thespianism up there in front of an actual crowd, I'd suggest your speaking agent or publisher get on the stick to try land you into Arts & Lecture series, maybe in connection with the Family paperback? Here in town, although the lying-in-their-teeth bastards claim not to take local folk (hello, David Wagoner), but more importantly I'd say, places like San Francisco and Portland. Gigs like that would get you both notice in new geographic areas and establish you at that level of speaker lineup, where you belong. If you're gonna try on this, have Penguin get on the case pretty soon, particularly with San Francisco, which I think fills up early. Again, there's only pocket change in it, but good big new audiences for your opus pocus. Or maybe opi poci--I'd spread the assignment to talk some about Children's Blizzard somewhat too, given the chance.

This mentoring is plumb exhausting, to the point where I must beg leave to go dress up and head downtown to buy a refreshing piece of art. Not, alas, from the magic pocket of you buddy Braseth, but a small(ish) sculpture Carol and I have put a reserve on at Tony Angell's opening at Foster-White tonight. Mark and Lou Damborg are packing us down there from their house, gonna have dinner at a place they know (and they do know 'em), and then, barring catastrophe, blow a few thou on this nifty bronze of a flight of loons skimming the water, or in our case, we hope our big living room bookcase. Will keep you informed. And yes, let's get social before the holidays consume us, although I don't have any more idea that that at the moment.

More anon.
Ivan

From: laskin.david@gmail.com
Subject: **Re: kudos to us!**
Date: December 8, 2013 7:16:05 AM PST
To: "Carol Doig" <cddoig@comcast.net>
Reply-To: laskin.david@gmail.com

Fabulous. We are staying at the Davenport on a crazy mission to acquire another dog. Don't blame me - I am just along on Kate's wild ride. Home later today - will tell the tale and introduce you to the new pup (Gloria!) soon. Hey we should stand Ms Gwinn to a fancy libation! David

-----Original Message-----

From: Carol Doig
To: Laskin, David
Subject: kudos to us!
Sent: Dec 8, 2013 6:16 AM

Good morning, fellow writer of a best book of the year, according to the incontrovertible Seattle Times (aka Mary Ann Gwinn). Not bad for a couple of laborers at the skunkworks, hmm?

--Ivan

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: hobnobbery yesteerday
Date: November 25, 2013 8:44:42 AM PST
To: david laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



Thanks for providing the wheels yesterday, pal, and for the brief tug into Braseth's cosmic orbit. I apologize for not getting to something I fully intended to do, which was to cite you to Annie as a folk hero of the Dakotas because of The Children's Blizzard. That might have engaged/loosened her up somewhat more, although I think we all did well enough. I am glad that you got in on yesterday's soiree or whatever it was, as a literary historian. And wasn't the grub great!

Best,
Ivan

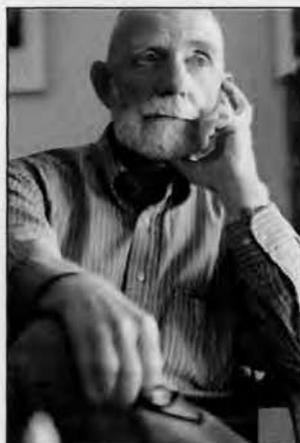
p.s. Next time, if you get out from behind the potted palm, maybe you'll have a chance to be introduced to Mahatma Gandhi or Greta Garbo or whoever else John spots in the lobby. I figure Annie and I now are in Mimi's will, we hit it off so astonishingly with Ms. Gates in those twenty nanoseconds. You betcha.

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The Voice in My Head: Ivan Doig as Neighbor, Friend, and Mentor

AN ESSAY BY DAVID LASKIN



Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig lives and writes about a mile and a half from where I live and write – but there are times, and now is one of them, when it feels like he has taken up residence in my home office. I swear he’s standing right behind me, shaking his head and muttering unprintable things under his breath. I know Ivan reads most of what I write (he’s been force fed my last three books by blurb-hungry editors and publicists), and I’m acutely aware of how high his standards are. I cannot count the number of sentences I have deleted on the dead certainty that Ivan would judge them flabby, flaccid, fake, strained, insufficiently researched, high falutin’, or just plain cruddy.

Would Ivan cringe? I ask myself – and out it goes.

In my years of writing, I have learned to silence many a voice inside my head: The purse-lipped aunt who once asked, “What do YOU have to write about?”; the block-buster blusterer who told me to pursue only book ideas in which “a lot people die”; the academic second-guesser who sniffed that unless you’ve “read everything” you have no business writing about it.

But Ivan’s is an internal voice I welcome. Ivan manages to be exacting and supportive at the same time. He does not suffer fools; he does not gush or hug or high-five; I’d estimate that he keeps at least two-thirds of what he’s thinking to himself. What he likes he praises; what he doesn’t like he doesn’t mention, the assumption being that we both know there is always room for improvement.

If memory serves, Ivan and I first came in contact after I reviewed his 1996 novel *Bucking the Sun* for the *Washington Post*. A postcard arrived (typed on a typewriter but with no sign of having been curled through a roller – a trick

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he has never revealed) thanking me for the review and remarking over the fact that we shared the same zip code. Ivan guards his privacy; I was in awe of my famous neighbor – so there was a bit of tap-dancing before we took it to the next step and actually spoke by phone. I was nervous and voluble; Ivan was measured, frank and collegial. We discovered we had a couple of friends and contacts in common. We edged, tripped, slid and finally settled into friendship.

But friendship doesn't quite capture the flavor of our book-centric rapport.

Ivan is invariably the first person I call when I find myself in need of professional guidance. Trouble with an over-reading editor? Big organizing offering copious flattery but puny pay? Lousy review – NO review – during review? Call Ivan and the good news always feels better than the bad news becomes bearable, if not downright comic.



David Laskin

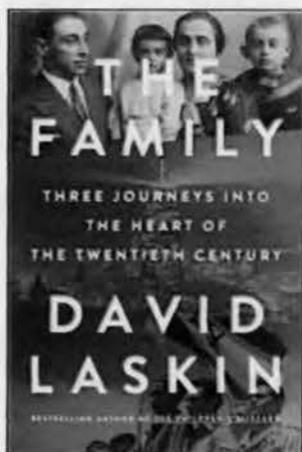
Does this mean I can claim Ivan as my mentor? *Man, I can hear him barking.* "An experienced and trusted counselor," how the Compact OED defines mentor. "From the root (ment-) to remember, think, counsel, etc." If I had Ivan's

knack for braiding the erudite into the quotidian (the character Morrie Morgan has got to be Doig's alter ego hiding behind some extra facial hair), I'd work in the fact that the original Mentor was a noble Ithacan whose identity the goddess Athena borrowed when she came down to, well, mentor Odysseus' son Telemachus.

Never mind. Ivan is the experienced, trusted counselor par excellence. And the disguise part is strangely apt as well. His gruff, bluff manner hides fathomless generosity. When Ivan twinkles or teases or hums under his breath, it means he's put in a good word for you behind your back. When the good deed surfaces and you try to thank him, you get a crooked half smile, a shrug, a hasty "Happy to help" – and the subject is changed.

A couple of snapshots from the Doig album of mentorship. My new book *The Family* – the true story of the three radically diverging paths that my mother's family followed in the 20th century – had a rather rocky genesis. I submitted the proposal to the publisher that had done my previous two books and they held onto it for an unconscionable amount of time while I twisted in the wind. Idiotically superstitious, I never disclose new book ideas even to friends and family until the deal is done – but in this case I broke down, called Ivan, sketched in the concept and confided how frustrating it was to be interminably on hold. "You've got a terrific book idea and you know it," was Ivan's immediate response. "Quit waiting and start writing."

I plunged in and soon got a nice contract from Penguin (one of whose imprints currently publishes Ivan). Advance money in hand, I traveled to Israel where one branch of the family came to rest (branch #2 immigrated to the US at the turn of the last century and founded the Maidenform Bra Company; the third



branch perished in the Holocaust). Not long after that first research trip, I was sitting, drink in hand, in Ivan's living room droning on about my struggle to incorporate a few choice quotes on the psychology of early Zionist pioneers from some high-toned academic study. "Don't quote," Ivan told me point blank. "Tell *the story*. Readers want to know what happened to your family – not the insights of some academic. Save that for the footnotes."

I went home, summoned the manuscript onto my computer screen, and deleted every sentence that began "As Professor Suchandso wrote ..." At a stroke I had taken out yards of slack and tightened the narrative focus by several critical notches.

I usually hate unsolicited advice – but I've taken every turn Ivan has steered me into and never gone wrong yet.

Just the other day we were having lunch and I brought up the subject of envy – the plague of writers with newly published books. How did he feel when a bit of fashionable fluff by some whippersnapper Montanan by way of Malibu topped his latest opus on the bestseller list? "Look at it this way," Ivan rumbled, "the more money the publishers earn, the more there is in the pot for the rest of us." Never thought of it that way.

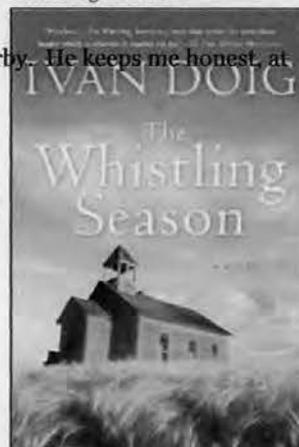
But wasn't there *anyone* whose success has gotten under his skin? Ivan stopped to ponder. He finally allowed that there was one recent bestselling nonfiction author (I'll leave out any identifying details, as I'm sure Ivan would prefer me to) who annoyed the hell out of him by making a couple of narrative claims that strained credulity.

Ivan in a nutshell. As long as you're scrupulous, as long as you do your homework, as long as you work hard and write well and don't sling the bull – Ivan is behind you all the way. Fudge, fib, or hang even the shadow of a toenail over the snake-pit of plagiarism and you'll see that lopsided smile turn into a fixed icy frown faster than you can say *The Whistling Season*.

