

The Week of April 21-27, 1996

A Family of New Deal Dam Builders

Novel spotlights those who helped tame water in the West

BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23

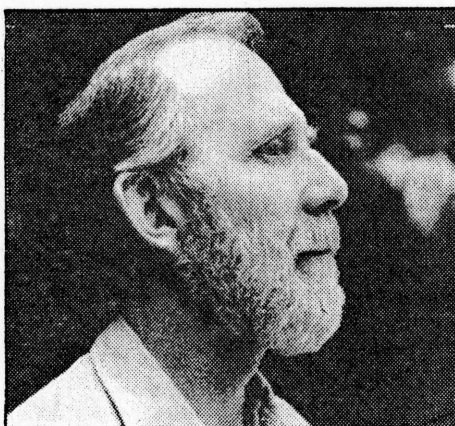
REVIEWED BY JOHN HARVEY

Since his award-winning memoir, "This House of Sky," was published in the late '70s, Montana-born writer and historian Ivan Doig has used the novel form to speculate upon the lives of people who lived and live in the West.

With "Bucking the Sun," which is principally set in the upper reaches of Missouri River country in the Depression years leading up to the start of World War II, he has achieved his most adroit blend of fact and fancy in what is perhaps his best book since that first work.

What sets Doig apart from others who have farmed the same terrain is the deft way he handles the fruits of his research; fact and anecdote are woven into the text with a light and often humorous touch. The sense we have is of a storyteller who is familiar and comfortable with his material; as readers, we trust the teller, and so we trust the tale.

Taking as its basis the construction of the Fort Peck Dam, a major New Deal project that brought work to thousands and in so doing flooded vast tracts of land, Doig centers his story on the lives of the Duff family — whose men were immigrants from Scotland, as was the case with Doig's own kin. If Doig the historian, with his light but liberal use of archive material from the Fort Peck Dam oral history project and the pages of the "Engineering News-Record," gives this saga an authentic structure, it is Doig the novelist who lifts it



Doig the historian gives this saga an authentic structure, while Doig the novelist lifts it to great heights with his portrayal of the five Duff men and the women they love

to great heights with his portrayal of the five Duff men — two brothers and three sons — and the women they love and marry.

"Selfmade men always do a lopsided job of it," the novel begins — a wonderful phrase — and in part that is what the story explores: Hugh Duff and his twin sons, Neil and Bruce, forever adapting to the changing demands of the land and work around them, learning as they go. Set against them is the older son, Owen, who turns against his father by going to college to study engineering and helps mastermind the building of the dam.

They are a headstrong bunch, creatures of hard work and heady impulse, adroit with their hands in every sense, and given to wooing women on the tight-grained tongue-and-groove dance floor of the Blue Eagle — a floor they laid themselves in a single night.

Hugh, the father, is stubborn and strong-willed, loving his wife Meg almost

despite himself in a relationship that owes as much to attrition as it does to affection. He respects and admires Meg just as he writhes under the weight of her judgment, her "nurselike sense of attention, the way of peering at you as if clerking for God." And some Friday nights, his pay burning a hole in his back pocket, he kicks over the traces and defies her by spending the night in town, drinking the whorehouse dry.

Hugh never quite forgives Owen for turning his back on him and finding a life of his own — a life that threatens the one Hugh had struggled to build for himself — yet nevertheless he eventually bows to the inevitable and accepts work on the construction of the dam. He moves himself and Meg into an ill-built shack, which Owen, tellingly, papers over with blueprints to stem the cold.

The younger sons also benefit from Owen's patronage and find work attached to the new project; Neil is seemingly the more stable, while Bruce jumps fitfully from one dangerous task to the next, rel-

ishing each new risk. When Hugh's brother, Darius, a left-wing agitator from the shipyards of the Clyde, arrives without call or expectation in their midst, things are thrown up into the air even more. Not only are Darius' political beliefs a potential threat to the building of the dam, the love he has nurtured all these years for Hugh's wife, Meg, has the capability of wrenching that central relationship asunder.

But this is not a book about men doing what men do; women are given nearly equal space in the story. Their strengths are their own — they are handsome, willful, dangerous — and they are not used solely to hold family and community together, though to a point they do that too. There is a pervading sense that Doig, in common with, say, two writers as different as Larry McMurtry and Carl Hiaasen, not only respects women, he actually likes them. For example, Owen's wife Charleen, independent and single-minded, becomes as involved in the running of her own business as Owen is in his work on the dam.

Some way into the novel, Doig uses a perfect simile: "This family is like nine radios going at once. . . . Every Duff a different station." It's apt because these Duffs are talkers, and when they're not talking, they're singing, or dancing, or doing all three at once. The remark also describes how the narrative works, the skill with which we are switched around from voice to voice, location to location, eavesdropping on a sentence here, a brief scene there, a near-documentary description or the most intimate of moments. This is a story about connections, attractions, shifting currents and the relationship between water and land, and about the nature of love, its fluctuations and irresistible flow.

What Doig understands well and describes with fascinating power is the way nothing in life is ever still. You can dam rivers and still they break. You can ignore for just so long the beating of the heart, but that will do nothing to quell the rush of blood along the vein. Owen's constant fear is "seepage," the knowledge that no matter how much weight of earth you use to stem the river's passage, water can still eat its way underneath; and in just such a way the firmest foundations of a marriage can be undermined by a look, a word, by intimations of a touch.

Doig's great achievement is to string his compelling narrative along these connections between outer and inner worlds, the silent stirrings of the human heart and the swelling moments of a river, both imperceptible until it is almost too late. He does this with dramatic sweep and yet great subtlety, letting the human and the natural spheres spin together and bind to one another, almost unseen. ■

John Harvey's forthcoming novel is 'Easy Meat' (Henry Holt).

BUCKING
THE SUN
IVAN DOIG

BOOKS

just over a century ago may well enjoy pursuing **Our Landlady**, a collection of newspaper columns about a small town in the newly admitted state of South Dakota, by L. Frank Baum, who would later give the world the unforgettable tale of Dorothy's adventures in the land of Oz. Baum, a young man from New York who followed Horace Greeley's advice about going West, Baum spent three years (1888-1891) in Aberdeen, S.D., where he contributed a humorous, mildly satirical column to the Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer.

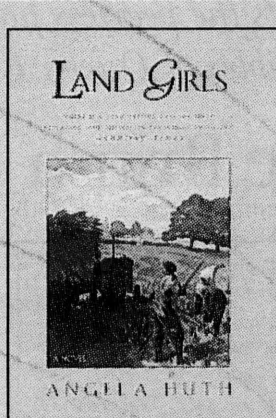
Baum's column featured the fictitious character "Mrs. Bilkins," a lively, opinionated, penny-pinching woman who runs a boarding house and cuts every corner she can when it comes to feeding her sometimes hard-up paying customers.

Mrs. Bilkin's decided opinions on a variety of subjects, from droughts, crop failures, and economic fluctuations to suffrage, Prohibition, and politics, exhibit a distinctive blend of naiveté, shrewdness, cynicism, and dogged optimism.

Although these journalistic vignettes scarcely rise to the artistic and imaginative heights of his Oz books, they constitute a colorful sampling of Americana and are expertly edited and annotated by Nancy Tystad Koupal in an attractive, illustrated volume.

The 28 stories selected by editor John Sutherland for **The Oxford Book of English Love Stories**, were chosen in large part for the ways in which they confound conventional expectations. They are, indeed, a far cry from the world of Harlequin romances.

In these love stories, love does not always conquer all, and even when it does, the result is not always the proverbial happy ending. Many of these stories are surprisingly unsentimental and, perhaps even more surprisingly, most are quite unerotic.

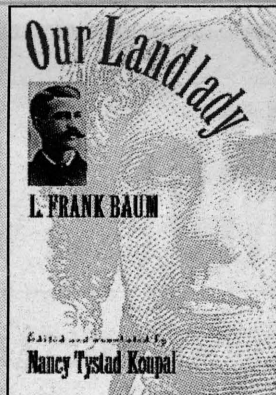


LAND GIRLS
By Angela Huth
St. Martin's Press/
Thomas Dunne Book
378 pp., \$23.95 By L.

A FINE BALANCE
By Rohinton Mistry
Alfred A. Knopf
640 pp., \$26

**THE OXFORD BOOK OF
ENGLISH LOVE STORIES**
Edited by John
Sutherland
Oxford University
Press
452 pp., \$25

OUR LANDLADY
Frank Baum
University of Nebraska
Press
285 pp., \$35



Readers who are prepared to forgo the predictable will find stories that brilliantly illuminate many kinds of love: foolish, wise, casual, caring, obsessive, deluded, self-sacrificing, and selfish. Beginning in the late 17th century with a rather colorless tale by the colorful Aphra Behn, commonly credited as the first Englishwoman to make her living by the pen, the collection skips over the 18th century to proceed chronologically into the 19th and 20th centuries. (Irritatingly, the editor fails to provide the actual dates of the stories' composition or publication, perhaps out of a mistaken belief that to do so invites readers to consider them mere "period pieces.")

Sutherland has done an unusually fine job of finding interesting and relatively unfamiliar works by very famous authors, including Mary Shelly, Anthony Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, Somerset Maugham, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Katherine Mansfield, and Elizabeth Bowen.

It probably says more about the temperament of this particular editor than it does about the English love story in general that most of these stories end unhappily: with noble self-renunciation at best, despair and ruin at worst, and a great deal of betrayal and disillusionment in between.

But there are also shafts of sweetness and light. From Thackeray's daughter, Anne Ritchie, there's a delicate story of devotion narrated by a man unembittered by his disappointment; from Phyllis Bentley, a crisply written account of malice that ends up outsmarting itself.

Although this anthology of love stories may not be a collection to warm the hearts of true romantics, it brings together a fascinating and enlightening variety of perspectives on the harsher realities that may lie in wait for unsuspecting lovers.

■ Merle Rubin regularly reviews books for the Monitor.

Historical Fiction With Contemporary Montana Edge

Doig delivers what his readers expect

By Brad Knickerbocker

IF there is any potential problem with really enjoying a contemporary writer — relishing the thought of the next book — it's that the new work will simply replot safe ground, be too predictable in style and subject matter. Or, alternatively, that there will have been a jarring departure in approach.

With Ivan Doig's latest novel, fans need not worry. All the steel and sweetness, the granite and light, the humor and sharp dialogue, in Doig's writing are here with new flair and depth. The grit and warmth is pure Doig, only more so.

"Bucking the Sun," Doig's fifth novel (he has written three non-fiction books as well), is set in his home state of Montana during the Great Depression of the mid-1930s. Thanks to the Roosevelt administration, Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River is to be a massive public-works project that will employ thousands, including some whose homesteads will be inundated by the lake it creates.

The tale centers on the Duff family. Patriarch Hugh and his wife, Meg, Scottish immigrants who are just barely making it on land tougher than they are; their elder son, Owen, an engineer and "fillmaster" on what will be one of the largest earthen dams ever built; twin younger brothers, Neil and Bruce; and Hugh's brother Darius, a militant Marxist shipyard worker who shows up running from a violent past in Scotland carrying political and personal grudges.

Quite soon, all the Duff men are married — to women (two of them sisters) just as tough-minded, yet vulnerable, as the Duffs are. We know from the start that a man and a woman from two different couples will end up naked and dead in a truck that has rolled off the dam.

Doig has the perfect background for this kind of writing. He grew up on Montana ranches before going off to get a doctorate in history. His factual recounting of the Fort Peck Dam project is full of fascinating historical tidbits. The scenes where FDR himself came to see the project and speak to the awed assembly gives a gritty newsreel quality to events.

In fact, I kept wishing that photographs from that time had been included.

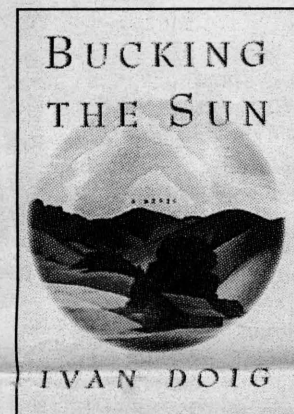
The promise of the era is fully felt, as well as the growing concern about events in Europe as the shadow of fascism falls. Some of the characters are politically radical to the point of being anarchic — a chilling precursor to the militias and "freemen" found in that part of the country today.

If there is one weakness in "Bucking the Sun," it's that the surreptitious affair between two of the Duffs is not fully developed — not developed at all, in fact. From all we're told, it could just as easily have been any two others, and there's plenty to work with here without it, which leaves one wondering why it's there in the first place.

But this is a relatively minor quibble. Ivan Doig is a terrific writer and a great storyteller with a healthy outlook as indicated in his dedication: "To novelists who deliver the eloquence of the edge of the world rather than stammers from the psychiatrist's bin."

I'm looking forward to his next work, whatever it may be.

■ Brad Knickerbocker is a Monitor correspondent who covers environmental issues from Ashland, Ore.



BUCKING THE SUN
By Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster,
412 pp., \$23

A Jury of One's Peers Goes Up in Smoke

By Lawrence J. Goodrich

JOHN GRISHAM'S latest legal thriller, "The Runaway Jury," has it all: mystery, legal maneuvering, behind-the-scenes views of a trial, jury tampering, and plenty of other skulduggery.

Taking a page from today's headlines, Grisham takes us to Biloxi, on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, and the latest tobacco trial. The combatants/conspirators/protagonists are many, but most of the action centers around two men, Rankin Fitch and Nicholas Easter.

Fitch runs the tobacco companies' secret legal fund. He's a bully who hires the lawyers, jury consultants, and investigators, and who fixes the juries. His clients are scared silly of him, but

they put up with him because Big Tobacco hasn't lost a case since he's been in charge.

The stakes are tremendous for plaintiff and defendant alike. If the jury finds that cigarette smoking killed Jacob Wood, and that he couldn't quit because the

THE RUNAWAY JURY
By John Grisham
Doubleday, 401 pp., \$26.95

tobacco companies got him hooked as a child and then spiked their cigarettes with more nicotine to keep him hooked, the coalition of trial lawyers financing the case expects to cash in big in future lawsuits. The tobacco companies need to head that off. Both sides are ready to

play hardball — complete with spitballs and beanballs.

This is no civics-textbook trial. As the action unfolds, both sides are trying to fix the jury, but that panel seems to have a mind of its own. Before long it's going on strike and dictating terms to the judge. It's a runaway jury.

As usual, Grisham draws a finely detailed, realistic picture of the action and the characters. The judge, the lawyers on both sides, the witnesses, even the court officers are painted as real human beings with real foibles. And true to Grisham's style, just when you think you know the ending, you suddenly find out that you don't.

■ Lawrence J. Goodrich is a Monitor editorial writer.

Monday
APRIL 14, 1997

Variety

E
SECTION

TODAY'S QUOTE

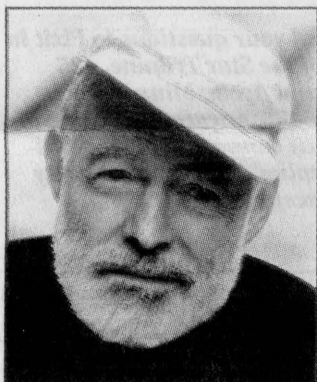
► "The government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul."
— George Bernard Shaw

Minneapolis

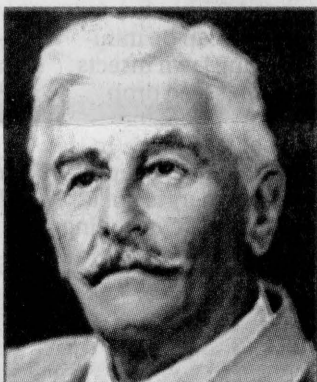
StarTribune

April 14, 1997

Can today's authors live up to these?



Ernest Hemingway



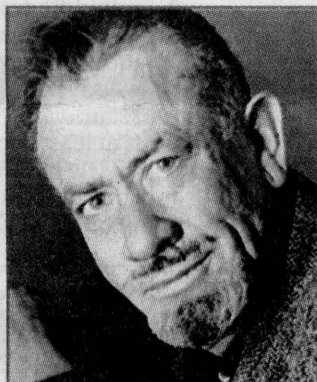
William Faulkner



Willa Cather



Langston Hughes



John Steinbeck

Literary Lions

An endangered species

In the land of million-dollar advances,
the pop celebrity author is king.
John Grisham and Anne Rice are pale successors
to William Faulkner and Willa Cather.

Future lions?

- Maya Angelou
- Pat Conroy
- Robertson Davies
- Ivan Doig
- Richard Ford
- John Gardner
- David McCullough
- Toni Morrison
- Larry McMurtry
- Reynolds Price
- Alice Walker

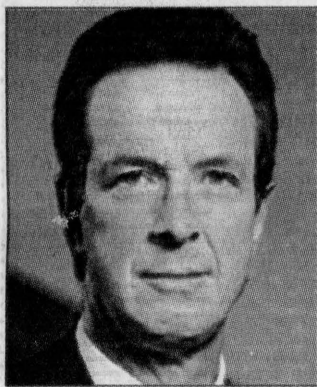
Almost forgotten

- Margaret Atwood
- E.L. Doctorow
- Joseph Heller
- John Irving
- Norman Mailer
- Anne Tyler
- John Updike

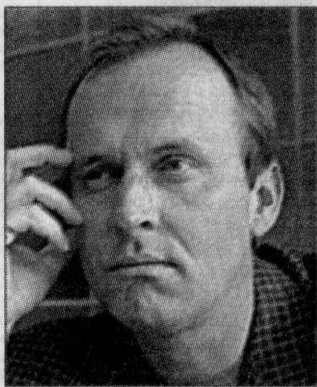
Past popular

- William Peter Blatty
- Grace Metalious
- Mickey Spillane
- Jacqueline Susann

Will anyone remember these authors?



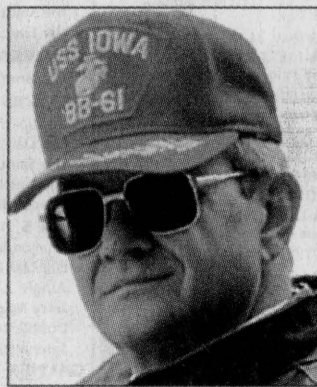
Michael Crichton



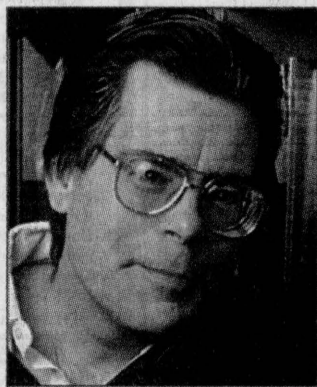
John Grisham



Anne Rice



Tom Clancy



Stephen King

By Jeff Guinn
Fort Worth Star-Telegram



Dave Barry

HUMORIST DAVE BARRY dreads this hypothetical moment in a high school or college classroom.

"It terrifies me that a teacher might someday ask a student, 'Explain how Mr. Barry utilizes the word 'booger,'" he says. "I don't know that my writing should be studied by future generations."

Yet it's entirely possible that around 2010 Barry's name will be

Cornwell, Michael Crichton, John Grisham, Stephen King and Anne Rice.

If fiction on current bestseller lists seems so lightweight it could float, the nonfiction list looks no better. The days when history-marking, if not history-making, tomes such as William Shirer's "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," Theodore White's "The Making of the President 1960" and Will and Ariel Durant's epic 10-volume "The Story of Civilization" set high literary standards are long gone. So far in 1997, those ubiquitous "self-help" books (Sarah Breathnach's "Simple Abun-

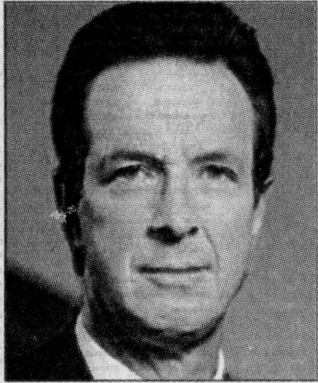
Are these statements true?

- Book publishers don't promote quality.
- Television takes up time people once devoted to reading.
- Modern lives are so stressful that readers want mind candy, not challenge.
- Authors used to be celebrities in their own rights, but not anymore.
- More readers of earlier generations appreciated good writing.
- Teachers aren't introducing students to new writers.

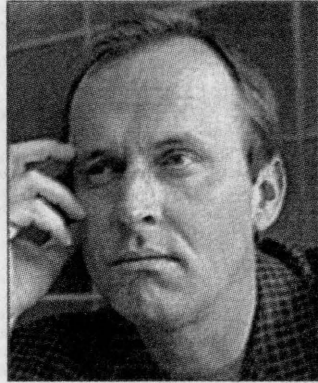
to William Faulkner and Willa Cather.

Will anyone remember these authors?

Blatty
➤ Grace Metalious
➤ Mickey Spillane
➤ Jacqueline
Susann



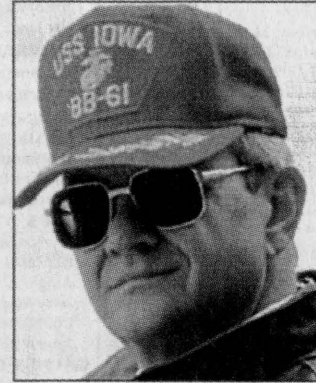
Michael Crichton



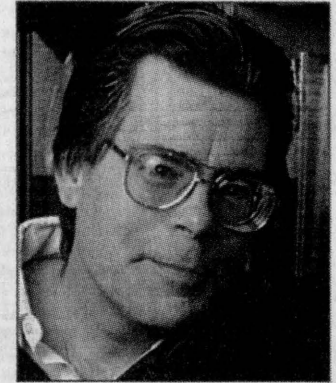
John Grisham



Anne Rice



Tom Clancy



Stephen King

By Jeff Guinn
Fort Worth Star-Telegram



Dave Barry

HUMORIST DAVE BARRY dreads this hypothetical moment in a high school or college classroom.

"It terrifies me that a teacher might someday ask a student, 'Explain how Mr. Barry utilizes the word 'booger,' " he says. "I don't know that my writing should be studied by future generations."

Yet it's entirely possible that around 2010 Barry's name will be included on reading lists of classes focusing on popular authors of the late 20th century. In alphabetical order, the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist might be joined by Tom Clancy, Patricia

Cornwell, Michael Crichton, John Grisham, Stephen King and Anne Rice.

If fiction on current bestseller lists seems so lightweight it could float, the nonfiction list looks no better. The days when history-marking, if not history-making, tomes such as William Shirer's "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," Theodore White's "The Making of the President 1960" and Will and Ariel Durant's epic 10-volume "The Story of Civilization" set high literary standards are long gone. So far in 1997, those ubiquitous "self-help" books (Sarah Breathnach's "Simple Abundance," Suzanne Somers' "Eat Great, Lose Weight") comprise more than three-quarters of the nonfiction bestsellers.

Turn to **WRITERS on E7**

Are these statements true?

- Book publishers don't promote quality.
- Television takes up time people once devoted to reading.
- Modern lives are so stressful that readers want mind candy, not challenge.
- Authors used to be celebrities in their own rights, but not anymore.
- More readers of earlier generations appreciated good writing.
- Teachers aren't introducing students to new writers.
- There aren't any more great writers.

Read on to find out

Nonfiction bestsellers, then and now:

"The Making of the President 1960"
by historian Theodore H. White

"Eat Great, Lose Weight"
by sitcom star Suzanne Somers



WRITERS from E1

The art/commerce crossover may be a casualty of the times

Meanwhile, survivors among the previous generations of greats are in their unremarked dotage. Joseph Heller, Norman Mailer, John Updike and a few others still publish. But, like ex-presidents, their past achievements get all the attention. Quick, what's the title of Heller's recent sequel to "Catch-22," and what was its highest position on the bestseller list? ("Closing Time," and it didn't even make it.)

The best-known authors among the current crop might sell millions of books, but their collective talent pales when compared to the American literary lions immediately preceding them — Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, Langston Hughes, Willa Cather. It's painfully obvious that when future scholars judge the reading habits of late-20th-century Americans (and, by direct inference, our relative intelligence) their verdicts aren't likely to be kind.

The question is no longer whether the modern era will produce writers whose present excellence guarantees them future re-

nown; instead, it's necessary to ask why it didn't. There are several prevalent theories.

► **Book publishers don't promote quality.** According to American Bookseller Association figures, more books are published annually — approximately 50,000 new titles each year — than ever. This means, in theory, that bookstore browsers have a much wider range of selections.

In reality, fewer than one in 100 of those books will sell in significant numbers. Sales of 45,000 to 60,000 usually are required to make the bestseller list.

"The way publishers market their books has radically changed," says Rob Harvey, manager of Borders Books and Music in Fort Worth, Texas. "The publishers are backing fewer and fewer books with more and more money, and those are the so-called star authors. The more literary writers who are published get left by the promotional wayside. When a Grisham or Clancy has a new novel, we get 150 to 300 copies to display in our store. We only get seven to 10 copies of books by

what we call 'midlist' or good but unknown authors. So it's hard for the great unknowns to get noticed because of how much [display] space the Clancys take up."

The bottom line is, of course, money. For publishers to recoup the \$4 million advances on earned royalties paid to the likes of Clancy, they must sell a million copies of his latest book. They have far less financially at stake with the anonymous, better writer whose advance was \$5,000.

► **Television takes up time people once devoted to reading.** If it's true the average American watches almost 30 hours of TV each week, it follows that there's little time left to spend with well-written, challenging books.

"It can be hard work reading a good book," says Judy Alter, director of Texas Christian University Press and the author of more than a dozen novels. "It's not as easy as watching a TV show. Let's face it: TV shows are more intellectually accessible."

Fort Worth psychologist Richard Citrin agrees, but only in part. "It's also true that TV has now been with us for around 50 years, and in the '40s many of the most famous authors, the ones who sold the most books, were also the best writers," he says.

"People no longer rely on books for information. We've got cable television channels devoted to news and biographies of the great and near-great. The Net offers immediate access to data on every conceivable subject. Radio talk shows debate the most minute political maneuver. . . .

Why would someone spend three days or even three weeks reading a book when he could learn a lot about the same subject with just an hour of watching TV or working on a home computer?"

► **Modern lives are so stressful that readers want mind candy, not challenge.** Critics claim that Grisham rehashes essentially the same trial-based plots in every novel, with just names and locations changed. Cynthia Hiatt of Arlington, Texas, agrees — and says that's why she snaps up each Grisham potboiler.

"I'm a single parent raising two children under 6," Hiatt says.



Mickey Spillane

"After work I have to run to day care, fix supper, pay bills. When I sit down for half an hour with a book, I want it to be fun, and maybe be able to figure out who's guilty or whatever. I can count on John Grisham for that. I don't want some book I have to study."

► **Authors are no longer celebrities in their own right.** If writers who toil in anonymity share one gripe, it's the attention and sales furor that accompany the release of autobiographies of TV celebrities and sports stars. In Dallas, a book-signing by the Cowboys' Emmitt Smith attracted 1,500 eager fans; a few weeks later at the same bookstore, Norman Mailer sold about 25 books at his signing. The difference between today and

"I'm a single parent raising two children under 6. After work I have to run to day care, fix supper, pay bills. When I sit down for half an hour with a book, I want it to be fun, and maybe be able to figure out who's guilty or whatever. I can count on John Grisham for that. I don't want some book I have to study."

— Cynthia Hiatt of Arlington, Texas

"Escapist fiction, particularly, is what readers seem now to be looking for, but it's been that way for a long time. Take a genre like mysteries. You had Dashiell Hammett being published, but also Mickey Spillane. Spillane outsold Hammett by a lot, but there was never any question that Hammett had the better quality of writing."

— Elmer Kelton, western writer



Dashiell Hammett

a generation ago might be that a select few authors are still famous; it's just that they no longer are famous for "quality" writing.

► **More readers of earlier generations appreciated good writing.** This is probably correct, but we miss the point entirely if we assume slick literary trash is a sales phenomenon of the late 1990s.

"Escapist fiction, particularly, is what readers seem now to be looking for, but it's been that way for a long time," suggests Elmer Kelton, who writes westerns. "Take a genre like mysteries. You had Dashiell Hammett being published, but also Mickey Spillane. Spillane outsold Hammett by a lot, but there was never any question that Hammett had the better quality of writing."

In 1956, Grace Metalious' low-brow "Peyton Place" was the runaway literary hit, outselling Edwin O'Connor's "The Last Hurrah" and James Thurber's "Fables for Our Times" combined. Jacquelyn Susann's "The Valley of the Dolls" was fiction's bestseller of the '60s.

In the past, however, books such as O'Connor's and Thurber's were also bestsellers, if in fewer numbers than "Peyton Place" or William Peter Blatty's "The Exorcist."

► **Teachers aren't introducing students to new writers.** True and false. Fort Worth's Paschal High's top-flight honors English classes read a smattering of recent works — Barbara Kingsolver's "The Bean Trees," Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," John Gardner's "Gren-

del." But the bulk of the list remains tried-and-true classics: "Heart of Darkness," "Lord of the Flies," "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

A teacher who asked not to be identified (and who is not on the Paschal staff) said her reason for sticking to the classics is simple: "There are now always some parents who come down on you for requiring a book they somehow decide is bad or religiously incorrect."

When she tried to have her class read Alice Walker's "The Color Purple," several parents called the principal to complain that certain scenes — mostly involving sex, though a few with modestly coarse language — were inappropriate. If the book wasn't removed from the class reading lists, these parents threatened, they would complain to the school board or withdraw their children.

► **There aren't any more great writers.** Yes, there are. Most of them are just unknown.

