Or there's the fact of the flooding. English Creek most years behaves predictably enough. The melt in the mountains comes down to the valley as rapid tan water, about twice as much of it as the usual clear flow of the creek. But one winter a February thaw loosed some of the runoff months ahead of time and the creek overflowed into the meadows of the north fork at 00's place—where it promptly froze with the next switch in the weather and left the meadows like a series of hockey rinks. 00's cows slipped and slid on the ice, and he had any number of calves born backwards that spring.
A blind man was standing alongside a stack of orange newspapers, the Great Falls Leader. I have always had fear for my eyes. Not to see what is going on around me would be my edition of hell. Yet sightless people carry on lives, too. Suddenly the blind man called out: Leader. Leader. Leader. Whadimp-whadimp-whadimp-whadAAAA.

Leader. Leader. Certainly if you were anywhere within earshot and had any least notion of reading a newspaper that day, you would step over and buy one from that blind crier.
For one instance, I never saw why it was necessary for OO, the government trapper, to kill trapped coyotes in the manner he did--by stomping his boot heel onto the coyote's chest to burst its heart.

The argument may be that dead is dead, the method doesn't matter, and of course I know that keeping the pelt whole and undamaged is a consideration, too. But still, I just think there is a way to behave and a way not to; and that it's unnecessary for man to disgrace himself against the other creatures any more than he ordinarily does.

"No, sir," Owen advised him. "That's a flutterby." Normally he wouldn't have troubled to converse with a two-year-old, but there was something so judicious about Jackie... "There, don't you see how it flutters by?"

Jackie considered this. "Flutterby," he agreed.
The glacier of cold air slid down from the north until it covered Montana from corner to corner, then stood there for a solid week. Temperature readings were its cutting edges, red stubs of mercury in the bottoms of thermometers across six hundred miles, saying implacably 35 degrees below zero at noon, 38 degrees below zero at dusk, 45 degrees below zero in the night.

On the dam project, the engines of the bulldozers were never shut down in weather this cold, throttled onto idling all night long. Their diesel monotony broke the silence of the frigid spell, but down on the river there was the periodic buzzsaw-sound of ice being cut, but the Fort Peck project mainly was groggy with this weather. In the Wheeler saloons and dancehalls the air went stale with cigarette smoke and the accumulated pack of not recently bathed bodies, but then the instant you stepped outside the fresh keenness would all but take the lungs out of you.

The record winter of '36, the year they had all been looking for.
The damwork underwent that same sort of (whiplash) (stupor and awakening) ...
If the Fort Peck townsite looked sickly, Wheeler looked leprous.

As the snow went off, rubbish reappeared from the previous autumn, usually amid a backyard swamp of mud. All the new had faded from the building fronts that had been fresh lumber when the Duffs arrived in 1933; the Blue Eagle by now had a venerable tint, like a weathered pirate.

Spring couldn't come fast enough to suit Darius or Hugh or Meg or Neil or Kate or Rosellen or Bruce or Rhonda. Only Owen and Easter, accustomed to indoor work, had not particularly minded the confinement of winter.
"Let's clear out of here until Kittrell gets off the warpath,"

Sangster said. "Come on, I'll stand you to coffee and pie."

As usual the Rondola was brimming with customers. Owen's head was so full of the OO problem it took him a moment to sort out which shifts these were, coming and going. He and Sangster had been wrestling with the OO plan from time immemorial, it seemed like.

"Jesus, I hate it when Kittrell gets this way," Sangster said, rubbing his eyes. "And he's this way now."

"Yeah. But he's right that we have to come up with a faster rate of fill. We can't just let the river gain on us every--"

Sangster cut him off with an upraised hand. "No more engineering we can mix it with pie," He was winking theatrically at the waitress. "I'm surrounded, am I. How you doing, Kate?"

Owen looked at her in surprise, having forgotten she'd be on shift now. "Hi," he said.

While Sangster talked through mouthfuls of rhubarb pie, Owen let his gaze drift after Kate, curious to see whether she went at things the way Rosellen would have. Not really, he decided: this Tibbett sister
scurried with the planeloads of food, the coffee pot. None of Rosellen's take-it-or-leave-it style. Watching her, he saw that her figure was so like Rosellen's that it stirred him up in a strange reminiscent way.

As if he'd been where he hadn't.
She came over to him again with the coffee pot and the question-grin.

"No, I better not," he said against another refill. Which sounded stiffer than he'd intended, so he looked up at Kate and kidded: "Bruce claims there's something in the coffee here--that's how Rhonda got him."

Kate gave her half-chuckle, then looked in amusement at the coffee pot she was holding.

And refilled his cup.
"Let's get out of here until 00 gets off the warpath," Sangster said. "Come on, I'll stand you to pie."

As usual the Rondola was brimming with customers. Owen had to think for a moment, which shift was coming, which going. He and Sangster had been wrestling with the 00 plan for a season, it seemed like.

"Jesus, I hate it when 00 gets this way," Sangster said, rubbing his eyes. "And he's this way now."

"Yeah. But he's right that we have to..."

Sangster was grinning at the waitress. "I'm surrounded, am I?"

"How you doing, Kate?"

Owen looked at her in surprise, having forgotten she'd be on shift now. "Hi," he said.

let his gaze drift

While Sangster talked, Owen watched Kate after Kate. She scurried with the plategoods of food, the coffee pot. Her figure was so like Rosellen's that he felt himself stir... As if he'd been where he hadn't.

She came by with the coffee pot and the question-grin.

"No, I betta. Bruce claims there's something in the coffee here—that's how Rhonda got him."

"Does that mean a refill, or not?"
In the next few years Peter Stapfer rose to become horse boss of
the Frenchman River Hutterite colony, in charge of the use of 180 workhorses.
Ten yrs beyond that, colony
In 1949, the Frenchman River hived, and Peter Stapfer was among the members
who established a new colony in northern Montana. That colony converted
to tractors, and Peter Stapfer, horse boss without horses, settled toward
somewhere still hidden on '00 Colony in . . .
old age. ...of himself, stiffly smiling, outside the back door of the
Blue Eagle saloon.
"I must trust you. The colony, they cannot know of this. We do not...haf such things. Mail it, please, in this." He thrust at her a seed company envelope of the sort that came to him as vegetable boss of the colony.

Easter nodded.

...

Peter Stapfer gestured to his head. "They are thieves, here."

There. He had not actually said his cap was stolen, and among this collection of people there surely were some who qualified as thieves.

The younger man, George, looked as excited as Peter felt. "The constable, Peter! He can--but do we dare--?"
"Where begin and where end, Jackiejack.... You've a grandfather, me, who's a thorough fool.... Your father is something of the same, but motorized... Your mother, by great good fortune, is an apprentice saint...
You've a grand-uncle who xxxxx in a wild-ass way chases after politics. Not that the politics don't need chasing.... We've tried two countries and eleventy occupations, Jackie, and we're still on the drift. The only one of us making a go of it is your uncle who knows how to stop up rivers... Your grandmother, did I think to mention, Jackie? Your grandmother I am still trying to figure out after 60 years."

(Meg overhear this, as Hugh tends to the baby?)
do an overlap of Mott making a Plentywood stump speech and FDR a fireside radio speech?

--- and have one of the characters look up from a newspaper and ask:

"What's this Hitler?"
"There's this man Mott, a person hears of."

"Mott's got his own catechism," Darius said. "Printed in red, wouldn't surprise me."
Hugh goes on the wagon for a while, but falls off.

--"Tie me to the wagon."
It's one way to keep warm."

"You can't talk. You don't have to put up with cold feet, cold hands..."

Tom Harry was interested now. "Cold everything?"

"Close enough to everything."

"How's your everything?"
bird migration, to indicate coming of Autumn, in Sept.?

Riley, snowstorm in Billings:

Hmm. Autumn in Montana, when the leaves turn snowy white.

possible lead:

An October day, chilly and oo, even though the calendar was still testifying to September. Usually the weather gets it out of its system after Labor Day and (Indian summer comes to Montana), but this was...
like a rabbit out of a hat. Toasty
Spring came pell-mell. Warm
as berserk as the winter had been. Chinook winds

Hawaii, it seemed like, and Fort Peck's
billowed in all the way from the slopes of the Rocky Mountains

distilled into
snow promptly Fort Peck's mud. As usual at the start of spring,

Wheeler looked leprous. With the snow going off in patches, rubbish
reappeared from the previous autumn, and the backyard coal piles had
become ash heaps (dishwater, gray tossed with gray)

By the first day of summer, just over two months since the dredges
started up, the dredging was nearly a month ahead of schedule.
The river:

textbooked easily. (quote from 1920's geology or hydrology book?)