That's another thing I like about having Ivan nearby. He keeps me honest, at times he keeps me sane, and he always makes me proud to work at this crazy trade.

Since I'm talking about Ivan here, let me call it a profession. "Professional" is high praise indeed in Ivan's book – and I can honestly say that he is the most professional writer I have ever known or ever hope to know.

If I Ivan Doig counts you a fellow professional, you've made it. You've cleared a hurdle, you've lived up to a standard, you've got a seat at the table – and by God don't screw up the next time you set fingers to keyboard.



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reading, and
the call of
books."

—*Kansas City Star*
(Top 100 books
of 2012)



Advertising information

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Tegan Tigani (@ttigani) mentioned you on Twitter!
Date: November 18, 2013 3:10:52 PM PST
To: laskin.david@gmail.com



Hey there, Hubster for the day. It took about all our five college degrees to do it, but we've just got onto The Blog and what can I say except, wowie. It's just lovely, and I thank you from the bottom of my bluff old heart. Owe you drinks, hugs, tickles, when you get back--for now, soak in that Boston balm as a storm (likely minor) is a-movin' in here. You're probably about to sing for your supper back there, so good luck and 100% best wishes as ever. See you soon--let's gab by phone when you're over airplanitis.

gruffly yours,
Ivan

On Nov 18, 2013, at 10:08 AM, laskin.david@gmail.com wrote:

I think if you follow the link embedded in this tweet you will find my blog post on someone you know and love. I am in Boston - mid 60s and balmy. DL
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T
From: "Tegan Tigani (Twitter)" <notify@twitter.com>
Date: Mon, 18 Nov 2013 17:41:42 +0000
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Tegan Tigani (@ttigani) mentioned you on Twitter!

David Laskin,
You were mentioned in a Tweet!

Tegan Tigani
@ttigani
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I love this essay by @davidlaskin about Ivan Doig. #hoorayauthors #pnbanwbooklovers.org/2013/11/18/the...

05:41 PM - 18 Nov 13

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Twitter, Inc. 1355 Market St., Suite 900 San Francisco, CA 94103

From: laskin.david@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Tegan Tigani (@ttigani) mentioned you on Twitter!
Date: November 18, 2013 3:55:10 PM PST
To: "Carol Doig" <cddoig@comcast.net>
Reply-To: laskin.david@gmail.com

Hey damp friends - glad my ramblings were acceptable. Am feeling pretty gruff bluff myself just now having spent last half hour careening in cab driven by Haitian who was as familiar with outskirts of Boston as I am with Port O Prince. 3 calls and emergency plea with agent's husband to email directions landed me in cavernous old age home where I am about to sing but I doubt I'll get any supper not to mention a shot of booze which is what I'm really craving. Ah the glamour of it all! Your humble fan and slow learner, David
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

-----Original Message-----

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Date: Mon, 18 Nov 2013 15:10:52
To: <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Tegan Tigani (@ttigani) mentioned you on Twitter!

Hey there, Hubster for the day. It took about all our five college degrees to do it, but we've just got onto The Blog and what can I say except, wowie. It's just lovely, and I thank you from the bottom of my bluff old heart. Owe you drinks, hugs, tickles, when you get back--for now, soak in that Boston balm as a storm (likely minor) is a-movin' in here. You're probably about to sing for your supper back there, so good luck and 100% best wishes as ever. See you soon--let's gab by phone when you're over airplanitis.

gruffly yours,
Ivan

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You were mentioned in a Tweet!

Tegan Tigani
@ttigani
Follow

I love this essay by @davidlaskin about Ivan Doig. #hoorayauthors #pnbanwbooklovers.org/2013/11/18/the...

05:41 PM - 18 Nov 13

From: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Fame is fleeting
Date: November 7, 2013 4:25:47 PM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Ivan, The only thing worse than losing some luster on the crown would have been making false claims on my own behalf. I guess Ms. Gwinn got so carried away by the narrative prowess of yers truly that her journalistic acumen was temporarily dulled. Well, even a retraction/correction gets my name out there -- indeed gets OUR names out there -- and it's always an honor to be the junior partner of the stardust twins. Thanks for a great lunch and gabfest yesterday -- the next one's on your pal, David

On Thu, Nov 7, 2013 at 9:05 AM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

David, hi again this morning, getting to be a ritual. I didn't want to say anything and take the shine off your crown, but Tony Angell (3 of them there awards to his name, just like you anointed folks) took it on himself to seek a wee bit of correction on the state book awards numbers, and so, according to Chris Higashi's message here, Mary Ann will be taking some puff out of your sails and Egans's and whoever the other guy was, with a correction. Hey, not to worry, with 4 or 5 years of hard work you just might bypass Tony and me, right?

Great lunch and gab yesterday.

Ivan

(Sent this morn)

Chris, hi. No big deal about the award numbers, definitely no offense taken. I'm somewhat used to being shrouded back in awards history, as the PNBA absolutely cannot get the right digit (6) on my record number there--and I'm a longstanding dues-paying member! Anyway, thanks for catching up to the record, literally. I hope all is going well with you in the fantastic parade of authors through your realm.

Best,
Ivan

On Nov 6, 2013, at 4:38 PM, Chris Higashi wrote:.,

Dear Ivan, My apologies! The Washington Center for the Book assumed responsibility for the book awards in 1999-2000. My own records go back to 1987. In that period you had one award, as did Tony Angell..

I went searching through stuff transferred from the Washington State Library and found a pdf of a document titled: Washington State Library - Governor's Writers Day - Award Winning Authors and Books.

I discovered that Tony Angell had three awards. You had a record five!

Mary Ann Gwinn is running a correction. Again, I apologize.

All best, Chris

Chris Higashi ■ The Seattle Public Library, Program Manager ■ Washington Center for the Book, 1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104-1109, V: 206-386-4650 ■ C: 206-898-5316, I'm reading Donna Tartt's The Goldfinch

From: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: dishing Mother Penguin
Date: November 5, 2013 5:27:08 PM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

I'll be there. DL

On Tue, Nov 5, 2013 at 3:02 PM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

Woohoo, you really done good last night. A throng, a veritable throng! Yup, we're on each other's dance ticket for tomorrow, and hell no, I won't turn down a chauffeur. So thee pick me up 11:20, OK?
Best, Ivan

On Nov 5, 2013, at 2:54 PM, David Laskin wrote:

> Ivan, Hey great to see you pop up from depths of the crowd last night -- cool event, no? Just double checking that we are still on for lunch tomorrow. You'll swing by around 11:20? Or I'm happy to do the driving. Say the word.

> Best, David

>

>

> On Wed, Oct 30, 2013 at 8:16 AM, David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com> wrote:

> Schedule checked and double checked and the 6th it is! DL

>

>

> On Wed, Oct 30, 2013 at 7:33 AM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

> OK, media star, the 6th.--Ivan

>

> On Oct 30, 2013, at 7:27 AM, David Laskin wrote:

>

>> Ivan, Call me disorganized, call me punch drunk - but I just checked my schedule and I see I've got a taped radio interview at noon on Tues. Nov. 5 and another one at 2 PM. Sorry -- should have checked before hitting reply. So scratch off the 5th. Nov. 6, 7 and 8 are pretty much wide open -- so take your pick. Same plan - assuming you can swing one of those days. Sorry. Lemme know. David

>>

>>

>> On Wed, Oct 30, 2013 at 7:03 AM, David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com> wrote:

>> Deal. By the way, last night went great. Details at lunch -- but in brief, big crowd, lotsa love, really nice space up on Capitol Hill. No microphone so yours truly is good and hoarse but otherwise delighted. DL

>>

>>

>> On Wed, Oct 30, 2013 at 6:58 AM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

>> Great, how about Nov. 5, Chanterelle in Edmonds 11:30 when their lunch menu starts, unless you have a zingier place to nominate? I'd pick you up 10 minutes beforehand.--Ivan

>>

>>

>> On Oct 29, 2013, at 5:16 PM, David Laskin wrote:

>>

>>> Ivan, got your card -- let's by all means have lunch and talk Penguin. Next week pretty wide open (except the 4th). Wish me luck -- I'm off in a few minutes to speak on Capitol Hill. Good interview with Mr. Scher this afternoon. David

>>

>>

>>

>

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: finale!
Date: October 25, 2013 8:54:53 AM PDT
To: Glory Plata <Glory.Plata@us.penguingroup.com>, rebecca saletan
<Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguingroup.com>, Lily N Rudd
<lily.rudd@us.penguingroup.com>



Hi, dear trio--The final event of the booktour, the LitCrawl kickoff at Town Hall, went really quite well, given that the 'Crawlers didn't seem to get the word out about their city-wide event(s) very widely. Audience of 100, and a vigorous signing afterward. Mary Ann Gwinn was great as ever in our on-stage q-&a, and I made sure to get a plug in for her "Well Read" TV show. Everybody went home happy including, I guess, me. By the way, we sold a pretty good number of 'The Bartender's Tale (nice news about the Indie readers' group recommend yesterday, thanks) along with Sweet Thunder, and the Elliott Bay bookseller handling things said Thunder is going great at their store.

Glory, the previous day's KUOW interview with Steve Scher went slick as ever, but the bad news is, his on-air time is now segmented into 9-12 minutes per topic in a magazine format the station has stupidly gone to. A real shame, as he's a great interviewer and personality and deserves the airtime he's had for years.

Becky, a heads-up for you about this Steve Scher. I learned he's written a comic novel during his sabbatical earlier this year, and knowing him a bit as I do from these public radio gigs, I have a hunch it might be worth a peek. He's smart as a whip, quick and funny in person, and savvy enough about writers/writing to know what he's doing on the page, I'd guess. I didn't let on I'd mention him and his ms to you--maybe it's spoken for, I don't know, our pre-air conversation didn't get that far--so there's no expectation/obligation of any kind, but I can tell you I think he's a talent who maybe can translate a knack for tales onto the page. Enough said.

Thanks for the good work, pals. Now back to the writing part of being a writer.