"There's Ivan Doig, there's Reynolds Price, or David McCullough, or Stephen Ambrose," Alter says. "Sometimes the best writers are stereotyped as regional. Robertson Davies in Canada is one example. John Graves here in Texas is another. I couldn't tell you which modern writers with worthwhile work will be studied by students in the future or remain widely read in the future."

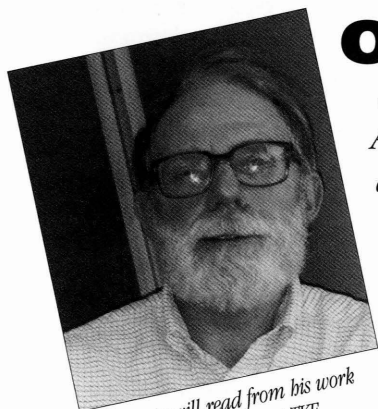
"But I'm confident there will be some, and not those names like John Grisham or Anne Rice from the top of the bestseller lists."



Book News from The
King's English Bookshop
Volume 5, Number 1
June 1997

The Inkslinger

In Our House of Sky



*Ivan Doig will read from his work
Wed., May 21, 7 p.m. at TKE.*

*A chat with Ivan Doig
at the Salt Lake Airport*

by Kathy Ashton

Ivan Doig, one of our favorite authors, passed through Salt Lake in late March on his way from Seattle to Santa Fe to accept the Spirit of the West Award from the Mountains and Plains Booksellers Association. We met him on the concourse at the Salt Lake Airport, where amongst screaming children, blaring TV's, and frequent airline announcements, we sat down with him and his wife Carol to try to have a little chat (and mostly succeeded, thanks to Doig's powers of concentration). We wondered what had been going on in his life since his last book tour for his extraordinary *Bucking the Sun* (about to be released in paper — he will be reading from it at The King's English on Wednesday, May 21, at 7 p.m.).

Nosy as always, we asked why in the world he lives in Seattle when he

Doig, continued on page 4

Digressions with a Point, Finally

by Ann Edwards Cannon

Every now and then when my kids want a good laugh, they like to pull out Pictures From My Youth and look at what my hair was doing. Mostly what it was doing was making me look like a dork — especially when I was in high school during the early '70s. I wore my hair long and straight then, parted in the middle and hanging like heavy drapes over my ears just like (a) Susan St. James on *McMillan and Wife* and (b) Cher before she dumped Sonny. All the other girls at my high school wore their hair this way, too, although some of them added tiny barrettes at the brow to make a crisper, more defined fashion statement.

Of course the boys all looked like each other, too. They had these absolute wheat fields of hair sprouting from their scalps, waving mildly in

Cannon, continued on page 2



BOOKS, MUSIC, ART, FOOD, FRIVOLITY — DISCOUNTS
UP AND DOWN THE BLOCK

**Thursday, June 12 (Kids' Day),
through Sunday, June 15
at TKE — BOOK SALE**

**30% off selected hardbacks, 40% off if you
buy 3 or more, 10% off entire TKE stock**

Writers Reading Their Works

FRIDAY, MAY 16, 7:30 p.m.

A reading of two original one act plays, *Fade* and *Manhattan Insecurities*, by Michael Kranes.

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2 p.m.

Prince Manucher Farmanfarmaian and his daughter Roxanne will discuss their book, *Blood And Oil: Memoirs Of A Persian Prince*.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 7 p.m.

Ivan Doig, one of our favorite authors, will be reading from his latest novel, *Bucking the Sun*.

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 7 p.m.

Author Peter Rock, a current Wallace Stegner fellow at Stanford University, will be reading from his new novel, *This Is The Place*.

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

KIDS' DAY with Pat Bagley, Ann Cannon, magician Christopher Fair, Vera Rosenberry, and Rick Walton. (See page 12)

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 7 p.m.

Leslie Kelen and Eileen Hallet Stone will be reading from and signing copies of their book, *Missing Stories*.

NEW WEB SITE ADDRESS: [HTTP://WWW.KINGSENGLISH.COM](http://www.kingsenglish.com) (See page 5)

NEW BOOKS

The Saskiad, Brian Hall

Brian Hall has managed to do something fresh with this coming-of-age novel which revolves around Saskia, a ferociously bright 12-year-old who lives with her mother on the remains of a commune.



Saskia is a child who lives primarily through books and her rich fantasy life. She is, however, largely responsible for holding together the remains of the commune while trying to ignore her mother's ex-boyfriend.

Watching Saskia learn to separate fact from fantasy as she navigates the journey from childhood to adulthood is a true joy. This strange book, infused with great tenderness and enormous heart, is one of the most vivid I have read all year. — CME, Houghton Mifflin, \$23.95

Lives of the Monster Dogs,

Kirsten Bakis

The year is 2011, and a young woman is sunk in the slough of despond, the aftermath of a failed love affair, when strange half-human creatures begin taking New York by storm — monster dogs — which stand upright, speak (through mechanical voice boxes), and are clearly as intelligent as any human. Although the protagonist tries, she doesn't always succeed in loving them wisely as they attempt to find a safe



port in a world for which they are only partly suited. An astonishing, complicated first novel about the animal world, about the bonds that tie sentient beings, and the things that separate them. — BB, FSG, \$23

The Man in the Box, Thomas Moran

Niki Lukasser is 13 when the doctor who saved his life when he was a baby returns and asks to be hidden from the Nazis. Despite protests, Niki's father builds a false wall in the barn and hides the doctor. Once "the box" is built, Niki's father seems to want to forget about the man, so it falls to Niki and his best friend Sigi, the blind girl next door, to care for him. To the children, Dr. Weiss seems as mysterious as all of adult life, and the novel

Doig, continued from page 1

feels such strong ties to Montana. The answer: his wife's job has been in Seattle for the last 30 years and, "really, Missoula is only a day's drive away." Living in Seattle has been much better for his work "in terms of getting the books written, being able to hole up in a West-coast suburb and do the books. There's a lot of obligation and citizenship that goes with a smaller state community such as Montana. Author Jim Welch ended up serving on the parole board for 10 years while he was writing his books." Doig tries to pitch in where he can in Seattle, but "I've been able to do more writing there than I would living anywhere else."

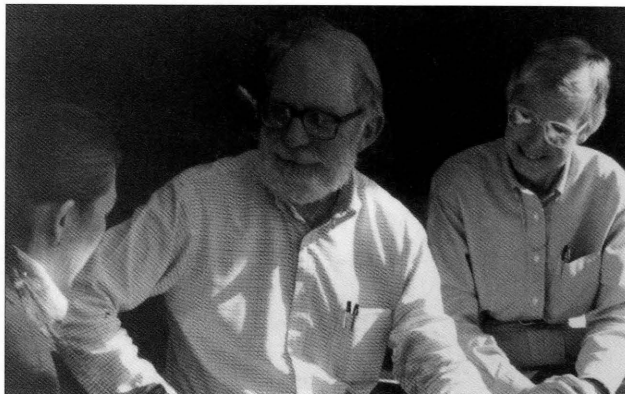
Since his wife Carol was with him, we decided to see how much she is involved in his actual writing process, if she does much preliminary reading for him. We had remembered Doig mentioning during another interview that when he was writing **Bucking the Sun** he had Carol read a lot of the passages on dam engineering to see if they were too technical. She does read much of his work, mostly she says (laughing), "to edit out too much Scotch politics."

He is, of course, a Westerner born and bred, but sees himself first and foremost a writer. He is a very accomplished one, with a National Book Award nomination for **This House of Sky**, along with five novels and three books of non-fiction to his credit. But we were curious as to how he felt about the pigeonholing process. Reviewers often tend to pigeonhole Western writers as "regional," even though their work transcends such labels. Doig is almost always reviewed as a Western writer, even when those reviews appear in places like *The New York Times Book Review* and *Time* magazine. He thinks that may be partially due to the fact "that Western topics — the land, working by hand, family resilience — throw reviewers, a lot of whom are Easterners. For instance, **This House of Sky** came out on Labor Day of 1978, and wasn't reviewed in *The New York Times* until the next February, and might not have been then, except for the National Book Award nomination." Only Southerners, we agreed with a laugh, somehow don't get looked down on as "regional." But all good writers, Doig says, wherever they base themselves, "are trying to write about that larger country — life."

Hoping that there will be a new book in the near future, we asked what he is currently working on. His answer — "A new novel set partly along the Pacific Coast and partly in Rocky Mountain country. My characters are Baby Boomers, the reluctant peanut butter and jelly sandwiched between their kids and their aging parents. Meanwhile they're facing that old American question, can they go home again." Publication date, he reports will be just ahead of the millennium — 1999. (Perhaps, if we're lucky, he'll visit TKE when the new book comes out. He didn't make any commitments, but there is always hope.)

With so many independent bookstores in trouble

now because of the large chains, we asked about his philosophy regarding signings and readings. In the past, he has dealt overwhelmingly with independents — "by now, I've done nearly 500 bookstore appearances, and fewer than two dozen were in chain-stores," but he regrets how much the scene is changing. "Several of my friends with small bookstores have gone out of business or are going." (Cities such as Great Falls and Billings, he points out, have no independent bookstores left.) But, wherever he can, Doig tries to give an independent first crack at a signing, as he recently did in a trio of signings in Missoula — "the locally owned



"My characters are Baby Boomers, the reluctant peanut butter and jelly sandwiched between their kids and their aging parents," says Doig of his novel-in-progress.

store on the first day, then a chain, then a Costco. All three were big signings, different book-buying constituencies — for instance, the people I come from, blue-collar ranch folk a lot of them, shop at Costco. They go there to get fence posts and barbed wire, and if I'm there, they'll stop by to say hello and buy a book." Readings at chains are getting harder to turn down: "Readings are a necessary part of writers' lives; they have to go where audiences are."

Knowing it was like asking a parent which child is the favorite, we persevered anyway, asking if he had a favorite book. That was indeed a tough question, but he allowed that he probably "had two, simply because they've sold so well, **This House of Sky** and **Dancing at the Rascal Fair**." We adored **Heart Earth** for the sheer beauty of the language and asked him if he had any special feelings for it. He seemed surprised at our question and remarked that "I do joint readings with a poet friend, Linda Bierds, and at the end of our shtick, we always read from each other's work. At our most recent appearance, she read from **Heart Earth** because she just loves it. For some reason, other writers seem very attracted to it." We think we know why the work attracts other writers — it's the elegance of his craft: his skilled use of language makes the work seem more poetry than the prose it is.

Doig seems to have more eclectic taste than most and enjoys book talk. He has just finished Ismael Kadare's **Chronicle in Stone** and **The Pyramid**. Kadare is an exiled Albanian author (writing in French rather than his native tongue) who Doig feels we may see nominated for the Nobel Prize in the near future.

Chronicle in Stone is a kind of Garcia-Marquez-

Continued on page 5

like performance, but I think it's better. It's a World War II memoir done in fiction." He is also reading Frank O'Connor's critical anthology, *The Lonely Voice*. Carol offered the title *One Sweet Quarrel* by Deirdre McNamer, a Montanan who both Doigs feel is a comer.

When we asked if he liked traveling, he responded that if he could "do it without planes or hotels, I'd like traveling a lot better. I particularly like bookstore appearances." He had wonderful readings in the East in Vermont and Connecticut on his tour for *Bucking the Sun*.

We always like to know how writers feel about the interview process and if they have any pet peeves. Doig's is "the pegging process." He sees himself as a "writer who lives in the West by choice, not as a Western writer" (as well he should). As a follow-up, we asked him what he most liked to talk about, and his response was, "the craft of writing." He likes people to ask him "Why did I do what I did and how did I do it?" Doig elaborated that he hates first drafts. He doesn't really enjoy writing until his fourth or fifth draft, when he "gets to the point

where I can tinker with prepositions."

Doig recently contributed to a book on Wallace Stegner, and we wondered how they met, imagining a boyhood friendship or something of that sort, even though Doig is younger than Stegner. It occurred to us that they might have run into each other — they did, but much more recently than we might have guessed. Their first meeting was engineered by Clarus Backes, book review editor of *The Denver Post*, at an ABA meeting in Anaheim. Backes was working on a book entitled *Growing Up Western* and thought that it would be a good idea for these two giants of Western literature to meet.

At this point, the boarding call for their next flight was announced, and the interview was over. We called goodbyes and thank yous as the Doigs dashed off across the concourse, wishing that we had more time with them.

Please join us for a longer visit with Ivan Doig at TKE on May 21, for his reading of *Bucking The Sun*, newly released in paper.

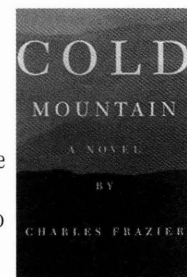
NEW BOOKS

follows the passage from innocence to knowledge with a light touch and an earthy sense of humor. A masterful first novel, it combines humor and pathos as it explores the manner in which even our most noble deeds rarely proceed from unmixed motivations. — CME, Riverhead Books, \$21.95

Human Croquet, Kate Atkinson
From the first chop of the axe in Arden forest to the final whine of the chain saw as it bites into the bark of 'Lady Oak,' we watch strange and sometimes dangerous games played out in the shade of the ancient trees, snort at puns and witticisms while blood leaks from the bodies of the players. The book's heroine Isobel is busy, along with her brother Charles, hunting for her mother, who disappeared years before; busy resisting the hole in time that keeps trying to suck her into some parallel universe. Isobel tries desperately to leach truth from the cracks in reality as her world fractures and then realigns itself over and over again. Like its predecessor, Whitbread award-winning *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, **Human Croquet** is a triumph — a book which at once dazzles and moves the reader. — BB, Picador, \$24

Cold Mountain, Charles Frazier
An odyssey in which a young man, Inman, wounded and disheartened by the Civil War, attempts to make his way home to his beloved Cold Mountain and the woman he loves. Fighting outliers (outlaws), wild animals, Northern soldiers, and his own conscience, he reaches his destination, only to find that "home" has changed. His sweetheart Ada has lost her father, and through that loss, her own will to live. A gorgeous and heart-rending first novel. — KA, Publisher's Group West (Atlantic Monthly Press), \$23

The Discovery of Heaven, Harry Mulisch
More imaginative than anything we have read in a long time, this is the tale of three friends destined to meet through the machinations of a couple of enterprising



Inkslinger on the Web

The King's English is and always has been an advocate of the printed word. The *Inkslinger* will be in print as long as the store exists, but much as we hate to do this, due to ever-escalating printing costs, **we are asking everyone who now receives TKE's Inkslinger to either voluntarily send us an annual \$3 to \$5 contribution or take it by e-mail instead of Snail-mail (U. S. Postal Service). If you are connected to the web, e-mail will be free of charge.** If you can't use the web or if you can't afford the subscription price, we will, of course, continue to deliver the *Inkslinger* to you by mail. You can find us at our

NEW ADDRESS: [HTTP://WWW.KINGSENGLISH.COM](http://www.kingsenglish.com)

We are now connected to all major search engines. Please call 484-9100 if you have any questions.

Book Groups

A flower-filled patio, a glass of wine, good books, and good friends. Sign yourself up for a few summer evenings like this with the book groups at The King's English. Margaret Neville's group, which meets on Monday nights, will sample Eastern writers with novels by authors from Rushdie to Mahfouz. The Friday night group, led by Eve Leonard, plans a sort of Mediterranean and American split, with reading that ranges from Peter Mayle's Provence to Artemio Cruz in Carlos Fuentes' Mexico. The groups meet once a month and welcome men and women, both singles and those otherwise engaged. (Eve's group started out as a singles' group, but that category has faded.)

Margaret's Group

May 5: *A Fine Balance*, Rohinton Mistry

June 2: *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Salman Rushdie

July 7: *Children of the Alley*, Naguib Mahfouz

August 4: *Reef*, Romesh Gunsekera

Eve's Group

April 18: *To The Wedding*, John Berger

May 30: *Dancing After Hours*, Andre Dubus

June 27: *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, Carlos Fuentes

August 1: *Hotel Pastis*, Peter Mayle

Christopher Fair
Magician
Magic with a Flair!
(801) 265-2244

TIME



HILLARY VS. LIDDY

Who would be the better First Lady?

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

FLOOR: 04
COPY 1 OF 1

Building Lives In Montana

The power of geography
in a big, roistering novel

MONTANA NOVELIST IVAN DOIG sets himself a challenge in his big, roistering new novel, *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23). His subject—not just the book's setting but also the presence that rules its composition—is a monstrous, chancy construction project in the mid-1930s, the huge Fort Peck dam across the Missouri River in Montana bottomland.

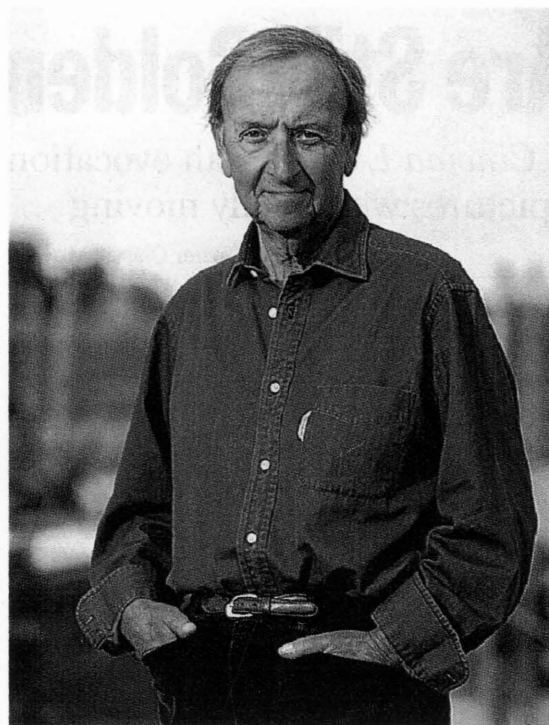
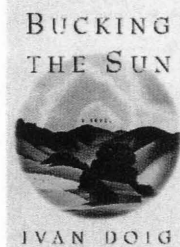
To save his novel from the curse of what used to be called socialist realism, Doig must come up with characters large enough to symbolize the unruly river and the vast dam in combat as construction proceeds, but sufficiently strong and gritty

in their own right so that they can't be yawned away as costumed actors posing in front of a diorama.

He finds effective protagonists in the Duff clan, Scottish immigrants and hard-scrabble farmers losing their battle with drought and grasshoppers in the river valley until the dam project lurches into motion. Owen, the bookish eldest son, is an engineer. His twin brothers Neil, a truck driver, and Bruce, a diver, work in the river's murk. Father Hugh is a reluctant laborer and enthusiastic boozier, and Uncle Darius, a union organizer on the run. The younger men marry and risk lives and livers as they watch the river slowly pool up behind the growing dam.

The reader is pulled into their story by a puzzle the author has set: What two Duffs—man and woman, naked, married but not to each other—are extracted drowned from a submerged truck as the construction winds down? This is skillful manipulation, the novelist as conjurer ensuring that the reader's first thought is of human beings, not power shovels and spillways. The device works beautifully, and so does Doig's roguish novel. Though not well enough—perhaps never that well, if your characters wear jeans—for its author to escape the tag “regional.”

—By John Skow



STEVE LISS FOR TIME

MAKING A STATEMENT: Moore plays tricks with the notion of poetic justice

ed statement identifying the intended victim as “Pierre Brossard, former Chief of the Second Section of the Marseilles region of the Milice, condemned to death in absentia by French courts, in 1944 and again in 1946.” The statement goes on to say that Brossard was charged with the massacre of 14 Jews on June 15, 1945. The document, which the old man realizes was to be pinned on his body, concludes, “The case is closed.”

Not true, of course, because the old man—who is indeed Brossard, although he has called himself Pouliot for many years—survives. But who, in 1989, still wants to punish him for his past by killing him? Brossard assumes that Jewish money is behind this attempt on his life. That belief, a measure of his reflexive anti-Semitism, will have fatal consequences.

The Statement may have a classic thriller's plot—a character on the run, private power plays behind public façades—but it unfolds in a moral universe infinitely more complex and

To Avenge or to Forget the Past?

A provocative thriller is set in a
complex moral universe

GIVEN A SCENE IN WHICH AN ASSASSIN stalks a potential victim, most readers will, in the absence of other evidence, instinctively root for the quarry. In the opening pages of his new novel, *The Statement* (Dutton; 250 pages; \$22.95), Brian Moore provides just such a scene: in a village in the south of France an old man is being tailed by a hired killer. The murder, the assassin decides, will take place when his target drives back to the monastery where he has been staying. Feigning engine trouble along the route, he waits for the old man to stop, then approaches as if to ask for a lift, pulls out a pistol and is fatally shot twice in the chest by the man he planned to kill.

This sort of narrative turnaround usually provides the pleasure of surprise, the sense that poetic justice has foiled a malevolent act. Moore quickly cuts off such easy certainties. He shows the old man examining the possessions of his would-be murderer. They include a print-

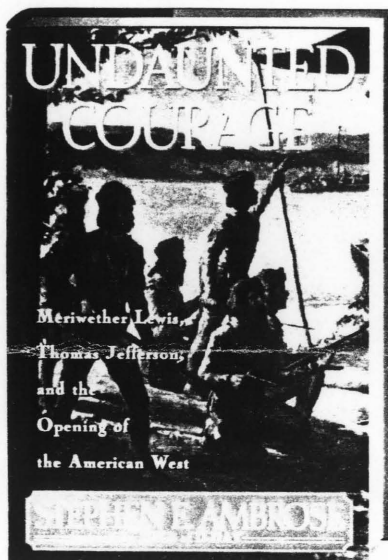
compromised than the white hats vs. the black hats so typical of the genre. The novel asks not only who is trying to murder Brossard but also why Brossard has been able to remain in France for 44 years, receiving asylum from various Roman Catholic monasteries, and a 1971 presidential pardon for the crimes he committed during the German occupation and the Vichy regime.

“It is hard to pass judgment on what people did back then,” says a French army colonel who is also looking to bring Brossard to justice. This remark is the crux of the novel. Does a time come when people must be forgiven for doing what they mistakenly believed was right or unavoidable? Or should evil never be forgiven or forgotten? By challenging the reader to confront these questions, *The Statement* is ultimately unforgettable. —By Paul Gray



THE 1997 MOUNTAINS & PLAINS BOOKSELLERS
ASSOCIATION REGIONAL AWARDS

Simon & Schuster congratulates



STEPHEN E. AMBROSE

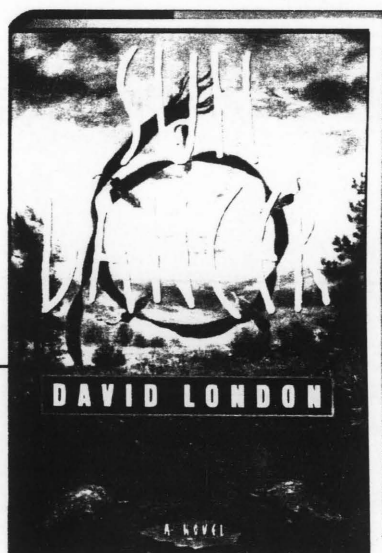
Undaunted Courage

WINNER—
NONFICTION

DAVID LONDON

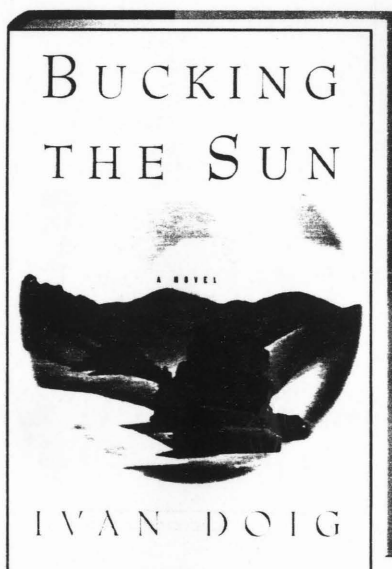
Sundancer

WINNER—FICTION



IVAN DOIG

WINNER—SPIRIT OF
THE WEST LITERARY
ACHIEVEMENT



SIMON & SCHUSTER

A VIACOM COMPANY

<http://www.SimonSays.com>



Santa Fe New Mexican

(3/9)

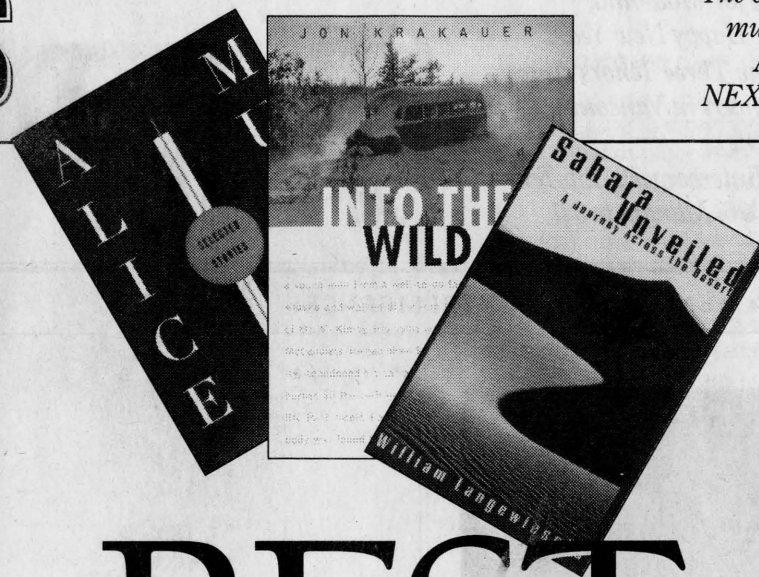
In the news

Irish novelist Roddy Doyle will appear in a benefit for Seattle Arts & Lectures' Writers in the Schools program, 7:30 p.m., Jan. 15 at the First United Methodist Church (\$5; 624-6600).

BOOKS**'Alias Grace'**

The enigma of a 19th-century murder haunts Margaret Atwood's new novel.
NEXT SUNDAY in BOOKS

GETTING A READ ON THE YEAR'S BEST



'96 NW BEST SELLERS

Bestselling books in the Pacific Northwest for 1996, as reported by Pacific Pipeline, a Kent-based wholesale distributor.

Hardcover fiction

1. "Primary Colors" Anonymous
2. "Bucking the Sun" Ivan Doig
3. "Executive Orders" Tom Clancy
4. "The Tenth Insight" James Redfield
5. "Crown of Swords" Robert Jordan
6. "Name Withheld" J.A. Jance
7. "The Runaway Jury" John Grisham
8. "Behind the Lines" W.E.B. Griffin
9. "The Horse Whisperer" Nicholas Evans
10. "The Fallen Man" Tony Hillerman
11. "The Web" Jonathan Kellerman
12. "The Deep End"

DONN FRY

Seattle Times book editor



As someone who normally gravitates toward literary fiction, I was surprised to discover that my most memorable reading experiences of

1996 were mostly works of nonfiction.

Looking back over my reading list for the year, it became clear that memoirs and small-scale histories are the books that charged my imagination. There were some fine works of fiction in 1996, of course, but the best of those apparently were read by other Seattle Times reviewers: Alice Munro's "Selected Stories," for instance, or David Foster Wallace's "Infinite Jest" and Graham Swift's Booker Prize-winning "Last Orders."

In fact, it was not an outstanding year for quality literature of any genre: The editors of The New York Times Book Review found only eight books they could agree on for their annual "Editors' Choice" feature.

While no single work this year knocked me out, in retrospect I'm struck by the liveliness and range found in close, narrow-focus exami-

year there was Tobias Wolff's satisfying story collection, "The Night in Question" (Knopf).

So what were the most memorable books of 1996? Those mentioned above, of course, as well as the other titles below, which I've selected on the basis of my own reading or the opinions of Seattle Times reviewers.

This is not a "Top 10" list; rather, these are books released in 1996 that will repay your attention.

Fiction

"Burning Your Boats: The Collected Stories of Angela Carter," by Angela Carter (Henry Holt). This satisfying, often surreal collection of the short work of the British writer who died of lung cancer in 1992 "will appeal to anyone enamored of the gothic and macabre, as well as anyone enticed by an exquisitely ribald, masterfully pyrotechnic prose style."

"Derby Dugan's Depression Funnies," by Tom De Haven (Henry Holt/Metropolitan). In 1936, a hack novelist and ghost-writer for a hugely popular comic strip wanders an exciting New York City filled with gangsters, bordellos and a woman with the most beautiful smile in the world. Yet looking back 30 years later, Al Bready finds "undercurrents of failed ambition, longing and loss" in this "rare combination of humor and pathos."

story master shows her "astonishing ability to capture moods and impulses for which no easy formulas exist."

"Last Orders," by Graham Swift (Knopf). This year's winner of Britain's prestigious Booker Prize traces four men's odyssey to scatter the ashes of a departed friend, a darkly comic journey "which may leave even the most cynical readers in tears but resplendent in their commitment to the joys and catastrophes we call life."

"My Other Life," by Paul Theroux (Houghton Mifflin). The prolific travel writer and novelist is up to his old tricks: mixing his own peripatetic life with liberal doses of imagination to produce "that most exotic of all journeys, an excursion into the realm Theroux calls 'what if?'" The result: "a self-portrait painted in a hall of mirrors."

"In the Beauty of the Lilies," by John Updike (Knopf). This acute observer of life and love among the American middle class examines the generational fallout from a Presbyterian pastor's loss of faith in "a fast, gripping novel... a literary masterwork."

"Infinite Jest," by David Foster Wallace (Little, Brown). This 1,079-page novel is "that rare literary feat

California childhood to the European battlefields of World War II, this longtime Rutgers English professor and author engagingly recounts his development of "the crusty shell of a cantankerous skeptic, committed to exposing the truth in the face of dumb insolence from a self-serving officialdom."

"Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust," by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (Knopf). This provocative study by a young Harvard professor raised cries of protest in Germany because of his powerful, persuasive conclusion that "the driving force of the Holocaust was the universal and extraordinarily virulent anti-Semitism at every level of German society."

"The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War," by Paul Hendrickson (Knopf). This National Book Award finalist by a Washington Post features writer is a searching examination of five lives irrevocably altered — or ended — by a disastrous war promoted too long by a Defense secretary who privately saw its futility.

"Sahara Unveiled: A Journey Across the Desert," by William Langewiesche (Pantheon). This mesmerizing journey through the vastness of (mostly) Algeria rivals "the best of Paul Bowles' North African writings with its hypnotic yet unsentimental prose and its



- Mitchard
13. "The Celestine Prophecy"
James Redfield
 14. "How Stella Got Her Groove Back"
Terry McMillan
 15. "Cause of Death"
Patricia Cornwell

Hardcover nonfiction

1. "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus"
John Gray
2. "The Zone"
Barry Sears with Bill Lawren
3. "Bad As I Wanna Be"
Dennis Rodman with Tim Keown
4. "The Dilbert Principle"
Scott Adams
5. "Rush Limbaugh Is a Big, Fat Idiot"
Al Franken
6. "The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success"
Deepak Chopra
7. "In Contempt"
Christopher Darden with Jess Walter
8. "How Could You Do That?"
Dr. Laura Schlessinger
9. "Midnight in the Garden of Good & Evil"
John Berendt
10. "The Way of the Wizard"
Deepak Chopra
11. "Emotional Intelligence"
Daniel Goleman
12. "Into the Wild"
Jon Krakauer
13. "Miss America"
Howard Stern
14. "Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West"
Stephen E. Ambrose
15. "The Road Ahead"
Bill Gates

through memory or historical investigation.

Both Jonathan Raban's **"Bad Land: An American Romance"** (Pantheon), which is a lyrical exploration of failed Montana homesteading earlier in this century, and Mary Gordon's **"The Shadow Man: A Daughter's Search for Her Father"** (Random House), which just as tellingly explores the mystery of her own father, fall into this category.

So, too, are such strikingly different works as **"Into the Wild"** (Villard), Seattle writer Jon Krakauer's wrenching portrait of the final two years in the life of a charismatic young idealist who marched unprepared into the Alaskan wilderness, and Calvin Trillin's **"Messages from My Father"** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), a subtle, funny and deceptively profound reminiscence of his late father, Kansas City grocer Abe Trillin.

Into this mix, I would even insert Seattle writer David Shields' iconoclastic and unclassifiable **"Remote"** (Knopf), a quirky and irreverent meditation on the cluttered surface of late 20th-century American life.

My fiction favorites? Well, at the beginning of 1996, there was **"The Moor's Last Sigh"** (Pantheon), Salman Rushdie's absorbing generational saga of a most singular Indian family, while at the end of the

Doig (Simon & Schuster). The Seattle novelist returns once again to his native Montana for a lively, New Deal-era chronicle set against the building of the Fort Peck Dam, "powerfully rendering life and death in one family, and through them the people and places of the American West in the 1930s."

"The Woman Who Walked Through Doors," by Roddy Doyle (Viking). The Booker Prize-winning Irish author of "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha" has penned a deep examination of an alcoholic Dublin housewife's escape from domestic abuse, written so sensitively that "we understand why she stays in this marriage as much as why she finally ends it in her own extremely ironic way."

"The Tailor of Panama," by John le Carré (Knopf). The master of international intrigue keeps finding new possibilities for fiction. This tale involves the lively, often humorous exploits of Harry Pendel, tailor to the diplomatic power brokers in Panama City who is soon out of his depth in a game of espionage.

"Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer," by Steven Millhauser (Crown). This fantastical National Book Award finalist, about a 19th-century New York hotel entrepreneur whose projects grow ever more surreal, is a haunting study of how the inventive mind harbors desires "to overthrow itself, to smash itself to bits and burst into new forms."

"Selected Stories," by Alice Munro (Knopf). This rich overview of 28 stories by the Canadian short-

comic epic on a par with such great, sprawling novels of the 20th century as 'Ulysses,' 'The Recognitions' and 'Gravity's Rainbow'."

Nonfiction

"Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West," by Stephen E. Ambrose (Simon & Schuster). This absorbing chronicle by an eminent historian is a fascinating study of the man who successfully led the most arduous journey into the unknown in American history, only to succumb afterward to politics and his own personal demons.

"Great Books," by David Denby (Simon & Schuster). Nearly 30 years after first taking Columbia University's two core-curriculum courses in Western literature and philosophy, this 48-year-old film critic re-enrolled, casting "a wondering eye on the soul-enriching complexity and radicalness of the Great Books," along the way writing a "great book" of his own.

"Jesse: The Life and Pilgrimage of Jesse Jackson," by Marshall Frady (Random House). An award-winning political journalist offers a "rigorously honest" profile of the quicksilver African-American leader and social activist who rose from humble beginnings to make bold runs at the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and, especially, 1988.

"Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic," by Paul Fussell (Little, Brown). Moving from his leisurely

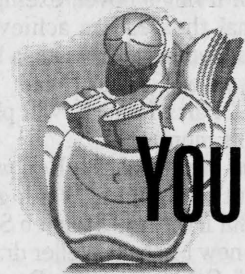
drama of desolation and distance that is the Sahara Desert."

"Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War," by Peter Maass (Knopf). Within the growing body of literature on the ethnic conflict and genocide in the former Yugoslavia, nothing has been written with "such compassion and conviction" as this work by a Washington Post correspondent who "cuts through all the Serbian exculpations, firmly and convincingly placing the blame for this heinous war in their hands."

"Angela's Ashes: A Memoir," by Frank McCourt (Scribner). The most extravagantly praised memoir of 1996 — and of many other years as well — is this first book by a retired 66-year-old New York high-school writing teacher, who

recalls how his hard-luck immigrant parents left the land of his own birth and returned to the grinding poverty of their native Ireland, an experience whose scars still dance vividly in his memory.

"The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinction," by David Quammen (Scribner). Traveling to some of the world's most remote ecosystems, this Montana-based natural-history writer tries to understand the forces propelling the current rush of extinctions, and in the process he has produced a sobering "masterpiece of science journalism."



YOUNG READERS

BY KARI WERGELAND
Special to The Seattle Times

As the curtain falls on 1996, I've been mulling over the children's books that I reviewed in this monthly column over the year — hoping I would see some way to boil them down into a list of my 10 favorites.

It's an impossible task. Give 10 children's librarians the same assignment, and you would probably end up with 10

entirely different lists. The biggest reason for this is volume: Children's book publishers may be trimming the fat, but they are still cranking out lots of titles.

How is one supposed to distill 5,000 books into 10?

And, of course, personal experience colors every reviewer's reaction. I loved Karen Cushman's **"The Ballad of Lucy Whipple,"** which is set in the Sierra Nevadas

during the California Gold Rush. Yet I'm well aware that it resonated with me partly because my great-grandfather once worked as a miner in the same breathtaking country where Lucy's family struggles to survive.

Besides, it's not always the starred books or award-winners — or even the popular series like Scholastic's "The Adventures of the Bailey Hill School Kids" — that will grab a child's attention. Any librarian knows it isn't always possible to predict which book will lure a particular child into the world of reading.

And adults' judgment of wonderful literature for kids sometimes speaks more to those who have long since fin-

ished growing up than to their pint-sized friends. Every year I notice more children's books that actually appeal to adults, and just last month, the Children's Book Council announced "Not Just for Children Anymore!", a program whose goal is to encourage adults to add children's books to their reading lists.

While I applaud anything that will widen the audience for the fine work being done by children's authors — who rack up the least prestige in the literary world — I hope that publishers do not lose sight of kids' tastes as they try to please grownups.

So here are my 10 favorite children's books of 1996. Hopefully these titles are kid-

friendly, despite any other personal biases I might harbor:

Destined to be a classic is **"My Very First Mother Goose"** (Candlewick), edited by Iona Opie and illustrated by Rosemary Wells. Betsy Byars scores an ace with **"My Brother, Ant"** (Viking) in the beginning reader category. **"Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse"** (Greenwillow), by Kevin Henkes, will grace most other lists of notable books for 1996.

Julius Lester and Jerry Pinkney breathe new life into the controversial "Little Black Sambo" story with **"Sam and the Tigers"** (Dial). **"When Birds Could Talk & Bats Could Sing"** (Blue Sky Press), by Virginia Hamilton and illustrated by Barry

Moser, is a collection of sassy African-American tales.

Older children will enjoy the pirates in **"Tingleberries, Tuckertubs and Telephones"** (Viking), by Margaret Mahy. **"Falling Up"** (HarperCollins), by Shel Silverstein, is a collection of the author's signature poems. Phyllis Reynolds Naylor continues the story of the dog Shiloh in **"Shiloh Season"** (Atheneum).

A determined heroine turns her nose up at California in **"The Ballad of Lucy Whipple"** (Clarion), by Karen Cushman. And finally, Donna Jo Napoli depicts a mother's betrayal in **"Ze"** (Dutton), a novel length version of the Rapunzel story.

LIVELY ARTS

Sunday, May 19, 1996

SECTION E

THE DENVER POST

BEST SELLERS LOCAL

Here are the area's best-selling books, according to information from the Tattered Cover, the Boulder Book Store, Barnes & Noble in Greenwood Village, Media Play downtown and the Chinook Bookshop, Colorado Springs.

FICTION

1. **The Tenth Insight**, by James Redfield. (Warner, \$19.95.)
2. **The Celestine Prophecy**, by James Redfield. (Warner, \$17.95.)
3. **How Stella Got Her Groove Back**, by Terry McMillan. (Viking, \$23.95.)
4. **Primary Colors**, by Anonymous. (Random House, \$24.)
5. **Bucking the Sun**, by Ivan Doig. (Simon & Schuster, \$23.)
6. **The Horse Whisperer**, by Nicholas Evans. (Delacorte, \$23.95.)

ans. (Delacorte, \$23.95.)

7. **Moonlight Becomes You**, by Mary Higgins Clark. (Simon & Schuster, \$24.)

8. **All the Places You'll Go**, by Dr. Seuss. (Random House, \$16.)

9. **Malice**, by Danielle Steel. (Delacorte, \$24.95.)

10. **The Debt to Pleasure**, by John Lanchester. (Holt, \$20.)

NONFICTION

1. **Simple Abundance**, by Sarah Ban Breathnach. (Warner, \$17.95.)

2. **Undaunted Courage**, by Stephen E. Ambrose. (Simon & Schuster, \$27.50.)

3. **The Dilbert Principle**, by Scott Adams. (HarperCollins, \$18.)

4. **At Your Own Risk**, by Tom and Jean Sutherland. (Fulcrum, \$27.95.)

5. **Another Lousy Day in Paradise**, by John Gierach. (Simon & Schuster, \$22.)

6. **Clicking**, by Faith Popcorn. (HarperCollins, \$26.)

7. **Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus**, by John Gray. (HarperCollins, \$20.)

8. **The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success**, by Deepak Chopra. (New World Library, \$12.95.)

9. **Emotional Intelligence**, by Daniel Goleman. (Bantam, \$23.95.)

10. **Shelter of Each Other**, by Mary Pipher. (Putnam, \$24.95.)

FICTION PAPERBACK

1. **The Green Mile: The Mouse on the Mile**, by Stephen King. (Signet, \$2.99.)

2. **Snow Falling on Cedars**, by David Guterson. (Vintage, \$12.)

3. **Op Center III**, by Tom Clancy. (Berkley, \$6.99.)

4. **Ladder of Years**, by Anne Tyler. (Ballantine, \$12.)

5. **Moo**, by Jane Smiley. (Random House, \$12.)

NONFICTION PAPERBACK

1. **Reviving Ophelia**, by Mary Pipher. (Ballantine, \$12.50.)

2. **A Third Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul**, by Jack Canfield. (Health Communications, \$16.95.)

3. **Chicken Soup for the Soul**, by Jack

7-18-'96

USA TODAY



By Carol M. Doig

Ivan Doig: A Montana clan clashes in his eloquent novel 'Bucking the Sun.'

In 'Sun,' traveling a family's dark and rocky terrain

Bucking the Sun
By Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster
409 pp., \$23

By Angela Herrin
USA TODAY

In the spring of 1938, a pickup truck is pulled from the Missouri River, near Montana's mammoth Fort Peck earthen dam project. The bodies of a man and woman are inside, their clothes floating beside them.

Is this a married couple, the sheriff asks the crowd of dam workers, and was this murder or an accident? Well, their last name is Duff and

they're married all right, an embarrassed worker finally says — just not to each other.

The sheriff will spend the next 50 years pondering this riddle, trying to unravel just how he and this couple arrived at the riverbank that day. But the story really belongs to the

Book Review

Duffs, a rough, raucous family struggling with the cross-currents of secrets and grudges swirling around them.

This is familiar territory for Ivan Doig: the misunderstandings and tragedies that plague generations of the same family, that divide brothers and estrange lovers.

In earlier books, like *Dancing at*

the Rascal Fair and *English Creek*, these tales were set in the Montana of the past as ranchers struggled to hold onto homesteads and their families in the raw, unsettled West. They fight floods, blizzards and locusts.

More importantly, they fight each other.

This time, it is government and technology in the form of the unrelenting advance of the Army Corps of Engineers that threatens the family. In a New Deal program worked out in Washington, the government takes the Duffs' bottomland farm so a huge earthen dam can be built across the Missouri.

The Duffs all find work at the dam, but it's an uneasy alliance. Oldest son Owen, who left the farm for

college, is a head engineer on the project, while his father and two younger brothers find jobs as laborers.

The family resentments don't prove any easier to tame than the river itself. Hugh Duff can't relinquish his role as powerful patriarch of the family; his wife can't forgive his harsh carelessness. As each son marries, new tensions emerge over the limits of love and control.

The answer to the riddle — which two members of the Duff family end up in that submerged truck in the Missouri River? — doesn't show up until the last page of the book. But in such an epic tale, written in such a geography of love and pain, there's little temptation to skip pages.

BUCKING
THE SUN



IVAN DOIG

BOOKS

just over a century ago may well enjoy pursuing **Our Landlady**, a collection of newspaper columns about a small town in the newly admitted state of South Dakota, by L. Frank Baum, who would later give the world the unforgettable tale of Dorothy's adventures in the land of Oz. Baum, a young man from New York who followed Horace Greeley's advice about going West, Baum spent three years (1888-1891) in Aberdeen, S.D., where he contributed a humorous, mildly satirical column to the Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer.

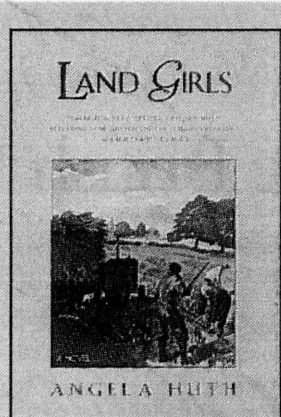
Baum's column featured the fictitious character "Mrs. Bilkins," a lively, opinionated, penny-pinching woman who runs a boarding house and cuts every corner she can when it comes to feeding her sometimes hard-up paying customers.

Mrs. Bilkin's decided opinions on a variety of subjects, from droughts, crop failures, and economic fluctuations to suffrage, Prohibition, and politics, exhibit a distinctive blend of naiveté, shrewdness, cynicism, and dogged optimism.

Although these journalistic vignettes scarcely rise to the artistic and imaginative heights of his Oz books, they constitute a colorful sampling of Americana and are expertly edited and annotated by Nancy Tystad Koupal in an attractive, illustrated volume.

The 28 stories selected by editor John Sutherland for **The Oxford Book of English Love Stories**, were chosen in large part for the ways in which they confound conventional expectations. They are, indeed, a far cry from the world of Harlequin romances.

In these love stories, love does not always conquer all, and even when it does, the result is not always the proverbial happy ending. Many of these stories are surprisingly unsentimental and, perhaps even more surprisingly, most are quite unerotic.

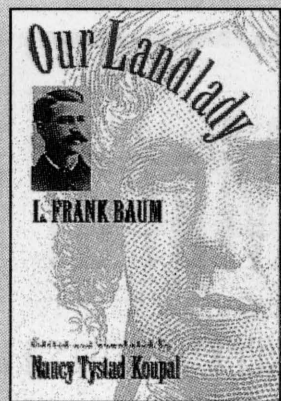


LAND GIRLS
By Angela Huth
St. Martin's Press/ A
Thomas Dunne Book
378 pp., \$23.95 By L.

A FINE BALANCE
By Rohinton Mistry
Alfred A. Knopf
640 pp., \$26

**THE OXFORD BOOK OF
ENGLISH LOVE STORIES**
Edited by John
Sutherland
Oxford University
Press
452 pp., \$25

OUR LANDLADY
Frank Baum
University of Nebraska
Press
285 pp., \$35



Readers who are prepared to forgo the predictable will find stories that brilliantly illuminate many kinds of love: foolish, wise, casual, caring, obsessive, deluded, self-sacrificing, and selfish. Beginning in the late 17th century with a rather colorless tale by the colorful Aphra Behn, commonly credited as the first Englishwoman to make her living by the pen, the collection skips over the 18th century to proceed chronologically into the 19th and 20th centuries. (Irritatingly, the editor fails to provide the actual dates of the stories' composition or publication, perhaps out of a mistaken belief that to do so invites readers to consider them mere "period pieces.")

Sutherland has done an unusually fine job of finding interesting and relatively unfamiliar works by very famous authors, including Mary Shelly, Anthony Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, Somerset Maugham, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Katherine Mansfield, and Elizabeth Bowen.

It probably says more about the temperament of this particular editor than it does about the English love story in general that most of these stories end unhappily: with noble self-renunciation at best, despair and ruin at worst, and a great deal of betrayal and disillusionment in between.

But there are also shafts of sweetness and light. From Thackeray's daughter, Anne Ritchie, there's a delicate story of devotion narrated by a man unembittered by his disappointment; from Phyllis Bentley, a crisply written account of malice that ends up outsmarting itself.

Although this anthology of love stories may not be a collection to warm the hearts of true romantics, it brings together a fascinating and enlightening variety of perspectives on the harsher realities that may lie in wait for unsuspecting lovers.

■ Merle Rubin regularly reviews books for the Monitor.

Historical Fiction With Contemporary Montana Edge

Doig delivers what his readers expect

By Brad Knickerbocker

IF there is any potential problem with really enjoying a contemporary writer — relishing the thought of the next book — it's that the new work will simply replot safe ground, be too predictable in style and subject matter. Or, alternatively, that there will have been a jarring departure in approach.

With Ivan Doig's latest novel, fans need not worry. All the steel and sweetness, the granite and light, the humor and sharp dialogue, in Doig's writing are here with new flair and depth. The grit and warmth is pure Doig, only more so.

"Bucking the Sun," Doig's fifth novel (he has written three non-fiction books as well), is set in his home state of Montana during the Great Depression of the mid-1930s. Thanks to the Roosevelt administration, Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River is to be a massive public-works project that will employ thousands, including some whose homesteads will be inundated by the lake it creates.

The tale centers on the Duff family. Patriarch Hugh and his wife, Meg, Scottish immigrants who are just barely making it on land tougher than they are; their elder son, Owen, an engineer and "fillmaster" on what will be one of the largest earthen dams ever built; twin younger brothers, Neil and Bruce; and Hugh's brother Darius, a militant Marxist shipyard worker who shows up running from a violent past in Scotland carrying political and personal grudges.

Quite soon, all the Duff men are married — to women (two of them sisters) just as tough-minded, yet vulnerable, as the Duffs are. We know from the start that a man and a woman from two different couples will end up naked and dead in a truck that has rolled off the dam.

Doig has the perfect background for this kind of writing. He grew up on Montana ranches before going off to get a doctorate in history. His factual recounting of the Fort Peck Dam project is full of fascinating historical tidbits. The scenes where FDR himself came to see the project and speak to the awed assembly gives a gritty newsreel quality to events.

In fact, I kept wishing that photographs from that time had been included.

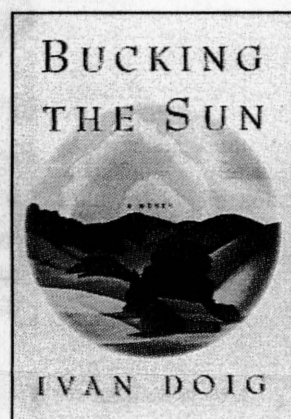
The promise of the era is fully felt, as well as the growing concern about events in Europe as the shadow of fascism falls. Some of the characters are politically radical to the point of being anarchic — a chilling precursor to the militias and "freemen" found in that part of the country today.

If there is one weakness in "Bucking the Sun," it's that the surreptitious affair between two of the Duffs is not fully developed — not developed at all, in fact. From all we're told, it could just as easily have been any two others, and there's plenty to work with here without it, which leaves one wondering why it's there in the first place.

But this is a relatively minor quibble. Ivan Doig is a terrific writer and a great storyteller with a healthy outlook as indicated in his dedication: "To novelists who deliver the eloquence of the edge of the world rather than stammers from the psychiatrist's bin."

I'm looking forward to his next work, whatever it may be.

■ Brad Knickerbocker is a Monitor correspondent who covers environmental issues from Ashland, Ore.



BUCKING THE SUN
By Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster,
412 pp., \$23

A Jury of One's Peers Goes Up in Smoke

By Lawrence J. Goodrich

JOHAN GRISHAM'S latest legal thriller, "The Runaway Jury," has it all: mystery, legal maneuvering, behind-the-scenes views of a trial, jury tampering, and plenty of other skullduggery.

Taking a page from today's headlines, Grisham takes us to Biloxi, on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, and the latest tobacco trial. The combatants/conspirators/protagonists are many, but most of the action centers around two men, Rankin Fitch and Nicholas Easter.

Fitch runs the tobacco companies' secret legal fund. He's a bully who hires the lawyers, jury consultants, and investigators, and who fixes the juries. His clients are scared silly of him, but

they put up with him because Big Tobacco hasn't lost a case since he's been in charge.

The stakes are tremendous for plaintiff and defendant alike. If the jury finds that cigarette smoking killed Jacob Wood, and that he couldn't quit because the

THE RUNAWAY JURY
By John Grisham
Doubleday, 401 pp., \$26.95

tobacco companies got him hooked as a child and then spiked their cigarettes with more nicotine to keep him hooked, the coalition of trial lawyers financing the case expects to cash in big in future lawsuits. The tobacco companies need to head that off. Both sides are ready to

play hardball — complete with spitballs and beanballs.

This is no civics-textbook trial. As the action unfolds, both sides are trying to fix the jury, but that panel seems to have a mind of its own. Before long it's going on strike and dictating terms to the judge. It's a runaway jury.

As usual, Grisham draws a finely detailed, realistic picture of the action and the characters. The judge, the lawyers on both sides, the witnesses, even the court officers are painted as real human beings with real foibles. And true to Grisham's style, just when you think you know the ending, you suddenly find out that you don't.

■ Lawrence J. Goodrich is a Monitor editorial writer.

This Week

The Bozeman Daily Chronicle June 28 - July 4

BUCKING THE SUN

A NOVEL

IVAN DOIG

Ivan Doig finds material for his books in Montana/**page 14**

Movies

'Hunchback' thrilling
animated tale complete
with happy ending.

Page 2

Music

Big Sky Arts Festival
begins July 6 with
Kathy Mattea concert.

Page 5

Art

'The Chair is Art'
exhibit opens at Beall
Park July 5, 7-9 p.m.

Page 6

Dance

Local dancers win at
Spotlight Dance Cup
competition Salt Lake.

Page 8

'Bucking the Sun'

Ivan Doig's latest novel chronicles the building of Fort Peck Dam

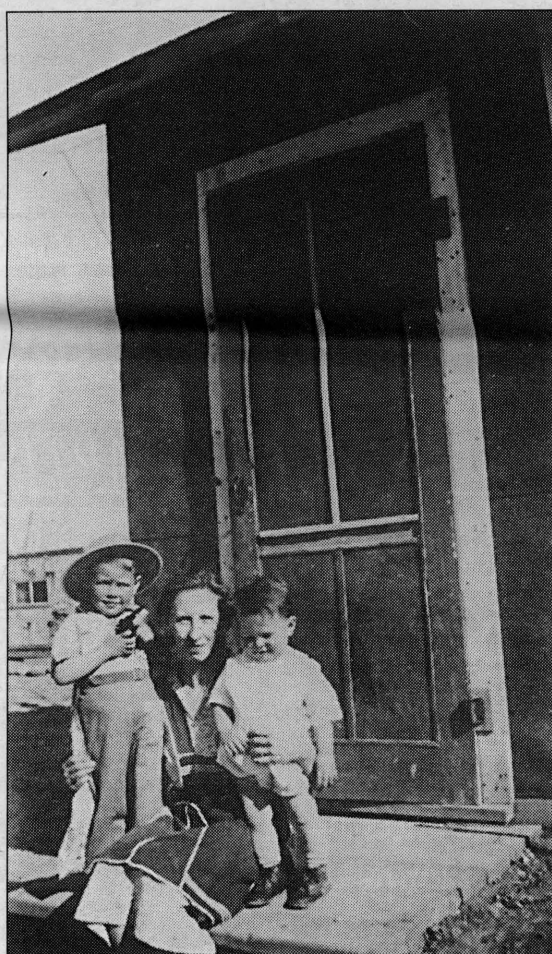


Photo courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
Wheeler was one of several boom towns that sprung up as 10,500 people found jobs helping the build the dam. The towns were described as rough and wild in Doig's novel.

Amid the poverty that plagued Montana during the Depression years, Ivan Doig finds a wealth of treasure.

The riches he brings to us in his newest novel, "Bucking the Sun," are of the Montanans who labored in an epic struggle — building what was the largest earth dam in the world. Chick Siderius' job in 1934 was to tell the farmers along 125 miles of the Missouri River they had to sell their land to the federal government for the dam.

"Siderius always kept to the same spiel, had it down slick by now: 'Here on official business ... kind of a hard thing, I know, but there's no getting around it ... at least make you a fair offer.' Saying it the same helped him, whether or not it did any good for these bottom land honyockers. ...

"Don't know if you'd've heard yet, but they're going to be putting up a big dam over by Glasgow. ...

"This, this'll be under the lake."

The dam forming Fort Peck Reservoir was built in desolate country. But it made this land in northeast Montana a center of activity.

"The hiring in Glasgow that morning had a carnival spirit to it. Men milled into lines, expectant, not wanting to hope too much but buoyant with the prospect of a paying job, a steady half-dollar-an-hour after the cashless bafflement the Depression had brought."

Doig tells us of the construction through the lives of scrappy Scottish immigrants — the Duff family.

"I made them up entirely to fit a situation I wanted to explore in fiction," he said in a telephone interview last week from his Seattle home.

The Duffs are a passionate family, with brothers Hugh and Darius both in love with the same woman, Meg, who married Hugh. Their twins, Neil and Bruce, find wives amid whirlwind romances.

Owen Duff, the oldest son of Hugh and Meg,

is a hotshot engineer and mirrors the intensity of the dam's record-breaking construction.

"His father, Hugh Duff, practically invented himself out of actuality," Doig said. "I didn't have to research very far or listen to very many people in the interviews and oral histories to learn that people had been driven out of the pretty prosperous alfalfa seed farming there in the valley bottom."

The book took three years to write plus afternoons he devoted to it while writing "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana" and "Heart Earth," said Doig, 57. Research alone took an additional year. He has published six books since "This House of Sky," which won him acclaim in 1978.

He is pleased with "Bucking the Sun."

"In readers' terms, what has really pleased me is it didn't become a manual on building a dam," Doig said. "People have responded to the characters and the story."

Critics also liked what they read.

The New York Times wrote, "A historian and journalist by training, he has nonetheless striven for years to bear witness to Montana history in fiction, and to become if not the Homer at least the Virgil of generations of Scots who migrated to northwestern Montana ..."

The Washington Post was impressed. "It's one of those books that takes you over as you read it, invading your daydreams, lodging its cadence in your brain, summoning you back to the pages."

"Doig's great achievement is to string his compelling narrative along these connections between outer and inner worlds, the silent stirrings of the human heart and the swelling moments of a river, both imperceptible until it is almost too late," a reviewer wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Doig will be in Bozeman Friday, June 28, at Country Bookshelf from 7:30 to 9 p.m. for a reading and to sign autographs.

He's already working on his next novel, but hasn't yet given it a name. It will be a story of baby boomers in coastal Alaska and Seattle

Author Ivan Doig speaks on interviews and re-

turning to the Rocky aging parents.

"They face question changed. Should they said.

Doig, who grew up and Dupuyer, has no p from Seattle, where he years, have lived since

Despite having mountains and prairie, in Montana remain we ries.

"The stuff that we a way people talk, the w do things. That is alwa has," he said. "Really t me."

Story by **Al Knauber** of the Chronicle



Photo courtesy of Carol M. Doig.

Author Ivan Doig spent more than three years writing "Bucking the Sun," the saga of construction of the dam that created the Fort Peck Reservoir. He spent another year on interviews and research. He is shown at the spillway of dam.

