

[2014]

Jan. 1--The year is odd to a flying start, fueled by pharma (Dex only at the moment; tomorrow brings the Rev-Mel cycle again), as I readied file cards to start working over the ms chunk, worked outside for an hour and half pruning and sulphuring the peach tree and cleaning out about 35 pounds of leaves from the triangle by the front walk so the towhees won't scatter stuff on the walk every damn day, and now I'm about to exercise and get ready for the long tough night--Wednesdays, 2nd day of Dex effect, always are. Also found time to give the Davids and wife muses a New Year's email toast: in Scotch (& scotch) lingo: "Here's to us! Who's enny like us? On'y few, and they're all deid."

Jan. 5--Cold day, the street the slickest with frost it's been all winter. Our neighborhood walk will have to wait until sunshine thaws things this afternoon, if it does. Meanwhile, I've been tinkering with Last Bus, after y'day's session with Kathrin Maloof, who'd looked the ms over for me to see if I'm making Herman the German sound reasonably right. Surprisingly, I mostly was. Ann McCartney also read over the ms for me, doing a fine close job of going over it. Wonderful and valuable friends.

Today I got up feeling much better and more alert (after a sleeping pill that didn't give me any more sleep than usual--I still woke up at 3) and so was able to dig in to Last Bus right away, very usefully. I'm in the maximum drug cycle, my last dose of Melphean today with Dex wearing off but Revlimid making itself felt, so it's chancy whether I can keep on achieving much today. Determined to try.

Other news from here, Hurrah, is Sweet Thunder's continuing run on the PNBA bestseller list--#5--and the Bartender's Tale hanging in there on the p'back list at #12.

7 Jan.--Big days of work in going over the more or less done ms chunk, y'day and today. 142 of the 170 pp. spiffed up. This comes at a physical ~~cost~~ cost or at least a nocturnal one, as I wake up--more like, get up--at 3 each morn, get a mug of coffee and breakfast into me, and go to work by 4 or 4:15. 'Tis what it is.

Saturday we went to the Maloofs for my session with Kathrin in making Herman the German more reliably Deutschy, and as noted, she had surprisingly few changes to suggest. Even more surprising was the contribution of John, whom I'd offhandedly said was welcome to read the ms if he wanted. He did so right off the bat, and provided a cheer-leading assessment which I've put in the back of the diary. But beyond that, it turned out that my version of Donny thrust out on his own at "eleven going on twelve" matches a lot of John's experience at that age, when his Boston folks deposited him at caddy camp in Hyrannis for a couple of months of the summer, 2 years running (evidently 1940-41, as he remembers the uppercrust golfers of the first summer showing up, and I believe golfing, in military officer uniforms the next year). He took a train by himself, was shy about looking at the woman who visited with/watched out for him because her eyes were 2 different colors--he thinks she was the wife of the Red Sox manager Joe Cronin. Remembers exaggerating things, exactly like Donny. Listening to all this while Kathrin served us milked coffee and German goodies, I was knocked back in my chair. John and I long have been social friends in the casual visiting way, and I've learned considerable about him down through the years--singling out Kathrin at Bryn Mawr to marry when he was at the Wharton school, and his Korea soldiering at Pork Chop Hill and otherwise, he claims having made corporal 3 times (i.e., being busted at least twice)--but we're not really close friends, and this "who would have thought it?" episode really touched me.

8 Jan.--Done it. Finished going through the ms chunk today 40-some pages fixed up quite a bit as they were the most recently written there at the end. I'm fueled by Dex today and still will be tomorrow, when I can get back to making fresh pp. Before I wind down today, wanted to note down another surprising coincidence from the session with

8 Jan. cont--the Malcofs. I have Herman saying of his WWI German soldiering that he was at Dead Man's Hill, which I made up in Prairie Nocture (and reprised in the battle for Leyte in Eleventh Man, figuring there's always a bloody hill called that in any theatre of combat), and I'd had C google a German translation. Kathrin frowned at the evidently overly literal ~~translation~~ translation, and said when she and John had gone on-line to see what the German side called that battle--

Wait a minute, I said. I made that up.

Maybe, she said Teutonically doggedly, but it is there, called Höhe Toter Mann. At Verdun, John chipped in.

Just where I'd set it. It sounds like it may have been French troops instead of the Montana Brigade against the Germans, but close enough--life copying something I dreamed up.

17 Jan.--Rough day which has me awaiting a phone visit from Chen to see what he has to say about my daylong gastric/gas/bowel marathon. I don't remember any such episode before, and as I told C, it takes a lot out of a person in more ways than one.

Amid all this turmoil of my insides, there came one good sign--the electrophoresis serum protein test result is in, and it shows another decline, from 14% to 7%, low as it's been in a couple of years. The Melphean seems to have done its job, and I'll be asking Dr. C if I'm to keep on with it.

Given the rumbleguts day, I didn't have much ms production working away at a scene I should be able to solve fairly quickly. I have to keep reminding myself I am getting things done, particularly the quite sizable and fairly sophisticated financial moves that come at this time of year. The minimum distributions from both our IRAs are taken care of and available for investing as I'll soon do, and the first \$50,000 of my Profit Sharing Plan distribution from Windson II similarly has been arranged, along with several investments I made just after the turn of the ~~year~~ year. Also have achieved some outside work, the blueberry patches pruned and the out-of-control raspberry patch half redone. It never feels like enough, but it must be better than I think.

Jan. 19--The Chen phone visit sheet at the back tells the tale of my really tough Friday, the 17th, when I could get little done but suffer through, often on the pot. Luckily--

determinedly--I've had a strong weekend of writing, making a number of fixes in the 173-page ms chunk which will go to Becky and finally, finally, finally solving the scene where Donny gets the bright idea of cutting the thumb off the mitten to holster the arrowhead. So, the week has come out not badly after all, and with what is really significant news, the success of Chen's Melphean in driving down the monoclonal protein level. It is, when I make myself stop and think about it, something like life-saving news.

Quickly onward, in an hour we'll settle in to watch the Seahawks against San Francisco in the league championship game, drinks and munchies at halftime and eventually crockpot soup supper after the game, which we expect to go San Francisco's way, hot team that they've been. May we be wrong.

20 Jan.--And we were! Seahawks 23, SF 17!

21 Jan.--4:10, end of a long day but productive, 99 pp. of the ms chunk gone through, ahead of shipping it in to Becky. And C, bless her, went out and shopped us a new dishwasher after the old one died. We're back to being hunkered again, 45 and foggyish again today, after our good luck y'day, when we did something nice for ourselves for a change and took off for the Skagit flats. No snow geese to be seen, but good sightings of other birds--pair of hawks leisurely hunting along the Indian Slough dike ahead of us. And a dandy pizza and pilsner lunch at the LaConner pub as always.

24 Jan.--This is a queer skewed day because I woke up about 2:15 and couldn't get back to sleep, and so got up just past 2:30. I'm surely going to crash from this Dex cycle by lunchtime, but as I told C I do feel like I've turned a corner, maybe two:

--Finished spiffing up the 173 pp. chunk of Last Bus by the time we walked, just before daylight.

--Dr. Chen cut the Dex dosage in half--20 mg instead of 40--in y'day's phone talk, given the success of Melphean and my concern about gaining 4# and not losing any of it as has normally happened.

4 Feb.--I've been through a rough patch, the 4th cycle of Melphelan, and even now 48 hours after the last of those pills, am feeling somewhat rocky. Over the weekend I felt about half sick, off balance, and muzzy, although my head must have been working better than I realized because I got a decent amount of writing done. Thank goodness for Sunday's Super Bowl and the Seahawks' tromping of the Denver Broncos, a game so lopsided the rest of the country found it dull but perfectly delightful to us. Wasn't a cure, but took my mind off my mind for quite a while. And mysteriously, I felt better y'day than I do today, although I haven't had any medication besides the usual Revlimid--but maybe that's the culprit. Add to it all that I go have my teeth cleaned in about half an hour, and this is another day I'm grinding through.

A medical report if anything worse than mine came in a letter, and companion phone call, from Craig Lesley, who fell down his cellar stairs just before Xmas, fractured his skull, bunged up his shoulder, lost some hearing in one ear, and so on. He's the 2nd friend to have a fall like that, Tony Angell having tumbled down a similar set of stairs sometime last year, and the ~~only~~ miracle is neither of them ended up paraplegic.

As to good news, it's mainly related to the Last Bus ms, which is fairly clear in my mind plotwise, and I discovered I have a valuable trove of haying info about the Big Hole, from all the way back when I advertised in small-town Montana papers asking to hear from folks who had hayed there in the '30's. Much, much good stuff. Now I need a clear patch of effort to make pages. Meanwhile the weather isn't cooperating worth a damn, a cold week shutting us indoors when we both need a chance to work outside and loosen our bodies up.

Note on the Seahawks, a bunch of chip-on-their-shoulders overlooked players we've become real fans of. In the over-the-top coverage of the Super Bowl and after, today's NY Times locker room report says they have a ritual, some one of them shouting out "We all we got!" and the rest of them, including coach Pete Carroll, chorusing back, "We all we need!" This writer likes that.

15 Feb.--Rain has settled in, probably on into tonight from this quiet Saturday afternoon. We did get outside to work on the property this morning, clearing out under yellowing rhodies so they can be dosed with Ironite etc., and I forked up maybe a quarter of the potato-patch-to-be that is overrun with grass. Other than that, I've done a small dab of ms work and a medical note on how I'm faring on half dosage Dexamethasone--better than on full dose, whatever that says. We're going to dinner at the Angells' tonight, after last night's Valentines Day chili at the Damoborgs, our friends coming through with generosity as they so often have.

On the work front, I feel this has been an inconstant week, what would seem like good progress on the Crow Fair chapter one day looking in need of gap-closing and added consequence another day. Even knowing that medication is behind a lot of this, it is disturbing, that feeling that I am not my real self, but some critter made of lists that don't get crossed off. Will have to see how I am tomorrow and the next days after, when the Dex should be wearing off.

24 Feb.--Waiting for phone call from Dr. Chen, for once knowing it's going to be good news (at least some) because he emailed earlier, "The M-spike is good at 0.3--which is great!" So, the Melphean cycle (I did 4, across past 4 months) evidently worked, propping me up one more time in this marathon against myeloma. I do need to go over with him the continuing tough effects from even the lowered Dexamethasone dosage, late-week crash that leaves me loopy or worse. But, what, so far so good. And today I actually feel pretty good, in the hiatus between Revlimid cycles and past the worst of the Dex effects. After exercising, I experimentally soaked in hot bath for 10 minutes to see if I could loosen up the stiff leg muscles any, then applied VapoRub, and the legs are indeed somewhat better, for who knows how long.

And maybe more to the point, I worked well on the ms today, after struggling along the past 3-4 days.

Another topic: the weather, couple of days of rain. That is supposed to change tomorrow, forecast into the 50s and partly cloudy, so I'm in hopes of getting my pea starts into

24 Feb.--the ground. Seed potatoes should be here next week, and I have that patch prepared, too. C and I both feel immensely better when we can do some outside work.