Best,
Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **The Willows, munched but not devoured**
Date: October 18, 2013 10:19:18 AM PDT
To: Glory Plata <Glory.Plata@us.penguingroup.com>, rebecca saletan
<Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguingroup.com>, Lily N Rudd
<lily.rudd@us.penguingroup.com>



So, all of you with envious appetites; here's the quick rundown on our adventure to the fancy-schmancy Willows Inn:

--The book event went great: 19 people (Village Books and The Willows hold these session to 20; Rick Steves is the next attraction) who paid the fairly sizable fare to listen to me and eat the grub. They each got a Sweet Thunder, and we sold some more of those and backlist besides; good spenders, this bunch.

--The accommodations, however, were none too accommodating. The Willows "inn" turns out to be cabins etc., and our "cottage" (meaning old and small, and up a hill from the parking lot; much schlepping to handle our baggage!) we could get by with for one squeezed-in night (Carol nobly taking the futon) but not two. So after a really useful tour of the half-acre veggie farm that supplies the fancy-schmancy chef the next morning, we headed for home and our space. Thus we don't get to report on eating, I don't know, salmon heads and dandelion seeds or something. The event-night dinner and breakfast we had were both terrific cooking, though. Lummi Island incidentally is about as far north as you can go on the West Coast and still be in the U.S.; an old resort island, reached by a six-minute ride on a small ferry that toodles back and forth. Maybe it's something like Block Island or others of those off New England; lots of summer/second homes, good scenery, isolated as hell by Doig standards. It was fun enough, but now we've done that.

Speaking of doing and getting done: couple of things about next week's finale event--LitCrawl--please, Glory:

--Would you email me the KUOW part of the schedule again (just that). I pretty well know the KUOW routine, but should check to see if anything has changed.

--On the actual night, 5 PM is awfully early to arrive for that 6 PM event; can we change that to 5:30 with the car company, do you think?

I have just hit up Jane Hodges of the LitCrawl committee for talking points to use on the Steve Sher show; didn't even have the schedule of who else is participating until Carol managed to find it online, not real easily done. Anyway, we'll go and march through it, with Mary Ann Gwinn's presence a guiding light.

Nifty news about the regional bestsellerdoms; showing some legs, as they say in Hollywood, eh?

Happy weekend all.
Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Friday
Date: October 23, 2013 10:12:07 AM PDT
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David, hi from foggy cold Innis Arden--the Left Coast seems to be in a weather funk. Miami, yech!--we're decades ahead of you in finding it a bummer. Way back when, we were sent to the Miami Book Fair at Thanksgiving time, and found the damn town was a constant 85 degrees, 85% humidity, and about a 15 mph wind battering the weather into us. Didn't sell many books either, though that did not seem to be the point of the Fair. Dan Jenkins and George V. Higgins turned into sniggering high school sophomores when they read together. At her turn, Patricia Hightower got up, negligently opened a book and drawled in Britspeak, "Well, I wonder what I ought to read." Harold Brodkey still was swanning around with that eternal awful novel he was spending a couple of decades writing(?). I was paired with Noel Perrin, not as bad as it could have been. But the one thing Carol and I wanted to do down there was go on to Key West, and wouldn't you goddamn know, here came a hurricane warning for the Keys. We got the first plane for Seattle we could.

Book Passage: even if you don't sell much at the reading, try to savor the place and tune in to the store folks--we thought it was a terrific store, one to have on our side down through time. Also, we had good grub at Il Fornaio restaurant in the fancy Town Center shopping mall a few minutes from the bookstore, if you get the chance. And speaking of grub and such, the Laskin Birthday Blowout will be a kick, no matter what whimwhams of the schedule. See you there, with hugs and tickles.

Hang in there.
Ivan

On Oct 23, 2013, at 8:46 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Dear Ivan and Carol, Greetings from foggy cold SF. This war horse has 2 more nights on the road, then I return home to collapse into the arms of Kate and the paws of Paddy - and into a barrel of booze that we will share with you and David and Marjorie (Alice and Will may come too). 6 o'clock is the time Kate has fixed on. It may be a bit chaotic since I arrive home around 2 PM and I doubt Kate will show much before the guests but we will pull it off. Can't wait to return. Will share tour stories then -- but in brief, it WAS going well until Miami. That town may have a large Jewish population but they sure made themselves scarce on Monday night. We'll see about Book Passage and Mrs. D -- no local media to speak of so my expectations are low.

Cheerio, David

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **No illusion--the proof is in the poetry, and vice versa!**
Date: October 15, 2013 4:27:03 PM PDT
To: linda bierds <lbierds@uw.edu>



Linda and Sydney, a hasty hi--Just wanted to say we're tickled pink to have received the proof version of Roget's Illusion today. Just in time, as we are about to go off on an uncommon gig set up by Village Books in Bellingham--2 nights (and meals!) at the fancy-schmancy inn/restaurant on Lummi Island, The Willows, where I'm to do a reading, q-and-a, and "conversation" tomorrow night with about 20 people who're paying \$150 a head (mostly for the grub, is my guess). You bet, we'll take them poems with us. And I've been remiss in not saying how wowed we were by your appearance--both poetic and nicely caricatured--in Smithsonian. Looking good, Ms. B.

Among other breathless pursuits, we've been to San Francisco and Portland to hold forth to booksellers--around 250 total--at their fall shows. Good stuff, and Carol got to go with me on publisher's money. Let's catch up with each other's doings pretty soon--next week is hellish busy, but we're available to meet someplace for a meal after that.

Love,
Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: catching up with the Thunder
Date: October 9, 2013 9:25:07 AM PDT
To: Glory Plata <Glory.Plata@us.penguingroup.com>, rebecca saletan <Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguingroup.com>, Lily N Rudd <lily.rudd@us.penguingroup.com>



Hi, everyone. Carol and I are safely home and can report on our Left Coast book swing. I frankly have to say it went counter to Murphy's Law: in this case, everything that could go wrong went right.

A bulletin before the details, though. The Edmonds store, our little indie we chose for the launch signing, as of a week ago had sold 119 Thunders. We can safely say, that worked.

We lucked out in both trade shows, and gave luck a little help at the PNBA.

--All 4 of us who spoke at the Northern California show were professional, respectful, prepared, funny to a degree--not a dud among us, which you know is not always the case--and the audience of a hundred or so was wowed. As you may know, those presentations were flat-out pitches for our books, but we all got pieces of our lives into it as well--I'd say a classic of gigs of that kind, don't we wish we could bottle it.

--Similarly the PNBA went really well, with a little backstage massaging. (And I refer here not only to the blessed presence of the hand masseuse, named Aspen, who was there again as a volunteer and saved my signing hand halfway through the mass of books). I got to the moderator ahead of time and told him I had 5 minutes of prepared remarks, could we each start with that much time and, ahem, be timed? Just between those of us here in the chat room, Thom Chambliss and I had long since discussed the Barry Lopez propensity to talk on and on--and I do count Barry a friend, but one with a lot of philosophical lungpower when he gets going. So, I nicely did my shtick, just under 5 min.--the topic was how we had attained backlist eminence, and I recounted Doig and for that matter Saletan history in how we've gone from me doing 40-50 handselling events per book to the Skype era, all of it maintaining that blessed alphabetical residence on bookstore shelves, Dickens, Doig, Dostoevsky--and Jane Kirkpatrick, quite a pro at speaking, did her piece. Barry's turn, and as usual he was deeply thinking and just about to soar off into cosmic territory when the moderator's phone timer played a nice little tune, and Barry kind of blinked, said "I heard that," and that was that. Thom Chambliss was rapturous afterward, saying it was the best event PNBA has ever had (and he's been there, what, 20 years or so); I don't know about that, but it was a helluva hit.

All in all, between the 2 trade shows, we got to dance our Swan Lake in front of at least 250 booksellers. Mission accomplished, eh?

The booksignings were capped by the sellout crowd of 200+ at Powells's, but both Book Passages signings were also full houses and healthy sales. Incidentally, that Corte Madera store is simply superb; it has made itself a keystone of the community, and the turnout at 1 o'clock on a gorgeous California Saturday reflected loyalists to the store as well as loyalists to Morrie and me.

Couple of last things. Glory, both escorts were terrific, couldn't have been better. I hope you've received Bob Wilkins' pix from the Bay Area doings--let us know if you haven't and we'll forward 'em--but if you have them, could you see that Vicki Congdon gets that one of her and me? Vicki looks terrific in it, while I look, alas, like me. Also, an email from Mary Ann Gwinn that we caught up with too late said my "Well Read" segment was on TV last night; we're going to try to watch it on the Seattle Times blog.

All (and I know it's plenty, but I hope this helps us keep track) for now; back to laundry and answering emails. Thanks for everything, especially the invaluable company of Carol on this trip--Frisco and selling books both, she was in 7th heaven.

Best,
Ivan

PS: Just now caught up your email about "Well Read", glad to have that link.

From: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: if you see
Date: August 28, 2013 7:40:29 AM PDT
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Ivan,

Here is a link to Dan's piece (though they dropped the great sidebar that has definitions of many more rhetorical terms and suggestions for further reading -- next time we get together I'll bring the paper copy which has the whole shebang).

<http://bulletin.kenyon.edu/x4478.xml>

As for Looking Glass and Chief Joseph, not yet available online -- but should be soon since it's in the Sept. issue. "Ho for Oregon" would be great to have detailed (I think this is the correct auto painting lingo) on our car. Though in some neighborhoods Ho might be mistaken for a worker in Venus Alley.

My mom used to rifle through my dad's closet and remove ragged, saggy, disreputable items of clothing that he insisted on wearing, though he could clearly afford new duds. Kate and I seem to be heading down that path of marital madness. Looking forward to our next laff fest (oh and speaking of blow hard geezers waiting to ambush you at Hearthstone -- remind me to tell you about the faculty senate spouse who, on the excuse of having read one of my books, buttonholed me for HOURS at a recent shindig to lecture/free associate on American history topics of interest only to him -- he followed us out to the car, running his mouth the whole time -- we practically removed his still moving lips when closing the car windows!). The perils of working the writer's trade....David

On Wed, Aug 28, 2013 at 7:01 AM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

Half the laughing and an equal share of delight is always our reward around you two. Glad last night worked for everybody. Hey, couple of other things: how about sending the link to your Nez Perce piece, and your bro Dan's rhetoric piece in whatever form. Gotta read Dan, as the man said, to find out if I've actually been talking prose all my life.