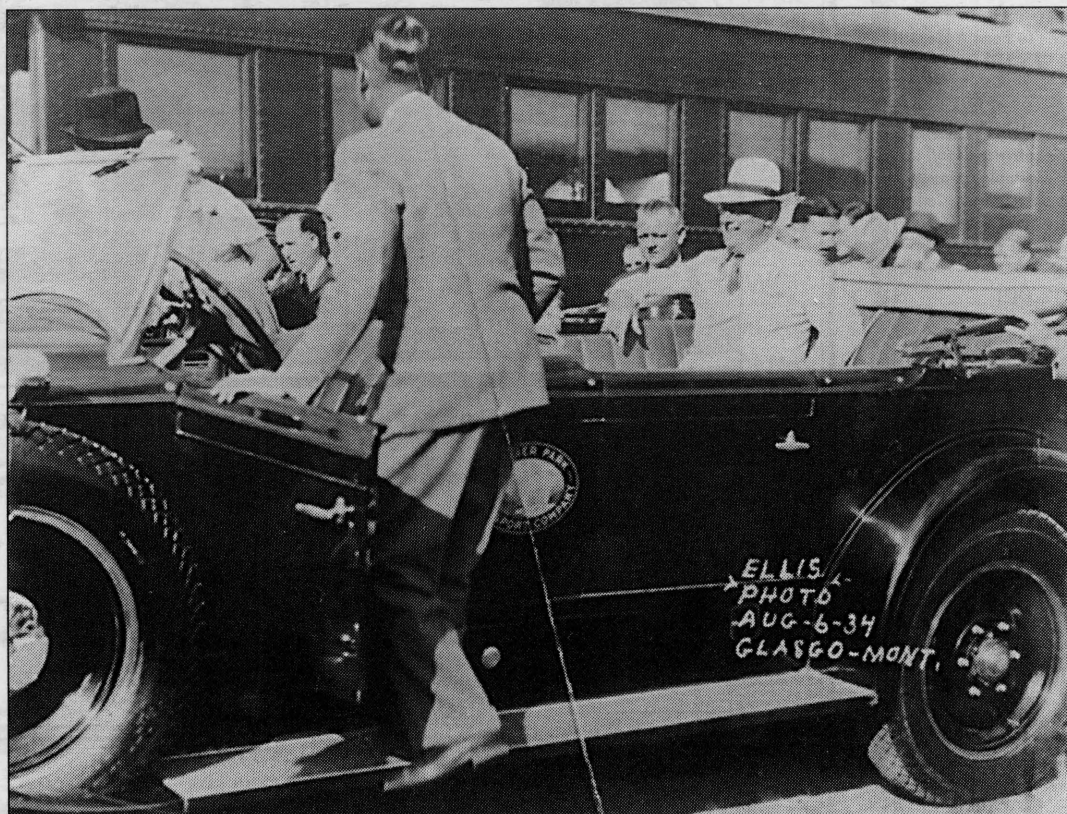
returning to the Rocky Mountains to care for aging parents.

"They face questions how things have changed. Should they stay, dare they stay?" he said.

Doig, who grew up in White Sulphur Springs and Dupuyer, has no plans to return to Montana from Seattle, where he and Carol, married for 31 years, have lived since they were newlyweds.

Despite having moved from this landscape of mountains and prairie, pine and sage, his roots in Montana remain well nourished by his memories.

"The stuff that we absorb as we grow up, the way people talk, the way they look, the way they do things. That is always the best stuff a writer has," he said. "Really that's what Montana is for me."



President Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Glasgow, the nearest town to the construction of the dam. It was one of the many federal projects in the 1930s aimed at re-starting the economy left stalled by the Depression.

Photo courtesy of the Montana Historical Society.

Books

Author paints Montana with words

By Carolyn Lamberson
The Bulletin

For almost 20 years, Ivan Doig has painted the Big Sky country with words, putting Montana on paper for the world to read and share.

In "This House of Sky," a 1979 National Book Award finalist, Doig chronicled his life with his sheep-herding father in the Rocky Mountain Front region of Montana. The successful "Medicine Creek" trilogy pulled together the multigenerational stories of the fictional McCaskill clan.

Last year, Doig released what could be his most epic work. "Bucking the Sun," just out in paperback, looks at one of the New Deal's most audacious projects — the earth-filled Fort Peck Dam designed to put people to work and stop the flow of the Missouri River.

To coincide with the paperback release, Doig will read from "Bucking the Sun" at Paulina Springs Book Co. in Sisters on Saturday as part of a mini-tour that includes Bellingham, Wash., and Salt Lake City.

Doig and his wife, Carol, have lived in Seattle for 30 years. In a telephone interview from his home, Doig said the genesis of "Bucking" came during the research he did on the "Medicine Creek" novels — "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," and "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana."

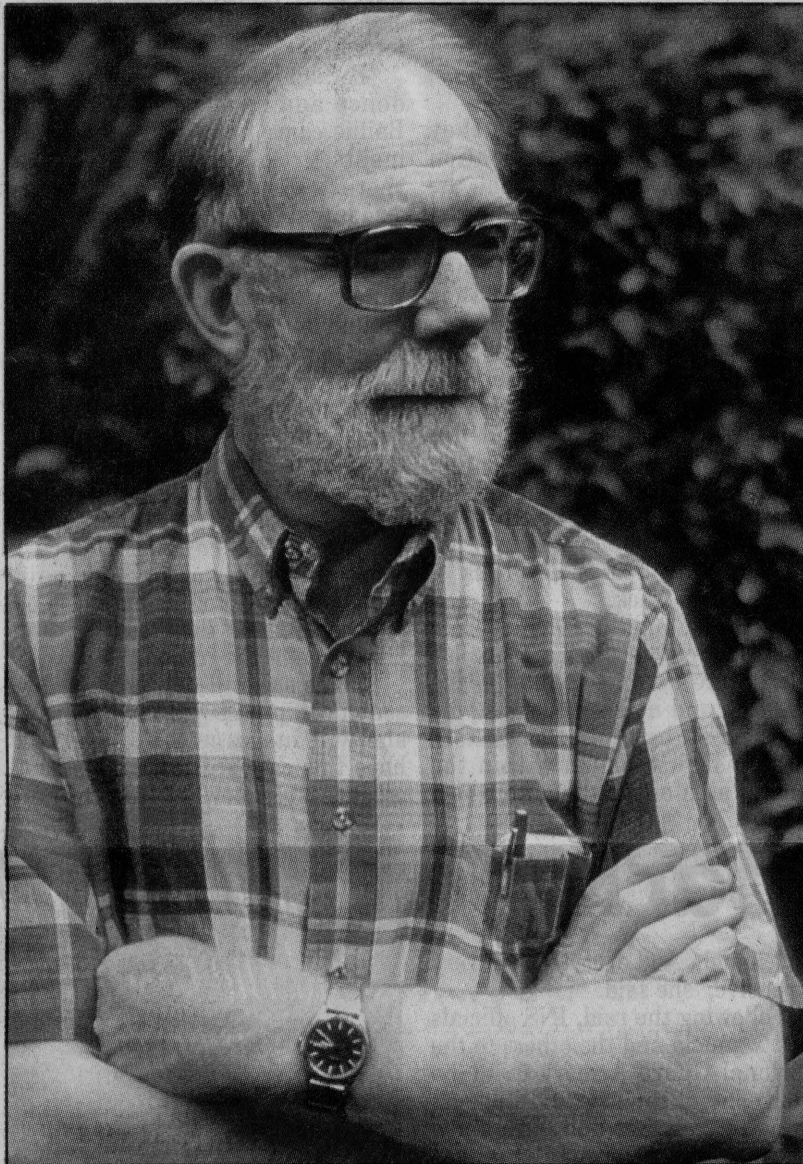
"There was a frequent refrain when I was talking to people of, 'When I got on at Fort Peck,' or 'When I married Joe at Fort Peck,'" Doig said. "My own family was not at all involved in that. They were still herding sheep on the western side of the Rockies — and doing quite well at it, too — and were hundreds of miles away from Fort Peck. But for many people, it was their first real wage. First hard drink. First good kiss. It stuck in their memories."

What made Fort Peck so spectacular is that while most New Deal dam-builders erected concrete monoliths like the Grand Coulee in Washington and Hoover in Arizona, engineers in Montana wanted to play with dirt. Enough dirt to stretch four miles and stand 25 stories high. Enough dirt to turn the Missouri River into a lake.

"It sounded like a really big topic that gave me a way to get a lot of different elements of life, from politics to love and betrayal," Doig said.

Against the backdrop of Fort Peck, Doig has drawn the Duffs, a family forced off their farm by dam-building and subsequently hired to work on the relief project.

Owen, the college-educated and ambitious older son, is the fillmaster in charge of moving millions of tons of earth into shape. The twin



Submitted photo/Carol Doig

Doig brings his Big Sky genius to Sisters on Saturday

brothers, Neil and Bruce, have personalities as different as their faces are similar.

Their father, a Scottish immigrant, tried in vain to make his piece of land work and now battles his drinking demons; their mother, a trooper, fights to keep the clan together.

Joining them is a quartet of Duff wives, and Uncle Darius from Scotland, who brings a troubled past and Socialist Party politics.

Of all these characters, Doig's favorite is the outsider, Sheriff Carl Kinnick. Kinnick comes in at the beginning of the story, when two of Duffs, a man and woman (not husband and wife) are found in a pick-up at the bottom of the reservoir. Kinnick suffers from what some might call "short-guy" syndrome — he's short on stature and tall on attitude. Despite all his bravado, the Duff case gets under his skin.

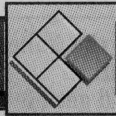
"I found it interesting to be writing away at this dull, delicate, frequently mean little man who ultimately was lonely in life ... yet he kept getting by," Doig said.

One of the sheriff's lines (spoken inwardly, as he miserably sits in his nursing home room), was

something that "A River Runs Through It" author Norman Maclean once said to Doig: "The capacity for being ornery is the one power left to a person in old age."

"Bucking the Sun," which refers to driving into a sunrise or sunset, was an immense piece of work. Although the McCaskill saga could be called epic, Doig told that huge story in three novels.

He was a year into "Bucking" before he fully understood the engineering involved in the Fort Peck Dam. And with 11 main characters, "It was a job that I knew early on was really Russian in size," he said, alluding to the mammoth novels of Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky.



quick facts

What: Author Ivan Doig will read selections from his novel, "Bucking the Sun."

When: From 6 to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, June 21.

Where: Paulina Springs Book Co., 252 W. Hood Ave., Sisters.

Admission: Free.

Info: Paulina Springs, 549-0866.

It was time, he said, for him to bang out an epic story, with the work all done on his manual Royal typewriter. "But it also damn near killed me," Doig said. "It was an amount of work to make a person buckle."

The book he's working on now, due out in 1999, again will be set in Montana. But he's moving beyond the Big Sky country and has scenes set in San Francisco, Seattle and flashbacks to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. He's examining an issue that has worried him — the death of small towns.

He was fascinated to learn, he said, that America's least populated county is in Montana: Petroleum County, where 600 souls live in an area the size of the Los Angeles Basin.

"A lot of places are emptying out, and not just in Montana, but I'd guess also in places like Eastern Oregon," he said.

While his work always is set in the West, Doig doesn't consider himself a Western writer. He just writes what he knows.

"It's the voices and senses that have stayed between my ears during my life," he said. "It's why (James) Joyce wrote about Dublin and (William) Faulkner wrote about Mississippi."

He credits his visit to Sisters to a "good and diligent" bookstore in Paulina Springs. But Oregon always has been a good place for him, he said.

"Oregon is one of the mother lodes of readership for me, more so than the Puget Sound area in terms of turnout at readings and book signings," Doig said. "(Central Oregon) is an area Carol and I have liked, and we're going to do some looking around."

Brunch, auction to mark Women's Lobby Spring Fling

The Montana Women's Lobby has scheduled its gala kick-off to springtime in the Rockies with its Helena Spring Fling Brunch and Auction scheduled for this Saturday, May 3, at 10 a.m.

Held annually at the Rocky Mountain Neighborhood Center, the Spring Fling features delightful brunch selections, great coffee and the ambiance of fresh flowers, spring colors and good friends. Coming at the close of the legislative session, it's a welcome way for Helena's feminist/progressive community to gather and reaffirm the values which drive the Lobby's activity at the Capitol.

The Montana Women's Lobby is a grassroots progressive public interest coalition whose mission is to work for the political empowerment of women and to develop, educate and advocate for progressive public policy benefiting women and families. The Spring Fling, a keystone event for the lobby, is planned by a committee of Helena Lobby members who obtain items for the silent and live auction, cook, and select the annual recipient of the Lobby's Belle Winestine award, which is given to a Helena woman for political excellence.

This year the Belle Winestine award recipient is Anne MacIntyre, administrator of the Montana Human Rights Commission.

The organizing committee for this year's

spring fling includes Andree Larose, board member, Holly Franz and Amy Pfeifer, Helena attorneys; Jaimi Dogget, Meagher County commissioner; and Linda Gryczan of Alice B. Toeclips Cyclery.

According to Andree Larose, the auctions, which consist of items generously donated by Montana merchants, will feature several outstanding contributions this year including: raft trip in Glacier, several get-away packages to bed and breakfasts in Montana and the surrounding area; authentic Persian rug; an overnight stay in Ivan Doig's ranch home near White Sulphur

Springs; professional services; gift certificates from local restaurants; pottery and other art works.

The \$10 tickets for the event may be purchased from lobby board members and are also available at the door the morning of the event. For more information please call 449-7917. Complimentary child care is available.



Photo by Third Eye Photography

From left, Women's Lobby officials Andree Larose and Sandy Oitzinger and artist Sarah Jaeger check out the Spring Fling door prize, a casserole dish made by Jaeger.

LA Times Bk Rev. May 18, 1997

READING L.A.

George Regas,
rector emeritus,

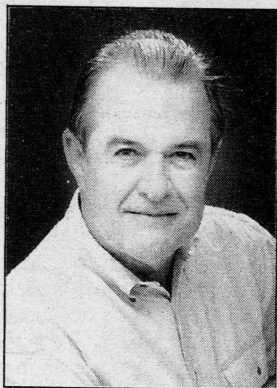
All Saints Church:

"Fist Stick Knife Gun,"

by Geoffrey Canada
(Beacon Press).

"This is one of the best books on urban violence that I have read.

Canada provides an insightful look at the environment in which young people are acting out in such deadly ways."



Tony Crowell,

investment advisor:

"Bucking the Sun," by Ivan Doig (Simon & Schuster).

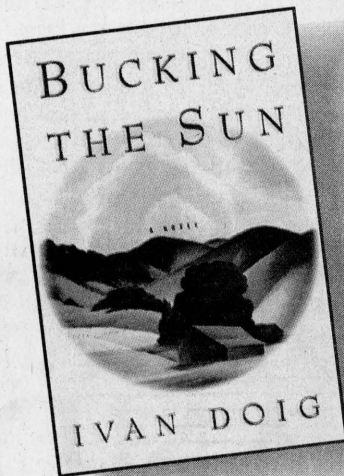
"Opening with a double murder, this is an incredibly vivid account of families living in the West in the 1930s and working on a huge WPA dam project. It's the story of people who start with nothing, intent on building their own little pursuit of happiness."

SECTION

D

MAY 12, 1996

ARTS & BOOKS

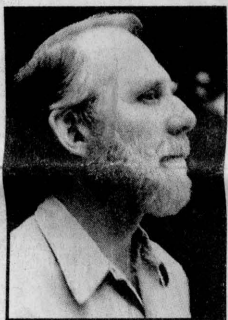


Ivan Doig's epic dam

The novelist's sprawling tale set beneath a giant dam hammers to the core of Northwest culture

By ROBIN CODY

In the 18 years since his best book, "This House of Sky," Ivan Doig has written some of the finest Northwest fiction and nonfiction. Mining much the same ground, he has come up with smaller and smaller nuggets. He's so damn good, you want him to go for it. You want him to drill into the mother lode and blast away.



DOIG

INSIDE

DAM HISTORY: The building of a Montana dam, a massive public works project of the '30s, gave Ivan Doig the right stuff for his latest novel — a pivotal point in history and working-class characters. See Ellen Heltzel's "Writing in the Rain." / 7

moving engineer, believes in the nature-busting destiny of Western Man. Hugh's other sons, twins, bring to the job polar opposites of quiet reliability and ram-bunctious stunts. And here, fresh from Scotland, comes the old man's brother, Darius Duff, after bashing a guy's head in for trying to snuff a communist shipyard rally.

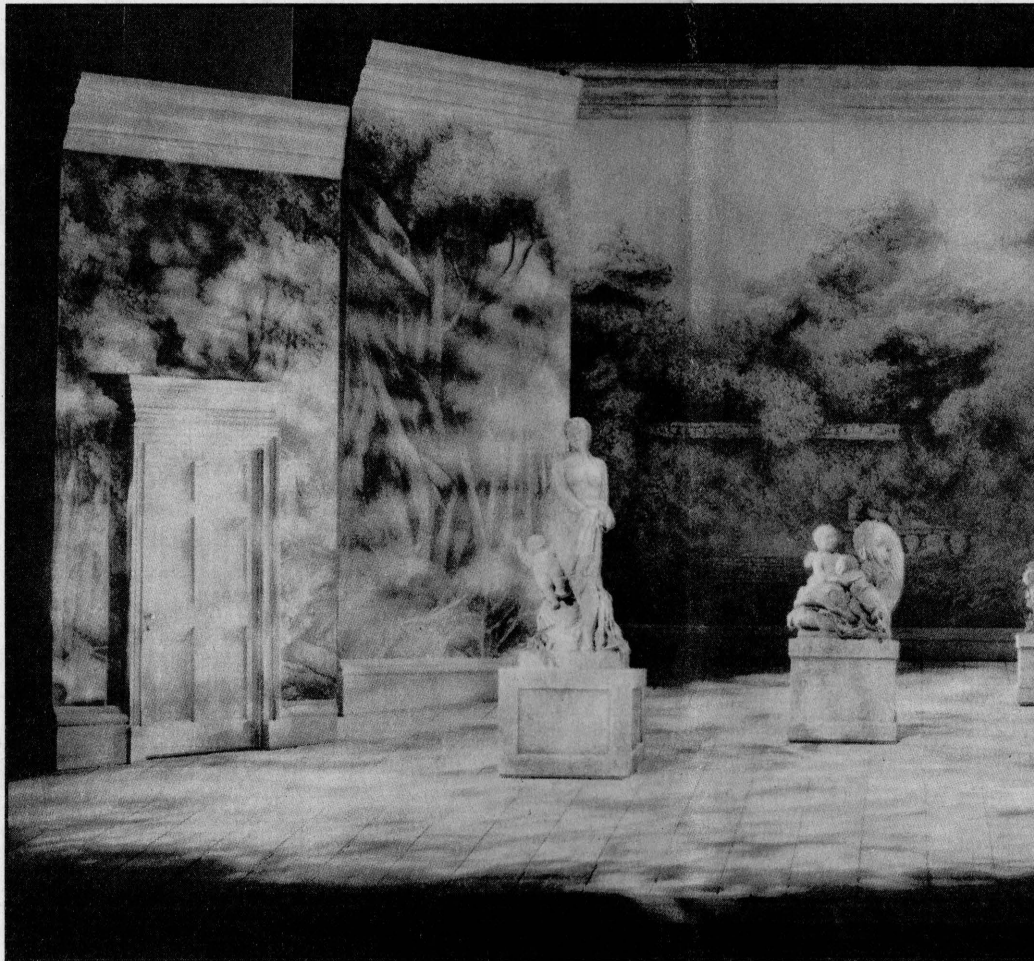
To this explosive mix, add wives. In addition to Hugh's long-suffering partner, we get a social-climbing beautician, a savvy waitress, a dreamy novice writer and a hooker with the proverbial heart of gold.

Doig lights the fuse on this powder keg right away.

With "Bucking the Sun," Doig does just that.

This is his most ambitious novel, an epic tangle of Montana sod-busters turned dam workers — all in the Duff family — in the mid-1930s. They're building Fort Peck Dam, a massive earthen plug on the upper Missouri River.

These Duffs have range. The patriarch, Hugh Duff, leaves the soon-to-be drowned homestead for a job at the construction site, slipping off on drunken jags. His son Owen, the chief dirt-



Portland Opera brings its 1995-96 season to a romantic, elegant and lighthearted conclusion with

Mozart

The master's sunny, sexy 'Marriage of Figaro'

By AMY MARTINEZ STARK
of The Oregonian staff

"The Marriage of Figaro," wrote Westerner. That excessive wouldn't find love.

zart's music who would agree. The Portland Opera closes its season with Mozart's great satire, a musical play that pampous aristocracy and marriage of the help.

One of three Mozart operas by Lorenzo da Ponte, also the oldest opera in the repertoire of most opera houses premiered in 1786.

Beyond its playfulness of complexity of plot, "Figaro" its vivid characterizations.

Mozart toyed with revolutionary operatic version of the Bea play spoofing the upper class created a scandal because of sive political content.

However, Mozart's "Figaro" thing but a political tract. gathering of operatic hits, with dozen famous arias, among "vuol ballare" ("If you wish "Non so piu" (Cherubino's



BANFF CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

"The Count will kill me if he finds me here," sings Cherubino while Susanna, the maid, begs him not to jump out the window.



DOIG

INSIDE

■ **DAM HISTORY:** The building of a Montana dam, a massive public works project of the '30s, gave Ivan Doig the right stuff for his latest novel — a pivotal point in history and working-class characters. See Ellen Heltzel's "Writing in the Rain." / 7

tana sod-busters turned dam workers — all in the Duff family — in the mid-1930s. They're building Fort Peck Dam, a massive earthen plug on the upper Missouri River.

These Duffs have range. The patriarch, Hugh Duff, leaves the soon-to-be drowned homestead for a job at the construction site, slipping off on drunken jags. His son Owen, the chief dirt-moving engineer, believes in the nature-busting destiny of Western Man. Hugh's other sons, twins, bring to the job polar opposites of quiet reliability and rambunctious stunts. And here, fresh from Scotland, comes the old man's brother, Darius Duff, after bashing a guy's head in for trying to snuff a communist shipyard rally.

To this explosive mix, add wives. In addition to Hugh's long-suffering partner, we get a social-climbing beautician, a savvy waitress, a dreamy novice writer and a hooker with the proverbial heart of gold.

Doig lights the fuse on this powder keg right away.

In a flash forward, we learn that a naked man and a naked woman — both Duffs, not married to each other — have rolled in a truck to their deaths off the dam.

Four hundred pages later, we learn why. And who they were.

It doesn't really matter who they were. Of the 20 possible pairings of unmatched Duffs, at least 12 would have made as surprising and satisfying an ending as the pairing Doig chose.

No, the real story — Doig at his best — is about people moving earth. It's about men and women carving a landscape, dredging the river bottom to stopper a great waterway with its own stuff. It's about the river, fighting back. It's about the weather. Nobody writes the

**Please turn to
DOIG, Page 7**

BUCKING THE SUN

Ivan Doig

Simon & Schuster, \$23

BOTTOM LINE

From one of the Northwest's leading writers, a new novel about Montana during the Depression demonstrates the author's skill with language and as a chronicler of the working class.

Doig tackles 'sizzle point' of Depression

Montana, 1996. The Unabomber case and the Freeman stand-off make Americans wonder what the world is coming to.

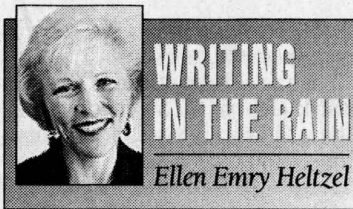
Montana, 1936. The Fort Peck Dam, which graces the cover of the first issue of *Life* magazine, gives Americans a sense of pride and hope as the country surfaces from the depths of the Depression.

Two competing visions of the nation: one alluding to the social disintegration and distrust of government that now swirls at our feet, the other celebrating the stubborn optimism and abundance of resources that once seemed our salvation.

Seattle writer Ivan Doig, a historian by training, has made Montana his backdrop of choice and become the leading chronicler of its history through both his fiction and nonfiction. In his latest book, "Bucking the Sun," he returns to Big Sky country during the 1930s. His particular focus: the building of the Fort Peck Dam.

"Bucking the Sun" is Doig's first novel with a specific historical event at its center, one that both serves his working-man impulses well and spotlights the huge public works projects that not only helped lift the country out of the Depression but also forever altered the face of the West.

Dams have lost their luster these days, in the face of diminishing



**WRITING
IN THE RAIN**
Ellen Emry Heltzel

salmon runs and the emphasis on keeping nature natural. But across the West they remain mammoth testimonials to human will and to the important role the federal government has played and still plays in this part of the country.

Unlike the more familiar Hoover and Grand Coulee, those massive constructs of concrete along the Colorado and Columbia, the Fort Peck is a dirt-filled barrier four miles long and 25 stories high that was built to control the flow of the Missouri River. Beyond the story of its construction is the disaster that struck there in 1938, when a 2,000-foot-long section of it broke off, burying eight men. An "engineering misunderstanding," Doig explained in what seems like a classic of understatement, during a phone call to his home in Seattle: Water seeping into the shale foundation created a crack that sent tons of earth and rock plunging downstream in one of those made-for-the-movies disaster scenarios.

Doig, who comes to Portland May 21 for a 7:30 p.m. appearance at the Audubon Society of Portland, says

he got the idea for a novel about the dam while doing research for his previous books during the 1980s. Struck by how many old-timers used the Fort Peck project as a reference point, he began investigating its construction, which employed 10,000 workers.

"A lot of those people got their first radio at Fort Peck, their first car, their first truck or motorcycle. In other words, they entered our century through the building of that dam."

Doig says he also was interested in building a novel around the Depression because it's one of those "sizzle points" in American history and one that has particular relevance to contemporary politics: The New Deal, he points out, not only created huge public works projects but also welfare reform, specifically the safety net that's now being so hotly debated in Washington. (That net, by the way, included both guarantees of support for the poor, which everybody seems to have an opinion on, and for the elderly, in the form of the politically taboo topic, Social Security.)

Those familiar with Doig's work — most notably "This House of Sky," his memoir of growing up in Montana — can sense his allegiances in his writing. One is to the working class, the other to historical detail. He took his wife's hairdresser to lunch in order to figure out what techniques one of his char-

acters, a beautician, used to create the waves and curls of the time.

As for another character, a prostitute, Doig says he did field work on that one, too: He went to the Oasis Brothel Museum in Wallace, Idaho.

The 57-year-old Doig traces his preoccupation with "the labor and craft angle of life" to his own upbringing, as the grandson of Scottish immigrants and son of Montana sheep farmers. Growing up in a sparsely populated, remote pocket of north-central Montana, Doig saw his family's profits wiped out by bad weather and decided he wanted a different kind of life.

With his parent's encouragement, he became the first in his family to graduate from high school and go to college. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northwestern University and his doctorate in history from the University of Washington.

True to his roots, however, Doig values the lessons of a hard-working childhood and says they played a part in shaping his successful writing career. "When a chance comes up, you know how to grab it and put it in your pocket," Doig says. "As Branch Rickey told Jackie Robinson, 'Luck is the residue of design.'"

Ellen Emry Heltzel writes weekly for Arts & Books. She may be reached by phone at 221-8066, by fax at 294-4026 and by mail at 1320 S.W. Broadway, Portland, Ore. 97201.

Doig: Novelist penetrates heart of Northwest Anglo culture

Continued from Page 1

extremes of Montana weather better than Ivan Doig.

A truck driver "bucks the sun" when hauling straight into the glare of sunrise or sunset. Likewise, the Duffs buck cosmic forces in the doomful shadow of the rising dam. Through shifting points of view, we see Fort Peck — a Depression-era beehive — from several angles. Everybody works, on the dam itself or in the squalid shantytown nearby.

They're stubborn Scots. Nobody grows much, or even questions beliefs. They stay in their roles, trading witty barbs and colorful sayings.

Had Doig not artfully broadened the scope, the Duffs might have been

pathetic, rather than tragic. But he brings the global Communist movement into play. Franklin D. Roosevelt delivers a ringing speech at the dam. Even Hitler and Stalin play bit roles.

"Bucking the Sun" is a big book.

It might also have been a great book, if not for the stiffness of language. Doig, with his odd sentence structure, is never easy. Wooden dialogue, especially, slows things down. He is curiously reluctant to use the simple verb "said." Instead (to pick just one exchange) he writes "chortled out," "hazarded," "decided to contribute," "intoned," "plunged on to," and "made himself confine to." But Doig fans put up with the rubble for the gems re-

vealed. The reason he is so widely, and rightly, admired is because of his gift for writing *Man* against the elements. People work the land.

And every once in a while Doig just nails it. Listen to this:

"The hammer sounds raked into the Wheeler night ... *WHAM wham-am WHAM-am*. While the hammers hit those higher notes, a pile driver gave bass *whumps* beside the river. The bluffs of the Missouri here had heard din before — the bawling rumble of buffalo herds, the last-stand discourse of Sitting Bull's winter camp before the summer of the Little Big Horn, the axes of steamboat woodhaws — but there had been half a century of comparative silence since any of those. Now

and for years to come, a river of sound waited to drown down onto the site of Fort Peck — the opera shrieks of shale saws, the incessant comings and goings of locomotives and bulldozers and trucks, the false-to of steam whistles, the attacks of jackhammers." •

In "Bucking the Sun," Doig hammers straight to the core of Northwest Anglo culture. His is the voice of a major writer. He's one of the best we have on what it is to live in, and to change, a place.

Robin Cody is the author of "Ricochet River," a novel, and "Voyage of a Summer Sun," winner of the 1995 Oregon Book Award for literary non-fiction.

NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLERS

NONFICTION

(Two books tied for sixth best seller.)