Nothing to it, savvying the Missouri River from the distance of a college

classroom.

Owen Duff wondered about that a little upon first reading it in

Geology 301, his junior year in civil engineering. But he was the one

who had been capricious enough to abandon the family's foothold along

the Missouri, so maybe he ought to pay attention to the text version

of the river and see what he had missed. Geology professors were usually

rock docs, but 301 was taught by an exception named Zell who told them

the course was about process, which he pronounced as if it rhymed with

no less. In the next breath he was regaling them about ice, the edge of

 glaciation that had reached into Montana and royally rearranged things

for a few thousand years. It came as a relief when he shut up about

the glacial process and warned the class to clear their lives for a

field-trip all of the next week.

Zell was built like a dumpling, but that didn't stop him from

strutting around as if he owned Montana State College. None of the
Geology 301 students were much surprised when he showed up in jodhpurs for the show-me trip. They jounced north along the Missouri, Zell and the five students in a Model T touring car. Around Fort Benton, Zell seemed to lose interest in the river and pottered on northward, up the valley of dinky Big Sandy Creek, ignoring the Missouri's big bend where it turned sharply south on itself and then swung eastward across the rest of the state of Montana. The Big Sandy country wasn't much for scenery, unless you had a taste for being down in a big swale for hours at a time, then at last they clattered into Havre, and on through, Zell choosing to make camp in the Milk River Valley just east of town. The next morning, they weren't entirely done with breakfast before Zell cleared his throat, paced back and forth a dramatic few times, and said, "Welcome to the Missouri River."

The other four students bent sideways glances at Owen, on the basis that he was the one from up in this country. Owen furnished the corrective as offhandedly as he could:

"This's the Milk this morning, Prof."

"You don't say," said Zell.

Uh oh, in Owen.
"The Milk River, hmm?" In the jodhpurs, the professor seemed to strut standing still. "Not much volume of flow, is it, to cut a valley as broad as this? Better take a look, hadn't you?"

As a unit, the five young men stood up and took a lot of looks at the overwide valley and the small milky river winding slowly through it. Zell was right, naturally he would be. Where the hell were there any rock formations resistant enough to divert this river back and forth into the big bends needed to carve this much valley? Or if the water hadn't cut the valley this wide with centuries of patience, where then was the till of glaciation, the boulders and other gouging material?

The young men milled restlessly. Where was anything the damned textbook said ought to be here?

"Ice had something to do with it," Zell gave them a hint, then couldn't resist spelling it out. "An ice dam."

Zell swept an arm toward their route of yesterday. "Somewhere back around Fort Benton, the ice sheet blocked off the Missouri and contributed its own meltwater until there was a glacial lake perhaps as big as one of the Great Lakes now is. Then the ice receded and
and the flow resumed in the channel of the Missouri. Some of the
channel. You of course were right, Duff. This morning, this is the
Milk River. But some thousands of mornings ago, before that ice dam,
this was the Missouri. The big river itself—here, and...?"

Owen and a bright kid named Farrington caught on simultaneously.

"Big Sandy," they said together.

Zell almost smiled. "Another valley that's too big for its britches,
isn't it. That had to have the force of the Missouri to cut it, before
the ice dam changed the process."

Owen's mind raced. The big bend of the Missouri; the White Cliffs,
the Breaks, the home place: "Where the Missouri goes now—that's all a...
shortcut?"

"The younger channel, yes. From the big bend to Fort Peck, about.
That must have been the edge of the ice sheet, and the Missouri cut its
way along there while this"—Zell again swept his arm importantly around
in indication of the Milk River Valley and the Big Sandy Valley over the
horizon—"was dammed off."

My God my God my God, ran in Owen. The home place, the alfalfa-seed
change the Zell scene, possibly tightening it as well:

--drop "The river" device, saving it for later or just using it as is at start of chapter and then "The dam" just once, later on.

* --Possibly peg this into Owen @ office work.

> TOP of COPY
The power of water. (link to glacial version of the Missouri)

--hydraulic: tearing down entire hills in Seattle, reshaped the city; gold-mining; Panama Canal.
By the end of the third day, Owen Duff already was office-famous for POGOP.

Major Santee, the Corps' chief of operations, poked his head into the temporary warren where the civvie engineers had their desks. He had in his hand a contractor's letter, citing numerous reasons why a ten-day delay was needed in a contracted-for portion of the dam project, and his thumb on Owen's penciled comment in the margin.
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You know by now that I am a noticer. What was worth noticing about Malvina Peyser was the way those bib pants failed to defeat her womanliness.

Not that she would ever cause men to turn their eyes inside-out, in the way Leona or Velma Sims did. Malvina was a bit short-legged, or at least so she seemed in those overalls. As I say,
"Be awful careful of this stuff," the bait foreman warned them.

"It already gave me a little love bite." He pulled up his pantleg to show them. A burn about the size of a dime was on his shin where the top of his sock normally would reach. "Reminded me to watch what the hell I'm doing."

"What's in the bait?" Hugh asked.

"Arsenic."
The infestation set preachers to thumbing their Bibles, and I imagine most of them ended up somewhere in Joel, where pestilence is visited upon the Israelites(?) : That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten... The field is wasted, the land mourneth... Be ye ashamed, o ye husbandmen; howl, o ye vinedressers, for the wheat and the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. Because of our nonattendance habits to church, though, I don't know whether they went on to the part that reads, howl, ye ministers of the altar: come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God...
Dale Copenhaver, baby-eyed as if he was ending a long and terrible day instead of just beginning one, was telling a farmer: Slow those guys down in the field, don't let them roar across the country at twenty miles an hour.
I remember that as a day when human life seemed to make no sense.

As if those of us in the infested fields were on some moon of Saturn where insects ruled and we were but a marginal species.
Halve that on the likelihood of exaggeration, and it's still a world of grasshoppers.
Bill Reinking of the Gleaner was there, carrying a big square camera. I saw him sight through it a couple of times, then shake his head and put the camera back in his car. He was right, there was no capturing this scene in anything as small as a photograph.
The infestation was heaviest in the eastern part of the county.

Ten thousand pounds of bait a day was being spread there.
Drought, Depression, and now these goddamn ravenous bugs.
It became evident why Dale Copenhaver had called my father.

Crews had to be run, and my father's experience with fire crews made him a natural.
Be awful careful of this stuff, Dale Copenhaver warned us.

It gave me a little love tap...

A burn about half the size of a dime was on his shin where the top of his sock normally would reach. Reminded me to watch what the hell I'm doing, is all.

What's in the bait? I asked.

Arsenic.
In the air the ’hoppers sounded bad enough, a whirring as if
sage chickens were taking off, except that the noise was more distant
than that, thinner and sharper. But on the ground their noise was
of eating. You could actually hear the goddamn things making a meal
of everything that grew, millions of tiny mouths each biting through
a steam of wheat. Commotion would have been less ominous than that
undersound of eating, eating, eating.

And then there was the sound worse yet, the crackling as you
stepped on them on a road or on any other hard surface. The closest
I can come is to say it resembled walking on peanut shells—but as
if the shells were alive and in motion and endless in their total.
I know of no way to tell this except to lay it out and let you believe whatever you can stand to. I couldn't credit that day myself if I had not been there and seen the fields begin to move.