It's heading for 5 o'clock, still no Chen call, so I'll go upstairs in a ~~minute~~ minute and fix us a drink and handle the phone up there. Just want to note what a social burst is ahead for us later this week, 4 doings in I guess 5 days. Social butterflies, and ...

Surprise! Chen took me off all medications for 2 months! Yowie!

25 Feb., 6:30 AM--I'm still dazed and amazed at yesterday's turn of medical life. I went into the phone consultation ready as usual to parse through withstanding the side effects of the trio of medications, and Chen essentially threw all that out the window and said it was time to give me a break from all that. A couple of test results evidently were behind that, one showing that my white cells have damn near vanished, consequence of the Melphean cycles, and the other that there are signs of "toxicity," as he said.

He also said the monthly blood tests are like watching a plant grow, and it's a good idea to have more distance between them for truer measurement. Just when I'd been expecting him to want more frequent tests, because I'd be off the medications, he proposed stretching the tests out to 2-3 months apart. I wonder if I should have gone for broke and asked for 3 months, but given that the ~~constant~~ numbers that are the lingo of myeloma have not been good to me from the very start, when I supposedly had only a 4% chance of getting this goddamn disease, I went for 2 months' interval.

Even that seems like an enormity, a chance to regain myself, and I must now set to work at getting my body and mind functioning better. How much better that will be than just enduring the side effects week by week.

27 Feb.--Day 3 of my furlough, vacation, release from medications for the next couple of months. As with the previous two, I celebrated with hard work in the garden, today tearing out an area of ground cover and weeds and moving in the trio of supposedly early-bearing blueberry plants that have languished in their original spots along the house. Meanwhile, C whipped some cleanup and pruning in the front yard. Both of us proclaiming how much better we feel we can get out and get the body to doing something.

On the ms side, decent morning of work again, although not a great amount of page to show for it. Good stuff, I think, but not pouring out. For now, I hope that's good enough.

5 March--While my mind is undoubtedly better from being off medications, I've hit a rough patch with my legs and feet these past 3-4 nights, having to get up in the goddam middle of the night and hotsoak in the tub to settle things down. May do so tonight before going to bed, see if that heads off the discomfort.

Meanwhile I'm struggling more than I should have to with the Crow Fair section of the book, revisiting and revising as I work at making the story move at a good pace. It's coming along, but I've had to spend way too much time on it.

Speaking of way too much time spent, C y'day closed down the damnable trust portion of Margaret Svec's estate, and marked the occasion with lunch out with Jean Roden, fellow trustee and sufferer in the long paperwork gauntlet. They evidently had a fine celebratory lunch, and I'm putting in the back of the diary the grace note--one in each direction, actually--of their long friendship, which I have feared the waning of as mine has with John. They're better at it than we men, or at least we particular two.

20 March--First day of spring, chilly at 36, but maybe clear. 5:45 AM now, and I have a 7 o'clock eye exam, having not thought through the prospect of dilated eyes all the livelong morning. Will try to work around that, doing the n'hood walk with C, tending to a letter and talking with Steve the broker, and so on. The diary has taken a nosedive because of the effort that's had to go into the Crow Fair section of the ms, which at last, after about a month too long, is feeling right to me and heading to its conclusion. Life has been busy, with quite a lot of fending. Carol has had an awful cold, way into the second week of it, and we'll see if she's turned a corner this morning or has to go see our Dr. Kato. I've slept downstairs in the guest bedroom, battling my own whims which are foot (mostly) and leg sensations that make it hellish hard to sleep. Am hoping ~~against hope~~ against hope my lower extremities will recover, or at least calm down some, during this couple of months of furlough from harsh medication. Hard to see progress yet, on that. Otherwise I'm feeling good, more like what I think of as my real self, calmer and more directed than when the medications are skewing me. And having said that, I'm going into the TV/exercise room to do some stretches before heading off to Group ~~Health~~ Health and the eye doctor.

3 April--Miraculously, I may be getting ~~xx~~ some relief from the medication-induced neuropathy that has numbed my feet for years. Saw Dr. Kato for the leg problems--pain down the back of the right one, besides in the hip--and along with a physical therapy appointment tomorrow, she prescribed Gabapentin, an ~~ex~~ anti-epilepsy drug that's also used against neuropathy. Last night, my 5th day of working up to full ~~■~~ 3-times--a-day dosage (& 1st full one), I at last did not have to fight the sensations in my feet that have murdered sleep all this time. Also had taken a Temezapam sleeping pill, as I do 2-3 times a week, but not having to VapoRub my feet 3-4 times during the night was an enormous difference. Hope is springing, at last!

3 April cont.--On the downside of all the medical examination I keep going through, the eye doc Dr. Kim discovered what is likely early signs of macular degeneration in my left eye.

When she told me and said she knew it might make me concerned, I honestly said, "I'm terrified." That rocked her a bit, rapidly telling me only 10% of macular degeneration patients have the maximum horrible eye problems we hear about. Yeah, well, we'll see (or not, cosmic sonofabitch of a joke). Favorable statistics have not done me a damn bit of good on myeloma or itch red spot disease. On the plus side of that unnerving visit, got all my glasses changed and the world--particularly invaluable print on page--is much clearer.

17 April--The moon and I were the only ones up the other morning, and today at about the same time it stayed under the blankets. C and I have kidded, sort of, about the damp weather that generally accompanies our anniversary, and sure enough, this is an overcast cool rainy day. Right now she's dauntlessly walking the neighborhood, which I'm not doing currently until the pain in my hip and right leg gets figured out. Nearly 2 weeks of physical therapy have helped--I see the phys therapist again tomorrow--but I still can't stand still in one spot for more than about a minute with the pain setting in, as it does about the third of a mile mark when I've tried the n'hood walk. So, next week, email to Dr. Kato that I think we need the next procedure, which I'm guessing may be X-ray or something of the sort.

Other than that--although it's a helluva that--I'm doing pretty well during this furlough from big pharma, particularly so in sleeping better, now that the divine Dr. Kato steered me onto Gabopentine to alleviate the lower-limb neuropathy. It's taken away the pervasive damn calf-and-foot tension, just short of a burning or a twitching, that would regularly set in about 45 min. after I lay down. Mysteriously, the latest affliction, the hip pain, doesn't bother when I do yard work, including some fairly strenuous stuff. So, C and I have put in a lot of outdoor hours this spring, to the point where I have the best vegetable garden started that I've ever done.

17 April cont.--Enough and more than enough of the "organ recital"; today we celebrate 49 years married, by going out for lunch at the place where the food has wowed us, The Whale Wins, and this evening, who knows, maybe something wild like watching a DVD.

What a privilege it has been to have Carol in my life, still a daily miracle that we're up and going and financially well of and savvy each other so well. Brinking on 50, if time will give us a break.

26 April--We're back from an unexpected adventure which went wonderfully well--my speaking gig at Harriet Bullit's Sleeping Lady Resort outside Leavenworth, for a record \$12,500 (half paid in advance on signing, last year). It had indeed been 35 years or so since we were in touch, as I walked away from freelance submissions to Pacific Search magazine with my nose in the air as soon as This House of Sky made its debut. Harriet does not seem to remember my continued tries at getting better fees, in a time when it was becoming harder and harder to make any semblance of a living as a freelance; Carol says Harriet did me a great favor by driving me to writing books. I've semijoked over the years about carrying a highly useful grudge against Harriet--one that didn't really harm anyone, since Harriet never knew about it. Well, that's no over, as she went for the speaking fee we quoted her without a whimper--so it took 3^{1/2} decades for me to get her to make up for those goddamn magazine fees, but now she has!

She met us while we were having lunch at Sleeping Lady's Pantry eatery, which turned out to be really mediocre, but talking to her--listening to her, really--for about an hour was a revelation. I told C afterwards that Harriet not only has kept her marbles--she's in her 90s, as best we can figure--she's somehow gained some, from what I remember. She's smaller and thinner than in the old days, but active and seems thoroughly mentally with it. Goes around with a wonderful little Icelandic sheepdog named Roki--the dog came to my talk that night. And greatly more to the point, I guess, Harriet has been married for 22 years to a Russian named Alex, whom we figure is about 75. He's quite a looking guy, with shoulder-length gray hair and a

26 April--bristle of beard; Carol noted how attentive he is to Harriet, asking C if she would mind the dog if he had to help Harriet go onstage last night (turned out he didn't). In the course of our lunch, Harriet ranged over a lot of history, and she may be the only surviving possessor of a lot of it. First, though, her telling of meeting Alex, who is from Moscow and was in this country for the first time on some kind of visit to Colorado, but embarked on a 30-day bus trip around the country which brought him to Seattle. Someone brought him to one of Harriet's flamenco functions, Alex must have been quite a handsome item then--as he still pretty much is--and she invited him onto her boat. That didn't happen until he finished his bus travels--Harriet says she'd forgotten about the invite, but here he showed up as promised--and so they went aboard the 32-foot powerboat she'd bought for herself, i.e., learned to handle herself. Alex was expected a bigger boat, with captain and crew, but evidently adjusted admirably, cueing in on the galley stove and doing the cooking--Harriet said something vaguely about him having been on the food end of things in Russia. Stocking up for the boat, she took him in a Safeway for the first time, where he was overwhelmed by the amounts of food. So, whatever it took, the two of them clicked, he's Harriet's husband number three or four, we're not sure of the count, he seems like the lasting and right one. They live across Icicle Creek from the resort, and Harriet traveled to lunch with us ~~on~~ on a cable and ski lift chair, 4 minutes of travel she ~~said~~ said, instead of the 10-minute drive around to a bridge.

--The story of the resort as she told it: the Catholic archdiocese owned the site, an old CCC camp with bunkhouses up on blocks and all, a 67-acre parcel. Harriet's mother, the redoubtable Dorothy, had a house and property adjoining. In came a new bishop, says Harriet, who saw the church camp wasn't earning out, and they came to her to say the church was ~~a~~ selling, was she interested? As Harriet told us, someone might have put in a big development, and in her soft voice, "We couldn't have that."

26 April Cont.--She had money from the family's sale of King Broadcasting--lordy only knows how much she must have, given what she's piled into Sleeping Lady-- ~~so~~ she made the quiet deal with the church, the land never came on the market, and then she said she had to sit up among the boulders and alders and wonder what to do with it. She now calls the resort, to us, a retreat where people can come and have some respite and maybe go out and make their lives better.

--The artwork: We've long known, eavesdropping from the sidelines, of Tony Angell's 6-foot ravens sculpture there, but there's another item I'm going to tease Tony about: Dale Chihuly's glass sculpture springing out of a boulder like, well, maybe a small geyser--1500 spike-like pieces of glass which had to be hand-assembled in desperately wintry weather, the crew in fact getting showed in, Harriet says. And just offhandedly in the theater lobby is a small horse sculpture by Deborah Butterfield, which has got to be bug bucks.