1. **IN CONTEMPT**, Christopher Darden with Jess Walter Regan Books/HarperCollins, \$26.
2. **BLOOD SPORT**, James B. Stewart Simon & Schuster, \$25.
3. **THE DILBERT PRINCIPLE**, Scott Adams Harper, Business, \$20.
4. **UNDAUNTED COURAGE**, Stephen E. Ambrose Simon & Schuster, \$27.50.
5. **MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL**, John Berendt Random House, \$23.
6. **RUSH LIMBAUGH IS A BIG FAT IDIOT**, Al Franken Delacorte, \$21.95.
6. **HITLER'S WILLING EXECUTIONERS**, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen Knopf, \$30.
8. **THE RANTS**, Dennis Miller Doubleday, \$21.95.
9. **THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE**, Robert L. Shapiro Warner, \$24.95.
10. **HOW COULD YOU DO THAT?!**, Laura Schlesinger HarperCollins, \$22.

FICTION

1. **MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU**, Mary Higgins Clark Simon & Schuster, \$24.
2. **MALICE**, Danielle Steel Delacorte, \$24.95.
3. **THE TENTH INSIGHT**, James Redfield Warner, \$19.95.
4. **PRIMARY COLORS**, Anonymous Random House, \$24.
5. **THE CELESTINE PROPHECY**, James Redfield Warner, \$17.95.
6. **THE HORSE WHISPERER**, Nicholas Evans Delacorte, \$23.95.
7. **TIMEPIECE**, Richard Paul Evans Simon & Schuster, \$18.
8. **I WAS AMELIA EARHART**, Jane Mendelsohn Knopf, \$18.
9. **SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE**, Steve Perry Spectra/Bantam, \$22.95.
10. **SPRING COLLECTION**, Judith Krantz Crown, \$24.

PAPERBACK BEST SELLERS

Last week's best-selling books according to The New York Times

NONFICTION

1. **REVIVING OPHELIA**, Mary Pipher Ballantine, \$12.50.
2. **WE'RE RIGHT, THEY'RE WRONG**, James Carville Random House and Simon & Schuster, \$10.
3. **DEAD BY SUNSET**, Ann Rule Pocket, \$6.99.
4. **THE LIARS' CLUB**, Mary Karr Penguin, \$11.95.
5. **DEAD MAN WALKING**, Helen Prejean Vintage, \$12.
6. **SLEEPERS**, Lorenzo Carcaterra Ballantine, \$6.99.
7. **HOW THE IRISH SAVED CIVILIZATION**, Thomas Cahill Anchor/Doubleday, \$12.95.
8. **PAULA**, Isabel Allende Harper Perennial, \$12.50.
9. **AN ANTHROPOLOGIST ON MARS**, Oliver Sacks Vintage, \$13.
10. **THE HOT ZONE**, Richard Preston Anchor/Doubleday, \$6.99.

FICTION

1. **LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART**, Mary Higgins Clark Pocket, \$7.50.
2. **THE GREEN MILE: THE TWO DEAD GIRLS**, Stephen King Signet, \$2.99.
3. **THE APOCALYPSE WATCH**, Robert Ludlum Bantam, \$7.50.
4. **SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS**, David Guterson Vintage, \$12.
5. **TRUE BETRAYALS**, Nora Roberts Jove, \$6.50.
6. **THE CAROUSEL**, Belva Plain Dell, \$7.50.
7. **THE GREEN MILE: THE MOUSE ON THE MILE**, Stephen King Signet, \$2.99.
8. **MIND PREY**, John Sandford Berkley, \$6.99.
9. **THE RAINMAKER**, John Grisham Island/Dell, \$7.99.
10. **LADDER OF YEARS**, Anne Tyler Fawcett, \$12.

UW poet takes top state writing award

David Wagoner receives Pryor award

BY DONN FRY
Seattle Times book editor

Washington state writers are nothing if not eclectic. The winners of this year's Governor's Writers Awards — announced today by the Washington State Library and Washington Commission for the Humanities — range from a children's biography of the Buddha, to a novel inspired by Montana's Fort Peck Dam, to the history of a violent uprising against the British Raj in 19th-century India.

There's even a fond remembrance of a Seattle cabaret famous for performers in drag.

The recipient of the top award is no exception. The versatile poet-professor David Wagoner, named winner of the Nancy Blankenship Pryor Award for his contributions to the state's literary culture, is a man of many parts: For more than three decades, Wagoner has been a much-honored poet of national stature, the author of many novels, the longtime editor of *Poetry Northwest* and an influential mentor for generations of student-writers at the University of Washington.

Wagoner and the 12 other recipients of the annual awards will be honored in a ceremony Sept. 19 at the Museum of History and Industry. The awards recognize books published in the preceding calendar year by authors who either were born in Washington, spent most of their early years here or lived here for a least a year before their book was published.

This year's Governor's Writers Awards winners include:

- **Ivan Doig**, the Seattle novelist and memoirist, who becomes a five-time winner of the Governor's Writers Award — the most ever — with his honor for "Bucking the Sun" (Simon & Schuster), a novel about construction of the Fort Peck Dam during the New Deal era, seen through the lens of the fictional Duff family;

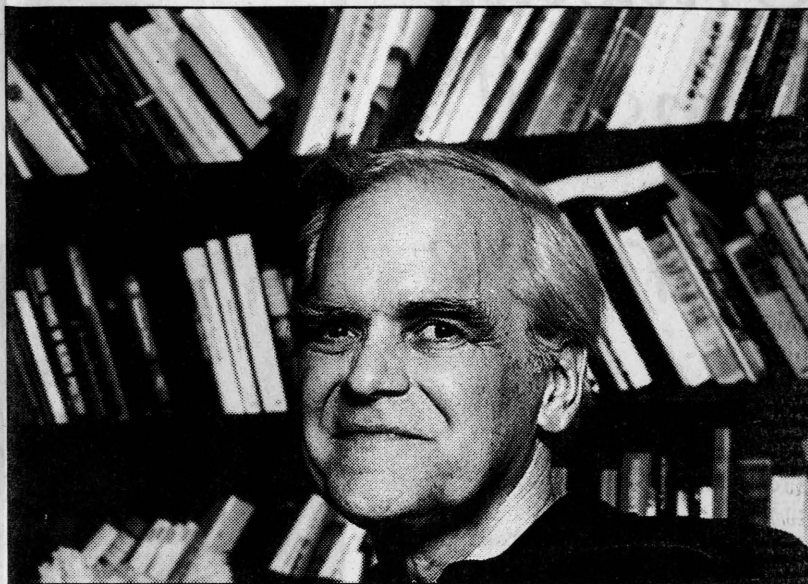
- **Jon Krakauer**, the bestselling Seattle outdoors writer whose 1996 book, "Into the Wild" (Villard), chronicled two years in the life of an idealistic young man who drifted around the American West after college and eventually died of starvation in the Alaskan wilderness;

- **Carolyn Kizer**, the Spokane-born poet who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1985, and whose latest collection, "Harping On: Poems 1985-1995," was published last year by Port Townsend's Copper Canyon Press;

- **Jonathan Raban**, the British-born Seattle writer whose book about failed homesteading in eastern Montana early in this century, "Bad Land: An American Romance" (Pantheon), also won the National Book Critics Circle Award;

- **Demi**, the Carnation-based author and illustrator of numerous books for young people, including last year's "Buddha" (Henry Holt), a retelling of the legend of the Indian prince who renounced his wealth and sought the path of enlightenment;

- **Tim McNulty**, a natural-history writer and poet who lives near Sequim on the Olympic Peninsula, whose "Olympic National Park: A



SEATTLE TIMES

University of Washington professor and poet David Wagoner has been named winner of the Nancy Blankenship Pryor Award.

Natural History Guide" was published last year by Houghton Mifflin;

- **Don Paulson**, a Seattle writer and artist, and **Roger Simpson**, a professor of communications at the University of Washington, whose "Evening at the Garden of Allah" (Columbia University Press) recounted the history of a popular Seattle nightclub famous for its female impersonators and lively musical scene;

- **Andrew Ward**, a Bainbridge Island journalist and novelist, whose "Our Bones Are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857" (Henry Holt) was a historical study of the so-called Sepoy Rebellion, which began as a Bengal Army revolt against the British East India Company but grew into a widespread fight against British rule in India.

- **Chara M. Curtis and Rebec-**

ca Hyland, both of Anacortes, who are the author and illustrator respectively of the children's story, "No One Walks on My Father's Moon" (Voyage Publishing).

- **Alan Thein Durning**, a Seattle writer and environmentalist, whose 1996 book, "This Place on Earth: Home and the Practice of Permanence" (Sasquatch), was inspired by his move with his wife and children back to his hometown.

The Governor's Writers Awards were chosen by a five-member panel from among more than 400 books published last year by Washington authors. The Pryor Award was selected by three jurors based on nominations from the public.

All of the books submitted for consideration are added to the Washington Authors Collection, now more than 13,000 volumes in the state library at Olympia.

INSIDE: Mild Aussie comedy
'Paperback Romance' reviewed. **C4**

■ Ann Landers **C2** ■ Television **B6**

■ Coffee Break **C5**

LIFESTYLE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

UW professor and 10 books garner governor's awards

By **JOHN MARSHALL**

PI REPORTER

From 400 books, only 10 emerged as winners: A powerful meditation on the fatal allure of the wilderness. A lavishly rendered story about Buddha for children. A celebration of a gay cabaret in Seattle from 1946 to 1956. A literate guide to the wonders of Olympic National Park. A hard-knuckled family saga about the building of a dam in Montana.

The just-announced 1997 Governor's Writers Awards once again highlight the wondrous variety of work done every year by Washington's writers.

The recipients of the awards are **Chara M. Curtis** and **Rebecca Hyland**, both of Anacortes, for their children's book, "No One Walks on My Father's Moon" (Voyage Publishing); **Demi** (no last name) of Carnation for her children's book, "Buddha" (Henry Holt); **Ivan Doig** of Seattle for his novel about the building of the Fort Peck Dam, "Bucking the Sun" (Simon & Schuster); **Alan Thein Durning** of Seattle for his reflections on environmental living, "This

Place on Earth" (Sasquatch Books); **Carolyn Kizer**, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and Spokane native, for her collection, "Harping On" (Copper Canyon Press).

Also: **Jon Krakauer** of Seattle for his best-selling examination of the death of a drifter in the Alaska wilderness, "Into the Wild" (Villard Books); **Tim McNulty** of Sequim for "Olympic National Park: A Natural History Guide" (Houghton Mifflin); **Don Paulson** of Vashon Island and **Roger Simpson** of Seattle for their evocation of past gay and lesbian life in Seattle, "An Evening At the Garden of Allah" (Columbia University Press); **Jonathan Raban** of Seattle for his myth-breaking look at the West "Bad Land," (Pantheon Books); and **Andrew Ward** of Bainbridge Island for his mammoth history about India, "Our Bones Are Scattered: The Cawnpore Massacres and the Indian Mutiny of 1857" (Henry Holt).

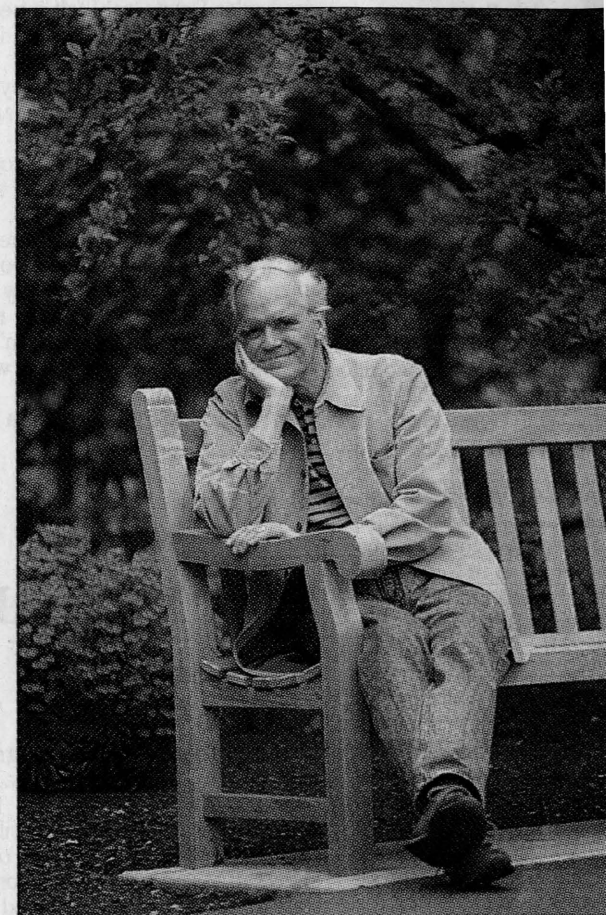
The gala ceremony honoring the winners of the 31st annual governor's awards will be held at 7 p.m. Sept. 19 at the Museum of History and Industry in

Seattle. The winners will get the chance to read from their award-winning works, with a free public reception to follow.

Also honored that night for his lifelong contribution to the literary life of the state will be **David Wagoner**, the University of Washington professor, prize-winning poet, novelist and editor of Poetry Northwest magazine for three decades. Wagoner, 71, has won prestigious prizes in his long career, including the 1991 Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize with its award of \$25,000, as well as the respect and gratitude of hundreds of students.

But winning the Nancy Blankenship Pryor Award, which recognizes his unique contribution to this state, is still a particular pleasure for much-revered Wagoner. As he says, "It's always nice to be well thought of at home — it makes one feel safer. I must add, though, that I have no sense of having been ignored or neglected here, or of having been a prophet without a country. Washington has always seemed a literate state to me and I'm glad they feel I've made a

See **AWARDS**, Page C3



KURT SMITH / P

Prize-winning poet, novelist, editor and UW professor David Wagoner says he's proud that the state recognizes he has made a contribution here.

Awards: State recognition carries weight with writers

From Page C1

contribution here."

Having so many different state authors honored on one evening is why the governor's awards ceremony is quietly becoming one of the premiere literary events of the year.

As Doig, who is the recipient of his fifth governor's award, puts it, "Whenever I'm at the awards ceremony, I always think to myself that this is such a classy touch for this state to have these awards. They cut across the writing community in the state, ranging from national best sellers to great trail guides. As I sit there, I also reflect on how there are years that go into every one of these books, probably three to four years of effort at making words dance, and all finally getting their moment in the spotlight."

The recognition of one's state also seems to imbue the governor's award with a particular weight with writers, as does having copies of their award-winning books permanently housed in the Washington Authors Collection in the state library in Olympia. It speaks permanence ("what I strive for," Curtis says), something that extends beyond the marketplace.

Krakauer has had the best-selling book in the country for several weeks this summer, his wrenching account of last year's Mount Everest disaster, "Into Thin Air." Krakauer has become such a national phenomenon that he heard singer Rosanne Cash dedicate a



Jon Krakauer



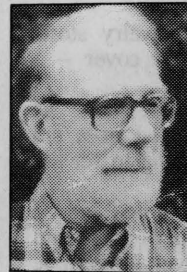
Demi



Roger Simpson



Don Paulson



Ivan Doig



Chara M. Curtis

song to him ("author of the most moving book I've read this year") during her concert Wednesday evening in Seattle.

Yet amid all the Everest hubbub, having the governor's award for his earlier book was like a blast of fresh air for Krakauer. As he remarks, "I've always liked that book better in a way. The award is a huge thrill for me. One of my secret ambitions has been to be in the company of guys like Doig and Raban. This is a real honor; I wouldn't miss that ceremony for anything."

Other recipients relate other satisfactions. For Raban, the British expatriate, it is the welcome recognition of his adopted home. For Demi, it is another powerful occurrence with a Buddha book that, under great deadline pressure, seemed to write itself. For Hyland, it is confirmation about her willingness to tackle something she had never done before, illustrating

a children's book. For McNulty, it makes it worth all the pains he took to craft a natural history book "in a clear and lyrical way befitting the magnificence of the Olympics."

But none of the recipients may feel greater satisfaction than Paulson and Simpson. They had rescued a little-known period of local history in the gay community just as it was about to drift into oblivion with the passing of its participants.

"Whenever we were working long and hard on this book, I would ask myself why is this important and I would always think that if we don't do

this, this story will die," Simpson relates. "To have state acknowledgment is an extremely good feeling — not so much for us, but for the story."

Adds Paulson: "I'm delighted because this award is a validation of the gay community. That, above all, pleases me, since this is the first history about the Seattle gay community."

INSIDE: Hand-me-down suits easily given a fresh look. **D2**

■ Ann Landers **D2** ■ Television **B4**
■ Coffee Break **D5**

SECTION
D

LIFESTYLE

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Essential Northwest books

A dozen best that speak our region's unique voice

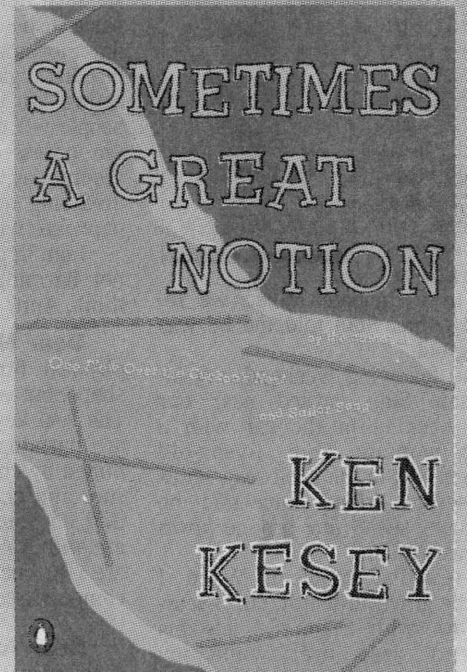
Story by
JOHN MARSHALL
P-I REPORTER

The scene that opens the novel is as Northwest as the rain. A river forms in the Coast Range of western Oregon, drawing sustenance from the gray skies, the verdant countryside, the overgrown slopes tilting toward the Pacific Ocean.

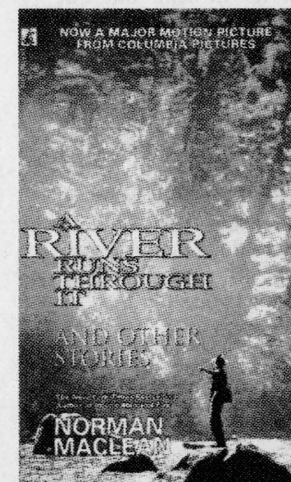
"Metallic at first," the author writes, "seen from the highway down through the trees, like an aluminum rainbow, like a slice of alloy moon. Closer, becoming organic, a vast smile of water with broken and rotting pilings jagged along both gums, foam clinging to the lips. Closer still, it flattens into a river, flat as a street, cement-gray with the texture of rain."

A more Northwest sort of opening for a novel is difficult to imagine, which may be why "Sometimes a Great Notion" by Ken Kesey tops the list of the 12 Essential Northwest Books chosen by a group of writers, booksellers and others in the book trade from throughout the region. Included in the group were such notable Northwest writers as David Guterson, Ivan Doig, Jon Krakauer, William Kittredge, Sandra Scofield, Brenda Peterson, Jonathan Raban, Rebecca Brown, Deirdre McNamer, Robin Cody, Jack

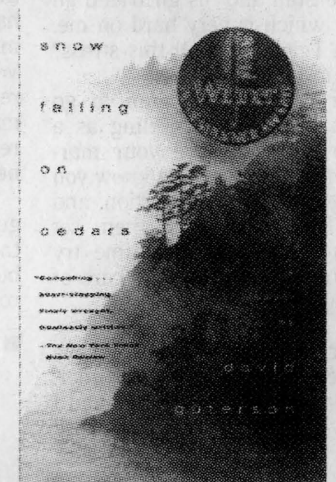
See **BOOKS**, Page D3



1 **Sometimes a Great Notion, Ken Kesey.**
A powerhouse novel about a spirited family caught amid labor strife in Oregon timber country.

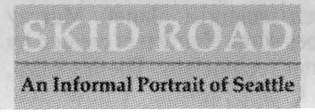


2 **A River Runs Through It, Norman Maclean.**
A haunting novella about fly fishing, clear waters and a family's past in Montana.



3 **Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson.**
A murder, a mystery, a trial in an evocative novel, the Northwest's own "To Kill a Mockingbird."

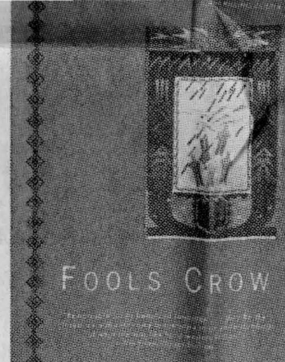
Tied for 4th



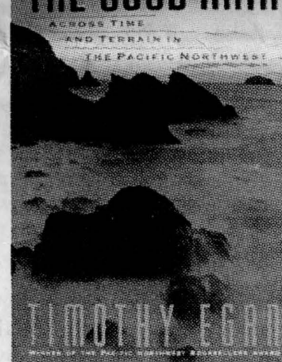
Ken Kesey, author of the top book on the

Ken Kesey, author of the top book on the list: "I think 'Some times a Great Notion' is the best thing I'll ever write."

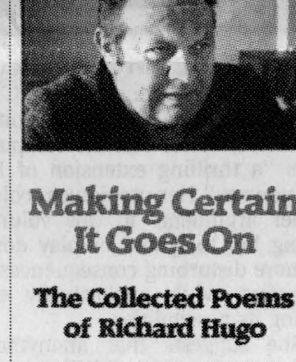
ROY SEBERN PHOTO



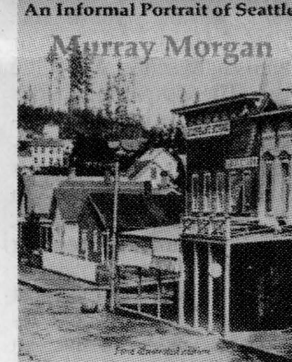
Fools Crow, James Welch.
A strong novel that gives stunning insight into the lives and psyches of Blackfeet Indians, 1870.



The Good Rain, Timothy Egan.
A engaging non-fiction tour through the 1990s Northwest, a conflicted time of growth and doubts.

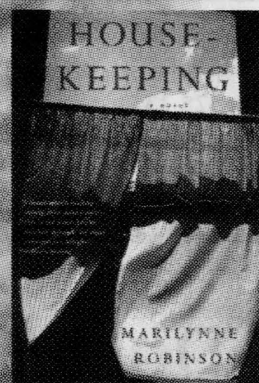


Making Certain It Goes On, Richard Hugo.
The memorable poems of a blue-collar Renaissance man, former Boeing worker.

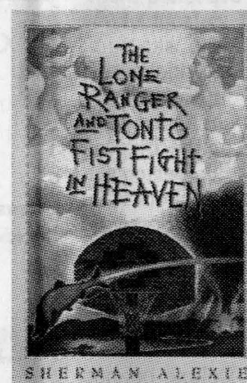


Skid Road, Murray Morgan.
The birth of a city as romp, with a cast of unforgettable characters far more colorful than today's.

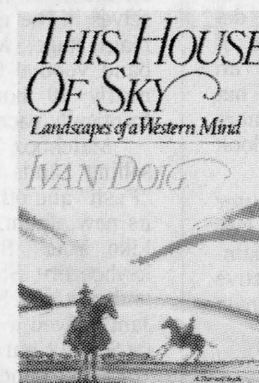
Tied for 8th



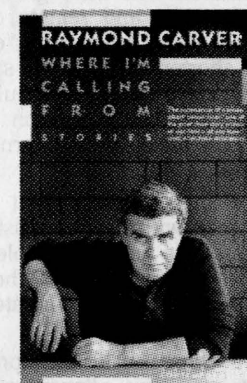
Housekeeping, Marilynne Robinson.
A quietly eloquent, but quirky first novel about two sisters growing up in a small Idaho town.



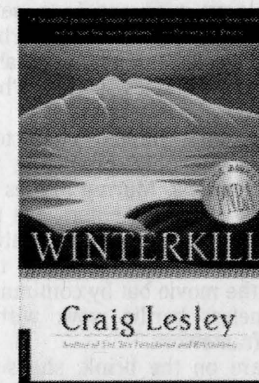
The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven, Sherman Alexie.
A hip, poetic breakthrough novel about real reservation life today.



This House of Sky, Ivan Doig.
A beloved memoir of the hardscrabble family life of Montana sheepherders, corrective to cowboy myth.



Where I'm Calling From, Raymond Carver.
Harsh realism turned short story art by a Northwest native.



Winterkill, Craig Lesley.
A compassionate novel about a Native American rodeo cowboy astride family crises and last chances.

Four regional writers offer their selections

David Guterson
Bainbridge Island
Snow Falling on Cedars



1. *Mountains and Rivers Without End*, Gary Snyder.
2. *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*, Raymond Carver.
3. *Northwest Passages*, edited by Bruce Barcott.
4. *Collected Poems, 1956-1976*, David Wagoner.
5. *Nisei Daughter*, Monica Sone.
6. *The Living*, Annie Dillard.
7. *The Final Forest*, William Dietrich.
8. *Cascade-Olympic Natural History*, Daniel Mathews.
9. *Wintergreen*, Robert Michael Pyle.
10. *Stepping Westward*, Sallie Tisdale.
11. *The Good Rain*, Timothy Egan.
12. *Mountain in the Clouds*, Bruce Brown.

William Kittredge
Missoula, Mont.
Hole in the Sky



1. *Journals of Lewis and Clark*.
2. *The Big Sky*, A.B. Guthrie Jr.
3. *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean
4. *Housekeeping*, Lynne Robinson
5. *Making Certain It Goes On*, Richard Hugo
6. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey
7. *All But the Waltz*, Mary Clearman Blew
8. *Homestead*, Annick Smith.
9. *Traveling Through the Dark*, William Stafford.
10. *'It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own': A History of the American West*, Richard White.
11. *Fools Crow*, James Welch
12. *The Jump Off Creek*, Molly Gloss.

Kathleen Dean Moore
Corvallis, Ore.
Riverwalking



1. *Journals of Lewis and Clark*.
2. *The Grains*, Margaret Jewett Bailey.
3. *Astoria*, Washington Irving.
4. *My Side of the Mountain*, Jean Craighead George.
5. *Dancing at the Edge of the World*, Ursula Le Guin.
6. *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Ken Kesey.
7. *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, Annie Dillard.
8. *River Notes*, Barry Lopez.
9. *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean.
10. *Legends from Camp*, Lawson Fusao Inada.
11. *Winterkill*, Craig Lesley.
12. *Fish Cookery*, James Beard.

Jonathan Raban
Seattle
Bad Land



1. *Vancouver's Voyages*, George Vancouver.
2. *The Egg and I*, Betty MacDonald.
3. *The Way of the Masks*, Claude Levi-Strauss.
4. *A New Life*, Bernard Malamud.
5. *The Far Field*, Theodore Roethke.
6. *The Northwest Coast*, James G. Swan.
7. *Coast Salish Essays*, Wayne Suttles.
8. *Making Certain It Goes On*, Richard Hugo.
9. *Skid Road*, Murray Morgan.
10. *United States Coast Pilot Survey, Volume 7*.
11. *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*, Mary McCarthy.
12. *The Measure of a Mountain*, Bruce Barcott.

Further Reading

Excerpts from many of the books on the list of 12 Essential Northwest Books, along with commentaries on the authors' work, can be found in two excellent paperback anthologies: "Northwest Passages," edited by Bruce Barcott (Sasquatch Books, 329 pages, \$15.95) and "The Portable Western Reader," edited by William Kittredge (Viking, 600 pages, \$14.95).

BOOKS: Many vote Kesey's work the champion

From Page D1

Nisbet and Molly Gloss.

Their assignment, at the request of the Post-Intelligencer, was to compile a list of the 12 books that best capture this varied region. Pick the dozen books that someone starting a Northwest library should begin with, for example, or the dozen books that a well-versed Northwesterner should have read.

Eligible for inclusion were books written by Northwest authors or books about the Northwest (including, for this story's sake, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana). Works of fiction, non-fiction and poetry could all be considered.

The 35 participants in the survey nominated 210 different books, everything from Kesey's powerful novel to such unusual picks as James Beard's "Fish Cookery" to the Dave Thompson's "Never Fade Away: The Kurt Cobain Story." The final Essential Northwest dozen were those books named most frequently. Included were six novels, three works of non-fiction, one short story collection, one poetry collection, one novella.

The winners are (in order):

1. "Sometimes A Great Notion," Ken Kesey, novel, 1964.
2. "A River Runs Through It," Norman Maclean, novella, 1976.
3. "Snow Falling on Cedars," David Guterson, 1994, novel.
4. (tie) "Fools Crow," James Welch, novel, 1986.
- "The Good Rain," Timothy Egan, non-fiction, 1990.
- "Making Certain It Goes On," Richard Hugo, poetry, 1984.
- "Skid Road," Murray Morgan, non-fiction, 1951.
8. (tie) "Housekeeping," Marilynne Robinson, novel, 1981.
- "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," Sherman Alexie, novel, 1993.
- "This House of Sky," Ivan Doig, non-fiction, 1978.
- "Where I'm Calling From," Raymond Carver, short stories, 1988.
- "Winterkill," Craig Lesley, novel, 1984.

The list is weighted heavily toward well-known books of the last two decades, which is not exactly shocking, since readers' memories are often short.

But the list does include its share of surprises, perhaps none more than the pre-eminence of Kesey's "Sometimes A Great Notion." It was named by almost one-third of the participants, and easily bested Kesey's better known first novel, "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." That verdict was readily supported by the author himself.

"I think 'Sometimes A Great Notion' is the best thing I'll ever write," Kesey said recently from his home in Pleasant Hill, Ore. "Writing it was much different from 'Cuckoo's Nest,' which often seemed like filling in the blanks.

"'Notion,' to my mind, is a great piece of work. People sometimes ask me why I don't write something like that again and I reply that I simply can't. I can't keep all that in my head at once anymore. Why, on 'Notion,' I used to work 30 hours at a stretch — you've got to have youth to do that."