How many grasshoppers there were in that creeping invasion is so far beyond imagination that people fell back on basic numbers. At Malta the cloud of 'hoppers filled the air for four hours. At Havre, it was six and a half hours. They came as insect blizzards.
I don't recall that much was said between us as my father drove toward Gros Ventre, and reaching there, went on across main street and east out of town. Maybe it was on both our minds that this was an unusual direction for us. To face the farming country. Our view of it was customarily from the mountains; we thought of the farmland as big patterns, blocks of green. To be down here driving through past the fields, the grain thicker than any forest, on each stem the trying to imagine such sums was like—I don't know, counting stars, individual kernels. To think that there could be enough grasshoppers to threaten each of those kernels was stupefying.
Looking back on all this, I don't know why the poison didn't kill farmers faster than it did the grasshoppers. What it amounted to was sawdust soaked with arsenic. The county men had an old cement mixer into which they put the proportions of sawdust, arsenic and banana oil and then some water, then spun it all up together into about the consistency of mush. In the evening or before dawn, people lined up for sacks of the stuff, because it was said to work best if spread in the morning while the fields were still damp.

Dale Copenhaver told my father that one of the worst problems he was having was with farmers who strewed the poison too heavily around their fields, on the notion that if a little was good, a lot was better yet. About all I can do, Mac, is try head the knotheads off by asking them if they work on that same principle when they take a laxative.
My mother always rode herd on Alec and me about calling older people Mr. and Mrs., but out of her hearing we lapsed into our father's natural inclination toward first names.
At Malta, they filled the air for four hours. 0 days later at Havre, for six and a half hours. Ministers turned to (biblical citation for plague). The insect blizzard whirled and leaped.

(Use early refce: the damp June had done in the grasshoppers...) In 00, a farmer north of town saw motion in his winter wheat field, a crawling... The grasshopper reports flamed from there...

Retribution began its own flights. Planes showered mixes of 00 onto the 'hoppers...
Malvina Peyser and I already knew each other in a hell-trading way, as almost everybody does in an area the size of the Two country.

You're good to help, she said now.

Actually she needed only the minimum of help, somebody to feed the sacks of hopper bait into the spreader. She had the spreader hitched behind a 1929 Dodge touring car... As I studied the set-up, a small tanned face popped up between the steering wheel and the rolled-down window on the driver's side, and began scrutinizing me.

Norman, say morning to Jick, Malvina prompted.

Morn', the boy complied and stood examining the two of us. I supposed Walter to be somewhere between two and three, whenever a kid can just talk.

My curiosity about why I instead of her husband was in this wheatfield with Malvina overcame my manners. I did manage to the question a little: What, is Lloyd laid up?

No, he's hired out this summer. On the Fresno dam job up by Havre.

Havre. A good 000 miles from this field. Lloyd Peyser plainly had to hire out, go off to earn WPA wages for survival's sake.
Bill Reinking was sifting among the weary crews.

were telling him, What they had to say sounded like war, which in a way it was.

started off on it 82 hours non-stop. Got 8 hours off, had a bath,

boiled my clothes, ate a couple hot meals and grabbed about 5 hours

sleep. Then went right back to another 32-hour shift...

pockets are dragging out my tracks. By God, if I never see another

grasshopper. ... You just can't believe how they are. I left my

cloth hanging on the door handle of the pickup and they ate it to

shreds. And chewed hell out of the handle of a shovel in the

pickup... What I want to know is, how much more of this can we

stand? One year it's drought and the next it's wheat rust and then

come a couple of years of these buggers. I just don't see...
I know people up around Havre and Chinook and Malta even today who tell me that a banana sliced onto their breakfast cereal will bring back the scene of those grasshoppers. Banana oil--it actually was amyl acetate, which has a smell like ripe bananas--was the attraction mixed into the 'hopper poison.
Norman: don't touch any. Don't ever, ever touch any. Make you sick, hon. Give you a tummy ache.

Walter balled his little fists against his chest and stared at the mysterious uneatable mush we were dispensing. He seemed to ponder, then asked: Grasshoppers get tummy ache?

Mmmhm. Grasshoppers eat a taste of this and they go to grasshopper heaven. Melvina looked out across the wheat of her field. Or someplace. Just so they go.
My hay was worth cutting only because it was better to have little than none; I could cover the width of a windrow with my hat. As for the Two country's grain crops, even on the irrigated acres of the Valier water project the grain stood so short it looked like a color of the ground itself, a tan flat panel of the earth; in the dry-land fields of the 'steaders, not even that color met the eye--only dead stalks.
We had been hearing about grasshoppers the previous couple of summers. The eastern part of the state was heaviest hit, for the 'hoppers preferred grainfields to range grass. On the scale by which we would choose T-bone steak over dry crackers, according to accounts of how they ate their way through that grain. (quote Gleaner descript?)

Not just the loss of crop was involved here. People reacted to the 'hopper invasion as if to say Damn it, now that's just too much.

The Depression, and then the drought, and now these hungry bugs trying to outdo both of those.

There also was a spooky kind of suspense about the 'hoppers. Any given summer of those years, you couldn't know. You couldn't know if they were going to show up, if it was going to be a grasshopper season again, and if they did hatch, there was no predicting which areas they would descend on, and which fields within the areas. As if someone was wildly waving a revolver in a crowded room: no knowing if it was loaded, and if it did go off, who would get struck.
I suppose my father deliberately had me go with Dale Copenhaver's half of the crew, on the theory that it might be good for me to be bossed around by somebody outside the family for a change. That the end result was any different is not at all certain, however. For when the truck stopped at the third wheatfield along the dike road, the person waiting there for a bait handler was a woman. Dale Copenhaver cast a glance over the grown men in the truck and called, Jick, how about you helping Mrs. Peyser here.

Now, I don't know what Dale thought anything was likely to ensue between a woman and a man in an open field with a swarm of grasshoppers imminent. Possibly his decision wasn't that explicit, he only wanted not to embarrass either side—people not married to each other, awkward time together. Which nominated somebody to too milk-toothed to be any cause for embarrassment of that sort. I swung off the truck.
How long's Lloyd been on the dam job?

Since it thawed enough for them to work. Early March.

Then who did this farming?

I did.

Norman

With Weber and all?

Norman's getting his start early. All I could do was leave him in the car

march aside the field here. Every round I plowed, I'd climb off the tractor

and go over and check on him. She looked at him. We made out okay,

didn't we, hon?

Dumb me. If I had that moment back I would without hesitation say what deserved to be said: Lady, you did a lot better than okay.

Instead I hefted the next sack of bait into the spreader, and we set off to give the grasshoppers some more hell.

The day was a swelterer. By rights the poison-spreading should have been done hours before.
Sometimes life has to be makeshift, though. If we were spreading bait in the heat of the day instead of while the grasshoppers were drinking dew, that was just the way it had to be.

Not only the day was hot; so was that Dodge. For one thing, Malvina was doing what a lot of people did in those days--covered the radiator with a gunny sack. That way, O0 could be burned instead of gasoline.

But the Dodge also was grinding along through this field in low gear, for the sake of spreading the bait thoroughly. Between that, and the O0, and the blistering weather, I had to put water in the radiator frequently. Which is another of my least favorite chores, unscrewing the cap of a boiling radiator. All there was to do, though, was to wrap my right arm in my coat each time, and with my gloved hand cautiously loosen that cap a little at a time, until the pressure--and the chance of me getting scalded like a hog--went down. Then I would pour in some more ditch water, and off we would go again.
Siderius was staying leery of all Duffs, but particularly that old bearcat Hugh. He himself couldn't see that they had any gripe coming, they'd been paid the exact damn same as everybody else. And now they had jobs, the whole slew of them. He could stomach Owen, who knew a job was a job, but the rest of the bunch...

... whatchamacall'er

The old woman, whozit--Dora-- seemed to be the only one on the place when he drove down, that day in early '34. But to hear her tell it, there were Duffs up every coulee... He asked for her husband... She studied his car and he was glad he didn't have the Corps of Engineer license plates...

Hugh Duff was (at some chore).

Siderius always kept to the same spiel--here for the government--going to be a project--fair offer on your land-- But for some reason, the look of this Duff caused him to jab out: "You heard? They're going to be building a dam at Fort Peck."

"What's that to us?"

"This'll be part of it. Under the lake."

"That's daft. The Glasgow country"--he said it a way Siderius had
Not nearly all of Wheeler was complete. Directly in front of them down the block, a tall man in a suit and vest shot out from a vacant raw-framed building, turned, and gave the structure a kick. He seemed to think it over briefly, then kicked the wood twice as hard.

"I felt that from here," Bruce said aside to Neil. "If that guy keeps on, he'll be in the market for assistant kickers."