Well, more later, I'm quitting for now to do the big set of exercises for my still achy hip (although it withstood the 2½ hour car trips to and from Leavenworth quite well) and answer ~~the~~ Harriet's gracious good-night email ~~from~~ last night. My talk went really well, there was a good crowd--we think 175 or so in that 200+ gem of a theater, so everybody went home happy.

27 April--Last night we saw the face of tragedy, at dinner with Craig and Kathy Lesley. As Carol plainly put it on our drive home, Craig looked awful. His face is slack, his gaze is a bit robotic, his walk is slow and hunched--the fall down a flight of stairs that evidently damn near killed him has left all kinds of heartbreaking marks on this great and dear friend of many years. He has recovered a lot, mentally, and we hope that keeps up, but we wonder if that's likely. Anyway, I think it was good that we picked him and Kathy up at the Deco Hotel after Craig's day of teaching in David Willims' environmental writing course at the Burke Museum and treated them to dinner at Ivar's Salmon House, where the view from the table was good and the food surprisingly good.

2 May--Good week for the home team, with both speaking gigs --Sleeping Lady and Whitman College--successful to the tune of \$20,000. How far we've come, when a sum like that would have been ~~xxx~~ my dream income for a year, and ultimately, would have been nearly half of Carol's peak hard-won college salary. The old warhorse speech, Makings of a Book, was wonderfully well-received in both places, and I've gotten comfortable and pretty good with performing it. So, coming onto h on a Friday, I'm about to call it a day, which began about h this morn, when I woke up there in the Marcus Whitman hotel and C was already awake watching me for signs of life, and I asked, "suppose we should try to get on the morning (6:10) plane?" and she said "Yes!"

11 May--My furlough from the major cancer drugs, which I hoped would be a healthy idyll, has hit another rough patch. This time it's a goddamn cold, which hit me the 24 hours before we were to go to Port Townsend for a what sounded like a terrific weekend with Linda Sullivan and Jeff, along with the Damborgs. There was just no way I could take my coughy sniffly sneezy self into that company and C could not be persuaded to go without me. So here we are, at home, fussing with the property as usual. Along with the cold, my achy hip--well, hell, my sometimes painful hip--persists, apparently caused by a spinal disk pinching a nerve. Am exercising like crazy in physical therapy mode, but it hasn't solved it yet. And, foreboding ahead, it's only a little over 2 weeks until Dr. Chen looks over my blood tests and in all likelihood some drug regimen, and side effects, atart again.

On the brighter side, we scraped through the big-earning outings to Sleeping Lady and Whitman without health incident. And I have burrowed into, this past week or so, just about a final polish of the first 200 pp. of Last Bus. Will now have to revert to the missing chuhks, I think getting Donny and Herman out of Yellowstone and to Butte, but that goes with the territory.

A final note, something I hate to admit but in honesty ought to keep track of. Yesterday after C and trans-

11 May cont.--planted a pierris in the front yard, I stood up, stumbled somehow over the mix of tools and bucket on the ground, and tumbled. No harm done, shaken and dis-~~mattered~~ heartened mostly, two small bleeding spots where I'd tried to grasp a tree limb. Something similar happened last year when I caught a boot in peavine netting. I am surviving these, and feel I am excruciatingly careful with my balance outdoors and in, but it is damnably scary that it can happen anyway.

22 May--What a week. Montday (the 19th) at lunch, C put down her soup spoon and said she was feeling weak. I popped to my feet to help her to her living room chair, but she began to go blank and uncontrollable before I could get her there, and ~~xx~~ ended up half carrying her. As soon as I deposited her in the chair, I raced into the kitchen and dialed 911. While I still was on the phone, she called out that she was okay, sounding anything but. With the aid vehicle on its way, I went and sat with her, holding her hand. The aid first-responders went through their drill--this is I think our sixth 911 experience--and found that her blood pressure was way low. Her other vital signs checked out okay, so it looked like dehydration again, as in the similarly horrific post-Tucson experience 4 years ago. She seemed to perk up all right, but just as the aid guys were getting ready to go, she said the light seemed awfully bright. It was an ordinary sunny day, and while I went to pull down the living room blinds I told the respond crew that this sometimes made her phase out. When I got back to her chair, I could see she was going unfocused, and then she blacked out. That did it for the aid crew, they grappled her onto the floor, pillow under her head and feet up on footstool. And as ever, she came right back to being lucid, answering questions and even carrying on conversation. But now the actual medics were into the situation, and the upshot was a trip to the emergency room at Virginia Mason, again as 4 years ago. It was another hellish experience for both of us, mine ensuing ~~xxxx~~ when I desperately got ready to follow in the car, closing up the house etc., and realized I had no idea how to find the hospital. Quick phone call gave me the cross

22 May cont.--streets, Spring and Boren. Then agonizingly slow going in the traffic on Aurora, & sitting through 4 lights to make the turn onto 145th toward the freeway.

Got to Va Mason, circled the block until I found the parking garage, then went in and was like a rat in a maze trying to find the 7th floor emergency room. Finally there, C in bed hooked up twenty ways, primarily (and most usefully) to an intravenous drip to rehydrate her, and determinedly--very determinedly, whatever is beyond determinedly--wanting out. I think she would agree that she is a difficult patient, her blood pressure spiking over 200 at times like that. After nearly 3 hours of her stewing in bed and me trying to hold myself together, a terrific doctor named Hall assessed the matter correctly and sent us home. To drink a helluva lot of water, needless to say.

And we both have colds, C having caught mine and right now she is at the worst nose-running phase. At times it's been like The Magic Mountain around here, both of us coughing consumptively, but I at least am a lot better today, and she should be soon.

Meanwhile the property has been wonderfully improved with the classy trio of gates and downslope fencing built by Brad Hembree--normally a cabinet maker, and the craft in the gates and so on shows it. Will Lowell showed up today and cut the hedges, so as beat up healthwise as we've been, we have gained on those fronts. I also have been writing the bear-feeding scene at what seems slow-motion during all this, but somehow am making about a page a day, even so. Keep on keeping on, I guess is the message.

5 June--Phew, what a rough patch we've been through. Sunday morn, the 1st, C on her daily walk lost her balance and fell, hitting her right cheek on the guard rail ~~on~~ near the top of the 175th St. hill. Called me on the cell phone, but luckily by the time I rushed there, Maureen Johnson, terrific neighbor who is a nurse, had stopped and was with her. Maureen gauged that C was clear-eyed, entirely responsive, etc., in short, no sign of concussion, which would have driven me wild to diagnose--call 911 or not? Thanks to angel Maureen, I simply got C home, made

5 June ~~mon~~ cont.--her take it easy the rest of the day and the next, and by now she's pretty much herself, although with a greenish bruise on her cheek and a pouch of shiner under her eye. Her accident did it for me, making up my mind that I couldn't keep giving my painful right hip days and weeks to respond to physical therapy exercises--which there was no real sign that it was--and I emailed Dr. Huff asking for a cortisone shot. He obliged ~~yoday~~--another angel in our medical realm, married to yet another, our usual doctor Pat Kato--and stuck the needle in me y'day noon. The hip ~~am~~ hurt late in the afternoon and last night, today has gone to just aching. The diagnosis is bursitis, and besides the terrible worry I'd had of ~~walking~~ alone--and the catastrophe that I wasn't with her to prevent the fall--I need to get it out of the way as much as possible because my blood tests ending my three-month furlough from the cancer medications show both proteins spiking, and Chen surely will want to hit them with 2 and maybe 3 drugs. Phone visit with him at the end of the afternoon will tell the tale.

7 June--A week ago, I was in terrible despair, the Sunday morning when Carol fell on her daily walk, striking her face on the guardrail, both of us shaken. Great good luck had Maureen Johnson, a medical professional, driving by in a few minutes, and by the time I raced up there, she had C sitting up and could observe that she was clear-eyed etc., not concussed. Without blessed Maureen I frankly don't know what I would have done, called 911 at once--which would have meant another hospital trip, Carol's absolute bane--or taken her home and watched her. In any case, these days later she is very much her old self, the colorful cheek bruise and shiner is going down, and I am moving normally after the cortisone shot in the hip, finally ending that sabotaging pain.

And, as I am about to turn to, the phone call from Dr. Chen at the end of yesterday I did not find as disturbing and life-upending as some in the past, although the news on me is so-so. As I'd guessed, he wants a 24-hr urine sample to be sure the lambda light chains reading has skyrocketed as much as it looks like. And in a surprise, he almost always has one, he thinks it's time to move on from

7 June cont.--Revlimid to the third-generation drug, Pomalidomide. Supposedly it does not cause neuropathy--I'll sure as hell see--and he's going to let me stay on the ~~Ex~~ Gabapentin, which has tamped down the lingering feet and calf problems; indeed, he's open to my negotiating higher dosages of it if needed. So that all sounds like a net gain in taking-potent-medication-because-I-have-to, but along with it comes the usual Dexamethasone ride, the steroidal up and down--at ~~least~~ least at low dosage, to start with. Probably week after this--I'll aim for the 18th if I can--it all starts again. Should note that I think Chen is holding Melphelan as the gunslinger drug if needed again, to really kill down the readings as it did early this year. And now to repeat this analysis into my file notes on conversation with Dr. C.

Friday the 13th, which I hope misses this household with any bad luck. This entry is one I need to get down, ahead of my re-immersion into cancer drugs, for two reasons:

--First of all, I want to record how good I have felt, the past few days. This despite some periodic aches in my bursitis hip, even after the cortisone shot bestowed by Dr. Huff, and the chronic ~~semi-chaos~~ semi-chaos of my sleep. I've been productive, not only on the manuscript but alert to chores etc. and taking them on in what I hope was not the kind of list frenzy when I'm on steroids (Dexamethasone)--C at least says I'm not. So this has been the me I want to be, and that I like, reasonable and capable, and that I must say goodbye to again, for who knows how long, when the medication regimen starts once more in a few days.

--Second, and this is to be referred back to if needed, Carol and I had one of The Talks yesterday, in the wake of her vital work on end-of-life care with Group Health and power of attorney with Marshall Nelson. As she finished up Marsh's paperwork for mailing, I told her I needed to have some notion of what she sees happening next, if and when we can no longer get by in this house. She at once said someplace in the Edmonds bowl, walkable to downtown--and here I must emphasize what both of us are counting on,

13 June cont.--Tiffany Kopec's expertise on retirement homes and beyond--and I said I liked that, but the drawback I saw ~~was~~ is the distance from Group Health's Capitol Hill campus, really our medical headquarters. She said, Then the opposite thing would be a place on Capitol Hill--which neither of us can see for ourselves, C outright saying that highrises make her a little ill and I think she does have a kind of acrophobia, as I may have, too. Thinking some more, she said Tiffany has also in her line of work talked about retirement/plus places in Ballard and near Seattle Center. I then asked about the Hearthstone at Green Lake, which I think C had speculated about after my booksigning there last year, and she said the H'stone is building a new unit, the Cove, what about that? As we shook this matter down, she looked up the Cove info on-line, offered to go there and take a look (I told her I trust her beyond all reason, which she comically wrinkled her nose at), and she took my point that the Damborgs, say, have put down deposits on a variety of retirement places they may have to choose among and maybe we ought to consider at least one such toss of money onto the gambling table.