Kesey added that he was pleased that "Sometimes A Great Notion" topped the list of essential Northwest books. "I appreciate it. When people ask me to sign 'Notion,' they also

seem to ask apologetically. I tell them what my dad said to me: 'You never outgrow your need for compliments.'"

Kesey's hard-knuckled tale of an Oregon logging family might well have been expected to make the list, but topping it was something else again. Still, as the participants pondered their lists ("It's not easy," one admitted), "Sometimes A Great Notion" kept coming up.

Among its most fervent fans is Bruce Barcott of Seattle, who studied 300 works of Northwest literature in compiling "Northwest Passages," his 1994 anthology of the region's best writing since the first natives told their campfire tales. Barcott says "Sometimes A Great Notion" has "Shakespearean themes played out against a raw, burly Oregon backdrop. Still the heavyweight champion of Pacific Northwest novels. Huge, bold, sprawling, brilliant. Unrivaled, unchallenged, unsurpassed. (I'll stop before I make a fool of myself)."

Bryan Di Salvatore and Deirdre McNamer, spouses and writers in Missoula, Mont., describe Kesey's novel simply as "the region's 'Moby Dick.'"

The next two books on the essential Northwest list are hardly surprises.

Norman Maclean's "A River Runs Through It," an elegiac tale of family and fly fishing in Montana, was already a cult classic even before Robert Redford directed a stunning film adaptation. David Guterson's "Snow Falling on Cedars," the Bainbridge Island writer's lush recounting of island crime and punishment in the aftermath of World War II and Japanese internment, is the reigning popularity champ of recent Northwest fiction, as well as winner of the prestigious PEN/Faulkner Award.

Of the four books tied in fourth place on the essential Northwest list, three might be considered surprises. The exception is Timothy Egan's "The Good Rain," surely the most highly regarded non-fiction tour through the Northwest territory in recent years, especially for its evocation of a suddenly "discovered" region caught in a whirlwind of change.

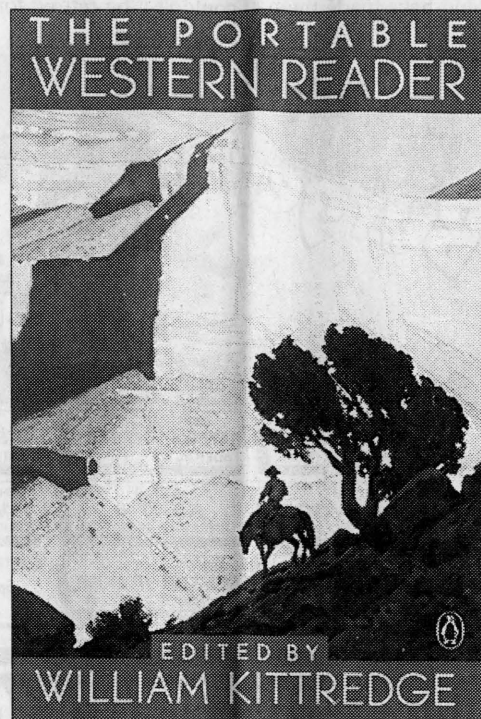
Murray Morgan's "Skid Road," a rollicking look at the characters who shaped early Seattle, is the only work of history to make the essential list ("The Journals of Lewis and

Norman Maclean's "A River Runs Through It," an elegiac tale of family and fly fishing in Montana, was already a cult classic even before Robert Redford directed a stunning film adaptation.

Clark" and Jonathan Raban's "Bad Land" just missed).

"Making Certain It Goes On," the collected poems of the late Richard Hugo, is the only book of poetry on the list and a fitting choice indeed, considering his career and impact, the way his darkly realistic poems touch on everything from the Hoh Rain Forest to West Marginal Way. Hugo had more books (five) nominated for inclusion on the essential list than any other writer.

As John W. Marshall, poet and co-owner of Open Books poetry bookstore in Seattle, commented, "There is probably no more essential Northwest writer than Hugo. He grew up in White Center, worked for Boeing and taught in Montana — these are the



Excerpts from many of the 12 Essential Northwest books, along with commentaries from the authors, can be found in these two fine anthologies.

geographic facts; his poetry tells the Northwest very well."

James Welch's "Fools Crow" is one of the most unexpected books on the list. The Native American writer from Montana, who studied under Richard Hugo, received several awards for his novel written from the perspective of a small band of Blackfeet Indians in 1870s Montana, but it has usually seemed a kind of underground favorite.

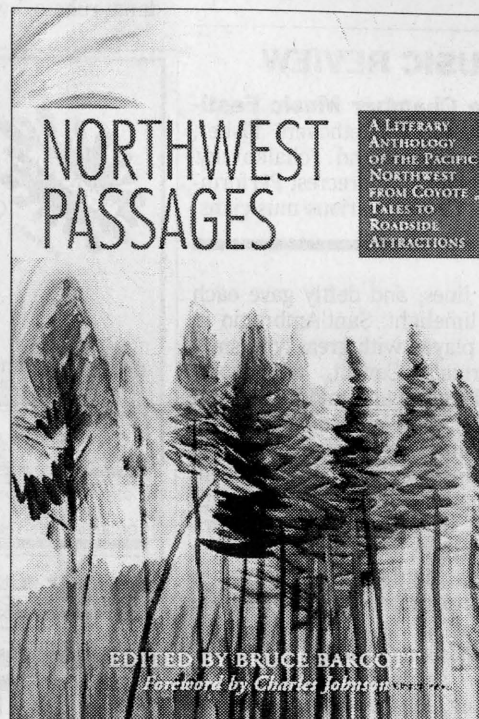
Writer Molly Gloss of Portland — whose own novel of Northwest pioneer days, "The Jump Off Creek," is rapidly rising in esteem, almost making the essential list — said of Welch's novel: "Much more than an historical novel, this is a stunningly beautiful and rich evocative book that illuminates our path into the past."

A much different vision of Native American life in the Northwest is found in Sherman

Alexie's "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," which is one of five books tied for eighth place on the list. The young Seattle writer, who grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation, gives a new view of reservation life, where hard-edged humor helps get through tough times.

Barbara Bailey and Michael Wells of Bailey/Coy books in Seattle wrote of him: "Alexie's writing will have a lasting effect on the literature of the Pacific Northwest. His stories, novels and poems explore the Native American experience in a bold new way."

Marilynne Robinson's "Housekeeping," a quirky coming-of-age first novel about two sisters in northern Idaho, may well be the most unexpected book of all on the essential



Northwest list. It has been offered in a mass market paperback for several years, a disadvantage of sorts since trade paperback is the more common format for literary works. A new trade paperback edition will be published this fall by the Noonday Press imprint of Farrar, Strauss & Giroux. The book's standing may well have been boosted by the arty 1987 film version, starring Christine Lahti and directed by Bill Forsyth.

"Housekeeping" does seem to inspire strong loyalty among those who have read it. Editor Barcott calls it his "favorite quiet book about the Northwest," while writer Sandra Scofield of Oregon describes it as "Idaho landscape as metaphor and destiny. A modern classic."

"Housekeeping" also turned out to be the only work on the list written by a woman (even though contributors to the list included 15 women and 20 men).

Several contributors to the list, in fact, bemoaned the lack of noteworthy Northwest works by female writers. Three novels by women almost made the list — Gloss' "The Jump Off Creek," Ursula Le Guin's "The Lathe of Heaven" and Annie Dillard's "The Living."

The final books that did make the list include two seeming sure things: Ivan Doig's beloved Montana memoir, "This House of Sky," and Raymond Carver's collected short story tour de force, "Where I'm Calling From." Less well-known, especially outside his native state of Oregon, is Portlander Craig Lesley's "Winterkill," a novel featuring an Indian rodeo cowboy who confronts his dwindling career and family crisis in Eastern Oregon.

Three other highly regarded novels were near misses for the essential Northwest list: "This Boy's Life" by Tobias Wolff (coming of age in Concrete, Wash.); "Another Roadside Attraction" by Tom Robbins (1960s high jinks in the Skagit Valley); and "A New Life" by Bernard Malamud (a New York newcomer adrift at a Northwest small college in 1950, a delightful satire set at a thinly disguised Oregon State, where the late great writer once taught).

Contributors to the NW list

Contributing their own lists to help determine the 12 Essential Northwest Books were:

Barbara Bailey and **Michael Wells**, Bailey/Coy Books, Seattle.
Bruce Barcott, writer, Seattle.
Rebecca Brown, writer, Seattle.
Robin Cody, writer, Portland.
Molly Cook, owner of Second Story Books and Magnolia's Bookstore, Seattle.
Bryan Di Salvatore and **Deirdre McNamer**, writers, Missoula, Mont.
Ivan Doig, writer, Seattle.
Molly Gloss, writer, Portland.
David Guterson, writer, Bainbridge Island.
Sam Hamill, poet and editor of Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend.

Cindy Heidemann, University of Oregon Bookstore, Eugene.
William Kittredge, professor at the University of Montana and writer, Missoula.

Jon Krakauer, writer, Seattle.
Gary Luke, editorial director at Sasquatch Books, Seattle.

John D. Marshall, book reporter at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

John W. Marshall, poet and co-owner, Open Books, Seattle.

Kathleen Dean Moore, professor at Oregon State University and writer, Corvallis.

Murray Morgan, historian, Tacoma.

Jack Nisbet, writer, Spokane.

Chris O'Hara, co-owner of Auntie's Bookstore, Spokane.

Nick O'Connell, writer, Seattle.

Brenda Peterson, writer, Seattle.

Sherry Prowda and the staff at Seattle Arts & Lectures.

Jonathan Raban, writer, Seattle.

Valerie Ryan, owner of Cannon Beach Book Co., Cannon Beach, Ore.

Roger Sale, professor at the University of Washington and writer, Seattle.

Carlos A. Schwantes, historian, University of Idaho, Moscow.

Sandra Scofield, writer, Ashland, Ore.

Elizabeth Wales, agent at Levant & Wales Literary Agency Inc., Seattle.

Mark Wessel and **Michael Lieberman**, Wessel & Lieberman Booksellers, Seattle.

Doig Unleashes Flood of Montana Memories

BY BRANDON GRIGGS

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

As a lover of literature and a chronicler of the American West, Ivan Doig is pleased with the reaction to his newest novel, *Bucking the Sun*.

In the past year, large audiences have greeted Doig at readings in Washington D.C., coastal Connecticut and upstate Vermont. Even six weeks ago in celebrity-crazed Los Angeles, considered a forbidding wasteland for literary authors, he drew capacity crowds.

Why the surge of interest in Doig's latest book? Maybe reports about the demise of the novel are premature. Maybe fiction about the West is finally getting national recognition. More likely, word-of-mouth is spreading among readers who relish Doig's carefully crafted prose.

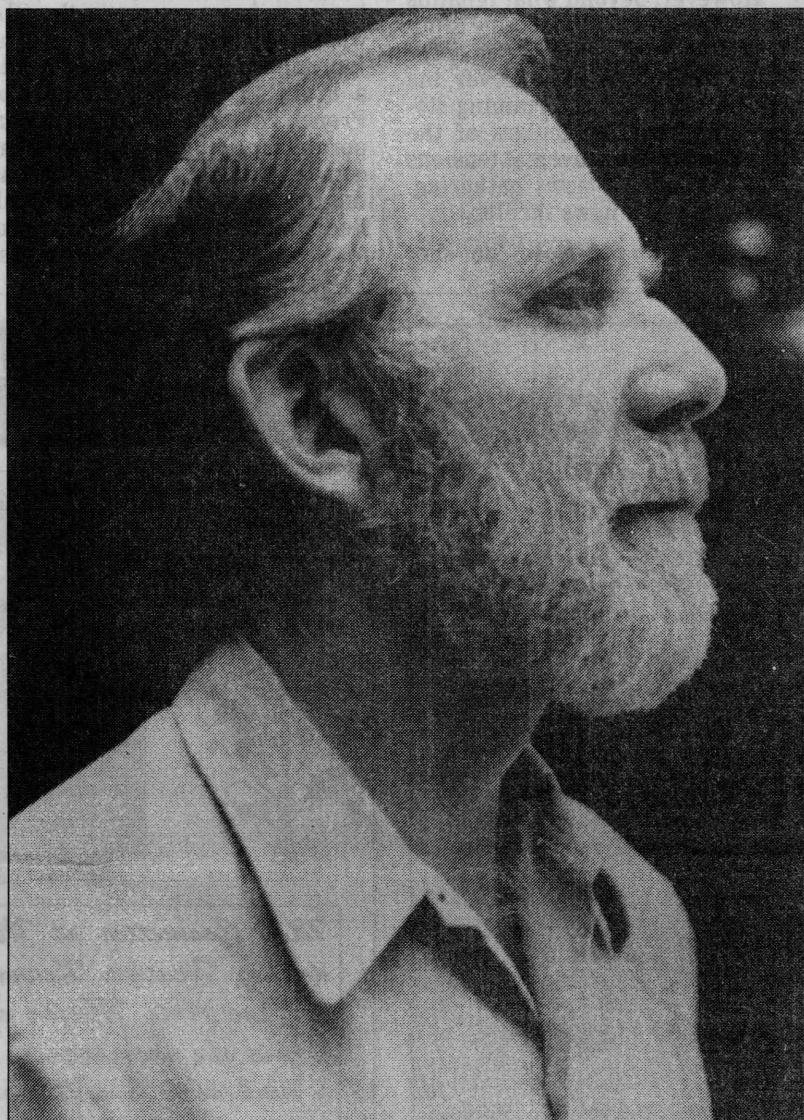
"There's a pretty good appreciation in other parts of the country for the kinds of writing going on in the West now," explains Doig, 57, by telephone from his home near Seattle. "There is some hope [for Western writers]. We hope Wallace Stegner broke the trail for us and we don't have to be into our 60s and early 70s before people start turning out in large numbers."

Doig, the author of five novels and three books of nonfiction, visits Salt Lake City Wednesday to read from *Bucking the Sun*, his family saga about the building of the Fort Peck dam in northeastern Montana during the 1930s. A writer who appreciates the spoken word, Doig brings a touch of theater to his readings. He reads from enlarged copies of his manuscripts to avoid using reading glasses, which make him dizzy when he looks up at the audience.

"The voice has always been an instrument to me," he says. "I look on this as sort of a nightly performance."

With almost 500 bookstore appearances under his belt, Doig still makes regular pilgrimages to his beloved Montana, where he grew up and where most of his books are set. Once there, he drives from town to town greeting readers and signing his books. Doig is an especially frequent guest at The Country Bookshelf in Bozeman.

"I've done more signings there than anywhere else on the face of the globe," he says. Doig's ap-



Ivan Doig sees readings as "sort of a nightly performance."

■ Doig Reading

Ivan Doig will read from and sign his latest novel, *Bucking the Sun*, Wednesday at 7 p.m. at The King's English Bookshop, 1511 S. 1500 East in Salt Lake City.

dam, a New Deal project on the Missouri River that eventually employed more than 10,000 people. The family's internal strife plays out against the harsh economic realities of the Depression-era shantytowns that sprang up to house the dam workers.

As the novel opens, a truck containing the drowned bodies of a man and a woman is pulled from the lake created by the dam. Both bodies are naked. Both are mem-

history — in this case, the building of the Fort Peck dam. It was something he had wanted to write about for nearly a dozen years.

"I heard about the Fort Peck dam experience time and again in Montana working on earlier books," he says, choosing his words carefully. "And it dawned on me, 'This is a big thing in the lives of that generation.' Many people got their start in life working on that dam."

History, Doig says, "triggers my imagination quite often as a novelist. As I work away at these characters . . . the history helps explain [who they are]. How did they grow up? What wars have they been in? What jobs have the women been able to get?"

"I wince also at being called a historical novelist," adds Doig, who holds a doctorate in history from the University of Washington. "To me, history is simply part

Montana novels (*English Creek*, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* and *Ride with Me*, *Mariah Montana*) were filled with the rhythms of rural speech — what Doig calls the "poetry of the vernacular."

For *Bucking the Sun*, Doig tried a different approach. Bold, cinematic and filled with a huge cast of peripheral characters, the novel is written in a straightforward style that propels the story along.

"What Doig is so good at is capturing a sense of a certain period of Montana history and telling a big, whopping sort of story," wrote novelist Judith Freeman in a review of *Bucking the Sun*. "It has often been said that the story of the West is the story of water, and this is certainly one of those stories, told in great detail."

Although Doig has not lived in Montana for some 40 years, he continues to mine its rich history in his books. When asked why, Doig says his hardscrabble boyhood on a central Montana cattle ranch keeps a tight grip on his imagination.

"Childhood always remains a vivid chapter. The geography of childhood and the language — the echoes that stay between our ears of how people talked around us when we grew up — that stays with us." An only child, Doig prefers to write about large families because they offer more opportunities for dramatic tension.

"I am interested in all the angles within sizable families," he says. "I find these elbowings and lovings that go on between siblings and parents endlessly fascinating."

Doig lives with his wife Carol in a wooded valley north of Seattle where he hikes, chops firewood and tends a vegetable garden. Mostly he reads: everything from the late Albert Camus to Irish novelist Roddy Doyle to Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare to the recent memoir by newspaper publisher Katharine Graham.

And, yes, he is at work on a new book: a contemporary novel, set mostly in the Pacific Northwest, about 50-ish baby boomers wedged in a generational vise between their parents and their children.

Like the characters in the novel, tentatively due in 1999, Doig is grappling with technology that is shaping the future. After more than 20 years of slaving at a manual typewriter, for the first time he is using a word processor to

BY BRANDON GRIGGS

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

As a lover of literature and a chronicler of the American West, Ivan Doig is pleased with the reaction to his newest novel, *Bucking the Sun*.

In the past year, large audiences have greeted Doig at readings in Washington D.C., coastal Connecticut and upstate Vermont. Even six weeks ago in celebrity-crazed Los Angeles, considered a forbidding wasteland for literary authors, he drew capacity crowds.

Why the surge of interest in Doig's latest book? Maybe reports about the demise of the novel are premature. Maybe fiction about the West is finally getting national recognition. More likely, word-of-mouth is spreading among readers who relish Doig's carefully crafted prose.

"There's a pretty good appreciation in other parts of the country for the kinds of writing going on in the West now," explains Doig, 57, by telephone from his home near Seattle. "There is some hope [for Western writers]. We hope Wallace Stegner broke the trail for us and we don't have to be into our 60s and early 70s before people start turning out in large numbers."

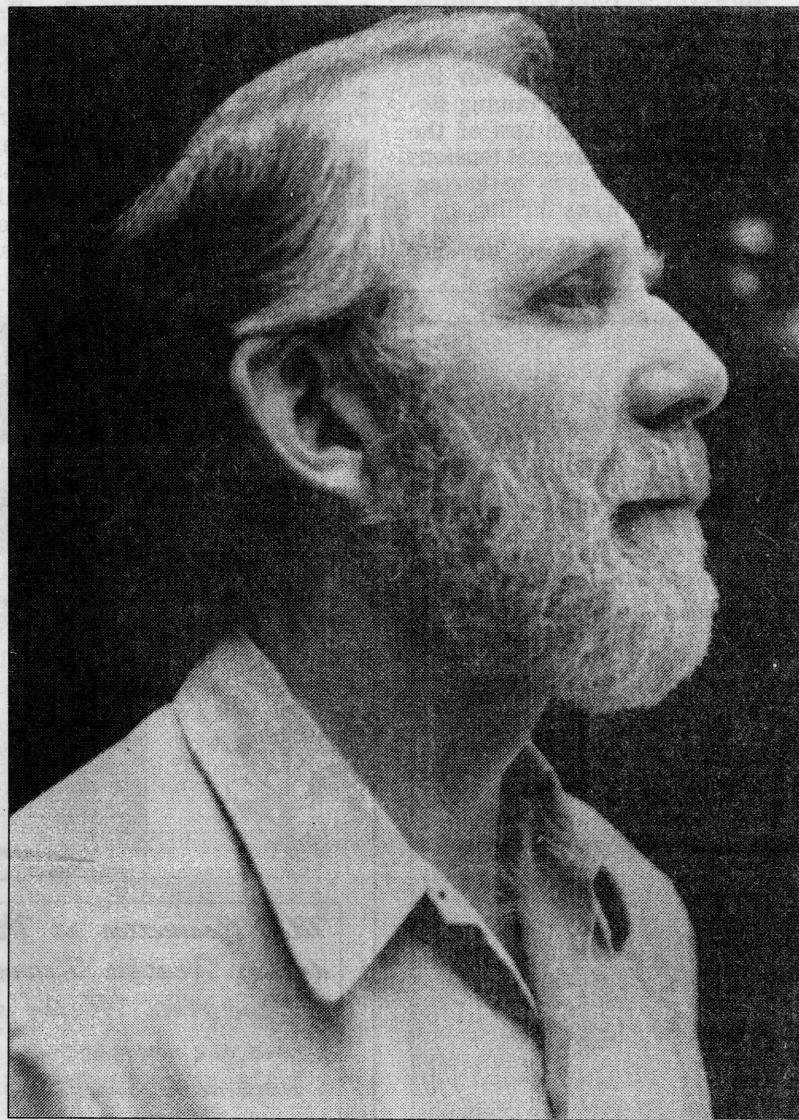
Doig, the author of five novels and three books of nonfiction, visits Salt Lake City Wednesday to read from *Bucking the Sun*, his family saga about the building of the Fort Peck dam in northeastern Montana during the 1930s. A writer who appreciates the spoken word, Doig brings a touch of theater to his readings. He reads from enlarged copies of his manuscripts to avoid using reading glasses, which make him dizzy when he looks up at the audience.

"The voice has always been an instrument to me," he says. "I look on this as sort of a nightly performance."

With almost 500 bookstore appearances under his belt, Doig still makes regular pilgrimages to his beloved Montana, where he grew up and where most of his books are set. Once there, he drives from town to town greeting readers and signing his books. Doig is an especially frequent guest at The Country Bookshelf in Bozeman.

"I've done more signings there than anywhere else on the face of the globe," he says. Doig's appearance this week at The King's English Bookshop will be his first in Utah since May 1993, when the Utah Humanities Council invited him to read in small towns across the state.

Bucking the Sun is the story of the Duffs, a contentious family of Scottish immigrants who find jobs building the massive Fort Peck



Ivan Doig sees readings as "sort of a nightly performance."

■ Doig Reading

Ivan Doig will read from and sign his latest novel, *Bucking the Sun*, Wednesday at 7 p.m. at The King's English Bookshop, 1511 S. 1500 East in Salt Lake City.

dam, a New Deal project on the Missouri River that eventually employed more than 10,000 people. The family's internal strife plays out against the harsh economic realities of the Depression-era shantytowns that sprang up to house the dam workers.

As the novel opens, a truck containing the drowned bodies of a man and a woman is pulled from the lake created by the dam. Both bodies are naked. Both are members of the Duff family. "Married, you bet," one sheriff says to another. "Only not to each other."

Having hooked the reader with this bit of intrigue, Doig then jumps back five years to the beginning of the story. As with his previous novels, Doig fortifies his characterizations and plot twists with hearty helpings of Montana

history — in this case, the building of the Fort Peck dam. It was something he had wanted to write about for nearly a dozen years.

"I heard about the Fort Peck dam experience time and again in Montana working on earlier books," he says, choosing his words carefully. "And it dawned on me, 'This is a big thing in the lives of that generation.' Many people got their start in life working on that dam."

History, Doig says, "triggers my imagination quite often as a novelist. As I work away at these characters . . . the history helps explain [who they are]. How did they grow up? What wars have they been in? What jobs have the women been able to get?"

"I wince also at being called a historical novelist," adds Doig, who holds a doctorate in history from the University of Washington. "To me, history is simply part of the story. It's not as if I'm writing about the Crusades. Most of my books took place within people's extended memories."

Doig's early books (the acclaimed memoir *This House of Sky*, follow-up *Winter Brothers* and his first novel, *The Sea Runners*) were much praised for their rich lyrical style. His trilogy of

Montana novels (*English Creek*, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* and *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*) were filled with the rhythms of rural speech — what Doig calls the "poetry of the vernacular."

For *Bucking the Sun*, Doig tried a different approach. Bold, cinematic and filled with a huge cast of peripheral characters, the novel is written in a straightforward style that propels the story along.

"What Doig is so good at is capturing a sense of a certain period of Montana history and telling a big, whopping sort of story," wrote novelist Judith Freeman in a review of *Bucking the Sun*. "It has often been said that the story of the West is the story of water, and this is certainly one of those stories, told in great detail."

Although Doig has not lived in Montana for some 40 years, he continues to mine its rich history in his books. When asked why, Doig says his hardscrabble boyhood on a central Montana cattle ranch keeps a tight grip on his imagination.

"Childhood always remains a vivid chapter. The geography of childhood and the language — the echoes that stay between our ears of how people talked around us when we grew up — that stays with us." An only child, Doig prefers to write about large families because they offer more opportunities for dramatic tension.

"I am interested in all the angles within sizable families," he says. "I find these elbowings and lovings that go on between siblings and parents endlessly fascinating."

Doig lives with his wife Carol in a wooded valley north of Seattle where he hikes, chops firewood and tends a vegetable garden. Mostly he reads: everything from the late Albert Camus to Irish novelist Roddy Doyle to Albanian novelist Ismail Kadare to the recent memoir by newspaper publisher Katharine Graham.

And, yes, he is at work on a new book: a contemporary novel, set mostly in the Pacific Northwest, about 50-ish baby boomers wedged in a generational vise between their parents and their children.

Like the characters in the novel, tentatively due in 1999, Doig is grappling with technology that is shaping the future. After more than 20 years of slaving at a manual typewriter, for the first time he is using a word processor to edit his novel-in-progress.

"I'll give it a shot. I'm still drafting on an old gray manual Royal. Sometime in the afternoon I go over to the computer and put in a couple of pages of the day's work," Doig says warily. "It's pretty much a word-oriented life, with short bursts into the outdoors."

goodwill expressed by the "lower" class toward the upper. Lesbian critics will be intrigued by the way Bert Sorrells continues to love and respect the beautiful, fun-loving, sad Bonnie, even after she freely chooses two female lovers. Critics interested in lenses from Zen to language will find a tension-filled, tenuous balance in this U. S./Mexico border-dwelling author's ability to cross racial, linguistic, sexual, geographic, and legal borders without judgment.

In Brown's world, the only unforgivable sin is expecting a day's work from a tired horse.

BARBARA "BARNEY" NELSON

Sul Ross State University

Bucking the Sun. By Ivan Doig. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 412 pages, \$23.00.)

Ivan Doig's latest novel, *Bucking the Sun*, may have arrived in time to serve as an antidote to the latest syrupy representations of the West, such as *The Horse Whisperer*. Doig's book should be required reading for those who would romanticize Montana, and it offers an important history lesson for all. The terrain of this book is still Montana, by now familiar territory to Doig's readers, but boomtowns have replaced the range in this narrative.

Scottish immigrants Hugh and Meg Duff have scraped a living from a bottomland ranch and raised three sons, but the New Deal, in the form of Fort Peck Dam, changes everything. Their land is condemned and they must establish a new life in perilous Depression times. The Duffs sign on to help build the dam, and the novel tracks their lives as they become boomtown residents and construction workers. Without their land, Doig's characters cast about for a future, for a sense of whom and where each will be in the world. The process makes them less sympathetic than many characters in Doig's earlier work, but the difficulties they face make them emblematic of many westerners' lives.

Bucking the Sun addresses many issues critical to the modern West, and it does so head on. And this is where the novel's strength lies. Most important, Doig articulates with great critical sympathy just how people who care about a place can nevertheless participate

it its demise, or at least its radical transformation. The Duff men, and the women who marry them, are hardly thoughtless people, but their thinking about the dam, the West, and their place in it cannot stop a federal project on the scale of Fort Peck Dam. That they think about the consequences of their actions at all should do much to complicate simple assumptions about people who make what many now consider bad environmental decisions. Doig offers a compelling profile of some of our western predecessors, coaxing us to understand how bad things can happen to good places.

This is a smart narrative addition to the new western history, one that gently reminds us the great American West was a classed society, where, in this case, the federal government offered laboring classes busy work to keep them passive. Doig gives us a range of perspectives on the politics of boomtowns, revealing how the West accommodates both the entrepreneur and the Communist party member. In this boomtown environment, *Bucking the Sun* complicates the insider/outsider distinctions so common to western writing. The workers, whether locals or strangers, share the need for money, while the reasons for disparaging the project vary. The result is a complex portrait of an all-too-neglected part of our regional and national past. In the bargain, Doig provides one of the best characterizations of the uneasy relation between a fiercely independent region and the federal government I have read anywhere. In these times of angry "Freemen" and militia members, we might all take note.

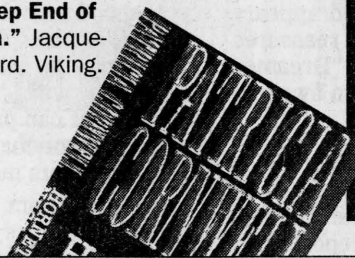
Bucking the Sun does not deliver the pure narrative pleasure of earlier Doig books, but it offers readers an intelligent, well-informed look at a crucial and often overlooked period in the "winning of the West."

NANCY COOK

University of Rhode Island

FICTION

1. **"The Partner."** John Grisham. Doubleday. \$ 26.95.
2. **"Sole Survivor."** Dean Koontz. Knopf. \$25.95.
3. **"Total Control."** David Baldacci. Warner. \$25.
4. **"Evening Glass."** Maeve Binchy. Delacorte. \$24.95.
5. **"Hornet's Nest."** Patricia Cornwell. Putnam. \$25.95.
6. **"The Notebook."** Nicholas Sparks. Warner. \$16.95.
7. **"Small Town Girl."** LaVyrle Spencer. Putnam. \$23.95.
8. **"Airframe."** Michael Crichton. Knopf. \$26.
9. **"3001: The Final Odyssey."** Arthur C. Clark. Del Rey. \$25.
10. **"The Deep End of the Ocean."** Jacqueline Mitchard. Viking. \$23.95.