Carol and I have a respite from the booktour trail (funny how we're starting to refer to it as something like the Oregon Trail, isn't it, long, hard, and in your case plenty continental) until the Sat. after Labor Day, U Book Store and that same afternoon something I think I'm going to regret, the Hearthstone at Green Lake with the U Book Store's new events person. I am not going to take kindly to some gruff geezer telling me how much he knows about Butte (or pretty much anything else). Will duly report. I think you two are about to go Ho, for Oregon! Have you thought about painting that on the side of your car, as they used to do on the covered wagons? Anyway, have fun, relax if you possibly can, and we'll catch up with you when you're back, tanned and mellow and bespokenly suited.

Best,

Vito, here to set you up, paisan (AKA Ivan)

On Aug 28, 2013, at 6:33 AM, David Laskin wrote:

> a huge bump in sales today, you've got me to thank -- I just tweeted your fantastic event last night. Ivan you are a pro down to your fingertips -- a model for us all. Thanks much for the foundational shout out and both of you, thanks for the post event refreshments (and for putting up with the Laskin-O'Neill comedy hour). If Kate has her way, I'll be doing a pre-tour fashion show (and doubling the value of Nordstrom stock). Now that will be something to tweet about. Best, David

Before we get to the questions, and maybe even some answers, I think we have time for a couple of sidelights. Anything to do with Butte usually has sidelights.

Over the weekend, Carol and I were visited by a friend from Montana, who brought the news that Butte has its own booze again. In the old days, each Montana city had its own brewery-- Highlander Beer made in Missoula, Kessler in Helena, Great Falls Select, and of course, Butte Beer, which was done in by Prohibition. But now, in this era when brew pubs are the mark of ever-higher civilization, Butte has Headframe Spirits, a distillery featuring beverages such as Neversweat Bourbon and Destroying

Angel Unaged Whiskey. (Put on cap.) It's maybe not coincidental that the caps the Headframe Distillery gives out are already a little cockeyed here, where the lettering is, as if the contents of your head have shifted.

The other thing I wanted to mention is not really a sidelight, for me it's a highlight--the presence of my writing buddies **Sweet Thunder** is dedicated to--David Laskin and David Williams, and their partners in life who share the dedication and deep friendship with Carol and me, their wives, Kate O'Neill and Marjorie Kittle. Give us the royal wave, you guys, so people can have a look at you. The Davids and I have been writing books as fast as our

fingers and heads can go--David Laskin with *The Long Way*

Home and now with his big book that will be out in October--*The Family*, the true story of the three branches of his forebears, one of which pioneered in Israel, another that was engulfed by the Holocaust, and the American branch which included David's great-aunt who was in on the foundation, dare I say, of the Maidenform Bra company. David Williams, who can read messages in stone thanks to his geological training, recently gave us *Cairns*, the Mountaineers book about meaningful piles of rock, and is working on an important book for the UW press about how Seattle has remade itself time and again with the Denny Regrade

and filling the tideflats and so on. The Davids, both professional writers to the hilt, are such good company in the writing life that I tinkered a little poetry into the dedication on their behalf, our behalf. I've written song lyrics or snatches of poetry in all of my novels, and this time it begins right up front, in the dedication, with an adaptation from an old ballad, "And I worked at the weaver's trade." In the case of the three of us, I transformed that to "And we worked at the writer's trade, Many a magical book we made." We're going to try to keep making them.

Well, I had better get to work on your questions. Who's first?

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: multiple plugs
Date: July 15, 2013 7:03:29 AM PDT
To: laskin.david@gmail.com



Just quickly before our n'hood walk: St. Ex, yes! We're longtime fans here, back to Night Flight and Flight to Arras. (Can't get with The Little Prince somehow, though.) We have Stacy Schiff's whopper biography of St. Ex, which shows him to be a real mess as a human being (and an erratic pilot, at best), but could the SOB ever write.

Congrats on being a Twitter, uhm, not twit but whatever the noun is.

excelsior,

Ivan

On Jul 14, 2013, at 5:50 PM, laskin.david@gmail.com wrote:

Thanks, pal. I heard it went live Fri night from someone in my Italian class who received it as a tweet from nytimes. O the times we live in. Lots of comments - my biggest fans are those who were there; they uniformly thank me. So I guess I got it right. Btw have you read "wind sand and stars" by st exupery? Just started and I am under its spell. I bet you know it.
Cheers, David
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

-----Original Message-----

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Date: Sun, 14 Jul 2013 15:58:28
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: multiple plugs

Whopper of a piece in the NYT, man! And a helluva good one, well written, (you said it right: chiseled prose) with intelligence, enterprise, and imagination behind it. Our Helena friend, Marcella, came across it online without our prompting, and e-mailed to say that from her 2 trips to Rome on Rick Steves tours, you hit it exactly right, WWII was never mentioned. So, great job not just on this Sunday, but for posterity.

Just curious: do you know why the Times ran the piece now, instead of holding it closer to Oct.?

And you're some great plugger as well; thanks for the boost in Val E's blog. I'm so grateful I'm gonna slip you 50 bucks next time I see you. (Coincidentally enough, we owe you a similar sum for Sarah's Manhattan walkabout.)

How about this weather? I've been in the garden all day, and am now about to kick back with the dubious pleasure of the NY Times Book Review. Don't miss the truly awful advice/examples on fictional characterization by somebody named Silas House in the Sunday Review. A heart gone to seed, like a shriveled potato, with shoots of kindness growing from it? As The New Yorker would say say, hold that metaphor.

all best,

Ivan

On Jul 11, 2013, at 10:33 AM, David Laskin wrote:

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: multiple plugs**
Date: July 14, 2013 3:57:12 PM PDT
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



Whopper of a piece in the NYT, man! And a helluva good one, well written, (you said it right: chiseled prose) with intelligence, enterprise, and imagination behind it. Our Helena friend, Marcella, came across it online without our prompting, and e-mailed to say that from her 2 trips to Rome on Rick Steves tours, you hit it exactly right, WWII was never mentioned. So, great job not just on this Sunday, but for posterity.

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all best,

Ivan

On Jul 11, 2013, at 10:33 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Carol and Ivan,

Val Easton did an interview of me for Crosscut in which I managed to plug not only my humble self but Sweet Thunder.

<http://crosscut.com/2013/07/11/books/115483/book-city-david-laskin/>

We will raise a glass to mutual back-scratching soon. Feels good to have emerged from the Nez Perce trail and returned to self-promotion under our pearly gray skies. Speaking of which, don't forget to check me out in Sunday's NYT travel section. Great photos to say nothing of the chiseled prose. DL

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Roget's Illusion cover options (fwd)
Date: July 9, 2013 9:32:54 AM PDT
To: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>



Hi, rock star of the poetry world--

The moth and wheel cover is sensational--Carol says it gets her rousing vote, and I second that. Maybe your best cover since I don't know when, and you've had some good ones. Anyway, big congrats, tell Marian I think it's really classy, and slip in that I'm tickled she crossed paths with my editor Becky there in the big Penguin roost. (Will tell you about that on Sat. if Marian hasn't.)

Things are perking here on the book front, we're trying to keep them from boiling over. Speaking gig offer from Whitman for full (sizable) fee, video trailer being done for Sweet Thunder which I'm to record a short reading for, and the Riverhead publicist just told us she has 300 nice new Sweet Thunders in her office to send out to reviewers.

Really looking forward to Sat.,
Ivan

On Jul 8, 2013, at 1:17 PM, Linda Bierds wrote:

Hi, you two,

I realize that I don't know how to copy the attachment to my documents, so am hoping that if I forward Marian's message to you with the attachments included, you can open them. My choice was the second image: moth within a wheel. I'll explain the allusion/illusion when we see you on Saturday. Let me know if this comes through.

Much love,
Linda

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Mon, 6 May 2013 10:36:56 -0400
From: "Wood, Marian" <Marian.Wood@us.penguin.com>
To: lbierds@u.washington.edu
Cc: "Minnich, Sara" <Sara.Minnich@us.penguin.com>
Subject: FW: Roget's Illusion cover options

I know I like one of these a lot, but the choice is yours. Let me know so I can let marketing and design know.

From: Stark, Kate
Sent: Monday, May 06, 2013 10:30 AM
To: Wood, Marian
Cc: Hasselberger, Richard; Minnich, Sara
Subject: Roget's Illusion cover options

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: good old Kirkus
Date: June 27, 2013 4:17:28 PM PDT
To: wendy smith <smith.wendy@earthlink.net>



Hi, Wendy, happy summer. Would you believe, the Kirkus review arrived today on my birthday--didn't even need candles, the thing was so glowing! My dad and grandmother once worked for an old Scotch sheep rancher who always said "amonoyus" for "anonymous," so by that dance of the tongue Mr./Ms. Amonoyus out there in Kirkusland astutely saw that the name of the game in Sweet Thunder was to keep that baby rolling, plot, plot, plot. It's continually surprising to me how much smarter and shiftier Morrie is than I am. Ah, and Booklist has checked in, too. Bill Ott who has been reviewing my books there since the earth cooled came up with the line we're going to lead my website "What's New" with and I'm gonna try hard as hell to get on the jacket: "Think SHANE but with dueling newspapermen instead of gunfighters." I dunno if it's very bright of me to write a book for which librarians are the prime audience, but so be it. Onward to The Dog Bus, where my prime readers will be Greyhound riders? Yikes.

So we're doing well here here all around. Carol took me out for a terrific b'day lunch and bought me a new coffee maker--basics yet necessities, eh? We hope a shade tree is growing in Brooklyn, and you're all three getting the most out of this pre-college season.