"Wait a minute," Neil said. "Let's just see." He went over to the disgusted man. "You putting up this building, mister?"

"No," the man said sarcastically, "I'm just throwing money at the goddamm place for exercise."

"What's left to do?" Neil peered into the walled-in shell of building, atop gray Fort Peck clay. "Only the flooring? My brother and I can handle a hammer."

"Look, junior, the last jackleg sonofabitch of a carpenter left me in the lurch here. I need the real item here. Every minute this place isn't making me money it's costing me money. Fort Peck's got carpenters up the geegee, and they're all out there"—he waved toward the trestlework—"on Frank D.'s payroll, God bless him."
By now Bruce had his head in the structure beside Neil's. Off behind the stack of floor boards stood a pile of cardboard boxes which advertised Mighty Mac bib overalls and Peerless worksocks and so on. "So, you're opening a line of dry goods."

"Wet," said the suited man. "You're looking at the Blue Eagle Saloon. Or would be, if it had a sonofabitching floor in it."

"We can lay your floor for you," Neil asserted. "Give us a crack at it, Mr.--?"

"Harry. Tom Harry." He looked at the pair of them as skeptically as if checking the sex on new puppies. "This's got to be done on a contract basis. Meet the deadline, or no pay—I can't be forking out to jacklegs who don't come through on the job. You two ever worked that way before?"

"All our lives," Bruce vouched, Neil cutting him off with:

"What'll you pay, if we do contract it?"

Tom Harry named his price.

"You're on," Neil and Bruce told him together. It was Neil who cast a second look at the stack of floor boards and asked:

"How long have we got to do the flooring?"
"Taxi-dancing." Hugh figured he had him there. "Mister, the Wheeler Inn beat you to it. Half the women in the universe are already working that place."

"Check your arithmetic," Tom Harry said unperturbed. "A work force of ten thousand here; when they get really geared up on building the dam. Three shifts a day—one shift working, one sleeping, and that still leaves about 3500 guys off-shift, any hour of the day or night. Plenty of them'll be married men," he looked coolly at Hugh, "but plenty won't," switching his look to Neil and Bruce. "There's not going to be any shortage of guys hanging around hot to trot."

The hammers hit higher notes while the pile driver gave bass whumps beside the river. The Missouri had heard clamor before: the rumble of buffalo herds, the axes of woodhawks cutting wood for the steamboats. There had been fifty years of comparative silence since either of those.

Now the first pinions of the Fort Peck project were being driven: the spur supports of the railroad trestle, the nails of a dancefloor.

Neil tried to take it in seasons. He would hammer into place, drive the nails, draw a breath while Bruce whaled at his end of the board, then start down the board nailing it at every joist.
Whang! (have Hugo hammering on thing?)
Everything about Fort Peck Dam was going to set a record.
Depression portrait of Gros Ventre unused(?) in Eng Crk:

Gardens of that time were tremendous, any food that could be grown was that much less to have to buy. Too, a lot of town families still raised chickens, and quite a number had a milk cow. Besides doing as much as possible to feed themselves, people did a great deal of puttering around. Men with no other job in sight tackled house repairs, or fenced the yard, or split wood—almost every back yard held a woodpile like a small hill. The women planted flower gardens to splash some color into life. So anything that was a matter of energy, of puttering and contriving, the hard times did not particularly quench. What had come to a standstill were the parts of life requiring actual money. Build or repair something, but then you couldn't afford to paint it. (That lack of paint, houses fading toward gray and machinery turning to rust, to me is the tone of those Depression years.) Cars got more and more shaggy-like, the triumph simply was to keep them running. And whenever somebody moved away, the house or business simply stood there empty, the life cored out of it.
"You heard about how Johnson got hired, didn't you. The personnel
guy asked him, 'You ever had any schooling?' 'Yes.' 'Whereabouts?'

'Yale.' 'Well, that's wonderful. You're hired. What'd you say your
name is?' 'Johnson.'"
from REMEDY IS NONE, Wm. McIlvanney:

p. 15: Was this how death happened, in the middle of a bright day that was too busy to notice?

p. 15 -- He seemed hardly to have thought about his father as himself for as long as he could remember.

p. 28 -- ...he seemed to understand something for the first time. He knew what it must have been to be his father.

p. 44 -- His forehead, ploughed with effort, slowly took on a faint dew of sweat.

p. 49 -- He went on from boyhood to manhood, living always between the plaster and the poultice...

p. 59 -- The present was riddled with the past.

p. 70 -- even when he was a boy there always seemed to be some central worry occupying him at any given time.

p. 72 -- Needin' her tongue scrapit.

p. 95 -- Margaret was no more than an elemental extension of the baby...

p. 103 -- ...Ah'd better no' write a letter tae ma feyther. He'll just have learned tae live wi' the fact that Ah must be dead by now.

p. 141 -- a big-boned and bluff man, body and limbs put together roughly in powerful slabs.

p. 201 -- ...moods that sway the tides of our bloods like moons...

p. 205 -- A city in ruins moves us less than one widow weeping.
Odd, that I always think of Gros Ventre as a town of nearness to the mountains, because the site more closely neighbors the farming country; you only have to pass Lawrence van der Post's place with its few dairy cows at the eastern edge of town and the patterns of cultivation begin. Grain is the word from then on, echoing and echoing across northern and eastern Montana and the Dakotas all the way to Minneapolis where the giant elevators rise in response. Seventy and eighty years ago the homesteaders were the ones who found out, by trial and error, that you could grow things in some of the soil of Montana. Provided that some of the weather of Montana didn't swallow you first.

Anyway, that sight of Gros Ventre as you top the benchland south of town is mostly of mountains and the tree-lined creek leading to them. Maybe it is that link made by the creek, English Creek twining westward and then dividing into the South Fork and the North Fork, and those two threading on up into the mountains, that connects the skyline and the town.

"Decent enough country," Riley popped off with: "Too

never been settled by human beings."
My father had an attitude toward his Forest Service bosses that I can only call patient fury. The everlasting exasperation he felt toward those higher-ups at Region One headquarters in Missoula and the main fudge factory in Washington, D.C., was a kind of fuel for his ranger quickest work--a stack of waiting paperwork was the best possible thing to propel him into a three-day horseback trip up into the mountains to look over the Two Medicine National Forest, his forest--
I had years of nights alone to make up for. And Dair had enthusiasm of her own. Do it until you get it right, wedding jokesters liked to advise. We strove to.
To say that my mother and Florene were friends puts it somewhat too strong. They were more like crewmates who happened to be in the same boat: born as women into a region featured male livelihoods.
Anna's people, Margaret and Walter Ramsay, were as advertised: 

you could see from her where Anna got her starch, you could wonder from him how he survived around these women. The Ramsays had bought a the horse rancher Isaac Reese the only neighbor near. relinquishment, the farthest homestead under the mountains. A place where with a possible hay crop along the creek, and a view of the Rockies and Breed Butte, and with wind and winter. I hoped they knew what they were in for, when January and February came.

I thought of Edinburgh's famous cannon Mons Meg® Great Meg® and Great Meg she became in my mind ever after.

"You were schooled where?" she asked.

"At a 'venture school, in Nethermuir."

"Anna and I both matriculated from 00 Dame School in Brechin."

"So I understand." (tricklated)

Whoof. Great Meg was going to be something to put up with, but Anna was worth all.

I am trying to recall Walter Ramsay's full contribution to that. It would if you have the butter please.
If God had His eye on every sparrow, He couldn't help but notice this Adair as the waif of the flock.
The wives of English Creek had a ladies' club, which met every month or so to play cards or work on quilts or maybe just visit. Whoever hostessed the meeting would place a plate in the middle of her table and each woman would put in a dime, to help out with the cost of coffee and baked goods. Once in these years, when Florene hadn't shown up for three months in a row, everybody noticed and commented on it, but it took my mother to figure out the reason. Florene did not have the dime to drop on that plate. It was my mother, too, who saw to it that the plate thereafter resided somewhere less conspicuous and that Florene resumed coming to the meetings.
I'd had my Chinook say, such as it was, about her and Riley after their night of ecstasy. For the old ever to try to tell the young how to live is as hopelessly far behind as thunder lecturing to lightning.
On a straight stretch where the Bago's headlights steadily fed the freeways into our wheels, I cast another quick glance over at the half-stranger who was my undeniable daughter. A parent has some powers, but prediction is nowhere among them.
Jicks says he sees bestowing the ranch to the Conservancy as a kind of tithe. Giving back to the earth.