All in all, The Talk clarified things quite a bit for me, lifting some of the panic I've had to shoulder in her medical episodes, & six 911 calls worth so far. And on we go.

Meanwhile there was finally (after 14 years!) good news from the Authors Guild that the lawsuit about our free-lance stuff being gobbled up by data banks without any fee ~~was~~ has been settled. I can't tell if I'm going to get a pittance or a nice four-figure sum out of the \$18 million, but by damn, it finally looks like it will be something.

18 June--Goodbye, old friend, myself, as I wave either the farewell or see you later to the person I have been these past few weeks. Once past my crippling cold of nearly a month (and Carol had two this spring), I have felt better than I have in years. Indicatively enough, last night at the Book-It shindig I had a couple of compliments of how "vigorous" and "good" I looked. But ~~tonight~~ tonight I resume Dexamethasone intake and tomorrow mid-morning it's the new world of Pomalidomide, the third generation of -ides with their effectiveness and their side affects. I'm likely in again for the cramp circle of hell, the legs and feet going violent in the night, ~~and~~ while I try to eke out 4-5 hours sleep. It may be that yet another drug, Gabapentin--the pill bottle lineup on the kitchen island is becoming a long rank--can tamp these neuropathy afflictions down, but I'll believe it when that happens. So, anyway, my myeloma is not "flaring," as the medicoes say when this cancer begins to get the upper hand, perhaps conclusively, and Cool Hand Luke aka Eric Chen is back to medicating me to the boundaries of my "tolerance" and beating back the M-proteins in my blood. MTK, in old newspaper parlance, more to come.

To the good news: Carol's assessment by the neurologist y'day was that there's nothing grievously wrong, she has "mild gait disorder," should keep active, maybe use a walking stick, etc. She/we needs to build up again to the old daily walk of our neighborhood, up the 175th St. hill and all, nearly 2 miles total, and with my bursitis hip sometimes acting up, that's another issue. We figure we'll come up with a plan. We'd better.

20 June--Medical report: day 3 ~~of~~ since taking Dex (@ 10 PM on 18th) and day 2 of Pomalyst (~~with intake~~ 1st pill y'day at 8 AM, 2 hrs ahead of lunch, well past b'fast). So far pretty good, got through both nights without nasty leg cramps, with help of Temazepam sleeping pill both nights. Last night was odd, slept OK--after Vaporubbing my legs at bedtime, which were feeling threatening--from just before 10 to 11:15 bathroom trip, felt quite awake worrying how to get back to sleep, next thing I knew it ~~was~~ was 2:30. I was plenty wide awake then, and got up about 10 to 3 and have

20 June cont.--been going ever since (now 5:30), coffee and some reading until b'fast at 4, then down here to plan day and start with this--am about to go on to answer a question from Laskin. As to how I feel, I'm a little bit spacey, a beat or two behind in remembering things, but I think I'll be ~~wired~~ wired up enough to put in a big day of writing, we'll see. Am doing stretches/ exercises (daily) ~~in~~ in hopes it'll help on cramps and the off-and-on hip. Also am forcing myself to drink lots of water, on advice of physical therapist to keep hydrated for the sake of all these tweaky muscles.

Oh, yes, and I turn out to be something of a medical rock star at Group Health central pharmacy, where I am the first patient they've dispensed Pomalidamide to. C picked it up, and witnessed that they had to run the computer charge in 2 iterations as they're limited to \$10,000 per transaction and Pom retails to Gp H for \$11,000. \$250 a dosage to us, ~~thank~~ thank heavens, the capped limit on prescriptions in our blessed health insurance--still quite ~~axx~~ a sticker shock up from \$40 on Thal and Rev.

20 June--Made it thru the night fairly reasonably, in my own bed not the guest room, sleeping OK from 9:45 to 11:15, trip to bathroom, then my head started going (from Dex) and I wasn't sure how the hell I could get back to sleep. Next thing I knew--I figure it was the sleeping pill finally really kicking, as it seems much delayed in effect on me--it was past 2:30. Got up at 3, have been going strong ever since except for absolutely conking out in the after-lunch nap, for about an hour and a half.

Learned that it's going to be hard to remember to take Pomalyst around 8 AM (which puts it at least 2 hrs from any meals), as we've been walking when Tiffany shows up irregularly around then and been scurrying off because of her work schedule. Today I forgot the damn pill until ~~bb~~ remembering it while putting out the lunch set of pills.

Took it pronto after nap, 1 PM. So it goes, I guess.

As to effects, no cramps last night or today--I am exercising zealously--but I'm a beat or so behind in remembering things and about a quarter sick-feeling, my insides and head not quite right, off the mark. Tolerable, so far.

22 June--So far so good, with the new med cycle. Have been able to sleep in my own bed, in the serial stints that are pretty much grooved by now: bedtime anytime between 9:15-9:45, sleep until 10:30 bathroom trip; sleep again until 11:30-11:45, bathroom again; if lucky, then sleep until 2:15-2:30, when I'm usually waking up. 5 hours total seems to be about all I can get, then a really conked out nap after lunch, 11 until 1. Today, day 5 of Dex, was surprised to find I haven't put on any weight (water buildup, I guess was usual).

All in all, the main effect--and it's one I must be very careful of--is on my balance; I'm a bit off in stride etc. There's also some clumsiness, particularly in my hands in picking up things (small things mainly) and the mental skips, in which I may forget something out of a series of what I'm trying to do. Doesn't seem to affect the writing, thank goodness. Now if the new drug combo will just knock the hell out of the M-proteins.

Another topic: the deer fence passed its first test! Carol spotted deer tracks in the bark of the front yard, and the garden wasn't touched even though they'd surely tried the north patio way in, where we put a fence screen from corner of the house into the thick rhodie patch. Take that, you bambi bastards.

25 June--Day before y'day, I was quite wired from Dex, and very much am again today, 1st day of new cycle but I 'm doing only 6 days between on this one because I did not want to follow up the wonderful Book-It evening with stuffing steroids into myself. So far, the Dex-Pom regimen is going pretty good, the noticeable effects the mental skips--things I know perfectly well simply drop out of cognizance--the spacey feeling, and as I said to C this morning on our walk, the not-great sensation of walking like a half-drunk sailor.

But I am walking with her, the hip tolerating it mainly. Had a phone visit ~~from~~ with the estimable Dr. Huff, learned I can get another cortisone shot ahead of the Sept. Yellowstone trip (and can have 3 a year, with at least 3 months between, if needed. Good news, so I don't have to try eternal physical therapy again as The cure).

27 June--#75, on the long calendar. In 15 minutes, C and I are going to Chanterelle in Edmonds for my birthday lunch, which will be a breakfast because we keep such early hours in this household. I celebrate making it to three score and ten and an extra five in slightly woozy condition, the 2nd cycle of Dexamethasone kicking in on top of the Pomalidomide. Strangely, the Dex hypes up the writing, I've been creating dialogue much of the morn after a ~~night~~ somewhat drunken-sailor walk with C. So I am what I am, an old man who doesn't feel like one, who has cancer and all the treatment a body can stand, literally. I may have noted that Carol said recently, Life is what it throws at you. Well put.

6 July--The diary has been sacrificed to the manuscript, although I see it's not as long since the last entry as I'd thought. But my intention of nearly daily ~~medical~~ medical notes obviously hasn't happened, and the summary here is that the Pamalyst seems surprisingly tolerable while the Dexamethasone gives me the same old afflictions, obsessive focus, clumsiness, foot numbness and so on, but not as severely as before. Except for one utterly hellish night when I experimentally took the calmative Lorazepam instead of the sleeping pill Temazepam, I sleep not too badly, for instance. This coming week I'll take the full blood test which will show how this pill regimen is working on the serum protein and urine protein.

Meanwhile Carol's balance is a concern. It varies day to day, she says, and the neurologist found nothing wrong with her except "minor gait disorder." We are experimenting with how to get her enough walking--she is using a walking stick as needed--and thank goodness, my hip is ~~xx~~ over bursitis enough--although not entirely--that I can be with her now.

This isn't much of a recounting, late on a Sunday afternoon when we're going to Tony & Lee Angell's for supper--after a superb beefsteak blowout at the Laskins' last night--but I should put down that I've been working like mad on the manuscript, and I think making gobs (at

6 July cont.--least medium-sized ones) of progress, with what feels like still quite a long way to go. Random good news, nearly \$3,000, unexpected, from Spanish royalties on Una Temporada para Silbar, that good old Whistling Season.

12 July--Lights in the night. First cruise ship coming in lit like a castle in festival, a dark-form freighter going out with bow lights and deck illumination at the stern. In the distance, the next cruise ship glows in the Admiralty Inlet-Point No Point passage, while the town of Kingston xtwinkles across the water from me. Full moon, with a peninsula of cloud below. This is the 4 AM scene, on this morning such as I am now having, waking at 2:30 or 3 and hauling myself out of bed.

18 July--A shock yesterday when I checked my blood test results (the pair of electrophoresis ones that dictate my medical regimen) and both had not gone down in the first Pomalidamie cycle just completed, but up--from 16% in the serum protein reading to 23%, and from 524 mg/l to 734 mg/l in the lambda free light chains. Unnerving to say the least, but when Chen called about an hour later, he played down the numbers as "way too early to tell," said we'll just keep on and see how things look in next month's tests, and "absolutely" gave me leave to skip a week of medications ahead of the Yellowstone trip in mid-Sept. So, a whoosh of relief, and a reminder to myself to hold to the pattern of checking those damn test results only just ahead of his phone call--I did it an hour and a half or so ahead this time, and an hour would have been a lot less fretting.

27 July--Whew. On the 8th, I sold my 100 shares of Amazon at \$323.80, and a couple of days ago it crashed 10%, to about \$320. I had no great insights about a stock where I essentially doubled my original Roth IRA \$17,000 investment, just, as I told C, a reluctance to ride Amazon down whenever it did hit heavy going. One thing off my mind, in summary.

And there's plenty still weighing there, as I work away at Last Bus to Wisdom while the mini-booktour for the paperback

27 July cont.--of Sweet Thunder looms in August, the house needs care (wasp exterminator just gone, roof cleaner coming, Sandi the painter due mid-month for touch-up projects), and my always overly ambitious garden taking a lot of time. But mainly, there is our health, our physical conditions. C's balance problem is terribly troubling, although she is brave and commonsensical about it, and I must in the meanwhile maintain myself despite the cancer medications to keep us operating. It's plenty to shoulder.

30 July--Whew, not unusual for these oages, I suppose. Big rough days, expecially when I have to get to Northgate for weekly blood test, manhandle the garden every morning to keep it from ~~burning~~ burning out, field emails and so on, when all in the world I want to do is race on with the Last Bus. Today, likely fueled by steroids of the latest Dex cycle, I saw that the Yellowstone section did not move fast enough, and figured out a major moving-around which I hope will take care of it. It is a major SOB of a revise, so I managed no more than half of it today, running as fast as ~~the~~ I can to stay in place.