All best,

Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **Sweetening the Thunder**
Date: June 17, 2013 4:34:39 PM PDT
To: david laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David, howdy. Just passing along the pull quote from today's Booklist review of a certain book dedicated to, oh, you know. "Think SHANE, but with dueling journalists instead of gunfighters." Strap on your Underwood, pard, and we'll clean up this town.

Best,

Ivan

17 June '13

Sheffield

Dear Derek--

Hey, tons of congrats on the book of pomes (as Linda Bierds calls 'em) and thanks so much for the beautiful copy. I spotted *Bye Bye* in Poetry mag and emailed Linda--in Rome, of course--about it, so there's another cause for congrats. And as much as I like your poetry--the command of language, the versatility, the sense of a good soul behind the writing on the page--I see you've done the barn chores too, all the submissions to all those journals, and you know I admire that. Well done, man, in every respect, and Orchises did right by you with a spiffy production job.

Over the mountains here, I'm dancing as fast as I can, with a new book coming out just before Labor Day (*Sweet Thunder*, the title swiped as you may recognize from Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream*; always steal from the best, right?) and another one underway. Got a real break today in a good review from the American Library Association's Booklist, with what my editor calls a pull quote that tickles me pink: "Think *Shane*, but with dueling journalists instead of gunfighters."

The arrival of your book prompted me to look back at our *Seattle Review* piece for the first time in years, and I still think we both did a terrific job. Apropos of cosmic mechanicking the language, am enclosing a lingo piece I did for the newsletter of the Dictionary of American Regional English, the amazing U. of Wisconsin project which has produced half a dozen fine fat volumes of the kind of wordmanship we're loony for. I do have a dialectological (yes, the DARE mavens speak of dialectology) knotty self-question, namely are neologisms that I flat-out make up ("swuft" is maybe a e example) dictionary dialect fare? The DARE editors seem to think so, good enough for me, I guess. 67 entries so far, most of them honorably eavesdropped on either in my head or one of them Montana bars or reliably mediocre cafes. Somehow it's a life that's become a living.

Well, that's the kind of thing that keeps me going. Carol and I are chugging along as best we can. Not traveling much; next week I turn 74, damn it. On the other hand, Mozart was twice dead at my age, huh? Sometime when you're over here, give a call to see if I can spring free for lunch. This fall is busy with the oncoming book, but we're hunkered in here all winter, or as they say in the book I'm working on now, in the mode of "Hunch up and take it."

All best wishes,

From: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>
Subject: **Re: sun in Seattle**
Date: May 15, 2013 8:17:37 AM PDT
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Dear Ones,

Well, that's quite an email, Mr. D! Did I ever tell you that I've been saving your letters, cards, notes, etc. for about two decades now? I don't trust the electronic clouds one bit, so will print your emails when I get home and put them in my file. (no printer here).

I'm so happy that you enjoyed Boeing Boeing! I worried that the traffic and parking would cancel any pleasure, but it sounds as if things went splendidly. And congrats on the e-book sales and the good work on the Dog Bus. I love to think of you doing a glass plate negative scene!

All's fine here, but we are mighty homesick. Eleven weeks away is about seven too many. My brother and his wife were here for two weeks--with a five day break at the midway point when they went to the Amalfi coast. They just left on Monday and it's pretty silent around here! (not a bad thing at all, actually, but it was fun to have them here, too.)

Some good news on my book front. Marian sent me two cover designs to choose between and one is a stunner. Exactly what I wanted. I'd send it to you as an attachment if I knew how--but, also, I think that it might take a little explaining so it's more fun to do that in person.

Carol, yes, we received an email from Gary Handwerk about Herb Blau's death. A complete shock to us. He must have known he was gravely ill at his retirement party a few months ago, but you'd never guess it from his actions. I didn't know him well, but admired him.

We have a busy three weeks left here. A two-night trip with the students to towns near Pompeii, several dinners with local writers--and one with Seamus Heaney, who's in town for a reading. It's all a little much for me. I'm so deeply into my Turing now that I just crave quiet time. But it will come soon. And we'll be Off the Road, just as your words about On the Road are being read by the Penguin folks. Can't wait.

Much love to you two,

Linda

--and Syd, who is sitting across the table from me grading papers.

On Sat, 4 May 2013, carol doig wrote:

Hi, you gallivanting two--

Just a brief report to tell you it's mid-70s here, sunny as all get out, and tomorrow & Mon. are forecast into the low 80s. Awful early for this kind of weather, but on the other hand, splitting a beer on our deck this noon while a sailboat race tinkered past, with the still snowcapped peaks of the Olympics beyond, we decided we won't gripe.

Thanks again for those Rep tix--Boeing Boeing was good good, despite being quite an old chestnut. Alison Narver directed and cleverly incorporated the farce elements--not slamming doors in this case, but doors everywhere producing cries of "NO, DON'T GO IN THAT ONE!"--into slick electronics in the swinging bachelor lead's apartment. Revolving pictures of the 3 stewardesses he's canoodling with at once, for instance. Better yet, she incorporated physical comedy to the max. Early in the play, a dweeby guy who seems to be the second banana shows up, old college buddy of the bachelor cashing in on "If you're ever in Paris, look me up." Against his protests, he's talking into staying in the revolving-stewardesses apartment, and first thing we know, he's the pivot of the play (performed by one of the Ashland Shakespeare actors we've seen there), onstage every minute from then on, doing pratfalls, dragging his baggage back and forth across the stage in Chaplinesque exertion!

From: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: SWEET THUNDER -- Penguin Selects Fall 2013
Date: May 26, 2013 10:03:49 PM PDT
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Ivan, Wow -- high fives to us both ! We are in Paestum, site of amazing Doric ruins (Greeks were here before the Romans). Having a most fabulous time, speaking loads of Italian, eating way too much and generally living la dolce vita. Today we head back to Rome, meet up with Em and her boyfriend, six more days of Italic indulgence -- then home to sweet old Shoreline on June 2, the day before Prof O'Neill turns 60. Will phone you when we recover from jet lag and regale you with tales of life in the slow food lane. Meanwhile, thanks for sharing this -- break out here we come! Best, David

On Mon, May 20, 2013 at 12:19 PM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

David--Hey, man, this just in, and if you ain't see it yet, let me be the first to congratulate us both. All of a sudden, we're the Gold Dust Twins at Penguin. Wahoo! See you on th break-out list.

Ivan

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Saletan, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguingroup.com>
Date: May 20, 2013 8:47:55 AM PDT
To: "carol doig" <cddoig@comcast.net>, "Liz Darhansoff" <liz@dvagency.com>
Cc: "Rudd, Lily N" <lily.rudd@us.penguingroup.com>
Subject: FW: SWEET THUNDER -- Penguin Selects Fall 2013

Ivan -- this is a lovely in-house promotion -- see below.

From: Nelson, Christopher (PGI)
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2013 11:40 AM
To: Saletan, Rebecca
Cc: Stark, Kate; Rudd, Lily N
Subject: SWEET THUNDER -- Penguin Selects Fall 2013

It is my great pleasure to let you know that SWEET THUNDER has been chosen for the Penguin Selects program for Fall 2013.

In case you aren't familiar with Penguin Selects, it's a program that started with the Fall 2012 list in which the Sales Department selects six titles from each season's list that they want to highlight to accounts for their breakout potential. We produce 1,000 slipcases containing a galley for each of the titles and they are sent to top independents, the Barnes & Noble Penguin stores, top Books-A-Million stores and select major libraries across the country. In addition the sales reps each receive a quantity to hand out both to their local libraries. We produce a designed ecard for the reps to send out their accounts highlighting the titles in the program. The response we have received from accounts in previous seasons has been wonderful. They recognize what being included in the program says about our expectations for the books and, thus, pay even greater attention to them when deciding on orders and promotion.

From: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>
Subject: **Re: Memorial Day weekend, a little sippy of course**
Date: May 29, 2013 9:06:19 AM PDT
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Hi, you two,

Sorry to hear that the weather's sippy there (ours is too, a little) but glad for the Copper River feast! All's fine here, except that our homesickness grows daily. We'll be mighty happy to get on the plane on June 8th.

Yes, we heard about the bridge collapsing. A friend here saw the story online, so we cranked up the laptop and read all about it. We're already planning how we can get to the Mt. Vernon Co-op for our usual dessert after a hike. Actually, first we have to figure out how to get to the hike itself. Probably through Conway.

Ah, it does the homesick heart a world of good just to write Mt. Vernon Co-op!

Luciphrastric, eh? Quite a Scrabble word. Glad to hear that your luciphrastric work has its memories showing.

And speaking of work, I'm thrilled to learn that The Atlantic finally brought out one of the poems! (They have another of mine yet to come). Please don't throw your copy away! I'm worried because the Post Office won't forward magazines (we have all of our mail forwarded to Fred) and I can't find a copy anywhere I've looked in Rome. I probably can get the Atlantic editor to scare up a copy for me, but hate to take a chance of missing it entirely.

Let's see, what else? Glad to hear about Derek in Poetry. He's in there from time to time. Really a fine poet.

I think that all of our students are ready to call it quits, too. They have a hollow-eyed look. It really has been a joy to be here, but, as I said, eleven weeks is a long time to be away.

Can't wait to see your dear faces again. It won't be too long now.

Syd sends her love. Me, too.

Linda

On Sun, 26 May 2013, carol doig wrote:

Hi, you two, wherever you are in the world--

Holy smoke of the non-papal kind, Rome dinner with Seamus Heaney. Outstanding! We want to hear everything. As I wrote Laskin, we feel very swayve and debonure at having friends living the life per Roma.

To business: opened the current issue of The Atlantic to p. 65 and there 'tis, On Reflection, angles of incidence dazzling as ever. Bravo, yet again. And did you know our buddy Derek Sheffield has a poem ("Bye-Bye") in the May issue of Poetry? Another yay for that. There's also quite a heady essay in that issue by V. Penelope Pellizon about those of us who write about photographs, Linda, calling us luciphrastric--"a verbal representation of a photograph that emphasizes the photo's time-filled status." Trying not to be overwhelmed like the fellow who'd just been told he has the knack of speaking prose, I have my kid/late narrator in the backyard greenhouse made of photographic plates conclude the panes of glass have their memories showing, and I think I'll leave the field to you after that. The Pellizon piece does lasso in a whole bunch of quotes about pics and time, so I have it around all marked up, if you ever want to see it.