"There's a saying: 'If you want to know what God thinks of money, take a look at who he gives it to.'"
You can never open yourself up like a satchel and say, here is everything I feel and think, every moment of it. No, in any case I can think of there are silences to lived with, too. The night ones while you wonder what the price of lambs and wool will be; and I suppose on Adair's side, maybe 00 or 00—I don't really know, I have to guess, and that's the point.

Try do nothing today that will haunt tomorrow. That hardest commandment when you are young—or any other age.
The bus traveled a veering, jagged route which took an hour and a half to carry us the twenty miles to Valier. Boredom set in fast. I played cards so relentlessly I have hardly touched them since. The game was Pitch, brisk and with small strategy to it, and we hunched into the aisle like near-sighted conspirators. Charles would fan his cards an inch from his glasses, lensed thick as goggles. The world was an unedin blur to him, and he had spent time in a school for the blind until they discovered he was hardskulled enough to get by in life, blurred or not.

Mearlin offered his bid with a wry grin, which either meant he had no strength in his cards at all or that he held devastation for us if we let him have the bid. Tom calculated long, as numbers forced him to do, then always said abruptly: Pass. I flicked my cards, hooted over the capture of a jick or jack,
A sheepherder might learn, but damn seldom would he take instruction.
At the start of the Thirties when drought came along and joined hands with Herbert Hoover, the talk in Montana and I suppose elsewhere in the west began to be of averages, averages, averages. How far below the ten-year average the current calf or lamb or wool or wheat price was. Even more than that, how the year's moisture to date compared to the annual average. Month by month and especially all during the growing season, those precipitation averages were always in the newspaper and radio reports. All that attention to them caused Bill Reinking, the editor of the Gleaner, to write that the wrong arithmetic was being performed— all that was needed was to average out Hell and the North Pole, which would sum up Montana's climate once and for all.
For all the glory of the Fourth, it also made me think of school.

I got along well enough in school; the only thing I much minded about it was the time it consumed. What people we would be if born with our schooling already in our heads, or could ingest it all in some single avid stretch of months instead of stint after stint filling twelve whole years, I don't just know. More individual of each other than we already are, possibly, and that wouldn't necessarily be to the good. But anyway, school did mean to me—and had, to Alec—a passage into different world, one with English Creek and Two only along its edges. My mother, with her notions of improvement, I think looked forward to autumn as a time when Alec and I would get some of our summer habits corrected out of us. But I believe my father saw the start of school as the point when he began to have only part-time sons again. Sons on their way into their own lives, out of his.
The shoes to school were a kind of bank account for all to read. Mine were scuffed but adequate, like our family condition. Ray Heaney's oxfords always looked as if they had come out of the Monkey Ward mail-order box that morning. Whatever conglomerate of boots and brogans was divvied onto the nine pairs of Hebner feet at any given time was more holes than leather.
This scene is fresh in my mind. Betty Cox was calling on my mother about something or other, and although I supposedly was out of the way, doing schoolwork at my father's desk, I happened to hear my mother say to Betty: You look thriving.

I glanced over in time to see Betty, a little blond bit of a thing, grip one hand and make an outline in front of her stomach as if tracing a half-watermelon in the air. December, she said.

From what I could tell, women seemed to communicate that way a lot, to have their private network of what was going on in the world...
Merle Dorrance, who had the place farthest up under the mountains, right against the national forest line, faced almost combat conditions. In winter the wind slammed through there like you wouldn't believe, and snow drifted until it covered Merle's fenceposts and left him guessing its depth beyond that. Summers, Merle retaliated on at least three fronts. His days he spent getting hay in, mowing every coulee that had enough grass to fill a sheep's belly. Then the early part of each night he went over to the south fork and sat sentry for beaver.

Merle of course wanting water for his hay coulees, the beaver engineering it for their dams and lodges—went on and on...

His third field of contention, though, was Bears. Merle was a burly man with a big low jaw that always reminded me of a picture of a pelican. The thought of him out after a bear was kind of amusing, that pelican jaw in pursuit of...

I suppose the bears never saw the entertainment in the situation, though, The bears must have found it less amusing, for Merle trapped them relentlessly. More than once my father came onto...
Nothing gave a forest ranger more grief. Several years ago a new regional forester arrived from California with the conviction that burros would be as good as mules. It of course turned out that burros, being shorter-legged, could not step over windfalls as easily as mules could.
Today, it might be theorized that the two of them did not say openly enough to one another what really was on their minds. But in that time, by those two people, such troubles could not be said that way. They could only beat soundlessly inside them, like birds walled in by glass.
Somebody has since told me that Gifford Pinchot himself was a
diarying fool, that he wrote in it without fail every day of the year--
talking in it to a young woman he loved who died. It is somewhat spooky
to think of Pinchot possessed by a dead love. Pictures of him, that
frozen face and latch of mustache, you'd never know he was
Besides, he was one of the big ticks supposedly running this nation,
governor of Pennsylvania now that he no longer had anything to do with
the Forest Service.

I don't really know if Pinchot's case brought about the daybook
notion, but the U.S. Forest Service anyway wanted to know, in writing,
what you'd done with your day.
In short, the Lunchery's main claim to fame was that it made the Sedgwick House menu look dainty and delectable by comparison. Yet its pedigree as a going business went most of the distance back to Gros Ventre's origins; the building had begun as the stagecoach station. Toussaint Rennie perhaps was the only person old enough to still call the place the Way Stop. Guys of the next generation had the habit of calling it the Fargo House, and my father and his generation mostly referred to it as the Doozy, from when a man named Deuce Harrison ran it. To me, though, it was the Lunchery, and Lunchery lore was a kind of seasoning, an attention-getting spice, in the history of Gros Ventre. The most famous tale was that once when somebody asked an old sheepherder when he was going back out among the woolies, he said he was washed up at that, too creaky to tramp the mountains, but he figured he could always get a job herding flies at the Lunchery. I think that exaggerates. The occasional times when I would be with my father when he was on Forest Service meal money, traveling back late from Great Falls or someplace, his suggestion of "Let's go try the Doozy" never did us any real culinary harm, that I know of.

Of course, that may have had something to do with the fact that
I do like the big sweeps of mountain and plateau and plain that the Two country presents. Gimcracks of nature bother me. Where English Creek flows into the Two Medicine River, there are formations of rock in all kinds of crazy shapes. I have been there to take a look just once. Rocks that are mimicking toadstools and 00 and 00 make me uneasy. It seems to me the life of the planet ought to be more serious than that.
To own land, though. To be the lord of each spear of grass, king over the spring flowers. Nothing excels it, I thought then.

Yet the key to Scotch Heaven was not our homesteads. 160 acres is not nearly enough to pasture a band of sheep on. The free range, the grass of the foothills and on up into the mountains, was the larder for our livestock. Ninian Duff had seen this, and I can at least puff myself that I saw what he meant.
I have the theory that my mother's cooking lured us all into our democratic attitude toward food. Grow up on the assumption that everything on your plate is going to be delicious, and the habit of tucking away can come pretty easily. Specialties of hers I still can taste. A venison mincemeat she made from deer neck. Noodles broad as a finger and rich with the taste of the chicken accompanying them. Chocolate ice cream cake. Her recipe for hot water pie dough was the envy of half the county. I remember once we were all at the Ear Creek ranger station, a Forest Service gathering of some sort which included the supervisor of the Two, OO. Louise Bowen had set a decent enough meal, and now she brought out a couple of gooseberry pies. OO cut into his piece first, the fork making a tunk as it forced through the crust and hit the enamelware plate. It sounded like a hailstorm on a tin shed as the bunch of us worked at that pie, and while my mother's face stayed perfectly pious, I somehow knew how gratified she was by the downfall of a rival crust.
This couple from Dundee and Perth had alighted in the remotest corner of an untamed county draped amid severe mountain ranges. That was simply the outer geography of their situation. Within that came the fact that their fallow, open-to-the-sky Tierney Basin was -- although it can be doubted that anyone there knew the word -- a ghetto.