Double whew, we survived another social evening with John Roden, again at the neutral ground of the Malcofs', though as C said, "It's exhausting." John seems never to have an opinion he can resist expressing, although there's no sign he tries, either. He is marginally better than his really bombastic old days when he would let fly any old time, as this time on the drive home he merely slid into (out of ~~nowhere~~ nowhere as usual), "Can anyone tell me what Vietnam did to us, to deserve (thousands of death etc.)?" My total response was, "It's a nice evening, John," and that was that. And something we really don't get--Jean for whatever reason, maybe just so much inurement to him that she doesn't see him as the rest of us, never ran her hand on his hair or told him to, so all evening his skimpy but wildy long hair on top stood up reminiscent of that old photo of Einstein's thatch looking like he'd stuck a finger in a light socket ~~some~~ Could have been eccentrically charming, except with his missing teeth and a dark single snag on the bottom and that hair mess, he looks more like a street wino.

13 Aug. cont.--Again have intended for days to get to this diary, much ~~xx~~ to add. We're \$56,250 richer, the ~~xxx~~ paperback chunk for Sweet Thunder. Which hit the PNBA best-seller list today at #7, hallelujah. Had a fine signing at Queen Anne bookstore on Sat., a bum one at the flagship U Book Store last week. C and I are taking this mini-booktour as if I'm mainly signing up stock. Meanwhile, she read 165 pp of ms, Crow Fair to arrival in Big Hole, and liked ~~dem~~. Sent the same ~~xxx~~ off to Marcella today. In the bigger world, we're both shocked at suicide of Robin Williams, whom we were around for several days on the St. Petersburg trip. Quickness of mind there that was damn near Mozartian, I thought.

23 Aug.--Another escape (I think). My test results scared the socks off us this time--the serum protein spiking from ~~xxx~~ 23% to 40%--but the unflappable Chen focused only on the fact that the results were "discordant"--the light chains test showed a decline instead of a spike, and he said the results ought to move in tandem because they measure "the same thing." So, continue as I've been, with Dex and Pomalyst, and repeat the tests with a urine test thrown in. And again, he gave his blessing for me to make the Yellowstone trip.

Aside from the hour or so of alarm after we'd seen the test results, this had been a week when a lot of things got shaped up--Sandi Rathbone doing 3 days of painting, Will Lowell trimming the hedges, some finances handled which took about \$60,000 out of the stock market, including about \$10,000 in capital gains. And I think I have a version of the ending of Last Bus to Wisdom, 4-5 pp. I pretty much worked on all week. I still don't feel on top of the entire ms, with gaps to be filled and my current tendency--perhaps steroid-induced--to rework instead of blazing on with rough draft. Am hoping now to get a helluva lot done ahead of the Y'stone trip.

Meanwhile, almost as an aside, we've been selling some books, the Sweet Thunder paperback #7 & #8 on the PNBA bestseller list the past 2 weeks. This week's event, at Third Place, was surprisingly adventurous, as C and I showed

23 Aug. cont.--up for what Glory the publicist had listed as just a signing, and there were 70 people sitting there waiting to hear me talk. Wendy Manning explained, sort of, that the store expects some kind of a presentation even when it's just a signing. By now I know to always carry a reading with me for just such a circumstance, and so scrambled it together and actually had a good event with a terrifically supportive audience, who want me to write books about various of my characters. Kidding (and secretly not), I said, "How long am I going to live?" We wrap up this mini-tour next week at ParkPlace, enough already.

1 Oct.--So much has happened since I could last wangle time for these pages, some of it great, some of it not so good. Our trip to Bozeman-Yellowstone-Jackson went splendidly, with the ironbutt driving help of Marcella. Unforgettable booksigning at the beloved Country Bookshelf in Bozeman, elk providing bugling when we were at the Tetons at dawn, fine turnout for the Jackson booksigning, and C and Marcella figured out how to dodge the Yellowstone Park trio of road slowings/closings by routing us to Jackson down through Idaho, the handsome country west of the Tetons. Then home and troublesome blood readings, enough so that Dr. Chen began speculating about putting me on intravenous drugs. I resisted, asking if we couldn't try Melphele with this new not evidently effective drug Pomalyst. He got immediately interested, saying he'd need to check with a pharmacist about toxicity. Next day, he called back to say there was no established protocol on using Melphele that way, but there was for a chemo called Cytoxan. So I'm on that, added to Pom and K Dex, and surprise so far, the first ~~men~~ dose last Sat. (this is Wednesday) didn't much faze me. And today, Wendy Smith invited us to stay with them in New York, to see The Iceman Cometh. We have emailed back a definite maybe, holding our hearts.

from

26 Oct.--Unremitting work on the ms has kept me reporting here, and I guess the news is mainly the work and the medication. Y'day I began the 2nd cycle of Cytosan, and when I told C earlier this afternoon I felt a little rocky and she asked for specifics, I said I'm about half half-sick. That actually isn't too bad, but I got up from the daily nap with a helluva crick in my neck, which I've been using a heating pad on, maybe to some improvement. Anyway, medicated life has to go on, and here's some of what we've been up to beyond that:

--Had lunch with Tony on the 24th, also buying 1st editions of Mariah at 3rd Place so we'll be able to provide full runs of my novels to Andy at Back of Beyond if the demand continues. (He sold 2 during the Antiquarian show here.) Came home after buying those at full price + and learned C had bought nice cheap ones on-line from AbeBooks.

--Fine funny dinner with Linda Birds and Syd at Chloe on the 21st. They'd been to Breadloaf in Sicily, sounded like a great adventure. Linda put the arm on me to talk to her Writers course next quarter, and I'm about to e-mail her to schedule me on a Tuesday ahead of the weekly Dex gamut.

--On 17thx, the Laskins were here for crockpot dinner, again great hilarious catching-up. As C has said, we are for fortunate in our friends.

--On the 12th, had lunch with Jean Walkinshaw and her daughter Meg and son-in-law Larry at Chanterelle. Jean somewhat alarmed us, as C said, finally looking her age and on Prednisone for the same ailment and treatment C went through. But she's still bright and interested, and out of that lunch came her picking up on the news of our 50th anniversary next April, telling Tony about it at the Mary Randlett book gig, and Tony maybe throwing a gala for us. We shall see.

17 Nov.--What a day, and set of days. I will try to get back to this to give it what it deserves, but for now --I am loaded up with medications to bring down the constipation and urine backup that have put nearly 20 pounds on me.

--This morning, despite grueling back pain, I finished the ms of Last Bus to Wisdom.

--And this Friday, I undergo an MRI test for what both my doctors seem to think is myeloma in my back.

24 Nov.--How strange a time this has been. On Friday, the 21st, the MRI confirmed the X-rays and Ultrasound, so the good news is I have a compression fracture in my back, but not myeloma! So we have skinned past that fate one more time.

Meanwhile, the back pain has been murderous, though a bit better now and over the weekend. Part of the problem is my swollen calves and feet, heavy enough to drag around that ~~X~~ it affects my stride. Dr. Kato keeps working the case with water pills, and I expect she may up the dosage a 3rd time. All in all, I currently am a cripple, dependent (mostly) on a cane etc. It has not stopped me from getting manuscript work done, and today I'm desk-cleaning, and as soon as Kory the windowasher gets out of here, can begin reading the full Last Bus to Wisdom calmly.

17 Dec.--Betty Mayfield is here inventorying our archive--which she already estimates at 100 linear feet--a fine event in another day of back crippledom. This has been a time of ups and downs--we FedExed the Last Bus ms to NY y'day, great triumph; everything I try on this back grief leaves me still crippled and near yowling with pain.

--Amid the above, Dr. Kato called, working through with ~~kne~~ me that this is probably spondylothesis pinching lower back nerves, the compression fracture is likely "incidental". She's put my case along to the back specialist, and we'll see what he has to say.

30 Dec.--My memory of this holiday season will be of pain and more pain. These past 2 months of back pain about like a muscle pull, confined to an area in my lower back about the size of a hand, worsening into excruciating pain in a band entirely across the lower back, with a diagnosis of 2 compression fractures. And now that I cautiously think that affliction may be ever so slowly getting better--the pain is down, although my walking is still effortful and uneven, with the ~~gaint~~ gait pushing my right hip out--the lower legs, particularly the left one, have come down with a really painful muscle ache when I sit through a meal, for instance. I've made myself the guinea pig to see if Chen's increased dosage of Cytosan is causing this, by noting how things are the rest of this week and next week off the cancer medications. Right now, I've been sitting here at the desk for 20 minutes or more, and while there's some discomfort, the legs are not howling with pain. We'll see, which has been the glum mantra of these weeks.

There are a lot more complaints I could make about the constant fending with this, but C fortunately is entering the better side, the social side. Our ~~friends~~ friends have been wonderful all through this, to the extent of the Laskins coming in and cooking spaghetti dinner a few nights ago, and ~~tonight~~ tonight Tony and Lee bringing supper.

And Carol has been wonderful. Patient, uncomplaining, attentive. How I have despised the ordeal she's being put through, but she is doing it magnificently. Some good news to end this crippling year with.

From: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: a New Year's toast
Date: January 1, 2014 11:50:28 AM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Cc: David Williams <wingate@seanet.com>

Dear Author and Muse,

When it comes to making words do magic, you are the fearless leader. This humble scribe is only too happy to follow. I don't have a snappy toast to fire back, so one of my favorite Italian words will have to suffice: Altrettanto, which the dictionary translates as "likewise," but which my Italian teacher uses in the sense of "Back attcha" or "The same to you and then some."

New Year's cheer wafting your ways. David

On Wed, Jan 1, 2014 at 10:06 AM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

Dear dedicatees, makers of magical books, muses, priceless friends, you know who you are--

This fresh morn of the year I've been going through a lingo file, and came across a Scotch (and probably scotch) toast I hereby incant for us all:

"Here's to us! Who's enny like us? On'y few, and they're all deid."

Happy '14, and many more.

--Ivan and the muse named Carol

Waiting for the Second Half

In Chapter I, I was carried by the stream of memory which seldom stopped for commas or periods, and cruised right into Chapter II and the Dog Bus trip. I rode along with Donny, first as a reader, but then as a companion hoping that his stories wouldn't get him into trouble. But if anyone has been alone and away from home when young, one's imagination is the only weapon available to build protection against an outside world, and it seemed effective in helping him in cohabiting with his bus companions. (I wish I had a purloined arrow head and Indian Mocassins when I was a kid.) I forgot that I was a reader when that sleazy heated dipstick salesman tried to steal his suitcase and would have liked to treat him to a few of his heated dip sticks up the gazoo. The old couple near the end of the trip deserved a hug. In fact, all his fellow riders had interesting personalities leaving one to wonder what was next for them.

Herman the expert on the American West seems to be a delightful character. I have a foreboding that Donny's grandmother is going to die and that he'll need Herman and may have to become the fourth hand at cards.