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Memorial Day weekend, a little soppy of course
Date: May 26, 2013 2:59:48 PM PDT
To: linda bierds <lbierds@uw.edu>



Hi, you two, wherever you are in the world--

Holy smoke of the non-papal kind, Rome dinner with Seamus Heaney. Outstanding! We want to hear everything. As I wrote Laskin, we feel very swayed and debonair at having friends living the life per Roma.

To business: opened the current issue of The Atlantic to p. 65 and there 'tis, On Reflection, angles of incidence dazzling as ever. Bravo, yet again. And did you know our buddy Derek Sheffield has a poem ("Bye-Bye") in the May issue of Poetry? Another yay for that. There's also quite a heady essay in that issue by V. Penelope Pellizon about those of us who write about photographs, Linda, calling us luciphraic--"a verbal representation of a photograph that emphasizes the photo's time-filled status." Trying not to be overwhelmed like the fellow who'd just been told he has the knack of speaking prose, I have my kid/older narrator in the backyard greenhouse made of photographic plates conclude the panes of glass have their memories showing, and I think I'll leave the field to you after that. The Pellizon piece does lasso in a whole bunch of quotes about pics and time, so I have it around all marked up, if you ever want to see it.

Uhm, and speaking of Did you know, a span of the I-5 bridge north of Mount Vernon got knocked into the Skagit, to general media hysteria. Happened at 7 in the evening when an oversize truck load clipped the side of the framework, two cars following dived into the river, three people in those were rescued, only minor injuries, but detours are the word for who knows how long. Inslee has staff trying to find a version of a World War II Bailey Bridge, by which army engineers were able to cross rivers like the Rhine in, oh, a day or so instead of the eon (and \$15 million) replacing the span the usual way is estimated to take.

So I mentioned soppy, but the drizzle is letting up in time for me to grill the first Copper River salmon of the season. We're invited to Edmonds for lunch tomorrow (Channel 9's Jean Walkinshaw's kids), but otherwise we're quite content to putter in the garden and do what we do. Last Monday, in Carol's case that was giving away fair-sized bundles of money (figuratively; inheritances, after all) at Shoreline College--as executor of a 99-year-old friend's estate, she's handled the bequests left to the women's center, nursing program, and so on. Meanwhile I write, write, watching warily out the corner of my eye toward August publication of Sweet Thunder. Laskin and I got a boost back there at Mother Penguin when, out of all the fall books (there must be hundreds) in all the imprints, ours were among six chosen as Penguin Selects, which means they'll send out a thousand slip-covered galleys, pep up the sales force about our titles, and who knows what else. Can't hurt, could help.

And that's pretty much the report from here. Looking forward to your return, bearing tales.

All kinds of affection,

Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Americans in Rome
Date: April 24, 2013 6:23:53 AM PDT
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David & Kate, hi--

We feel very suave and continental by proxy in having our Yank globetrotter friends sitting around in Rome making mention of us. Nice.

Just something quick here, to share a bad news/good news episode that swept through here from Mother Penguin's proofreading apparat. I'd already dealt with two apparatchiks, on the original copy-editing of Sweet Thunder (not great; I had to correct myself that Jenny Lind was not known as the Scottish songbird, but the Swedish one) and then a list of queries. Dealt with all that, then on Monday came 4 pp. of queries, the production editor or whoever having sicced Rob Sternitzky, described as their best proofreader, onto a collated proof, my ms, and Work Song, the predecessor book, as well. Holy crap, I thought, now what? More pecking to death by ducks? It turned out this guy Rob caught a couple of mortifying name fumbles--a minor character named Arthur in Work Song had morphed into Albert in Thunder--and, unbelievably, discerned dropped words in 2 or 3 passages at least half a dozen of us had read time and again. And so on. In short, the damn guy is a wizard, I took all but 3 or 4 of his tiny tweaks of punctuation and wordage, and the book will be much the slicker for it. I don't know if you're in for a similar session, but with all the Family names, I'd say it wouldn't hurt to have this guy inflicted on you to keep 'em all straight.

Clear sunny weather here at dawn right now, last of 3 such idylls. We've been out every afternoon smothering weeds and feeling good.

All best, Ivan

On Apr 22, 2013, at 10:53 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Dear Carol and Ivan,

We had such a lovely couple of hours with L and S this afternoon. Your four ears must have been burning (in your sleep) since we sang your praises up and down -- four loud Americans in an atmospheric Roman bar. It was a true Seattle day with sheets of rain and a few sun breaks (don't know the word for that in Italian) so we all felt very at home and comfy. Just now we are celebrating a bit, since two more superb blurbs have come in, one from Stephen Greenblatt, who also happens to be in Rome -- we will be meeting him at the American Academy for tea tomorrow. Pretty swell company for a couple of rubes from Shoreline, no? Well, gotta go fix some grub. I will tell you later about an absolutely haunting few hours at the Fosse Ardeantine -- the site of a mass slaughter of Italian partisans, Jews, and random Romans -- 335 in all to "pay" the Germans back for a partisan bombing. It is a stone's throw from the Appian Way -- my idea of heaven. The guard noted that very few visit these days aside from school groups -- "la memoria e' corta (short)."

Yours, David

From: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>
Subject: Re: anniversary waltzing (fwd)
Date: April 25, 2013 3:33:23 AM PDT
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Dears,

Just a quick note, too. We saw David and Kate for an almost-two-hour coffee date and loved every minute of it. A photo should be coming your way-- a little rain in the background just for you.

Thanks for the heads up on "The Bletchley Circle." It's especially apt that the women should be knitting while doing their detective work since Turing's wonderful biographer, Andrew Hodges, writes that the "cogs" on the big enigma machines clicked "like thousands of knitting needles."

Sorry you had so much traffic getting to Book-It (sounds like Rome) and hope that the Boeing experience is happy all of the way.

We're just back from an overnight trip with the students to Assisi. Just breathtaking. Sydney and I passed through a gate in the Basilica wall and found a trail that lead all the way down into the valley below, complete with an ancient abandoned convent, old mill, pretty stream. Quite a hike back up into town, but it was a lovely day and we took it easy.

Must sign off now and go to a meeting. It's so great to be in touch by email! Why didn't we think of this before?

Much love,
Linda

On Sun, 21 Apr 2013, carol doig wrote:

Dear Romans of the moment--

We're tickled to think of you, Scrabbling away on your balcony up LXII steps, if my rusty high school Latin holds. This is just a quick note, to pass along that there was an entertainment item in the NY Times yesterday about a PBS three-parter called "The Bletchley Circle"--the premise, four women who were WWII codebreakers there in Turing/Enigma territory "meet covertly (after the war), hiding their detective work behind a face of knitting and shopping with ration coupons." Sounds like it's destined for Bainbridge video watching.

This is our Boeing, Boeing week, and in what we hope was not a warmup, last night we went to Book-It for "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn UNCENSORED" (their caps). The production was great, with my Monty of Prairie Nocturne, Geoffery Simmons, terrific again as the wanting-to-escape slave Jim, but the logistics at Seattle Center were so crazy we finally had to give up being frustrated and laugh. Got there just past 6, thick, thick traffic--what's going on? Everything, it turned out: Huskies' spring scrimmage at the little old stadium because the big new stadium at UW ain't done, a Rianna concert packing Key Arena, Chinese acrobats in the Opera House... Every eating place jammed (couldn't get Ten Mercer reservations days ago), we eventually copped some barbecue and beer in the Food Pavilion, finally figuring out with our 5 college degrees that we could not bring beer to our food but we could take our food to where they serve beer. For Boeing Boeing night, we have firm!

reservations at Ten Mercer, you betcha.

Hugs and tickles to David & Kate for us tomorrow. Tell David it's reliably rained here most of the weekend, but is supposed to clear up and warm up all the way into the mid-60s.

All for now, will report after our Rep outing. Much love, Ivan & Carol

On Apr 20, 2013, at 12:58 AM, Linda Bierds wrote:

Dear Ones,

Your message went to Sydney and she forwarded it to me and now I'm "replying via cc" to you. Hope this works and doesn't just go to Sydney, since she already knows everything I'm going to write.

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: anniversary waltzing (fwd)
Date: April 21, 2013 2:37:12 PM PDT
To: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>



Dear Romans of the moment--

We're tickled to think of you, Scrabbling away on your balcony up LXII steps, if my rusty high school Latin holds. This is just a quick note, to pass along that there was an entertainment item in the NY Times yesterday about a PBS three-parter called "The Bletchley Circle"--the premise, four women who were WWII codebreakers there in Turing/Enigma territory "meet covertly (after the war), hiding their detective work behind a face of knitting and shopping with ration coupons." Sounds like it's destined for Bainbridge video watching.

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Dear Ones,

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Well, nothing could make me happier than to learn that the jug's contents have lost their protein dramatically! Wonderful news. Here's hoping that the medication can keep that number way down (or eliminate it entirely??)

And Happy Anniversary. I've heard that The Whale Wins is very good but don't know anyone who's actually eaten there.

From: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>
Subject: Re: anniversary waltzing (fwd)
Date: April 20, 2013 12:58:08 AM PDT
To: sydneyk@u.washington.edu
Cc: cddoig@comcast.net

Dear Ones,

Your message went to Sydney and she forwarded it to me and now I'm "replying via cc" to you. Hope this works and doesn't just go to Sydney, since she already knows everything I'm going to write.

Well, nothing could make me happier than to learn that the jug's contents have lost their protein dramatically! Wonderful news. Here's hoping that the medication can keep that number way down (or eliminate it entirely??)

And Happy Anniversary. I've heard that The Whale Wins is very good but don't know anyone who's actually eaten there.

