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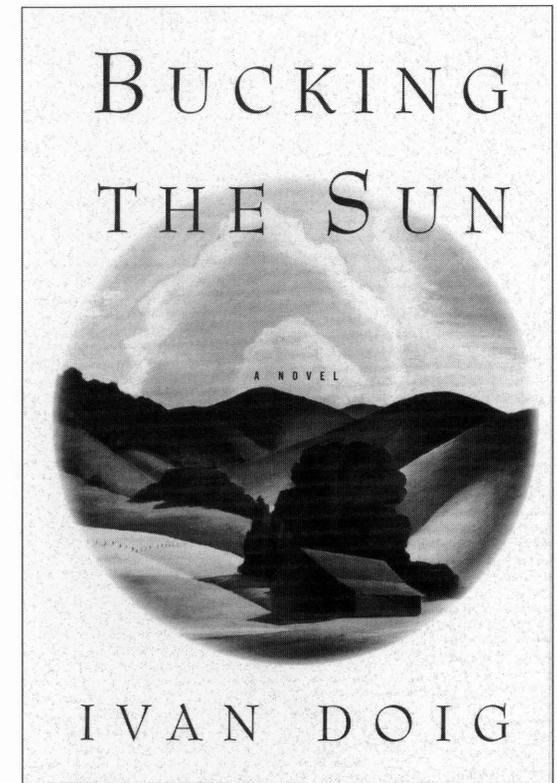
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Discussion Points:

1. While based on the actual building of the Fort Peck Dam, *Bucking the Sun* is a work of fiction. At what points does the novel depart from fact to imagination? What liberties does Doig take that an author of nonfiction could not? It has been said that fiction is the art of making things up to tell a greater truth; in what ways is this author trying to achieve that?
2. Describe the structure of *Bucking the Sun*. Discuss Doig's literary voice, as well as his use of flashback. What is the author's purpose in these italic "back stories"?
3. Doig has populated his novel equally with female

and male characters—Meg and Hugh, Bruce and Kate, Rosellen and Neil, Owen and Charlene, Proxy and Darius. How does *Bucking the Sun* illuminate the roles of women and men during the 1930s?

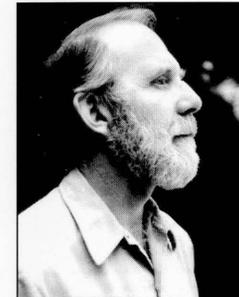
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5. Although the major characters are related, Doig takes care to make each a distinct personality. Consider examples of one way he does this: by giving each one unique turns of phrase.
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8. Doig writes of Kinnick: "He hated Franklin Delano Roosevelt for this project and its swarm of construction towns, if that's what you wanted to call such collections of shacks, and the whole shovelhead bunch down here who had to cut loose like rangutangs every Saturday night. Damn this New Deal crap. Wasn't there any better way to run a country than to make jobs out of thin air, handing out wage money like it was cigarette papers?" How does this political climate compare with the current debate in this country over the role of government?
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'Ivan Doig was born in White Sulphur Springs, Montana, in 1939...grew up along the Rocky Mountain Front where much of his writing takes place...first book, the highly acclaimed memoir *This House of Sky*, was a finalist for the National Book Award...former ranch hand, newspaperman, and magazine editor, Doig is a graduate of Northwestern University where he received bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism...he also holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington...in 1989 the Western Literature Association honored him with its Distinguished Achievement Award for his body of work...he lives in Seattle with his wife Carol, who teaches literature of the American West...'



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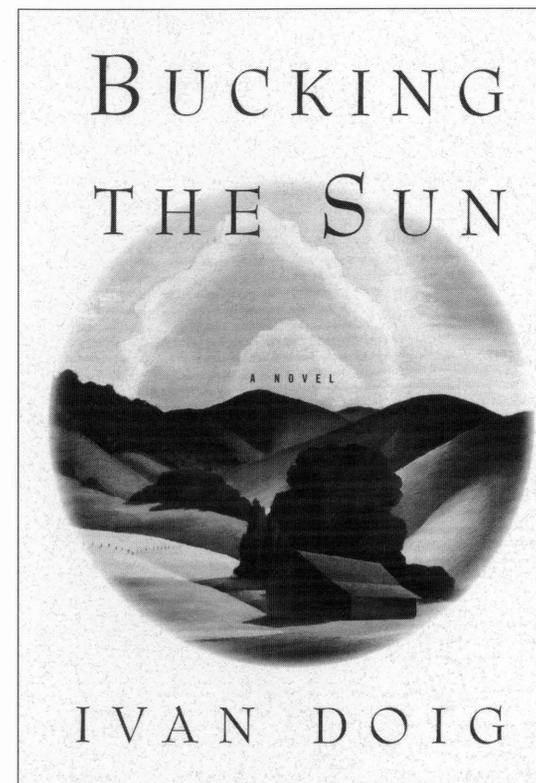
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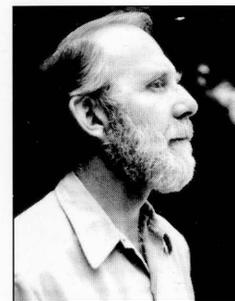
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BUCKING THE SUN

Selfmade men always do a lopsided job of it, and the sheriff had come out conspicuously short on the capacity to sympathize with anyone but himself. No doubt ears still were burning at the Fort Peck end of the telephone connection; he'd had to tell that overgrown sap of an undersheriff he didn't give a good goddamn what the night foreman said about dangerous, get the thing fished out of the river if it meant using every last piece of equipment at the dam site. This was what he was up against all the time, the sheriff commiserated with himself during the drive from Glasgow now, toward dawn. People never behaving one bit better than they could get away with.

Die of eyelids, you could on this monotonous stretch of highway down to the dam, he reminded himself, and cranked open the window for night air to help keep him awake. He'd been up until all hours, sheriffing the town of Glasgow through the boisterous end of another week, and had barely hit bed when the telephone jangled. Catch up on sleep, the stupid saying went, but in five years as sheriff he had yet to see any evidence that the world worked that way, ever made it up to you for postponement of shuteye and all the other—

The cat-yellow shapes of bulldozers sprang huge into his headlights, causing him to blink and brake hard as he steered onto the approach to the dam. Past the bulks of earthmoving equipment parked for the night, on the rail spur stood a waiting parade of even more mammoth silhouettes, flatcars loaded high with boulders to be tumbled into place on the dam face. Then, like a dike as told by a massive liar, Fort Peck Dam itself.

I V A N D O I G