No matter that the people were only a handful across the flank of an entire mountain range, or that the heights walling them in were weathered granite rimrocks instead of brownstone. Those homesteaders were immigrant, spoke dialect, kept their old ways, had endless children, and clutched together in narrow confines to try to make a living. Like a ghetto, too, the Basin ran more on memory and hope than on the pocketbook of the moment. Always the backdrop of Scotland hung at the corner's of the settlers' minds, reminding that the overworked home country could not provide job enough, household enough, chance enough. And in from those brain corners, like sparrows trapped in a barn, came the hopes that this Montana land was going to bestow all those.

But the bestowing was being asked in a hard place, and at a late time in the route of America's western settling.
He would say, *Time for the kicking contest.* Then he'd put on overalls and change into an old pair of shoes and head out back to milk the Heaney cow. They were among the last very few families in Gros Ventre to keep a milk cow, what with the creamery providing a contentious an easier source. At this time the Heaneys had an old Jersey. Ed of course hobbled her to contain her kicking, but then she took to whapping her tail around as he sat to hilk her. Being hit across the ear with a cow's tail with fresh manure on it is not a recommended way to start or end the day. But in his methodical way Ed solved the tail situation too. He ran a line of clothes wire across the back of the milking stall, took a clothespin, and pinned the end of her tail to that.
Cold is a purifier. It takes all life down to the basic matter: endure, or not. That is why I feel the need to be here now, at snowline, in the winter forest. To feed a stove, watch dusk draw down, gaze at the deer.

know so, half my lifetime ago. It is here, at the Northwest edge, that I will have to see whether I can last. Continue in a micro-chip society as a person of peasant's habits. Live with the altering of the geography I have chosen. Spin words out of my guts and trying, like the spider who built straight up from our cherry tree, to make the silver line climb impossibly.

In short, that it is here I have a winter brother, who happens to be one hundred and thirty-two years older than I am and whose blood may be a bluish Boston tint, but is a winter brother even so.
Owen came home practically cross-eyed from the [weary] calculations on the soil ratios of the dam fill. Rosellen met him with a kiss that included a dart of her tongue. He visibly perked up.

"Why, what's up?"

Rosellen drew a breath and told him she thought she should set up shop as a hairdresser.

The A-1 Beauty Shop was opened two doors down from the Blue Eagle Saloon. ("If nothing else," Rosellen said, "I can practice touching up Proxy all day long.") The shop name was discreet in the front window, what could be read the full length of Wheeler's main street was the resounding black block lettering across the top of the storefront:

J PERMANENTS $3.50 $5.00 $6.50

The Duffs grouped outside the shop, admiring the sign and Rosellen's philosophy behind it— that the outlandish top price of $6.50 made the $3.50 look like a bargain, and that when a woman felt like splurging, beckoned there in the middle set the $5.00 option.

One thing puzzled Darius. "'Permanent,' though— why's it called that?"

"That's American for 'more than overnight,'" Hugh informed him.
Proxy started to say something like Claudette, but decided brass might be better. "Does it matter any?"

or: "Does it matter any?" She had started to say something like Claudette, but decided brass might be better.
"You're who?"

"Does that matter any?"

This one isn't scared, the sheriff thought to himself, and wasn't sure whether he liked that fact or not.

"I have to tell you what's involved here?" he asked.

"I hear you like—you always want a trip around the world."

As much as it galled him to know they talked about him, he was relieved not to have to instruct on something like this.

"That's the deal, all right," he said gruffly. Then: "That sort of thing suit you?"

"That doesn't matter either, does it."
the man was an absolute revelation, Darius now found. Like some goggled ambassador from Utopia, Mott laid into the existing system with savage fact or, when he was short of that, scalding sarcasm. One of his political adversaries was a local lawyer who had tried to drum up trade among the Norsk farmers by painting _advokat_ in gilt on his office window; Mott ever after referred to him as the _abokat_, which was Norwegian for 'monkey.' (Darius, upon being apprised of this in a whisper from Jaraala, whispered back: "Now I am impressed. A man who can slander in more than one language.")
..."In Russia, it sounds as if they've knocked each other around, a bit much. Now, you can agree with Lenin that the old regime needed smashing, but once smashed, then the workers ought...
The Producers News was overrun with wordslingers. Every fluctuation of politics was registered in its prairie ink. Tom O’Flaherty, brother of the more famous Liam, wrote a weekly column remarkable for its lilt and vitriol. Although O’Flaherty by now had removed to New York and taken up a role there in what was called the Drinking Man’s Wing of the Communist Party, his memory lingered on in Plentywood. One of the farmers caught Jaraala by the elbow and, nodding toward Darius, demanded to know:

"This isn’t another one of those drinking talking Irishmen, is it?
Because if it is--"

"He’s from Glasgow," Jaraala said righteously, then thought to add:

"The Scotland one."


Darius in the damwork promptly recognizes—in the way the man looks at a foreman—a fellow radical workman. (John Jiraala?) J. is an old Wob, and he steers Darius to Plentywood radicalism.

--They arrive there w/ the May '34 duststorm: do descptn from Producers News etc.

--The leaders in Plentywood are the ex-sheriff (base him on Salsbury's general career, but don't have him identical?) and the newspaper editor (use Taylor, or make one up?)

--Jiraala vanishes in the '36 fingerprinting. (somebody says, "J quit the country.") (Darius goes to Plentywood by himself.)

--The sheriff naturally hates the Plentywood ex-sheriff; it was a bit before his time (?), but he's shocked that a Bolshevik could have been elected to office.

--possible angle to aim the sheriff and Darius together: Darius has a near-accident, p'haps the cement bucket shearing down the rungs of the ladder just after he'd been on it. He (in general revenge against the working situation) then commits sabotage: drops a wrench into something, maybe. A contractor or a Corps honcho mentions this to the undersheriff and the sheriff?
"I'm still feeling my way," Darius was saying to her now. "So far, this seems to be a country where they allow you to fly any kite as long as it doesn't have a shred of an idea attached." She felt him shake his head from side to side on the pillow, as if trying to take in the meaning of some outrageous tribal behavior. "But there's a potentially useful paradox there, don't you s--. I mean, it would seem to me," he loped the argument on. "Precisely because nobody in America seems to care damn-all about political thought, that leaves room for those who do, now doesn't it. And that's interesting about this country. You can maybe get at the political roots here. Here there's a local chance, to march in there and operate things. Mott ran that county. By an open election. In Scotland, anywhere in Britain, we were always having to wrestle London. We'd put a bit of aggravation into the streets, try to claim our own turf for ourselves, and out would come troops, slap like that." He hit the palm of one hand with the fingers of the other.
Darius stayed at Jaraalais' elbow in the Plentywood Temple of Labor.

If Darius had never expected to be making an excursion to a clapboard Temple of Labor in Plentywood, Montana, it was no small departure for From the time of Tom Jaraala either. The IWW had been his rough school, the lumberjack of combat bunkhouses and the street theatres of Butte, Spokane, Seattle, Everett, Industrial Centralia: the International Workers of the World fought where it could, endured casualties--Frank Little lynched in Centralia, 00 in Joe Hill Butte, 0 dead in gunfire from the deputies at the Everett pier--and cast them into song. (Darius, hearing J's whistling, had sought the chance to say, "There's another I quite like from The Little Red Songbook. How does it go? 'I dreamt I saw Joe Hill last night..."
by all reports, Airdrie, Motherwell, Vale of Leven, Longcroft, Condorrat; out of the West of Scotland.

there in the coalfields and the industrial towns, the strike was holding strong place

The soft part, against all expectation, was Glasgow and the Clydeside.

The strike committee which Darius had joined was stunned by the Glasgow when the

Trades Union Council in Glasgow

Perhaps it was the presence of the warships the government had sent
... I was in the movement.

...Then men lined up in ranks to kill men just like themselves.

...Well, nearly is a bit strong. But they were off balance, the owners and the government. And all there is to do is to keep coming back at them, press on...
Geography. Damn the geography, geography was the blubber of America, great fat spaces, paddings of distance between human groups. No wonder it was so hard to agitate against the big bugs; Jaraala had recounted from him, more in sorrow than anger, the IWW's woes; of striking a blow in one western town, and being struck down in another.... Darius almost felt nostalgia for Great Britain's (social order), vertical instead of bending away out of sight over ridge after ridge.