I think that some of Herman's "English" sounded slightly more Norwegian than German with my limited exposure to him so far. The Karl May Society in Germany will shurely add *Dog Bus* to its required reading list.

So, I like the book very much and anxiously await the rest of it. I can't comment on it as a critic but as reader give it six out of five stars.. Kathrin has the more difficult task and I have had all the fun.

John

Chen phone visit, Jan. 16 '14

This was a week ahead of the scheduled phone visit, because I was having a day of constant gassiness and frequent bowel movements and much urination. At Carol's suggestion, I called the Bellevue oncology number, got nurse Kyle and asked if I could be fitted in to Chen's Friday afternoon phone schedule.

The details as I went over those with Chen:

--Gastric upset since early morning, half a dozen bowel movements (not diarrhea-like; solid stools of diminishing size), frequent urination. All of it very draining, debilitating.

--In the medications cycle, I was 12 days since Melphelan, in 3rd week of Revlimid cycle, and 4th day of weekly Dexamethasone. (In the Dex cycle, effects should have been easing off at that point of the week, leading to usual Friday afternoon energy crash.)

Chen said it was "hard to know" what was hitting me, perhaps viral gastroenteritis. He suggested an OTC remedy called Gas-X, symethacone, which as he put it dissolves the "air pockets" of of gassiness into "one big bubble." I got the stuff at Rite-Aid and took 2 chewable tablets after supper, and while I never experienced the "one big bubble," my insides settled down and I had a good night's sleep, about 7 hours.

Now the **good news**. Unexpectedly the electrophoresis serum protein test result had come in (usually it's into the next week after Friday processing) and the decline in the SPEP m-spike as Chen terms it was dramatic: dropped from 14% to 7%, and in the g/dl measure Chen watches, the successive readings since he put me on Melphelan have been 1.6 to .07 to .03 now. Looking back at test results, that reading hadn't been that low since August of 2010. Chen said "Let's see if we can get it to zero," so I'll do another Melphelan cycle.

--I told him if we do get it down that far, I want to discuss with him cutting the Dex dosage, which he once raised as a possibility.

--We're retaining the regularly scheduled phone visit of next week, to check on how I'm doing.

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: One other jacket choice for The Family
Date: February 24, 2014 8:47:45 AM PST
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David, hi--Sorry we haven't gotten back to you earlier, but it's still raining here (foot of snow in Bellingham) and we're just back from suiting up like astronauts to do our walk round the 'hood. So, to business:

Carol and I both like the proposed cover, think it's strong and evocative. But we'd like it better if the middle letters of Family didn't fall through on the young scholar's forehead. Penguin folk may see reasons why this can't be done, but how about swapping the subtitle up to the top of the cover, and bringing The Family down to where the subtitle is now, so it would stand out clearly. The layout is still gonna look busy, it's that kind of cover, but I (we) think the first principle has to be to have the damn title clear and readable.

Other option might be just to put the title above the lad's head, maybe without the fancy lines. Those busy up the layout anyway, and it's an evocative kind of classic portrait that I think comes through good and strong without the linework froufrou. The simpler the better, maybe?

So there you go, free advice for what it's worth. Delighted to hear you're on tap for El Bay night--I've sussed out some logistics I'll tell you about when you're back. Best of luck on the rest of your NY mission(s).

--Ivan

On Feb 24, 2014, at 5:30 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Dear Ivan and Carol, Greetings from NYC. Wonderful talk yesterday -- one more to go tonight -- then pow wow with Penguins tomorrow morning. Take a look at this proposed cover for the paperback -- feedback welcome! By the way, mom does not show up till Saturday so I'm happy to accompany you to the E Bay Bash on Friday and be the designated driver. We will nail down details when I get back to what I gather has been damp chill Seattle. Sunny here! Cheers, David

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

From: Jill Kneerim <jill@kwblit.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 21, 2014 at 11:57 AM
Subject: One other jacket choice for The Family
To: "Kathryn.Court@us.penguingroup.com" <Kathryn.Court@us.penguingroup.com>, "David Laskin (laskin.david@gmail.com)" <laskin.david@gmail.com>
Cc: Brettne Bloom <bloom@kwblit.com>, Lucy Cleland <lucy@kwblit.com>

Dear Kathryn and David—

I've heard some serious objections to the jacket we chose and wanted to go on record with you both that I find the attached one appealing, in case you want an alternative. I think you liked this one, too, David. It's quite beautiful and definitely draws you in.

Jill

This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the individual to whom they are addressed. If you have received this email in error please notify the sender of the message. Thank you.

From: Baytown68@aol.com
Subject: **Re: good deed done**
Date: March 5, 2014 12:59:55 PM PST
To: cddoig@comcast.net

Wow, Carol....it is 46 years! I remember when I first saw you in the Faculty Diningroom on my internship from UW....seems like seeing another buddy from the mid-Atlantic coast just did it!!! I was amazed to hear that what you have done for Margaret seems to be beyond usual!!!! Good Show! Jean

In a message dated 3/5/2014 12:42:07 P.M. Pacific Standard Time, cddoig@comcast.net writes:

Hi, Jean. Thanks, again, for expeditioning with me yesterday, and for sponsoring lunch afterward. Good job, good beer and taco salad. I'm delighted we've done the final inning toward closing the trust. I got to thinking about how much we've done together. I think it's 46 years worth, isn't it?

Best wishes with the new computer and printer tomorrow. You'll get the hang of it, and do ask for help from the Dewells whenever you need it. If you learn a few new things every day you'll soon have it whipped....Carol=

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: date night!
Date: April 11, 2014 5:29:03 AM PDT
To: Linda Bierds <lbierds@u.washington.edu>



OK, darlings, you're on for April 22. 5:15 at Marcello? (Unless you want a place easier to find, har-de-har-har.) Seriously, we need to hear all about NY and such. Can't wait.

luv,
Ivan

On Apr 10, 2014, at 1:16 PM, Linda Bierds wrote:

Dear You Two,

It seems forever since we've seen you! First, thank you for the lovely anniversary card. I was very touched to walk down to the mailbox and find it there. I really thought that I'd live out my life without ever receiving an anniversary card, and there yours was!

We've been strapped with school work, house maintenance and tax preparation (our first as a married couple!). We went to Camano just once since we saw you and it was pelting rain then. Had to meet the plumber, but that's another story. I spent a week in New York giving a few readings and seeing Marian, then came back to start spring quarter. My students seem nice this term and actually interested--a rare thing for a room full of seniors during the last quarter of their undergrad lives.

I think of you every day and hope all is well--and that we can see you before too long! We're planning to head to Camano around May 1st, so if the weather is as lovely then as it is now, perhaps we can meet there for lunch. But how about a dinner before then? Are you free on Tuesday or Thursday, April 22 or April 24? It really has been way too long and we miss you sorely!

Much love,

Linda

On Sun, 12 Jan 2014, Linda Bierds wrote:

So you then!

On Sat, 11 Jan 2014, carol doig wrote:

Perfect. See you Tues. at 5:15.

--Ivan & Carol

p.s. It's really ablowin' here. Hope your trees are OK.

On Jan 10, 2014, at 6:02 PM, Linda Bierds wrote:

Hello right back at you!

How about this coming Tuesday? We can be there by 5:15 if that's ok with you.

Hugs and tickles, too, you two.

Linda

On Fri, 10 Jan 2014, carol doig wrote:

Yo ho ho, you two, how about dinner at Marcello? The Doigs' calendar is open next week and the one after, so suggest a night if you can, hmm? Hugs and tickles--Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Poetry Daily Poet's Pick April 15, 2014, as corrected
Date: April 21, 2014 7:36:00 AM PDT
To: Derek Sheffield <derekssheffield@gmail.com>



Derek, hi--

Yowie, the Clock a' clay stuff is amazing, isn't it. I don't know John Clare's work in detail, but carry around in the notebook I use to cram for interviews etc. his line "a language that is ever green." Also, do you know the novel The Quickening Maze, by Adam Foulds, set in the mental institution where Clare and where Tennyson shows up with his, what, neurasthenic brother? It's ostensibly about the family running the loony bin, but the poets are very much in the tale--kind of a highly wrought telling, somewhat all over the place with so many characters, but quite a job, all in all. As to Clare's rural lingo, I remember when Carol and I lived in England for that spell, some reporter cornered a codger in the Midlands or somewhere and asked him if anybody else could really understand the way they talked in that village, and received the answer, "Nobbut a tuthry." Not but two or three was plenty for them folk, I guess.

Anyway, thanks for sending the pome, as Linda B. calls 'em, Carol and I both got a kick out of it. We'll see you Friday--dinner seems to be at 5:30 but I don't know where. You'd probably do well to check with Rebecca Ryker <rebecca@icicle.org> who seems to be Harriet's detail person.

Till then,
Ivan

On Apr 17, 2014, at 8:37 PM, Derek Sheffield wrote:

This poem, and note, brought Doig to mind. 858 entries in the Oxford English Dictionary!

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

From: Poetry Daily <staff@poems.com>
Date: Tue, Apr 15, 2014 at 8:55 AM
Subject: Poetry Daily Poet's Pick April 15, 2014, as corrected
To: derekssheffield@gmail.com

Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

Poet's Pick April 15
John Clare: "Clock A Clay"
Selected by Susan Stewart
National Poetry Month 2014
Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

Our thanks to Susan Stewart for today's Poet's Pick!

We are bringing you a special poem and commentary each weekday in April as part of our annual fund-raising campaign and in celebration of National Poetry Month. Please help us to continue our service to you and to poetry by making a tax-deductible contribution to Poetry Daily! [Click here](#) to find out how you can contribute online or by mailing a check or money order.

Thank you so much for your support! Enjoy today's special poem and commentary!

In the cowslips peeps I lye
Hidden from the buzzing fly
While green grass beneath me lies
Pearled wi' dew like fishes eyes
Here I lye a Clock a clay
Waiting for the time o'day

2

While grassy forests quake surprise
And the wild wind sobs and sighs
My gold home rocks as like to fall
On its pillars green and tall
When the pattering rain drives bye
Clock a Clay keeps warm and dry

3

Day by day and night by night
All the week I hide from sight
In the cowslips peeps I lye
In rain and dew still warm and dry
Day and night and night and day
Red black spotted clock a clay

4

My home it shakes in wind and showers
Pale green pillar top't wi' flowers
Bending at the wild wind's breath
Till I touch the grass beneath
Here still I live lone clock a clay
Watching for the time of day

■ Susan Stewart Comments:

John Clare (1793-1864), born in the rural village of Helpston, has been called the "greatest English poet ever to come from the labouring classes." A field worker from childhood, Clare nevertheless received a rudimentary education and became a great reader and writer of poetry and a brilliant nature writer. In this little poem, "Clock a Clay," he speaks in the voice of the insect you may know as a "ladybug" or "ladybird." The name "Clock a Clay" comes from the rural Northhamptonshire belief that you can tell time by counting the number of taps on the ground it takes to make a lady bug fly away.