And congrats on the Booklist honor. Very deserved!

Rome is still Rome. The same vendors selling their vegetables in the Campo; the same Vespas nipping at our ankles as we all try to navigate these narrow roads. Our apartment is just right for two--actually very charming. It has a little balcony, so we can play Scrabble outside each evening. (Never had a balcony in all of our stays here.) The place will be crowded when my brother and his wife come next week, but they'll take side trips and so will we, so we probably won't spend more than four or five nights here together. The big problem with the apartment is that we have to climb 62 steep, concrete stairs to reach it. A dark, tight staircase--like climbing a corkscrew. That's the price for a balcony--in these old buildings they're usually only built on top-floor apartments. Thank god we hike weekly--the climb's not too bad, except with a few bags of groceries.

Yes, David's right--the weather's been grand. Only about 70 degrees, which is just right. We're meeting them for coffee on Monday at their favorite bar, which turns out to be our favorite bar. Funny, really, with a bar on every corner of this city, we four picked the same one!

Sydney is just fine. Working too hard trying to teach her class and also attend Rick's exhausting tours of the city. I love to spend my mornings alone in the apartment, reading my *Turning* on the balcony, taking notes for poems. Ahhh--the only thing missing is home. Really, Rome is magnificent, but I'll be happy to come home. Lots of things to do before then, though: an overnight trip with the students to Assisi next week, then we have a week off and are going to Venice and Florence alone, then we have another overnight trip with the students to some ruins south of Rome (and a water buffalo farm).

Keep thriving, you two. Write again when you can and we'll do the same. Great way to stay in touch. Why didn't we think of it before?

Much love,

Linda (and Syd)

On Wed, 17 Apr 2013, sydneyk@u.washington.edu wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----
Date: Wed, 17 Apr 2013 08:57:13 -0700
From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
To: sydney kaplan <sydneyk@u.washington.edu>
Subject: anniversary waltzing

Hi, you two darlings. David Laskin in his email toasting the Laskin-O'Neill and Doig-Muller nuptials that somehow cosmically occurred on April 17 (as I wrote back, at least 4 of us know E.T. Eliot was full of T.S. about April being the cruelest month, the old poot) claims there is actual sunshine wherever they are romping in Italy, so we hope it's beaming on you honeymooners in Rome. Whatever the weather, we hereby include you on your 37th-day anniversary--I'm guessing it's the gelato one rather than silver or gold--in our communal thankfulness for all finding one another.

Things are perking pretty good here. I think just before you left I was waiting to hear my latest test (read: big yellow bottle) result, and

damned if my doctor didn't actually say the problematic protein had declined "dramatically." Have just done an another all-day date with the jug and will know next week if the good trend continued, although I wouldn't think it can keep on getting dramatic honors. On the writing side, I'm banging away at The Dog Bus--got my kid to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where his uncle Herman the German, fixated on the American frontier, tells him it is where Manitou (the Algonquin tribes' spirit of the woods, you know) Walks--so I hope that's progress. Somewhere, oh I don't know where, I acquired the idea Herman holes up a lot in his greenhouse which is made of photographic plates, can you imagine?

Speaking books, we had a nice surprise when Booklist, the American Library Association's quite influential review outlet, named The Bartender's Tale one of the year's Ten best works of historical fiction, along with stuff by Hilary Mantel, Colm Toibin, Joyce Carol Oates, Rose Tremain, Mario Vargas Llosa, and so on. As I told my agent when she exclaimed about the company I keep, just hanging with my homies in the Nobel schoolyard. As if. That does remind me--Linda, did you hear Sharon Olds won the Pulitzer? Over Jack Gilbert and Bruce Weigl.

We're going to celebrate with lunch at The Whale Wins, hot newish place on toney Stone Way, if you can believe it, but before that, here's your touch of home, a couple of Eagle Harbor Books' limerick contest winners published y'day by Mary Ann Gwinn:

Said Romeo on Bainbridge, "Don't tarry!"
"Leave Seattle so that we can marry."
But his Juliet said,
"I'd rather be dead
than have to get on that damn ferry."

To the city we'll go to make merry
After dinner o'er drinks we will tarry.
Alas, with a shout,
we pay and rush out,
If we run we will catch the last ferry.

Enjoy the bridges on the Tiber. Much love, Ivan and Carol

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: great grub and classy footwear - UPDATE
Date: April 18, 2013 6:39:32 AM PDT
To: Mark Damborg <damborg@ee.washington.edu>



Mark

OK, no Anglo-Spanish archless slippers, although I still say they look deceptively classy. The Toms option at Nordstrom is likely a good one, along with a Footsmart catalogue that seems to intuit my need and shows up in the mailbox every month. Meanwhile I'm trying to scheme how to soften up the replacement Birks (the hurtful ones) somehow, as Birks to slip into are the best ticket when I have to get out of bed at night, and sometimes move myself downstairs. Am thinking of giving the cork insoles a hell of a treatment of Hubbards shoe grease and letting that soak in and (hopefully) dry the cork to a softer consistency. We'll see.

The Whale Wins was a indeed a winner. Carol's clams were delicious with some sort of sauce bottoming the plate to dip them in. and my trout (Idaho; not rainbow or eastern brookie, but I forget what; it was white flesh) maybe the best I've ever had in a restaurant, where I've learned to avoid ordering it because aint' nobody gonna match the family cooks in Montana who fried up our rainbow catches in bacon grease and cornmeal and who knows what else, so crisp we could eat 'em like corn on the cob. The croissant to start was perfect, flaky but not ramshackle, and really good marmalade along with it. Our anniversary treat from the restaurant was a piece, nay a slab, of zucchini bread two inches high, with a bit of nutmeg and other spice, and a bit of white sauce on the side, again really delicious. Even the one glitch, that they couldn't serve tap beer (we were there when the place opened at 11) because their CO2 delivery hadn't come, worked out nicely with their 16-oz. cans of Stiegl, an Austrian beer we didn't know and was really fine. Carol peeked at the wine list and reports it seems to be French and Spanish, no U.S. she could see--starting at \$24 and I think she said it went to \$140 or \$160. The restaurant has no real view except out onto Stone Way and a glimpse of the Lake Union ship works, but the interior is interesting enough we didn't think it mattered. It was quiet at lunch, but has a reputation of ratcheting up at happy hour and dinner. There are only. mm. 8 or 10 tables up front, and maybe half a dozen in back along with a short bar, so it could really crowd up.

One last thing: the waitress gave us the option of having our entrees served one at a time--the restaurant's preference, because it looks like every dish goes through the one French-type clay(?) oven in the wall--or both at once. We (me somewhat dubiously) signed off on one dish at a time, but lo, both came at once because the cook wasn't busy, and we think that's the way to go, sharing back and forth on the different delicious plates of great grub.

So that's it from here. We stopped at Central Market on the way home for coldcuts for supper after the whale of a meal, added samples of bologna and salami to our ingestion if not our digestion, napped a little, and got in some yardwork. #48 was a dandy one, our idea of a good time, we agreed

Ivan

On Apr 17, 2013, at 1:55 PM, Mark Damborg wrote:

Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: anniversary waltzing
Date: April 17, 2013 8:56:30 AM PDT
To: sydney kaplan <sydneyk@u.washington.edu>



Hi, you two darlings. David Laskin in his email toasting the Laskin-O'Neill and Doig-Muller nuptials that somehow cosmically occurred on April 17 (as I wrote back, at least 4 of us know E.T. Eliot was full of T.S. about April being the cruelest month, the old poot) claims there is actual sunshine wherever they are romping in Italy, so we hope it's beaming on you honeymooners in Rome. Whatever the weather, we hereby include you on your 37th-day anniversary--I'm guessing it's the gelato one rather than silver or gold--in our communal thankfulness for all finding one another.

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To the city we'll go to make merry
After dinner o'er drinks we will tarry.
Alas, with a shout,
we pay and rush out,
If we run we will catch the last ferry.

Enjoy the bridges on the Tiber. Much love, Ivan and Carol

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: happy anniversary!
Date: April 17, 2013 6:46:31 AM PDT
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



Friends, Romans, countrymen, and whatever other summae personae you two have sandwiched into yourselves in ways Shakespeare ne'er dreamt of: Yes! anniversary felicitations to the four of us who know T.S. Eliot was full of T.S. in calling April the cruelest month instead of the romantic one. While you're knife-and-fork-deep in celebratory pasta and grappling with grappa, we're going for lunch to The Whale Wins, hot restaurant on Stone Way (see if Alice knows it), and then maybe whacking away at the property some more, our idea of a pretty good time.

Things are more or less on track around here, I guess (except for Amtrak, which had another doozy of an Everett landslide and won mention in the Sunday Seattle Times in Ron Judd's usually insufferably snarky column as the only passenger train service that shuts down when it rains). Have talked with David Williams about his whack-a-mole week (he be the critter in the tunnel, alas) in which Sasquatch and the Guggenheimers both snubbed him, and he's come out of it sanely enough, and as I told him umpty times the UW Press could be a good shot for his book. On the phone, Paddy was heard in the background, so I'd say he's alive and well and in good voice. Here at this literary skunkworks, we had a nice surprise when Booklist named The Bartender's Tale one of the year's best Ten works of historical fiction, along with the stuff by Hilary Mantel, Colm Toibin, Joyce Carol Oates, Rose Tremain, Mario Vargas Llosa, and so on. As I told my agent in response to her email about the company I keep, just hanging with my homies in the Nobel schoolyard. Sure.

Still a tad cool and showery (and blizzard whiteout on Snoqualmie last weekend), but not bad. Delighted to hear you're catching rays in Italy, grab a few for us. Hugs and tickles, for the nifty annvsry message waiting when I came down here to the computer rabbit hole at 4:30 ayem; not even this household can beat a 9-hour headstart. And now we're about to walk the 'hood and then e-mail Linda and Sydney too, who may wonder what the hell kind of a glass-hoisting anniversary-waltzing kissy-kissy club they're got themselves into. I predict they'll adjust; and besides, I'm sending them a couple of Eagle Harbor Books' limerick contest winners, which are always about catching ferries.