BOOKS

SUNDAY, MARCH 9, 1997 • SECTION C PAGE 12

NON-FICTION

1. **"Murder in Brentwood."** Mark Fuhrman. Regnery. \$24.95.
2. **"Personal History."** Katharine Graham. Knopf. \$29.95.
3. **"Simple Abundance."** Sara Ban Breathnach. Warner. \$17.95.
4. **"Angela's Ashes."** Frank McCourt.
5. **"The Arthritis Cure."** Jason Theodakis, Brenda Adderly and Barry Fox. St. Martin's. \$22.95.
6. **"Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus."** John Gray. HarperCollins. \$23.
7. **"Mastering the Zone."** Barry Sears. Regan Books. \$22.
8. **"Gift of Peace."** Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. Loyola Press. \$17.95.
9. **"Conversations with God."** Neale Walsch. Putnam. \$19.95.
10. **"Journey Into Darkness."** John Douglas and Mark Olshaker. Scribner/Drew. \$25.

NOTABLE QUOTE: *"Saturday night in the hood, and it's coming alive like a swamp does after sundown..."*

"THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB" BY MIKE MAGNUSON

DAVID STEINBERG



Of the Journal

Deadlines help writer find words

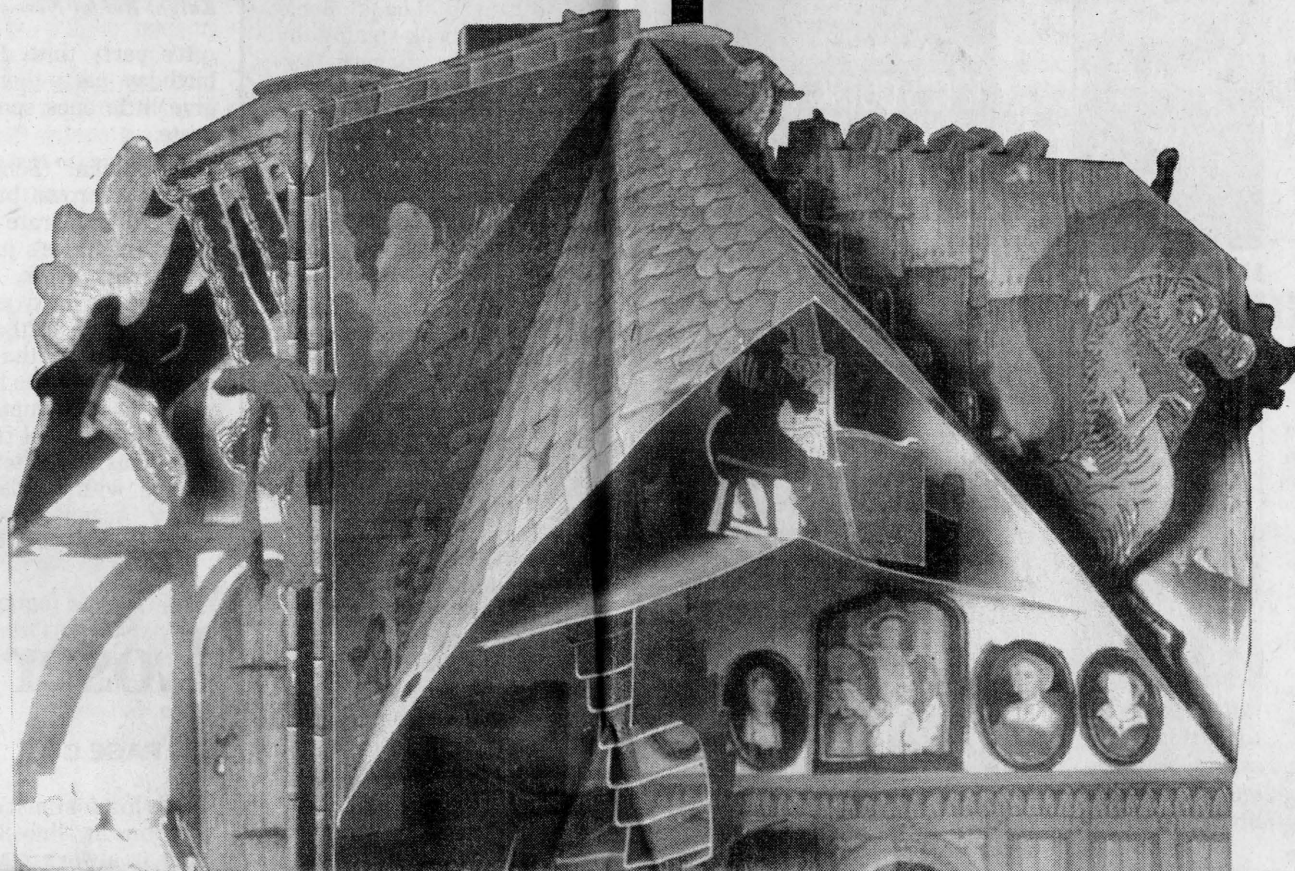
■ *Journalistic traits serve award-winning novelist well*

✱ The Mountains & Plains Booksellers Association presents its literary award at a banquet 6:30 p.m. Saturday, La Fonda, Downtown Santa Fe. The event is open to the public. Tickets are \$30; proceeds support regional literacy programs. For credit-card purchases call 800-752-0249 by Tuesday.

✱ Mountains & Plains Booksellers 1997 winners are Ivan Doig, Spirit of the West Literary Achievement Award; David London, "Sundancer" (fiction); Stephen E. Ambrose, "Undaunted Courage" (nonfiction); Gary Snyder, "Mountains & Rivers Without End" (poetry); Andrea D. and Brian Pinkney, "Bill Pickett, Rodeo-Ridin' Cowboy" (children's).

HUMOR

Pop-up masterpieces



'Right Man's' loser stays in trouble

"The Right Man for the Job" by Mike Magnuson

HarperCollins, \$23, 304 pp.

REVIEW BY FRANK ZORETICH

Gunnar Lund, the protagonist of this first novel, is an amiable jerk from a small town in Wisconsin who has left his long-time former girlfriend to move with a new girlfriend and her 10-year-old son to Columbus, Ohio.

When he's not quarreling with her, Gunnar works as a rental-store repossession man. Teamed with a partner named Dewey, he roams the slums of Columbus attempting to retrieve shoddy rental furnishings — including television sets and refrigerators — from deadbeats who have a thousand excuses for why they're behind on their monthly payments.

* Ivan Doig discusses, signs "Bucking the Sun" noon-1:30 p.m. Saturday, Page One, 11018 Montgomery NE.

* David London talks about, signs "Sundancer" 2-3:30 p.m. Sunday, March 16, Page One.

Before he became an award-winning novelist and historian, Ivan Doig had been a shepherd, a newspaperman and a magazine editor and writer.

He's never forgotten what he first learned at Journalism School at Northwestern. Like meeting deadlines.

"I've always got my own deadlines," Doig said from his home in Seattle.

"There's a daily quota of words I do. And I do them every day. Now I'm in the first draft of the next novel. And it's 400 words a day, on two triple-spaced pages."

This daily deadline he applies within the context of a book contract. In essence, it's about delivering a book every third Dec. 31.

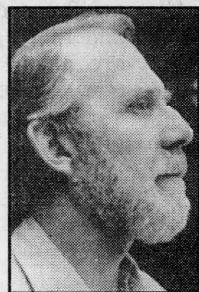
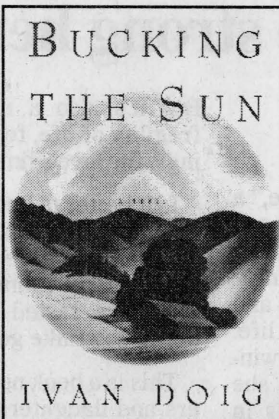
"Between that daily quota of words and the three-year deadline I then carve up my life according to how many pages I need done by a certain time every season," Doig said. "And in trying to get the stuff together I still go out and take a look at what I'm writing about. I hope that's a journalist's trait, lay eyes on what I'm writing about."

He did that with his latest novel, "Bucking the Sun." The story is about three generations of the Duff clan that has been forced off its bottomland farm by the construction of the Fort Peck Dam in Montana during the 1930s. The Duffs are fictional but the dam is quite real.

When the five-year project was completed in 1938, it held the world's greatest concentration of workers and equipment since the construction of the Panama Canal. The earth-filled dam is almost 25 stories tall and four miles long. It was the centerpiece of the New Deal: The Depression-era project provided more than 10,000 jobs.

Like real-life families, the Duffs find relief work on the project.

"I got a break on the Fort Peck book in that the Montana Historical Society had



DOIG: "Daily quota of words"

FAMOUS ART SHOWS UP IN UNUSUAL PLACES IN 'B & B'

REVIEW BY DAVID STEINBERG

This may be the ultimate in pop-up books. Or in fun art history books. Or both.

The pliable spine lets you pull the front cover around so that it touches the back cover. Then you tie four strands of glued shoe laces that reveal a home in the round, a 360-degree presentation of the rooms of "Botticelli's Bed & Breakfast."

It's a book that appeals to children and to adults. Here's why.

The visuals. As you might be able to tell from photographs accompanying this review, the three-D images are a trip.

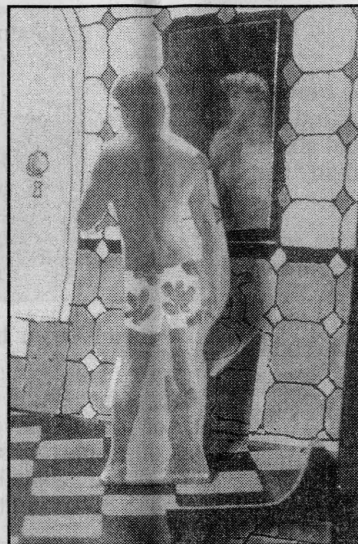
The art. That's Michelangelo's David ... in boxer shorts brushing his teeth in the bathroom.

There's Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa standing on a ladder rung holding a bottle of wine she's just brought up from the cellar.

Auguste Rodin's The Thinker is resting among paintings stored in a chamber in the cellar.

Whistler's Mother is warming herself in front of a fireplace in the library. Behind her is Francisco Goya's "The Maja," originally painted in the nude but clothed by request from the prudish Mother. But the viewer can pull a tab to reveal the woman *desnuda*.

Even in the bathroom where David is brushing his teeth there's other art. Claude Monet's "Water Lilies: The Morning" is in, of all places, the toilet. The towels are by Piet Mondrian in a design taken from one of his



DAVID BRUSHES UP: Michelangelo's statue of David wears boxer shorts and brushes his teeth in the bathroom of this 360-degree pop-up book.

"Botticelli's Bed & Breakfast" by Jan Pienkowski

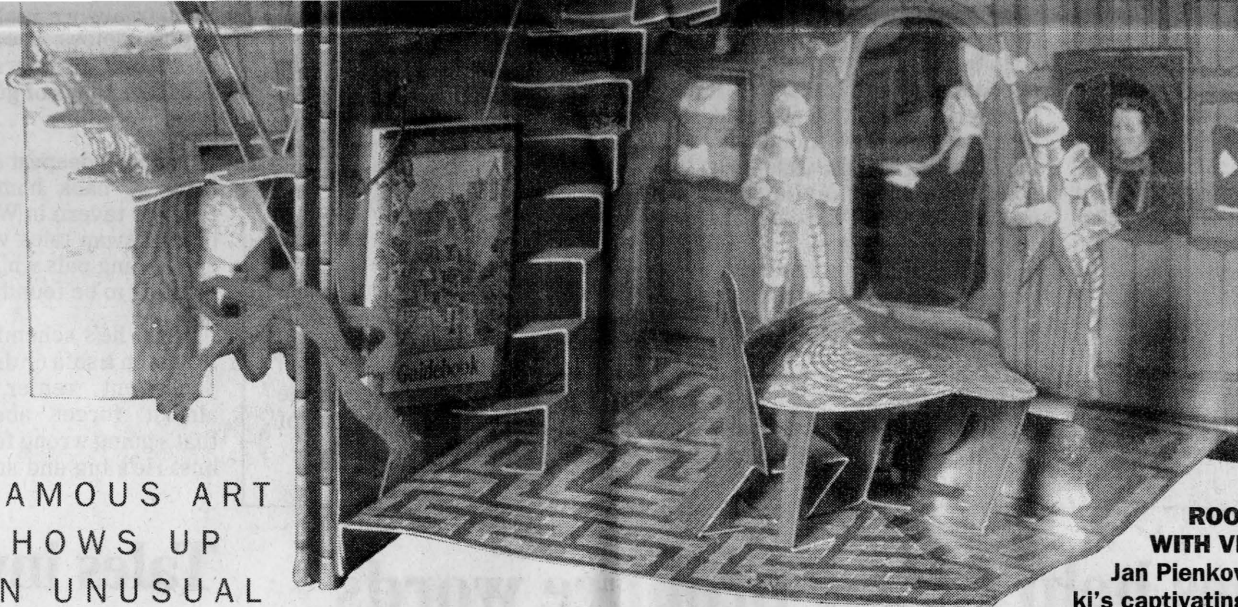
Intervisual Books/Simon & Schuster, \$23.50

paintings.

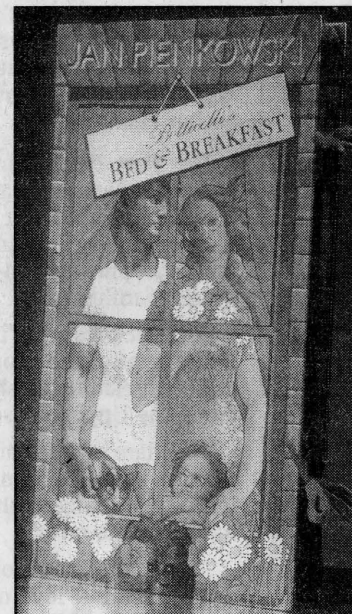
In all, 56 pieces of art are in the B&B collection. Other artists represented in the collection are Albrecht Durer, John Constable, Diego Velasquez, Katsushika Hokusai, Vincent Van Gogh and Rembrandt van Ryjn. And a bison from a prehistoric cave painting is in the cellar.

Part of the challenge is in identification.

The book is the idea of children's



ROOM WITH VIEW: Jan Pienkowski's captivating pop-up book "Botticelli's Bed & Breakfast" reveals room after room of art in unlikely places.



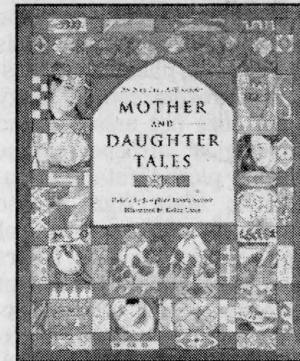
HEY BOTTICELLI: Bespectacled Venus, at right, peers through the window on the cover of a pop-up art book for children and adults.

author Jan Pienkowski, put together by paper engineers Roger Smith and Helen Balmer.

"It's humorous. Sort of a game for adults. And for the child it's fun and interactive. We toyed with the idea of including the secret paper," said Dawn Bentley, executive editor at Intervisual Books.

What secret paper? You find it.

David Steinberg is Journal book editor.



Tales celebrate strong heroines

"Mother and Daughter Tales" retold by Josephine Evetts-Secker, illustrated by Helen Cann

Abbeville Kids, \$19.95, 80 pp.

REVIEW BY SUSAN STIGER

"Mother and Daughter Tales" is full of stepsisters hated for their beauty, ugly crones who scare children and princes who fall in love with fair maidens at first sight.

It's also full of headstrong girls learning the lessons of life — to trust their brains and their hearts and that wonderfully female combination of the two — intuition.

This collection of folk tales from around the world, illustrated in lush, moody watercolors, may tug at your feminist sensibilities, but still these girls emerge as heroines. Their stories tell of celebration, fertility, transformation, independence, renewal, community and will — the power of women, women's rites, as passed from mother to daughter.

Sadnesses are great: Young girls lose their mothers only to endure hateful stepmothers, women are barren, men are deceitful, nature is harsh. But the stories invite discussion about overcoming, lessons learned, transformation, losses

See **TALES** on **PAGE C11**

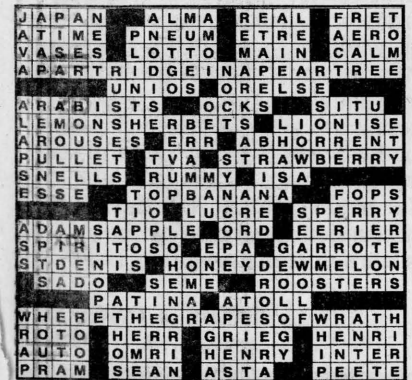
See **DEADLINE** on **PAGE C11**

good guys bamboozled the vile Nazis with double agents, phony code messages and Oxford-accented dirty tricks. Silva does not mess around with psychological introspection; he gets right into plot. A fatally glamorous German Mata Hari, whose boudoir abilities still are talked of back at spy school in Bavaria, filters into London and seduces the brilliant young American naval officer seconded by Churchill to design the six-story floating cement harbors needed for the real invasion at Normandy.

Vicary, who takes to spying with alacrity, tracks her up hill and down dale. In the meantime, he also is running double agents, sending bogus radio codes from dank prison cells — and slimming down and buying new suits! (The women in the file rooms start looking at him with new interest.)

Silva hasn't yet perfected the British class snobbery, the intramural sniping between the dug-in, knighted Whitehall aristocrats and the middle-class intellectuals drafted to serve them. But he's good, especially in the precise-sounding, crucial details about the subway and taxi surveillances across London and the helter-skelter car escapes through the back roads of northeast England on the way to that fateful rendezvous with the waiting German U-boat. Vicary, like George Smiley, never gets the thanks he is due. But that is why in the good-reading business there are sequels.

This review appeared in the Detroit Free Press.



Deadlines help writer produce words



from **PAGE C12**

done 50 interviews of people who worked on the dam. It was fascinating to find out who indulged in what. Then I had six or eight sources of my own on the dam," the author said.

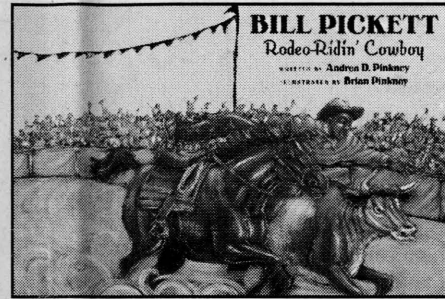
The Fort Peck Dam story, Doig said, was complicated orally. But that drew him into the book; not because it involved his own family; it didn't. They were Montana sheepherders at the time, and hundreds of miles away.

Fort Peck was the first important event in the lives of the people of that area — a major agricultural and historical valley along the Upper Missouri River.

The dam, Doig said, "put Lewis and Clark's route, 135 miles of it, under a lake, and changed the ecology and the nature of the river."

That's the kind of dichotomy Doig zooms in on — love of the land is transformed into a danger to it.

His work-in-progress takes on a similar theme in a different context. "The protagonist is sort of the last environmental writer in captivity, he's outlived Edward Abbey by a few years. He's a fictional guy who writes a Coast Watch column for an urban weekly in Seattle. He's facing how to keep on writing about it week after week, of seeing parts of it being hugged to death by people flooding in to



build their dream homes in green valleys."

Doig is fascinated with what he calls "a kind of pinball movement, the displacement of people that's been going on in the West, where people bail out of California and go to Boise and to Albuquerque."

■ ■ ■

Doig's previous books include "This House of Sky" (1978), a National Book Award finalist, "The Sea Runners" (1982), which was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year, and his Montana trilogy, "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana."

■ ■ ■

Jack Loeffler will read the acceptance speech for Gary Snyder, who is unable to attend. And Gwynne Spencer will read the acceptance speech for Andrea D. and Brian Pinkney, who cannot attend the banquet.

Tales involve strong heroines

from **PAGE C12**

that bring strength.

In the Slavic story, "Snowflake," a childless couple grows old and sad watching other people's children play. One particularly harsh winter they decide to build a snowchild and in their delight, she comes to life. They care for her through the winter, but as spring approaches, she becomes melancholy and hides in the shadows, growing thin and pale. The children coax her out to celebrate Midsummer's Day and they build a fire to jump over. When Snowflake jumps, she melts at once and disappears. Her distraught mother goes on searching for her for the rest of her life.

On the surface, it's a sad story, maybe even the stuff of bad dreams.

But it's also a metaphor for the fragility of life, for transitory blessings, for love's limits.

Is it better to know love and lose it than not know it at all? Is joy sweeter when you have known great sadness and is sadness deeper when you have tasted joy? And where does Snowflake go?

This is a book not just about mothers and daughters, but for mothers and daughters — to be read together. These messages aren't obvious and that's why they endure: They are meant to be shared, explored and felt, ultimately to be understood. Only then can they be passed on.

Susan Stiger is a feature writer for the Journal.

PAGE ONE WELCOMES

**SOUTHWEST WOMEN'S
HISTORY EVENING
CELEBRATING WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH**

Kate Horsley
*A Killing in New Town
& Crazy Woman*
Sharon Niederman
A Quilt of Words
Cheryl Foote

Women of the New Mexico Frontier

Talk & Booksigning • Tuesday, March 11th, 7-8:30pm



IVAN DOIG
Bucking the Sun

Recipient of the "Spirit of the West Literary Achievement Award"

Talk & Booksigning • Saturday, March 15th, 12-1:30pm

PAGE 1 ONE

**OPEN 7AM-11:30PM
1-800-521-4122 • 294-2026**

SW CORNER OF MONTGOMERY & JUAN TABO

DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE CALL TO CONFIRM.

Kids Corner

Youngsters ask questions about their history

BY JOANNA H. KRAUS

Knight-Ridder Newspapers

When seventh-grader Andy researches his Texas family roots for a school assignment, he discovers an ancestor who was believed to be a thief. His name was expunged

from the family Bible. Andy becomes determined to uncover the truth. The reader is pulled into the mystery "Search for the Shadow Man," cleverly crafted by Joan Lowery Nixon, as well as an ethical dilemma. Ages 8-12.

"A Different Kind of Courage" by

Ellen Howard is a fictionalized account of two children who meet as a result of being evacuated from Europe to America during World War II. The children perceive their parents' selflessness as abandonment. A different perspective on a much-explored topic. Ages 9 to 13.

Against The Current

BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster, 412 pp. \$23

By David Laskin

THE BUILDING of the Fort Peck Dam in eastern Montana: not, on the face of it, the most yielding subject for a novel. One of the most massive of FDR's New Deal projects, the earthen dam—the world's second largest—plugged the wide Missouri River with a four-mile cork of dredged-up sand, silt and clay. It took seven years (from 1933 to 1940) and 10,000 civilian workers to get the thing in place. Roaring shantytowns sprang up to house the crews and soak up their overflow wages. When the dam was done, a lake covering a quarter of million acres backed up over the Montana plains.

On second thought, what an absolutely stunning premise for a novel—given the right novelist. In *Bucking the Sun*, Ivan Doig rises admirably to the challenge of turning hydraulic engineering into compelling narrative. A Montanan by birth and by inclination, Doig unfolds the saga of the Fort Peck Dam through its impact on a single family—a clan of recently transplanted, peppery Scots called the Duffs. They were the damndest bunch to try to figure out, a new Duff wife muses about the explosive family she has married into. "Tear into each other at the drop of a hat, but stand together if the world so much as looked cross-eyed at them." Parents Hugh and Meg came over from Scotland as newlyweds, struggled for years to farm the fickle soil of the Missouri river valley, and raised three handsome lanky sons. Owen, the eldest and brainiest, incurred his father's everlasting wrath by abandoning the farm to get an engineering degree at Bozeman, his

David Laskin, a Seattle-based writer, is the author of "Braving the Elements: The Stormy History of American Weather."



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY RUSSO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

rowdy twin brothers Neil and Bruce, though colled to cut loose, are still working for their father, raising alfalfa, killing grasshoppers, cursing drought.

And then the dam rears up and turns the Duffs' world on its head. The government condemns the farm—the dam will flood it—and Hugh, Meg and the twins find themselves with no choice but to sign on with the dam-builders. "Goin' Owen" is already there—he's the "fillmaster," one of the topdog engineers in charge of pumping up river mud to create the staggering earthen barrier. Owen and Hugh promptly resume the war that started when Owen left home. Proud, irascible Hugh hates being beholden to his cocky son and hates "Owen's dam." Ambitious, gung-ho, pressed-crease Owen despises his father's bingo-drinking, his bluster and bitterness, and above all

his mullish refusal to admit that the Fort Peck Dam is the nastiest piece of engineering ever.

Subplots, mostly involving sex, love, marriage and politics, proliferate. Bruce and Neil get married after rapid-fire courtships and hurl themselves into energetic sex with their willing new wives. Hugh's brother Darius blows over from Scotland, breathing Marxist politics and unrequited passion for Meg. When she somewhat reluctantly rebuffs him (again), Darius consoles himself with a platinum-headed taxi dancer/hooker named Proxy (one of Doig's more inspired creations), and many torrid trysts later they too tie the knot. And all the while the earthen behemoth looms larger and larger, supplying the Duffs and their women with "the stories, the ingredients of life."

IN BOOKS like his acclaimed memoir *This House of Sky* and the brooding *Winter Brothers* Doig has written memorably of the immense, harsh, empty landscapes of the West; but here he brilliantly conjures up a crowded scene of mass energy and momentous civic upheaval. A master prose craftsman, Doig moves nimbly from wide-angle shots of seething barrooms to close-ups of uptight government offices to the pure poetry of construction and destruction. One gem, among scores, is the scene near the novel's end in which Owen looks on "statue-like" as a half-mile section of the dam collapses into the river: "Half a decade of engineering, millions of cubic yards of Fort Peck Dam... melting like brown sugar."

Bucking the Sun is so good one wishes it were flawless, but the novel does suffer from a serious miscalculation in design. Doig opens the book with the discovery of the drowned naked bodies of two Duffs—a man and a woman, married but not to each other, trapped in the cab of a submerged Ford truck—and he coyly withholds their identities until the novel's final pages. A guessing game of who they are and why and how they died keeps the pages turning, but it's a gimmick and it ends the book on a cheap, sour note.

Aside from this misstep, *Bucking the Sun* is a tour de force of historical fiction—no, fiction period. It's one of those books that takes you over as you read it, invading your daydreams, lodging its cadences in your brain, summoning you back to the page. Doig writes with absolute, perfect-pitch authority on dams, Duffs, the Depression, and the feel of life under Montana's fabled sky. Yes, the building of the Fort Peck Dam is the stuff of a great novel—and this is it.

Secrets of a Southern Town

THE KING OF BABYLON SHALL NOT COME AGAINST YOU

By George Garrett
Harcourt Brace, 337 pp. \$24

By James Hynes

THE NOVELIST George Garrett is one of the wily old foxes of American letters, his work as difficult to pigeonhole as it is a pleasure to read. The author of 25 books, 14 of them fiction, he writes with an energetic and irreverent wit that might be called precocious in a younger man. A native Southerner, conservative by nature, he does not hesitate to write like a postmodernist when it suits his purpose. Author of three of the finest historical novels ever written—*Death of the Fox*, *The Succession*, and *Entered by the Sun*—he is as knowledgeable about, and appears to take as much pleasure in, American popular culture as he does in the plays



means. The narrative moves forward, in its own looping, a-chronological way, and the "truth" of the events of April 1968 is revealed at last, but Garrett is clearly more interested in the journey than in the destination. Garrett knows in his bones what every good novelist knows, that if you break a story into its component parts, what you get is more stories, all the way down, like subatomic particles. And, as in physics, the further down you go into the grain of the narrative, the more mysterious and significant the stories become. The result is as much a magnificent piece of social history and cultural commentary as it is a novel, but more exciting, finally, and funnier, than any straightforward legal thriller.

Indeed, the novel is best considered as a shrewd, engaged and, in places, acid-etched portrait of the changes over the last 30 years in the life of a Southern small town, told in the voices, then and now, of the people who lived those changes. Perhaps necessarily, Tone himself is the least interesting character in the book, but then most of the book is told by much more entertaining folks: Moses Katz, brajny and libidinous, a Jewish professor at the local Baptist College who has turned to writing porn in his retirement; W.E. Gary, a wry and well-to-do African-American lawyer, who lives halfway between the local black and white communities, not quite accepted by either; Penrose Weatherby, brother of the murdered girl, whose adulthood as a slick, New South developer belies his youthful rage; and, speaking through their depositions and trial tran-

A Family of New Deal Dam Builders

Novel spotlights those who helped tame water in the West

BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig

Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23

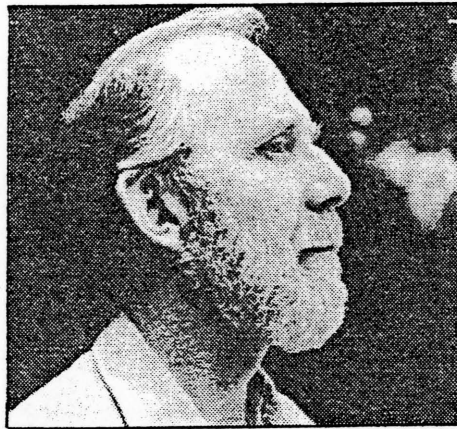
REVIEWED BY JOHN HARVEY

Since his award-winning memoir, "This House of Sky," was published in the late '70s, Montana-born writer and historian Ivan Doig has used the novel form to speculate upon the lives of people who lived and live in the West.