The poem was written at some point between 1842 and 1864 when Clare lived in the Northampton [Insane] Asylum, suffering from delusions, but continuing to write. John Clare is cited in 858 entries in the *Oxford English Dictionary*—not because he invented neologisms, but because he provided English poetry with a vast trove of everyday rural words, like "clock a clay," that no writer had before committed to paper.

This poem is printed in John Clare, *The Later Poems*, edited by Eric Robinson and David Powell, Oxford University Press, 1984, vol. I, p. 611.

■ About Susan Stewart:

Susan Stewart's most recent books of poems are *Red Rover* and *Columbarium*, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award. A former MacArthur Fellow, she is also the co-translator, with Patrizio Ceccagnoli, of Milo De Angelis's *Theme of Farewell and After-Poems*. Her many prose works include her recent *The Poet's Freedom: A Notebook on Making*. The Avalon Foundation University Professor in the Humanities at Princeton University, she is currently a Berlin Prize fellow at the American Academy in Berlin.

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: Laskin lecture for Holocaust Remembrance Day, Sunday April 27
Date: April 22, 2014 4:03:44 PM PDT
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David. hi. kind of quickly and raggedly at end of day--

Full congrats from both of us on the high honor of being a speaker at such an occasion. Unfortunately this is one time we can't be among your adoring fans, as (a) we'll just be home from my gig at Sleeping Lady and (b) I am physical therap-ying a painful hip, which I must have queered somehow doing garden work, and am sticking close to home as best I can. But let's get together, maybe after your Holocaust Remembrance event and my May Day gig at Whitman, and swap lies--er, compare adventures.

Garden alert: have had deer damage, bastards ate some fresh raspberry shots, evidence was deerprints in freshly-laid bark. Keep your seedling darlings netted over as long you can. Am seriously thinking about a deer fence.

Take care,
Ivan

On Apr 21, 2014, at 11:45 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Dear Friends,

This coming Sunday, April 27, is Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center has asked me to speak about my book "The Family" as part of this year's program. Josh Gortler, a survivor, and UW Professor Daniel Chirot will also deliver short talks. Rabbi Zari Weiss will say the kaddish (the mourners' prayer).

The event is free and open to the public.

Here are the details:

Sunday, April 27, 2:30 PM
Kane Hall, University of Washington Campus
(free parking in the Central Plaza Garage, 15th Ave NE and NE 41st St.)
For more information, please got to <http://www.wsherc.org/events/134-yomhashoah2014>

Thank you. I hope to see you this Sunday.

David Laskin
www.davidlaskin.com

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: maclean note
Date: June 3, 2014 6:55:05 AM PDT
To: David Williams <wingate@seanet.com>



Hey, man, good to hear from you. I knew from Andy that you were gallivanting Guatemala way. Glad to hear that was a grand experience. Re Mr. Maclean: Not sure I ever saw the whole shitaree he unloosed on Knopf, although pertinent pungencies sound familiar. I think I have in a letter from him (rather than remembered from conversation) his similar conviction that movie agents are the kind of creature that eats what's been run over on the road. Norman was really something else--so sophisticated in Shakespeare and Browning and riveting in the classroom that I believe he won the U. of Chicago's "best teacher" recognition three times, more than anybody else in history. Yet he never shed that sinewy little tough guy persona of cussing and grudges--short man in a tall world, and as he told Carol and me when he was in his eighties, being ornery was the one power he had left. Ah Norman, may there be catch-and-release in Presbyterian heaven, but I doubt it.

Hey, we're still coping with medical whims--unending colds and so forth--and need to get out of this week to see about getting together. I don't know if I RSVP'd about your annual shindig on the 14th, but we intend to be there if nothing else. Hope all is well on the bookmaking front for you and UW Press.

Best,
Ivan

On Jun 2, 2014, at 4:34 PM, David Williams wrote:

Carol and Ivan

Have you seen this? Hope you are well. We had a grand time down in Guatemala. It'd be fun to see you soon.

David

Dear Mr. Elliott:

I have discovered that I have been writing you under false pretenses, although stealing from myself more than from you. I have stolen from myself the opportunity of seeing the dream of every rejected author come true.

The dream of every rejected author must be to see, like sugar plums dancing in his head, please-can't-we-see-your-next-manuscript letters standing in piles on his desk, all coming from publishing companies that rejected his previous manuscript, especially from the more pompous of the fatted cows grazing contentedly in the publishing field. I am sure that, under the influence of those dreams, some of the finest fuck-you prose in the English language has been composed but, alas, never published. And to think that the rare moment in history came to me when I could in actuality have written the prose masterpiece for all rejected authors -- and I didn't even see that history had swung wide its doors to me.

You must have known that Alfred A. Knopf turned down my first collection of stories after playing games with it, or at least the game of cat's-paw, now rolling it over and saying they were going to publish it and then rolling it on its back when the president of the company announced it wouldn't sell. So I can't understand how you could ask if I'd submit my second manuscript to Alfred A. Knopf, unless you don't know my race of people. And I can't understand how it didn't register on me -- 'Alfred A. Knopf' is clear enough on your stationery.

But, although I let the big moment elude me, it has given rise to little pleasures. For instance, whenever I receive a statement of the sales of 'A River Runs Through It' from the University of Chicago Press, I see that someone has written across the bottom of it, 'Hurrah for Alfred A. Knopf.' However, having let the great moment slip by unrecognized and unadorned, I can now only weakly say this: if the situation ever arose when Alfred A. Knopf was the only publishing house

remaining in the world and I was the sole remaining author, that would mark the end of the world of books.