All best from your fellow l7ers,

Ivan & Carol

On Apr 16, 2013, at 11:15 PM, David Laskin wrote:

You are no doubt slumbering peacefully, but it s the morning of April 17 here -- so congrats are in order for the 4 of us. All goes wonderfully in Rome -- and I'm going to send a message to Linda and Sydney right now. Sarah and Alice are here at present, tho Alice returns tomorrow. We have seen more churches than any pagan should be exposed to in 10 lifetimes, eaten more pasta than we can count, and soaked up lots and lots of rays. Full report in June! Meanwhile, we will hoist a glass to our marriages, about 9 hours before you two do! David

11 March '13

Dear Linda and Syd--

Wow, you two--what an occasion. Everything last night was superbly done, of course most of all the heart-throbbing ceremony, but also the venue, the meal, the wait staff, and not least, the remarkable guest list. Your lives are written in gold in the form of such friends, and we were deeply moved and honored to be there. And Carol points out a common-sense touch that was brilliant--you let couples sit together!

Now the story about the glass heart. It goes back nearly ten years to when we received word that Jim Welch had been given a dire diagnosis. We didn't entirely know how bad at the time, but as we were about to be away for a while, we called Jim and Lois and offered them our house while we were gone. They accepted, and came to Seattle for a week or so and threw a round of dinners etc. for old friends here at Chez Doig, even the sunsets over Puget Sound cooperating, they told us. By all accounting, Jim and Lo had a good time. It was the last good time, as Jim died of lung cancer less than six months later. When we got home, we found they had left us the glass heart, symbol of love molded from friendship. It is only right, literarily fitting and so much else, that we pass it to you in that same spirit, with our own hearts behind the symbolic one.

Hugs and tickles, mazel tov, and all else that applies,

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **ALA report**
Date: January 28, 2013 10:05:30 AM PST
To: Glory Plata <Glory.Plata@us.penguinroup.com>, rebecca saletan
<Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguinroup.com>



Glory and Becky, howdy, as we say here in the literary West. The ALA panel was a smash hit. It turned out there were four of us, the late addition Terry Brooks, an old friend and consummate pro. We each got 15 minute segments, so I was able to link in *The Bartender's Tale* and also tout *Sweet Thunder* and its epic librarian Sandison to the audience of some hundreds of librarians.

Then at the Penguin booth people snapped up 150 copies of *The Bartender's Tale* -- a wonderful geographic spread of the librarian attendees, many folks from the South and Atlantic seaboard who were vowing to catch up with my work. Highly worthwhile, all around.

The other triumph of the week was *The Bartender's Tale* scrambling back onto the PNBA list!

Best,
Ivan

ALA Midwinter 2013: Northwest Authors and the Role of Libraries

by BRIAN KENNEY |

For all the talk about the changing digital world and its impact on the future of libraries and reading, the opening session of the 2013 American Library Association Midwinter meeting focused on a subject librarians know well: authors. With some 10,000 librarians, publishers and vendors gathered in Seattle, Wash. the Midwinter meeting kicked off with an opening session titled “The Novel is Alive and Well,” featuring four very different Pacific Northwest novelists--Terry Brooks, Ivan Doig, Gregg Olsen, and Ruth Ozeki--whose engaging conversation centered on the role of place in fiction, especially the Northwest.

“Rain is the ink of the Northwest,” declared Doig, whose novels are famous for capturing the history and spirit of the West. “The great rain coast, stretching from northern California to Alaska, with its mild climate and precipitation, is perfect for holing up and writing.” Doig went on to list a range of artists, from the Native Americans carvers or columns to Ken Kesey to Kurt Cobain and Pearl Jam, “none of whose work could have happened in Kansas.”

“I grew up here, and all my fiction is set here,” said crime writer Olsen, whose books include both fiction and non-fiction. “There’s something creepy and dark...about the Northwest,” Olsen said. “When it comes to serial killers, we have the best and the brightest in the world.”

As evocative as the Northwest may be, a small midwestern town can prove equally inspirationally, if only by pushing a writer deeper into his imagination. Describing life in prosaic Sterling, Ill., fantasy writer Brooks said “I pretty much invented role playing,” describing a childhood that involved extending the plots and characters of books into real-life games.

Of course, the conversation couldn’t avoid the issues now affecting the world

of reading and writing and writing, and in response to audience questions, the panel went on to discuss how things are changing. Ozeki, an early e-reader who uses an iPad, remained bullish on the future of print books. E-books “will never replace books, the bound object. I like to have both, but enjoy the visceral experience of the object.”

“I hate those Kindles,” said Brooks, while acknowledging that there was room in this world for a variety of ways to read.

Olsen was most concerned about the book’s shrinking footprint in major non-bookstore retailers, like Wal-mart and Target. Thankful that he started his career “when a book was a book,” and that he now had a following, he wondered how new authors would be able to be discovered, and whether e-books are going to earn new writers “a readership.”

“Publishing is changing, but publishing, books, and novels aren’t going away,” said Ozeki. “Yes, the business models may have to change. But there never was that great a readership for novels. I think we have more readers today than ever before.”

Doig’s appearance was sponsored by Riverhead Books, Olsen’s by Sterling Publishing, Ozeki’s by Viking, and Brooks by Random House.

ALA Furthers Community Initiative with Harwood Institute

It’s not just about the books. While libraries have always been crucial hubs of community engagement, that role has become more important in the digital age, ALA officials say, and at the 2013 ALA Midwinter meeting, ALA president Maureen Sullivan joined philanthropist and public advocate Rich Harwood to discuss an ongoing partnership with the Harwood Institute to further the library’s role in meeting a range of community needs.

“We live in a tower of Babel,” said Harwood, the founder and president of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. Public discourse, according to Harwood, is often negative, focused more on placing blame than looking toward new possibilities.

“We need to find a way to come together to get things done. Not to just volunteer for an hour or sign an online petition,” said Harwood, speaking at “Community Engagement and the Promise of Libraries,” one of four programs

From: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: ALA report
Date: January 28, 2013 1:51:11 PM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>

Viva la pioggia (rain) e bravo Signore Doig! Or, as we say in the not so literary West, Woo Hoo! And yes, I'm SURE Kate would love to see the S&S paperwork. Keep tearing. May call you later this week in a photo related matter. Meanwhile, dodge la pioggia, hole up and crank out some more tales for us to snap up. David

On Mon, Jan 28, 2013 at 12:20 PM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

Hey, Mr. Rain Guy, check this out. I may share with you my further remarks that transfixed the librarians of the nation sometime, if you're nice to me. Also, please tell Kate we (mostly Carol's doing) faced down Simon and Schuster: they absolutely caved and accepted our substitute amendment, taking e-books out of the reversion rights language. Game to share the paperwork about that if she'd ever like to see it. And you see the news about The Bartender's Tale below. We're on a tear.

Cheers,
Ivan

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Plata, Glory" <Glory.Plata@us.penguin.com>
Date: January 28, 2013 10:11:37 AM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>, "Saletan, Rebecca" <Rebecca.Saletan@us.penguin.com>
Subject: RE: ALA report

Ivan – Dominique Jenkins sent a glowing email to me over the weekend about how terrific you were. Not a surprise, but so glad to hear that your ALA visit was a success! Publishers Weekly posted a nice write-up about it, and they lead off with a quote from your segment:

http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/trade-shows-events/article/55691-ala-midwinter-2013-northwest-authors-and-the-role-of-libraries.html?utm_source=Publishers+Weekly%27s+PW+Daily&utm_campaign=b78cc12386-UA-15906914-1&utm_medium=email

Cheers,
Glory

-----Original Message-----

From: carol doig [mailto:cddoig@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, January 28, 2013 1:07 PM
To: Plata, Glory; Saletan, Rebecca
Subject: ALA report

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: Text or Source for Ivan Doig Fable "The Remembrancer"**
Date: January 28, 2013 9:54:36 AM PST
To: "Eric Amling" <eric@dvagency.com>



Eric, hi. I will get back to the librarian with info about the immortal author of that fable, namely me. Thanks and best,
Ivan

On Jan 28, 2013, at 7:54 AM, Eric Amling wrote:

Hi Ivan,

Wondering if you can answer this question for a library patron?

Thanks!

Eric

Darhansoff & Verrill
Literary Agents
236 W. 26th St. Suite 802
New York, NY 10001
www.dvagency.com

From: Reference RFPL [mailto:reference@riverforestlibrary.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2013 12:36 PM
To: eric@dvagency.com
Cc: Dorothy Houlihan
Subject: Text or Source for Ivan Doig Fable "The Remembrancer"

Eric,

Hello. A patron of our library is looking for the text of the fable "The king's remembrancer" which is referenced in Doig's book, Dancing at the Rascal Fair. Would it be possible for someone at your firm to contact Mr. Doig and ask if the excerpted portion is, in fact, the fable in its entirety. And, if there is more to the fable than what young Karen Peterson reads to her classmates, is it possible to obtain a copy of the complete fable? The 1987 edition of the book, which we own at our library, gives copyright credit for the fable to Mr. Doig, but does not mention what, if any, work from which it came. Thank you for your help in this matter.

Dorothy F. Houlihan
Reference Librarian

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River Forest Public Library
708-366-5205 Ext. 316
reference@riverforestlibrary.org

www.riverforestlibrary.org

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From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **King's Remembrancer**
Date: January 28, 2013 10:14:03 AM PST
To: reference@riverforestlibrary.org



Ms. Houlihan, hello. I appreciated the query about The King's Remembrancer. It is my very own creation, so you might tell your patron the rest of the fable unfortunately exists in my head -- time will tell if it ever emerges from there in full form, as my wife would love to see happen. Writers are sneaky, the poetry and song lyrics in Dancing at the Rascal Fair are also my own doing. Anyway, I am glad to know of an alert reference librarian on the case -- I have just been in the company of legions of librarians when I spoke to the midwinter ALA convention here in Seattle.

Best wishes,
Ivan Doig