But that was the point, here at Plentywood; to see how to take control in a smaller place, and enlarge from there. The foothold had too damnably many, failed at Clydeside; now to try it where there were just enough (people).

Darius: (the difficulty of getting to Plentywood etc.)

Geography. Damn the geography, geography was the blubber of America, great fat spaces, paddings of distance between (groups that could be usefully agitated).... He almost missed the (British social order), vertical instead of bending away out of sight over ridge after ridge... (ladder instead of sprawl?)

(Darius recites certain syndicalist or communist theory to himself, to bolster his hope?)
Varick was readying the wagon for us. Dair looked to the door where he had gone out. "I'll tell you something you've not seen before."

"What's that, now?"

"Varick at the stove lids a minute ago, blacking his boots..."

It startled me enough. Fifteen and he was shining boots to...

"Raising a Highland flinger, are we. He must be yours."

She had to grin.
Schoolhouse dances were difficulty. I couldn't go, even if Adair would have heard of that—which she wouldn't, for the dances were a release for her. How many times, to how many tunes, did I tread the floor of the South Fork schoolroom or the Noon Creek one, glimpsing Anna, while Adair flew in my arms. She was astounding, my wife. Automatically now she was the most popular for men to dance with. Yet you truly weren't dancing with Adair; you were dancing with something she had become, music in a frock, motion which wore an Adair mask.

"She's another person, out there in the music." This from Rob. He meant it to extoll, but that he said it at all was a surprise.

"Yes." (Rascal Fair line?) It was more than noticeable that Adair did not pitch in with the other wives when they put midnight supper to her, together. Eating wasn't in the same universe with dancing. Everyone was civil to Adair. But it stopped there. She had no friendships beyond myself, Rob, Judith—I wasn't that sure about Judith—and no enemies As far as Scotch Heaven was concerned, either. She still was a visitor.
North Fork wound down the valley it seemed as if the water and the land were working together, making a fit.
OO drawled, "Those'll be the only bedsprings in town that ain't singin' tonight." The man in the dark suit turned and went back to the lady photographer...

(Make this a scene of Bourke-White setting up with whatever kind of camera she used?)
"A bit of a favor, I need to ask of you," Darius had waylaid him the night before.

"Where've you had your thumb that you don't want the police to know about?"

"It's, well, I'm embarrassed to even tell you about it, Hugh, but it's Clydeside trouble. Political, a person would have to say.

They barred me. You remember, they made a habit of that, the big bugs--bar a person from their 'yards if he'd been too active in favor of a strike. You can understand, I don't want them matching up here and using that excuse to sack me." I'm exactly one of your people long-time, anyway. And so on.

"They'd just figure it's a different Darius Duff, I suppose," Hugh asked calmly. "If there are different fingerprints at the Clydeside than on my papers here, that's what they have to conclude, don't they," Darius said calmly. "Fingerprints are supposed to be an exact science of identification."

"Then what about--"

"yours on record here as mine, has to be a clerk's mistake, doesn't it. Same last name, understandable how the forms got mixed up, and so on."
The lines snaked slowly into the propped-open double doors of the personnel office. As soon as he was in, Darius had a panicky moment when he saw that the head of the dam security guards, Vern Bantry, was there in the office. Darius tucked himself as thoroughly as he could behind the broad-shouldered pipefitter ahead of him in line and watched. Bantry was joking, laughing. Darius saw then that a couple of Bantry's men had been enlisted at the fingerprinting pads, along with 00.

Darius relaxed a little.

When his turn came, Darius coughed a little as he presented his left thumb, then a really wracking cough as the thumb was lifted off the ink pad and applied to the first space on the identity form.

"Hey, now, take it easy," the fingerprinter said. But Darius launched into a terrible coughing fit, doubling over with his hands which he used as cover to slip over his nose and mouth—during which he thrust his inky left thumb deep in his mouth; then out and down his pants leg as the right hand continued to cover his alarming coughing.

Bantry himself came over to pound him on the back, Darius at last managing to straighten up, eyes running and nose snuffling.
"Catarrh," Darius pronounced, which in his burr sounded perilously like another glottal earthquake coming, and he pounded his chest with his right fist. Meanwhile he meekly volunteered his thumb onto the inkpad, where the fingerprinter took hold, lifted it over to the second space on the identity form and [impatiently] imprinted Darius's thumb. Darius's without noticing that it was his left one again.
was supposed to have so
The fingerprinting had come without much warning, went Darius

The fingerprinting was supposed to have come without warning, but

of course Fort Peck's tide of rumor ran a good twenty-four hours ahead

of anything. So Darius had a chance to think through the matter, and

he'd decided to stay; to put his flesh in the government ink and take

his chances thereafter. Partly he was counting on governmental lack of

London was going to
dexterity; he didn't really think Washington, D.C. ask Washington, D.C.,

to scout through the entire WPA payroll for him. More than that,

though, he didn't see how to explain to Easter if they fled.
Extra early, Neil started the truck's long low-gear climb out of the bottomland, the morning fog off the river sealing away the terrain above so that only the same amount of steep grade, a hundred feet of sloping twin ruts, continuously showed ahead. The lugdrone of the truck was monotonously unchanging, too. Nonetheless Neil whistled a bit, feeling he had the jump on the day, plenty of time to make this haul between now and noon when he had to go on shift at the dredgeline.

He palmed the gearstick knob beside his knee for a moment, tattoo of vibration up from the gearbox into his hand. The transmission took a beating, on these hilly hauls, but he intended to snag Bruce or Owen one of these soon weekends to help him take down the transmission, check the gesarteeth and all.

The truck finally dug free of the fog, up into the grass horizons of the ridgeland. Not quite dawn yet; the sky was a little more inky than he expected, making him wonder if his clock was fast. Maybe something to do with the fog. This last stretch of the road from the homestead switchbacked into a long curve eastward, and even before the road topped the ridge, Neil saw that the lid of cloud lay on the river all the way
ahead. At Fort Peck they doubtless were cussing the damp gray morning, and Neil whistled some more at the prospect that the fog would burn off into a bright day by the time he hit the dam.

As the sun came up, Neil conscientiously squinted down at the side of the road, same way he did the first minutes of sunrise on all these drives into the start of day. Foggier than he'd thought: the cheatgrass along the road edge seemed dim today, not catching the first light as usual. Curious, Neil glanced ahead and instantly ducked his head as if slashed in the eye, both eyelids clamped shut but a green fuzzy arc of light under the left one. He jammed on the brakes, his breathing at a panic rate. The vivid feather of green was in hot outline against the inside of his eyelid. Neil opened his eye and the green smear blaze arched there across the left half of his vision. He closed his eyelid and the green blaze stayed there the same way.

"What the Jesus--?" Birdlife dropped his hammer and looked ready to run, if he only knew where. "It's turning night again already!"

Fagerli himself appeared startled for a moment, until he remembered.

"Eclipse. It was on the radio. Couple of minutes' worth, is all, and
then it'll be regular light again. Everybody have a smoke, if you want, while this gets over."

"End of the world, Birdlife!" Bruce teased. "St. Peter'll be sorting us out here in a minute, you better figure out which chicken you're going to start repenting on."

"Lay off him," Fagerli called to Bruce. Then to Birdlife: "But don't be gawking up there, in case that fog lifts. They say you can get your eyeballs fried by looking into one of those."

Neil didn't see how he could drive, couldn't see to drive with that green corona branded into his eye, and after automatically shutting off the truck and leaving it parked in compound low, he plunged down the road toward the river, left hand held over that same eye. The green squirm lifted and fell according to his strides but never went away, never dimmed from its hot turquoise across the seal of his eyelid.

Neil breathed desperately from his plunge down the ridge, down into the cover of fog, and from the terror of the blazing brand in his eye.

He knew by now that this wasn't from some shatter of the windshield, some sliver of glass driven into his eye; that this must be the eclipse
blindness everybody was warned about, every ten years or so, from childhood on. Except this wasn't blindness, this was maybe worse; this was a blazing opposite of blindness, something always there you didn't want to see, couldn't stand to see but couldn't keep from seeing. 