Very sincerely,

Norman Maclean

~~~~~  
David B. Williams

wingate@seanet.com

Web site: [www.geologywriter.com](http://www.geologywriter.com)

**From:** laskin.david@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Re: knock 'em dead  
**Date:** May 4, 2014 9:39:28 AM PDT  
**To:** "Carol Doig" <cddoig@comcast.net>  
**Reply-To:** laskin.david@gmail.com

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Thank you sir. Just sold out all hard covers at event #1. Now packing wad of hard cash. 2 hours downtime then off to #2.  
Will call when I return on Wed.

Your pal, David

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

**From:** Carol Doig  
**To:** Laskin, David  
**Subject:** knock 'em dead  
**Sent:** May 4, 2014 9:21 AM

David, good morn from chilly showery breezy Innis Arden. I called y'day to wish you bon voyage, and Kate told me you were already airborne, I guess on your way to do a D.C. doubleheader today, huh? Anyway, knock 'em you know what...

We're solidly home from my two gigs, Sleeping Lady and Whitman, both of which went great. Large audiences, good signings after, and my warhorse of a talk on the makings of a book keeps on cantering, hasn't thrown a horseshoe yet. Quick book biz story, linked to your nifty review of the Doerr novel this morn. For the first time in a long time I've been in touch with the Scribner ass't editor who worked on my stuff when I was with that house, and he's gonna send me a copy of the book. Reason we were in touch was that he notified my agent that 4,000 ebooks of English Creek--"a really strong number"--were sold last Monday, as a Kindle Daily Deal. Great, sez I, how much is that in American money? The agent checks with Scribner, and the answer is...about a thousand dollars. Two bits a book! Am reminded of Napoleon's remark after one of his generals won yet another bloodbath battle--"A few more such victories and we are undone."

So get out there and sell them hardbacks and paperbacks where the e-gremlins can't get in our royalty pockets. See you when you get back, we hope, pre-Israel.

Take care,  
Ivan

Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
Subject: **Re: help with handout!**  
Date: June 20, 2014 6:24:36 AM PDT  
To: David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David, good morn--

Howya doing? Been to Salt Lake yet? Gotta hear your report on that, whenever.

Am honored to make your handout hall of fame, and I'd guess I'd say we have one in each category:

--This House of Sky was done as rigorously journalistically as I could--some two dozen tape-recorded interviews of people who knew my folks, and Carol and I visited every place they and or I'd lived, that hadn't fallen down yet, in that peripatetic life of the folks working as ranch hands and cooks and me boarding out for school not quite willy-nilly, but close. Also mucho diligento in research at the Montana Historical Society on the era, back into WPA Writers Project files where locals were hired to interview other locals about herding sheep, etc. The Castle Mountain Livestock Company (colloquially the Dogie ranch, and incidentally where Scott Fitzgerald once summered with his college pal of the Donahue family who owned it--some of 'em lived right here in the Highlands, how about that) files in Montana State U. archives produced pay records and general pic of the rather baronial livestock operation while my father and mother both worked there. And of course, our visit to our Jerusalem or whatever it was, the summer range and herding cabin at the north end of the Bridgers where my folks hoped to recoup/recover after the Arizona winter of '44 and my mother died. I emphasize that throughout this, Carol took copious pics and I took copious notes, including diagramming the homestead log house where my grandparents alit from Scotland and where my dad was born.

Another break: in those days, the Montana dept. of health or whatever it was would send copies of death certificates, which they stopped later on doing on privacy grounds or something.

Oh, yes, one more journalistic fit of conscience that went into Sky: notice that the "quoted" first-person dialogue etc. from my taped informants or remembered from my dad or grandmother (both of whom I also managed to tape reminiscences from, blessedly) is not within quote marks, italicized instead. This was meant to signal the reader, perhaps subliminally, that stories remembered from decades before were being told in maybe not the exact lingo/details of how they happened, but were the makings of memory. (Which I almost always found pretty damn accurate when I could check on things.)

All in all, I'd say it's family history, written up in as high a literary style as I could manage--there's that diary entry I have from the time about trying to make every sentence as highly charged as poetry. There: does that complicate your job enough?

--Heart Earth I really wanted to subtitle A Remembrance, which the publisher would not go for, and so right there on the cover it's pegged as a memoir. That's probably close enough, given that I had to recreate the narrative at a greater distance and from thinner resources--vitality my mother's letters across less than a year, to her sailor brother in the South Pacific theater of combat--but there's a kicker here, too. Heart Earth won the Evans Biography Prize given by Utah State U. for best bio of a western figure (\$10,000, man) which slid it at least onto the academic judges' notion of family history, so go figure, huh?

Anyway, I hope this sorts out more than it complicates. Call if there are any nits to be picked.

See you as soon as we all can manage. As anticipated, I'm back on medications (blood tests were up after my 3-month sabbatical, but not drastically), and I'm something of a medical rock star at Group Health (yikes) because the Capitol Hill Central pharmacy, which is the main and maybe only Group Health dispensary of high-powered cancer drugs like I take, dispensed the very first order of the new drug and staggeringly pricey (to them, not us) Pomalidamide to yrs truly. Naturally I'm being watched hawklike--weekly blood tests the first 2 months--and so far, only couple of days into this, I'm doing pretty good, a beat or two behind in remembering things, some facial flush, but no killer leg cramps, and if past history is any guide I may be wired up enough to write a bunch--which may account for how I've run on in this.

Anyway, onward, good luck with the Chuckanutters et al.

Ivan

**From:** carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Re: Finalist - Washington State Book Awards  
**Date:** September 12, 2014 3:41:38 PM PDT  
**To:** Derek Sheffield <derekssheffield@gmail.com>



Derek, hi at last--

Too damn many days have gone by without me getting to any email--no real problems holding me up, just the general kerfuffles of (writing) life. Anyway, just real quick as we're mustering ourselves like crazy for a Bozeman-Yellowstone-Jackson Hole trip, wanted to say I got a kick out of the pics of you as a huntin' fishin' fella. I appreciate your pal Chris's invite, but am probably not budging from home again until the novel comes out next August, and maybe not even then. Let's see, on down your list of good stuff:

--Jimdandy news on the award nomination. Have to say, I don't like that setup of cattle-calling all of you there and then pointing to the winner--hell, you all have to have acceptance speeches ready, win, lose or draw, huh? I'm sort of with you on not breaking a leg to get there, although I do have to counsel(?) that the Western Writers of America through the years similarly have nominated books of mine (including House of Sky) and demanded everybody show up, I never have, and never won.

--Yup, I got the Willamette Writers (Oregon bunch, said to be the biggest writers' organization west of Mississippi) Lifetime Achievement Award. Really do feel honored, that they crossed the Columbia to give me something they accorded Bill Stafford, the divine Ursula, Barry Lopez, et al.

--Sure, make use of the Sky talk, although I'd rather not have it loose on the Internet if it can be helped.

That's pretty much it from here, except to say Linda Bierds at this moment is teaching at Breadloaf in Sicily, brand new gig. Geez, them Breadloafers are inventive.

Take care, keep fishin'.

Ivan

On Sep 2, 2014, at 3:32 PM, Derek Sheffield wrote:

Ivan,

Below find some news to share with you. It's no National Book Award finalism, but probably close as I'll ever get. I doubt they'd give it to a first book, and I doubt I will make it to this event. My face doesn't need any more tight smiles.

Speaking of awards, I got wind from someone that you just won another recently. That true? Do tell.

I'm late in thanking you for sending me your "Sky talk." It's an instructive piece and I would like to share it with my students, if you don't mind. You make clear much of what I intuitively loved when I first made my way through your lyrical remembering.

And while we're on Montana, I should tell you that I was fishing it a couple weeks ago (photos forthcoming). A poet friend who works as a fly guide asked whether he could get you to Missoula for a reading for two grand. My friend, Chris Dombrowski, is the real thing and he'd take good care of you. I don't know if he has more funding than that or not. I told him I didn't know what you could do, but would float it by you. I didn't want to give him your contact info. without your say-so. Chris is good pals with Jim Harrison and David James Duncan. In fact, I think Chris will probably be Harrison's literary executor or something.

**From:** carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** howdy, is all  
**Date:** September 12, 2014 3:12:03 PM PDT  
**To:** david laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



David, hey and hi--

Just real quick, as we're mustering ourselves like crazy for our Bozeman-Yellowstone-Jackson Hole trip. Have lost track of where you are in the hemisphere, but hope you're knocking audiences over backwards in their chairs. If you and Kate happen to alight at David & Marjorie's shindig tomorrow night, we can try to catch up with your doings, OK? All is well enough here, Carol has planned our trip down to the last inch and my fearless doctor is letting me off medications for 2 weeks for it--am starting to feel like a human being again. Talk to you when we can--we're away the 15th to 19th.

vaya con dios, you betcha

Ivan

**From:** carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Re: The Iceman Approacheth  
**Date:** November 3, 2014 9:00:45 AM PST  
**To:** Wendy Smith <smith.wendyblackhall@gmail.com>



Wendy, greetings from Novemberish (rainy) Seattle--

Appreciated the update on The Iceman, and it helped focus the mind no end. I've looked at the possible trip up, down, and sideways, and I have to conclude I currently have too much medication (and its side effects) in me to make, apologies to O'Neill, long days' journeys of the sort. So Carol and I thank you to the skies for the wonderful offer, but proceed without us. It would have been so nifty to be with you and Joe on this, but reality trumps desire in this case.

I should say that the medication regimen I'm on--better living through pharmaceuticals--has worked in various forms for years in suppressing the "indolent" myeloma, and I have had no bodily damage from it. Luckily, if that word can be applied to coping with this kind of cancer, one of the medications contains enough steroids that it really hypes me up for the writing a couple of days a week. And I function steadily the other days. So, you're right, I am hard at work on the next book, and should be shipping it to my editor at Riverhead as an Xmas present. Publication next August. Life goes on, and I have plans for the novel after this one. Which brings me to a devout wish that you and Joe are healthy and thriving, and Luca is having the time of his life (academically, of course) in college.

All best, and gratitude again,

Ivan

On Nov 2, 2014, at 7:41 AM, Wendy Smith wrote:

Hi folks,

We are finally experiencing real fall: had to turn on the heat last night, and it's blustery and cold today. So it seemed only right that the BAM winter schedule arrived in the Saturday mail.

Tickets for The Iceman Cometh go on sale November 10. For our purposes, any time between February 5 and March 8 would be fine. The show runs Tuesday through Saturday nights at 7 PM, Sundays at 2 PM. Fair warning: the production is 4 hours 45 minutes long with three intermissions. (I don't know why they're doing that; we just saw Angels in America, 5 hours long with a single 45-minute break, which seems much more sensible.) It may be too much O'Neill for anyone but me!

However, if you're undaunted, Joe and I would be delighted to see you. I know you have health issues to consider, and if you want to make a tentative date I would have no problem unloading an extra pair of tickets later if things didn't work out. And if the thought of O'Neill's darkest play plus New York in late winter is just to much, I'll certainly understand!

I hope you're enjoying the usual temperate Seattle weather, and I'm sure Ivan is hard at work on the next book! Let us know your thoughts about this, and affectionate best wishes in any case.

Wendy

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
Subject: Re: followup  
Date: November 5, 2014 4:39:45 PM PST  
To: Linda Sullivan <ljsullivan@me.com>



Hi, Linda, crockpot chef for the ages <sup>even</sup> if the thing is only sporadically plugged (gotta be a cookbook in that, right?--

We thought the Baranof was a tone of fun too, and I've made a few small changes in my scene, putting life preservers along the wall with the great ships' names on them from a Manitowoc-built list, Pere Marquette and Northwind and Nanny Goat and my favorite for some reason, Chequamagon. Easily worth the price of the booze, business expense besides.

I did remember Frank's ore boat stint and intent to pump him about it on Thanksgiving. Yes, he's coming again, although he doesn't keep in touch nor do we the rest of the year, but I did learn when he phoned about what he's bringing (always appetizers, and however he does it, they're usually sensational) that he's moved to Olympia, not too fr from downtown. Excuse me if you already know the story, but he was looking for cheaper surroundings, went to Albuquerque but found it has become pricey, and so somehow ended up in Olympia. All I know for now. We like the sonofagun, but you were very wise to move on to life with our man Jeff.

Going out to dinner with the Nalders on Monday. Any pertinent gossip there, we'll try to think to pass along. Have a fine sunshiny time in Arizona, and thanks again to you and Jeff for the great grub and the pleasure of your company in the Baranof.

All affection.  
Ivan

On Nov 5, 2014, at 10:49 AM, Linda Sullivan wrote:

Hi, Doigs,

Great to see you last night and be a part of Ivan's work. Ivan probably already knows this but in case not: Frank Zoretich, as I recall, worked on a Great Lakes ore boat for one summer.

We'll look forward to hearing more as work progresses! Have a great Thanksgiving.

Love,  
Linda & Jeff

**From:** carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** oh my achin' back  
**Date:** December 21, 2014 3:37:44 PM PST  
**To:** jean roden <baytown68@aol.com>



Dear Jean and John, and mostly John--

Jean conveyed your truly generous offer to pitch in on anything I might need during this siege of bad back, and I will absolutely keep that in mind, thank you so much. My situation is that I don't seem to need much, as I'm sort of a potted plant, ensconce in an easy chair to ease the back pain. Tomorrow I get new X-rays, and Tues. I see the doc who's supposed to be THE back doctor in Group Health, so there should be some progress on what has been a helluva painful time, I have to admit.

On my other medical fronts, so to speak, diuretic pills (much peeing!) and I seem to have whipped the edema which accompanied this back onset, and so I've shed 15 pounds of those fluids and am triumphantly back at my high school weight of 155. There's a loss that's a gain, John! As to the cancer treatment, steady as she goes with state of the art pills. Jan. 1 will mark 8 years of this medical adventure, to call it that. So on we go, with the help and support of wonderful friends, the two of you as ever right there.

All affection,

Ivan

**From:** carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Re: Transfusion  
**Date:** December 16, 2014 3:36:59 PM PST  
**To:** David Laskin <laskin.david@gmail.com>



Glad to hear you're jingling and jangling in NY style. You're about to be joned by Donny and Herman the German, all 500 pp worth, so if you see celebratory fireworks in the direction of Hudson St., they've alit. Now cleaning out after the 2+ years of pilling up drafts etc.--whoof.

Hugs and tickles. Kate, for setting us up with Chris on the garbage run. Carol met up with her on a walk, so we think we're synchronized.

Just turned down a college speaking gig in Bismarck ND in late winter, can you imagine?

Mild weather here, nothing exciting, thank the heavens. See you soon for NY tales.

Ivan

On Dec 15, 2014, at 8:28 PM, David Laskin wrote:

So glad that worked. NY is its usual whirl - great to be overstimulated for a week or so, but after that basta! David

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 15, 2014, at 5:12 PM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

I met Chris yesterday as I walked past her house. She had a Christmas tree on thee roof of her car! Tis the season. And since she'd already been prepped by Kate, she offered to tote the garbage can and I accepted. Thanks to you both; you're taking care of us even from afar.

Carol

On Dec 14, 2014, at 10:24 AM, David Laskin wrote:

Kate has been in touch with Chris Kocher and she'd be happy to pinch hit till I return - don't be shy about calling on her ! David

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 13, 2014, at 5:33 PM, carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net> wrote:

I am now certifiably a red-blooded American, 2 pints topping me off. It was an ordeal, much longer than we were prepared for (nobody warned us it'd be 6+ hours) and I don't know if you've ever seen me furious, but Carol arrived from her medical appointment 45 minutes into the process to find me going wild because nothing had happened. Usually I have to coax her down off the ceiling in medical circumstances, so that was quite a switch. Things improved when the paperwork gauntlet was finally done, and the nurses started putting the red stuff in me. Oh man, it was a long time flat in bed with naught to do but a little reading and napping. Consequently, after supper when I had a yogurt for dessert I wondered whether it was mixed or not--and then hoped it wasn't so it would give me something to do! Carol meanwhile was enfolded in hospitality by Mark and Lou Damborg 10 minutes away, companionship, drinks, grand supper etc., thank goodness.

Today I'm taking it easy, the new blood ought be kicking in so I'll have more energy. Weather has nicened (why isn't that a word to match worsened, huh?) and Carol has gone for a walk. We're looking forward to hyper-crockpotted soup for supper. Thanks humongously for all the chores you did. Hope all is going well with you in the Big Apple. Looking forward to hearing about it when you get back.