Sliver of light. This would be like living with, what—a scream. No. You might grow gradually grateful color shrieked used to a scream eventually, or deafen from it. This shrieked vividly that it was going to stay vivid forever. Even in sleep. My God, how could you ever hope to sleep with this blazing like a green lamp inside your eyeball?

He reached the river, clambered out onto a gravel bar, dropped to his knees and frantically sloshed water, handfuls as fast as he could scoop it up, onto the eye. The cold shock of made him gasp, shudder, applying the but he kept water until his hands grew numb. The green eyebrow still glowed in the center of his vision. Neil lurched to his feet, the river purling past him, and looked around wildly, trying to shoot looks here and there more quickly than the green tuft of fire could follow. But always it was there, in fact it seemed to get where he was looking ahead of his sense of looking there, if that was possible. Impossible as outrunning your shadow, he knew this was.
"I've to go to Plentywood, and—I'd like you with."

Easter was surprised. "What for?" (more?)

"A funeral."

... Big Muddy Creek.

The community hall was down by the Big Muddy at the top of the town, overlooking the square streets of Plentywood and the new county courthouse and the bends of Big Muddy Creek. The Packard was a minority among the parked trucks and pickups.

At the door of the hall, Leo Mott met them, a gangling figure of grief; determined not to cry behind his thick eyeglasses.

"Sorry for your trouble, Leo," Darius said, gripping Mott's massive grip. He indicated Easter. "My wife."

Mott leaned toward her and peered. She looked steadily at him as she Mott's eyes until she could make out her face. "We thank you for this show of support, Mrs. Duff."

Darius took her elbow in surprisingly formal fashion—she couldn't help casting him a little look out of the corner of her eye—and they went into the hall. Slatbutt wooden folding chairs had been set up in rows, and people sitting in them were looking around uncomfortably.
"This tears it," Darius said on their way to the car.

"I'd say so," Easter agreed. "Those farmers looked like they were crying somebody had in church."

He seemed not to have heard her. ["You saw the looks on them."]

They'd never admit they're still churchly. Maybe they're even not.

But that—that in there shook them."

And not just them, Easter thought, looking at his agitation.

"Why does it keep happening? Almost more damned times than I can count, the movement trips over itself like this. You get people halfway lined up behind the workers, manage to make them see what a fraud the old order is, push things to a brink of success—and then it all crashes."

He shook his head. "Mott. I know he's a grieved man. But he lost all sense of tactics with that funeral."

- final expression of D, furious/distraught over election loss.
only once if he wanted a turn at driving. "If I so much as hit a bug
with Tom Harry's car, I would never hear the end of it," he declined.

At the door of the hall, Lawrence Mott met them, a looming figure
of grief. Proxy could not help staring. Determined not to weep, behind
his thick eyeglasses Mott squinted as if pulling up his face like a
coverlet.

"Sorry for your trouble, Lawrence," Darius offered, along with his
hand which instantly was lost in Mott's mammoth grip. They stood that
way until Darius indicated Proxy. "My wife."
Hugh & Meg (& possibly Owen?Charlene) when he decides to take the cure:

Meg: "I'm leaving."

H: "That won't be necessary. I'll go."

M: "You? You?... Where is there for you to go?"

fully

A look on him she hadn't seen since his days of courting her in Inverley.

"College," he said.

begin next scene w/ small cap sign of KEELEY INSTITUTE?

It maybe was not higher learning but it definitely was an education,
Hugh takes the Keeley cure?

—goes to Chicago

"He took off out of here just like that? Who told you?"

—Owen asks: "Gone? Where the hell, gone?"

Mag: "He said to tell you he's gone to college."

—as per Harold Chadwick's experience, Hugh is told he cannot ever take another drink, or it will set him off again. Also, Harold's experience of someone trying to bully him into a sociable drink, having to turn it aside time and again.

—he drinks root beer instead? Dr. Pepper? Nehi? Orange Crush?

—he needs a job again when he comes back: asks Owen?

—in the aftermath, Hugh is not noble; he's maybe a bit self-righteous? or is he simply implacable, a new cordage of behavior wound around himself?
In the days subsequent, Hugh Duff had moods he hadn't known he was capable of. The blare of Halway Street would summon him in the night. After the first week the jag boss was gone; in his place, dollops of wax which could be used to plug the ears. The Carteret staff prided itself on hard cases; this is the belley of the beast, this is Jonah's time in the whale, and you had better make yourself survive it. Pink shots in the arm gave way to phials of soup; all of it dope of some kind, Hugh figured, but if it worked he didn't care what it was. The other inmates, some of them remittance men from the South or the East, talked whom even O'Connor was heard to refer to as thick Micks, of what they would do when they were dried out. Hugh

...he'd have cleaned your clock six ways to Sunday. And after two weeks, midpoint, Hugh was allowed to go a movie with...m O'Connor and a few others of the staff along as a corporal's guard... And at nine-o'clock, in the darkness of the 00 theatre, fifty men simultaneously lifted little

butiish their community gulp of taking the Carteret cure.
one-eyed
The jag boss searched his suitcase, then the chest of drawers, then under the mattress, for the third morning in a row. Since the jag boss, a back-of-the-yards Chicagoan named O'Connor, stayed with him for them both, Hugh could have conjured alcohol into the room. How Hugh could have conjured alcohol into day and night, it was not clear when

announced
"Clean as an angel's drawers," the jag boss said. He cocked his ear to the sound of the cart in the hallway. "And here comes your slug of concrete."

The damnable stuff
Rosellen often turned to the river for company, sometimes following it all the way south to where it wound out of the Horse Heaven Hills. They were the ugliest hills in Montana, Rosellen was pretty sure (Charlene had been totally sure), but the river pranced out of them high, wide and handsome, its waters freshly braided together from the Gallatin, Madison, and Jefferson Rivers at the Three Forks headwaters. The steady-stepping river sought into the valley around Toston as if just released, and that was Rosellen, too. If she wasn't tracing the riverbank one more time to the swallowing hills, she was across the Toston highway bridge, on the west bank where the ospreys nested high in the cottonwoods and fished the river with their talons; around town, they would be shot at as fish thieves. Coming back from one of her osprey outings, Rosellen met a cattle drive, cowboys from the Sixteenmile country. She hurried the rest of the way across the bridge and darted over to a telephone pole she could stand half behind to watch without spooking the herd of cattle.
The cowboy winked at her. "Easier to show you than tell you, sis. Hop up behind." He slipped his boot out of the stirrup, the empty U of it now an open invitation for her to climb on behind his saddle.

For an instant Rosellen wished Charlene was there to nix this.

The cowboy was old enough to be her father. But not as old as her father.

In the next instant, she was up onto the horse and riding double
say, You wanted to know. She could feel it, all right, even up there on
the horse: the mass vibration set up by the cows' running hooves; the
sensation that the bridge would shiver itself to pieces. Quickly the
cowboy spurred the horse around toward the approach to the bridge and
shut down on the next cattle who tried to run, deliberately breaking the
rhythm so that the vibration could not build and build until it was
dangerous to the bridge. Push some, hold some. Rosellen swung down off
the horse onto the bank pleased that, thanks to the river as usual, she
knew something new, one small thing more about the invisible gearwork
of existence.

Bruce had been thinking about this all week, a span of concentration
that had his head buzzing. A kind of tingle built up behind his ears as
he at last reached the point of telling himself ask, go ask, they can't
any more than tell you no.

The minute his shift ended, he tromped up the gangplank onto the
workbarge.
The famous photographer, a woman, threw the colonels into a tizzy by wanting to visit Happy Hollow. When she asked about the brothel situation, one of the whole cobs hemmed and hawed that, well, yes, the boomtowns had plenty of whatevens. Then let's see one of your whatevens, Colonel, the famous photographer said, and away they and the camera headed, to the Riding Academy.

While the camera worked away (without much success) at trying to capture the Riding Academy, stories grew. It was said that when the famous photographer asked the names of a trio of women, she got back the semi-jingle, "We're just three destitute prostitutes." Well, maybe. It was further told that while the famous photographer's escort was inside clearing the way for her, a drunk tapped on the car window and asked if she was in the market for a man. "He's inside," she said. You are the most even-tempered woman he'd ever heard of. Well, maybe.