With "Bucking the Sun," which is principally set in the upper reaches of Missouri River country in the Depression years leading up to the start of World War II, he has achieved his most adroit blend of fact and fancy in what is perhaps his best book since that first work.

What sets Doig apart from others who have farmed the same terrain is the deft way he handles the fruits of his research; fact and anecdote are woven into the text with a light and often humorous touch. The sense we have is of a storyteller who is familiar and comfortable with his material; as readers, we trust the teller, and so we trust the tale.

Taking as its basis the construction of the Fort Peck Dam, a major New Deal project that brought work to thousands and in so doing flooded vast tracts of land, Doig centers his story on the lives of the Duff family — whose men were immigrants from Scotland, as was the case with Doig's own kin. If Doig the historian, with his light but liberal use of archive material from the Fort Peck Dam oral history project and the pages of the "Engineering News-Record," gives this saga an authentic structure, it is Doig the novelist who lifts it



Doig the historian gives this saga an authentic structure, while Doig the novelist lifts it to great heights with his portrayal of the five Duff men and the women they love

to great heights with his portrayal of the five Duff men — two brothers and three sons — and the women they love and marry.

"Selfmade men always do a lopsided job of it," the novel begins — a wonderful phrase — and in part that is what the story explores: Hugh Duff and his twin sons, Neil and Bruce, forever adapting to the changing demands of the land and work around them, learning as they go. Set against them is the older son, Owen, who turns against his father by going to college to study engineering and helps mastermind the building of the dam.

They are a headstrong bunch, creatures of hard work and heady impulse, adroit with their hands in every sense, and given to wooing women on the tight-grained tongue-and-groove dance floor of the Blue Eagle — a floor they laid themselves in a single night.

Hugh, the father, is stubborn and strong-willed, loving his wife Meg almost

despite himself in a relationship that owes as much to attrition as it does to affection. He respects and admires Meg just as he writhes under the weight of her judgment, her "nurselike sense of attention, the way of peering at you as if clerking for God." And some Friday nights, his pay burning a hole in his back pocket, he kicks over the traces and defies her by spending the night in town, drinking the whorehouse dry.

Hugh never quite forgives Owen for turning his back on him and finding a life of his own — a life that threatens the one Hugh had struggled to build for himself — yet nevertheless he eventually bows to the inevitable and accepts work on the construction of the dam. He moves himself and Meg into an ill-built shack, which Owen, tellingly, papers over with blueprints to stem the cold.

The younger sons also benefit from Owen's patronage and find work attached to the new project; Neil is seemingly the more stable, while Bruce jumps fitfully from one dangerous task to the next, rel-

ishing each new risk. When Hugh's brother, Darius, a left-wing agitator from the shipyards of the Clyde, arrives without call or expectation in their midst, things are thrown up into the air even more. Not only are Darius' political beliefs a potential threat to the building of the dam, the love he has nurtured all these years for Hugh's wife, Meg, has the capability of wrenching that central relationship asunder.

But this is not a book about men doing what men do; women are given nearly equal space in the story. Their strengths are their own — they are handsome, willful, dangerous — and they are not used solely to hold family and community together, though to a point they do that too. There is a pervading sense that Doig, in common with, say, two writers as different as Larry McMurtry and Carl Hiaasen, not only respects women, he actually likes them. For example, Owen's wife Charleen, independent and single-minded, becomes as involved in the running of her own business as Owen is in his work on the dam.

Some way into the novel, Doig uses a perfect simile: "This family is like nine radios going at once. . . . Every Duff a different station." It's apt because these Duffs are talkers, and when they're not talking, they're singing, or dancing, or doing all three at once. The remark also describes how the narrative works, the skill with which we are switched around from voice to voice, location to location, eavesdropping on a sentence here, a brief scene there, a near-documentary description or the most intimate of moments. This is a story about connections, attractions, shifting currents and the relationship between

See Page 4

matic moments in his consistently dramatic and moving memoir comes when the 15-year-old Mil-

Looking back, Milani remembers himself and his friends in the student movement as "the

— and makeup-free — and that unmarried men and women are not seen together in public.

he knew who were executed by this regime. "From 1979 — when the Ayatollah Khomeini came to

Alix Madrigal is on the staff of The Chronicle.

Dissident Writers in a Post-Cold-War World

THE DISSIDENT WORD

The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1995

Edited by Chris Miller

Basic Books; 198 pages; \$25

REVIEWED BY KENNETH BAKER

The Oxford Amnesty Lectures are an annual, privately sponsored, series of talks on topics pertaining to human rights, given in Oxford, England. Each year the committee selects a theme and invites prominent intellectuals to respond. The public is charged admission and proceeds benefit Amnesty International. Each set of lectures is then collected in a book. The 1995 installment is the fourth and regrettably the least stimulating.

In the West, the term *dissidence* still has a Cold War ring to it from its long association with insurgent writers and artists in the Soviet Union. The 1995 Oxford Amnesty Lectures consider the wide meaning of dissident writing in the post-Cold-War context.

The range of voices in this series may be the most disparate so far, from the arch humor of Gore Vidal to the confrontational rhetoric of Taslima Nasreen, a Bangla-

deshi writer exiled to Norway by an Islamic fundamentalist fatwa, and Nawal El Saadawi, an expatriate Egyptian feminist who teaches at Duke University.

One of the most striking aspects of the book goes unmentioned: the difference in tone between its male and female contributors. The men — Vidal, Andre Brink, Wole Soyinka and Edmund White — speak with detachment and flair, even about painful details of war and oppression.

The women, in whose lives the acts and consequences of dissidence appear to be more immediate and dangerous, are edgier. "If a philosopher produces many works that change nothing in the power system because they do not reach people and are not understood," Saadawi writes, "he or she may remain safe, even prosperous. The dissident word must be effective in real life, otherwise it loses its meaning and is no longer dissident. . . . The dissident word is an expression of a struggling woman or man whose body and mind and spirit are inseparable. . . . Philosophers who are not activists end up as empty shells . . . using words to fence with other users of words."

The reader hears an implicit reproach

to other lecturers in the Oxford Amnesty series that they themselves may not have heard before the publication of this book.

The contributors to the 1995 program see red in very different places. Andre Brink looks out hopefully from a South African setting where the current of social change finally shifted away from apartheid and censorship. He has what seems like the luxury of asking whether dissident writing suffers when its counterforce abates. "If it is true that literature is by its very nature dissident and oppositional," he notes, "it is equally true that it can also dissipate itself in mere dissidence and oppositionality; and if an entire literature threatens to define itself purely in terms of what it is against, there is the real danger of forfeiting the very richness and polyphony that assured its cultural validity to start with."

Wole Soyinka takes a pan-African view and reproaches the West for its parochialism. He cites the trial of Mariam Mengistu, deposed dictator of Ethiopia, a moral event he considers "of a dimension that is little short of that of the Nuremberg trials."

See Page 10

DAM BUILDERS

Continued From Page 3

water and land, and about the nature of love, its fluctuations and irresistible flow.

What Doig understands well and describes with fascinating power is the way nothing in life is ever still. You can dam rivers and still they break. You can ignore for just so long the beating of the heart, but that will do nothing to quell the rush of blood along the vein. Owen's constant fear is "seepage," the knowledge that no matter how much weight of earth you use to stem the river's passage, water can still eat its way underneath; and in just such a way the firmest foundations of a marriage can be undermined by a look, a word, by intimations of a touch.

Doig's great achievement is to string his compelling narrative along these connections between outer and inner worlds, the silent stirrings of the human heart and the swelling moments of a river, both imperceptible until it is almost too late. He does this with dramatic sweep and yet great subtlety, letting the human and the natural spheres spin together and bind to one another, almost unseen. ■

John Harvey's forthcoming novel is 'Easy Meat' (Henry Holt).

DAM BUILDERS

Continued From Page 3

water and land, and about the nature of love, its fluctuations and irresistible flow.

What Doig understands well and describes with fascinating power is the way nothing in life is ever still. You can dam rivers and still they break. You can ignore for just so long the beating of the heart, but that will do nothing to quell the rush of blood along the vein. Owen's constant fear is "seepage," the knowledge that no matter how much weight of earth you use to stem the river's passage, water can still eat its way underneath; and in just such a way the firmest foundations of a marriage can be undermined by a look, a word, by intimations of a touch.

Doig's great achievement is to string his compelling narrative along these connections between outer and inner worlds, the silent stirrings of the human heart and the swelling moments of a river, both imperceptible until it is almost too late. He does this with dramatic sweep and yet great subtlety, letting the human and the natural spheres spin together and bind to one another, almost unseen. ■

John Harvey's forthcoming novel is 'Easy Meat' (Henry Holt).

Doig edits manuscript many times

DOIG from Page 8E

some weather or dialogue. I'm a more natural editor than I am a first drafter. I blend it all together and it starts to be fun around the third draft. I like the improvements you can see in a manuscript by going through it time and again. I go through a finished manuscript one time just to look at all the verbs, make sure they're not all 'is' or 'was' or all hyper fancy. Another time I'll look at sentence rhythms, another time at how the sections or even paragraphs begin and end. Somewhere along the line you have to remember to go through and see if it makes any sense. This time I pulled out some Scotch politics — they were too much lumber on the wagon."

Finally, if you are Ivan Doig, you come up with a memorable beginning line — "Self-made men always do a lopsided job of it" — and the novel is off, pulling readers along willy-nilly.

Next, Doig says he will write a contemporary western novel, "set along the Pacific Coast and the interior West, probably the Montana Rockies again, but a book that will have Alaska, Seattle, San Francisco and the Rockies. It's about time the baby boomers faced the question of 'Can you go home again?' People faced by a family crisis and can we go back, or even dare we? That's a couple, three years down the line."

In the news

Irish novelist Roddy Doyle will appear in a benefit for Seattle Arts & Lectures' Writers in the Schools program, 7:30 p.m., Jan. 15 at the First United Methodist Church (\$5; 624-6600).

BOOKS

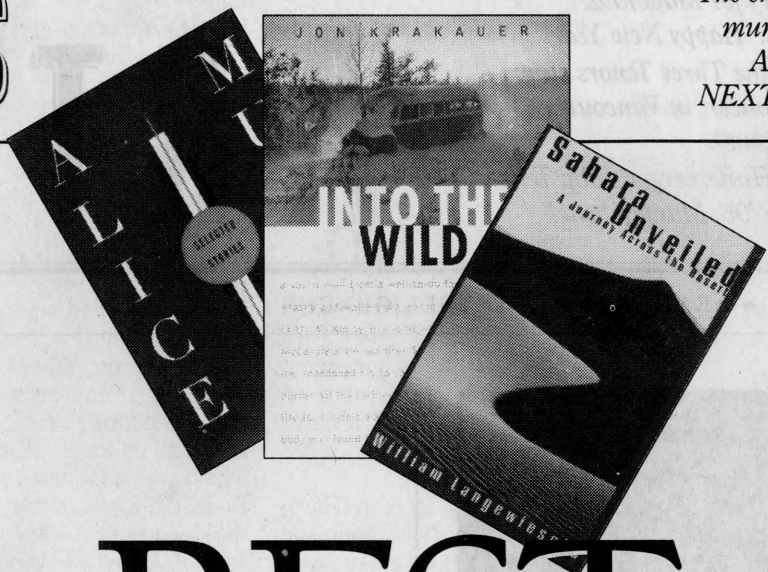
'Alias Grace'
The enigma of a 19th-century murder haunts Margaret Atwood's new novel.
NEXT SUNDAY in BOOKS

**'96 NW
BEST
SELLERS**

Bestselling books in the Pacific Northwest for 1996, as reported by Pacific Pipeline, a Kent-based wholesale distributor.

- Hardcover fiction**
1. "Primary Colors"
Anonymous
 2. "Bucking the Sun"
Ivan Doig
 3. "Executive Orders"
Tom Clancy
 4. "The Tenth Insight"
James Redfield
 5. "Crown of Swords"
Robert Jordan
 6. "Name Withheld"
J.A. Jance
 7. "The Runaway Jury"
John Grisham
 8. "Behind the Lines"
W.E.B. Griffin
 9. "The Horse Whisperer"
Nicholas Evans
 10. "The Fallen Man"
Tony Hillerman
 11. "The Web"
Jonathan Kellerman

GETTING A READ
ON THE
YEAR'S BEST



DONN FRY
Seattle Times book editor



As someone who normally gravitates toward literary fiction, I was surprised to discover that my most memorable reading experiences of

1996 were mostly works of nonfiction.

Looking back over my reading list for the year, it became clear that memoirs and small-scale histories are the books that charged my imagination. There were some fine works of fiction in 1996, of course, but the best of those apparently were read by other Seattle Times reviewers: Alice Munro's "Selected Stories," for instance, or David Foster Wallace's "Infinite Jest" and Graham Swift's Booker Prize-winning "Last Orders."

In fact, it was not an outstanding year for quality literature of any genre: The editors of The New York Times Book Review found only eight books they could agree on for their annual "Editors' Choice" feature.

While no single work this year knocked me out, in retrospect I'm

year there was Tobias Wolff's satisfying story collection, "The Night in Question" (Knopf).

So what were the most memorable books of 1996? Those mentioned above, of course, as well as the other titles below, which I've selected on the basis of my own reading or the opinions of Seattle Times reviewers.

This is not a "Top 10" list; rather, these are books released in 1996 that will repay your attention.

Fiction

"Burning Your Boats: The Collected Stories of Angela Carter," by Angela Carter (Henry Holt). This satisfying, often surreal collection of the short work of the British writer who died of lung cancer in 1992 "will appeal to anyone enamored of the gothic and macabre, as well as anyone enticed by an exquisitely ribald, masterfully pyrotechnic prose style."

"Derby Dugan's Depression Funnies," by Tom De Haven (Henry Holt/Metropolitan). In 1936, a hack novelist and ghostwriter for a hugely popular comic strip wanders an exciting New York City filled with gangsters, bordellos and a woman with the most beautiful smile in the world. Yet looking back 30 years later, Al Bready finds "undercurrents of failed ambition,

story master shows her "astonishing ability to capture moods and impulses for which no easy formulas exist."

"Last Orders," by Graham Swift (Knopf). This year's winner of Britain's prestigious Booker Prize traces four men's odyssey to scatter the ashes of a departed friend, a darkly comic journey "which may leave even the most cynical readers in tears but resplendent in their commitment to the joys and catastrophes we call life."

"My Other Life," by Paul Theroux (Houghton Mifflin). The prolific travel writer and novelist is up to his old tricks: mixing his own peripatetic life with liberal doses of imagination to produce "that most exotic of all journeys, an excursion into he realm Theroux calls 'what if?'" The result: "a self-portrait painted in a hall of mirrors."

"In the Beauty of the Lilies," by John Updike (Knopf). This acute observer of life and love among the American middle class examines the generational fallout from a Presbyterian pastor's loss of faith in "a fast, gripping novel... a literary masterwork."



California childhood to the European battlefields of World War II, this longtime Rutgers English professor and author engagingly recounts his development of "the crusty shell of a cantankerous skeptic, committed to exposing the truth in the face of dumb insolence from a self-serving officialdom."

"Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust," by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (Knopf). This provocative study by a young Harvard professor raised cries of protest in Germany because of his powerful, persuasive conclusion that "the driving force of the Holocaust was the universal and extraordinarily virulent anti-Semitism at every level of German society."

"The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War," by Paul Hendrickson (Knopf). This National Book Award finalist by a Washington Post features writer is a searching examination of five lives irrevocably altered — or ended — by a disastrous war promoted too long by a Defense secretary who privately saw its futility.

"Sahara Unveiled: A Journey Across the Desert," by William Langewiesche (Pantheon). This mesmerizing journey through the vastness of (mostly) Algeria rivals "the best of Paul Bowles' North African writings with its hypnotic

4. "The Tenth Insight"
James Redfield
5. "Crown of Swords"
Robert Jordan
6. "Name Withheld"
J.A. Jance
7. "The Runaway Jury"
John Grisham
8. "Behind the Lines"
W.E.B. Griffin
9. "The Horse Whisperer"
Nicholas Evans
10. "The Fallen Man"
Tony Hillerman
11. "The Web"
Jonathan Kellerman
12. "The Deep End of the Ocean"
Jacquelyne Mitchard
13. "The Celestine Prophecy"
James Redfield
14. "How Stella Got Her Groove Back"
Terry McMillan
15. "Cause of Death"
Patricia Cornwell

Hardcover nonfiction

1. "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus"
John Gray
2. "The Zone"
Barry Sears with Bill Lawren
3. "Bad As I Wanna Be"
Dennis Rodman with Tim Keown
4. "The Dilbert Principle"
Scott Adams
5. "Rush Limbaugh Is a Big, Fat Idiot"
Al Franken
6. "The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success"
Deepak Chopra
7. "In Contempt"
Christopher Darden with Jess Walter
8. "How Could You Do That?"
Dr. Laura Schlesinger
9. "Midnight in the Garden of Good & Evil"
John Berendt

experiences of 1996 were mostly works of nonfiction.

Looking back over my reading list for the year, it became clear that memoirs and small-scale histories are the books that charged my imagination. There were some fine works of fiction in 1996, of course, but the best of those apparently were read by other Seattle Times reviewers: Alice Munro's "Selected Stories," for instance, or David Foster Wallace's "Infinite Jest" and Graham Swift's Booker Prize-winning "Last Orders."

In fact, it was not an outstanding year for quality literature of any genre: The editors of The New York Times Book Review found only eight books they could agree on for their annual "Editors' Choice" feature.

While no single work this year knocked me out, in retrospect I'm struck by the liveliness and range found in close, narrow-focus examinations of people's lives, either through memory or historical investigation.

Both Jonathan Raban's "Bad Land: An American Romance" (Pantheon), which is a lyrical exploration of failed Montana homesteading earlier in this century, and Mary Gordon's "The Shadow Man: A Daughter's Search for Her Father" (Random House), which just as tellingly explores the mystery of her own father, fall into this category.

So, too, are such strikingly different works as "Into the Wild" (Villard), Seattle writer Jon Krakauer's wrenching portrait of the final two years in the life of a charismatic young idealist who marched unprepared into the Alaskan wilderness, and Calvin Trillin's "Messages from My Father" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), a subtle, funny and deceptively profound reminiscence of his late father, Kansas City grocer Abe Trillin.

Into this mix, I would even insert Seattle writer David Shields' iconoclastic and unclassifiable "Remote" (Knopf), a quirky and irreverent meditation on the cluttered surface of late 20th-century American life.

My fiction favorites? Well, at the beginning of 1996, there was "The Moor's Last Sigh" (Pantheon), Salman Rushdie's absorbing generational saga of a most singular Indian family, while at the end of the

Fiction

"Burning Your Boats: The Collected Stories of Angela Carter," by Angela Carter (Henry Holt). This satisfying, often surreal collection of the short work of the British writer who died of lung cancer in 1992 "will appeal to anyone enamored of the gothic and macabre, as well as anyone enticed by an exquisitely ribald, masterfully pyrotechnic prose style."

"Derby Dugan's Depression Funnies," by Tom De Haven (Henry Holt/Metropolitan). In 1936, a hack novelist and ghost-writer for a hugely popular comic strip wanders an exciting New York City filled with gangsters, bordellos and a woman with the most beautiful smile in the world. Yet looking back 30 years later, Al Bready finds "undercurrents of failed ambition, longing and loss" in this "rare combination of humor and pathos."

"Bucking the Sun," by Ivan Doig (Simon & Schuster). The Seattle novelist returns once again to his native Montana for a lively, New Deal-era chronicle set against the building of the Fort Peck Dam, "powerfully rendering life and death in one family, and through them the people and places of the American West in the 1930s."

"The Woman Who Walked Through Doors," by Roddy Doyle (Viking). The Booker Prize-winning Irish author of "Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha" has penned a deep examination of an alcoholic Dublin housewife's escape from domestic abuse, written so sensitively that "we understand why she stays in this marriage as much as why she finally ends it in her own extremely ironic way."

"The Tailor of Panama," by John le Carré (Knopf). The master of international intrigue keeps finding new possibilities for fiction. This tale involves the lively, often humorous exploits of Harry Pendel, tailor to the diplomatic power brokers in Panama City who is soon out of his depth in a game of espionage.

"Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer," by Steven Millhauser (Crown). This fantastical National Book Award finalist, about a 19th-century New York hotel entrepreneur whose projects grow ever more surreal, is a haunting study of how the inventive mind harbors desires "to overthrow itself, to smash itself to bits and burst into new forms."

"Selected Stories," by Alice Munro (Knopf). This rich overview of 28 stories by the Canadian short-



strophes we call life." "My Other Life," by Paul Theroux (Houghton Mifflin). The prolific travel writer and novelist is up to his old tricks: mixing his own peripatetic life with liberal doses of imagination to produce "that most exotic of all journeys, an excursion into he realm Theroux calls 'what if?'" The result: "a self-portrait painted in a hall of mirrors."

"In the Beauty of the Lilies," by John Updike (Knopf). This acute observer of life and love among the American middle class examines the generational fallout from a Presbyterian pastor's loss of faith in "a fast, gripping novel... a literary masterwork."

"Infinite Jest," by David Foster Wallace (Little, Brown). This 1,079-page novel is "that rare literary feat — a grandly ambitious, wickedly comic epic on a par with such great, sprawling novels of the 20th century as 'Ulysses,' 'The Recognitions' and 'Gravity's Rainbow.'"



Nonfiction

"Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West," by Stephen E. Ambrose (Simon & Schuster). This absorbing chronicle by an eminent historian is a fascinating study of the man who successfully led the most arduous journey into the unknown in American history, only to succumb afterward to politics and his own personal demons.

"Great Books," by David Denby (Simon & Schuster). Nearly 30 years after first taking Columbia University's two core-curriculum courses in Western literature and philosophy, this 48-year-old film critic re-enrolled, casting "a wondering eye on the soul-enriching complexity and radicalness of the Great Books," along the way writing a "great book" of his own.

"Jesse: The Life and Pilgrimage of Jesse Jackson," by Marshall Frady (Random House). An award-winning political journalist offers a "rigorously honest" profile of the quicksilver African-American leader and social activist who rose from humble beginnings to make bold runs at the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and, especially, 1988.

"Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic," by Paul Fussell (Little, Brown). Moving from his leisurely

study by a young Harvard professor raised cries of protest in Germany because of his powerful, persuasive conclusion that "the driving force of the Holocaust was the universal and extraordinarily virulent anti-Semitism at every level of German society."

"The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War," by Paul Hendrickson (Knopf). This National Book Award finalist by a Washington Post features writer is a searching examination of five lives irrevocably altered — or ended — by a disastrous war promoted too long by a Defense secretary who privately saw its futility.

"Sahara Unveiled: A Journey Across the Desert," by William Langewiesche (Pantheon). This mesmerizing journey through the vastness of (mostly) Algeria rivals "the best of Paul Bowles' North African writings with its hypnotic yet unsentimental prose and its total submission to its subject: 'the drama of desolation and distance' that is the Sahara Desert."

"Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War," by Peter Maass (Knopf). Within the growing body of literature on the ethnic conflict and genocide in the former Yugoslavia, nothing has been written with "such compassion and conviction" as this work by a Washington Post correspondent who "cuts through all the Serbian exculpations, firmly and convincingly placing the blame for this heinous war in their hands."

"Angela's Ashes: A Memoir," by Frank McCourt (Scribner). The most extravagantly praised memoir of 1996 — and of many other years as well — is this first book by a retired 66-year-old New York high-school writing teacher, who

recalls how his hard-luck immigrant parents left the land of his own birth and returned to the grinding poverty of their native Ireland, an experience whose scars still dance vividly in his memory.

"The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinction," by David Quammen (Scribner). Traveling to some of the world's most remote ecosystems, this Montana-based natural-history writer tries to understand the forces propelling the current rush of extinctions, and in the process he has produced a sobering "masterpiece of science journalism."



Building Lives In Montana

The power of geography in a big, roistering novel

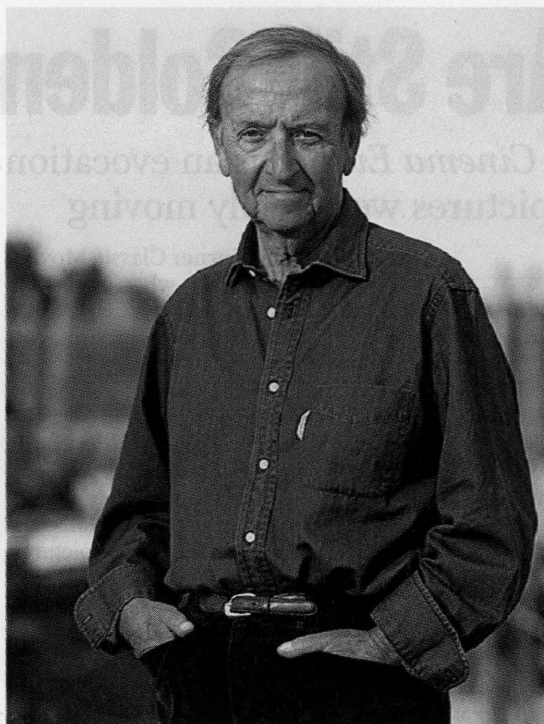
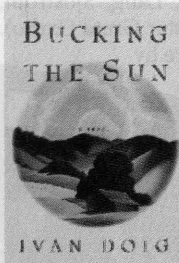
MONTANA NOVELIST IVAN DOIG sets himself a challenge in his big, roistering new novel, *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23). His subject—not just the book's setting but also the presence that rules its composition—is a monstrous, chancy construction project in the mid-1930s, the huge Fort Peck dam across the Missouri River in Montana bottomland.

To save his novel from the curse of what used to be called socialist realism, Doig must come up with characters large enough to symbolize the unruly river and the vast dam in combat as construction proceeds, but sufficiently strong and gritty in their own right so that they can't be yawned away as costumed actors posing in front of a diorama.

He finds effective protagonists in the Duff clan, Scottish immigrants and hard-scrabble farmers losing their battle with drought and grasshoppers in the river valley until the dam project lurches into motion. Owen, the bookish eldest son, is an engineer. His twin brothers Neil, a truck driver, and Bruce, a diver, work in the river's murk. Father Hugh is a reluctant laborer and enthusiastic boozier, and Uncle Darius, a union organizer on the run. The younger men marry and risk lives and livers as they watch the river slowly pool up behind the growing dam.

The reader is pulled into their story by a puzzle the author has set: What two Duffs—man and woman, naked, married but not to each other—are extracted drowned from a submerged truck as the construction winds down? This is skillful manipulation, the novelist as conjurer ensuring that the reader's first thought is of human beings, not power shovels and spillways. The device works beautifully, and so does Doig's roguish novel. Though not well enough—perhaps never that well, if your characters wear jeans—for its author to escape the tag “regional.”

—By John Skow



MAKING A STATEMENT: Moore plays tricks with the notion of poetic justice

ed statement identifying the intended victim as “Pierre Brossard, former Chief of the Second Section of the Marseilles region of the Milice, condemned to death in absentia by French courts, in 1944 and again in 1946.” The statement goes on to say that Brossard was charged with the massacre of 14 Jews on June 15, 1945. The document, which the old man realizes was to be pinned on his body, concludes, “The case is closed.”

Not true, of course, because the old man—who is indeed Brossard, although he has called himself Pouliot for many years—survives. But who, in 1989, still wants to punish him for his past by killing him? Brossard assumes that Jewish money is behind this attempt on his life. That belief, a measure of his reflexive anti-Semitism, will have fatal consequences.

The Statement may have a classic thriller's plot—a character on the run, private power plays behind public façades—but it unfolds in a moral universe infinitely more complex and

To Avenge or to Forget the Past?

A provocative thriller is set in a complex moral universe

GIVEN A SCENE IN WHICH AN ASSASSIN stalks a potential victim, most readers will, in the absence of other evidence, instinctively root for the quarry. In the opening pages of his new novel, *The Statement* (Dutton; 250 pages; \$22.95), Brian Moore provides just such a scene: in a village in the south of France an old man is being tailed by a hired killer. The murder, the assassin decides, will take place when his target drives back to the monastery where he has been staying. Feigning engine trouble along the route, he waits for the old man to stop, then approaches as if to ask for a lift, pulls out a pistol and is fatally shot twice in the chest by the man he planned to kill.

This sort of narrative turnaround usually provides the pleasure of surprise, the sense that poetic justice has foiled a malevolent act. Moore quickly cuts off such easy certainties. He shows the old man examining the possessions of his would-be murderer. They include a print-

compromised than the white hats vs. the black hats so typical of the genre. The novel asks not only who is trying to murder Brossard but also why Brossard has been able to remain in France for 44 years, receiving asylum from various Roman Catholic monasteries, and a 1971 presidential pardon for the crimes he committed during the German occupation and the Vichy regime.

“It is hard to pass judgment on what people did back then,” says a French army colonel who is also looking to bring Brossard to justice. This remark is the crux of the novel. Does a time come when people must be forgiven for doing what they mistakenly believed was right or unavoidable? Or should evil never be forgiven or forgotten? By challenging the reader to confront these questions, *The Statement* is ultimately unforgettable.



—By Paul Gray

Arts & Entertainment

Mike Pearson, Arts & Entertainment Editor — 892-2592 • e-mail: spotlight@denver-rmn.com



Norwest CultureFest

The University of Denver celebrates diversity during the fourth annual Norwest CultureFest on Sunday. Four stages will host nearly 50 performing arts groups. Wandering performers will also represent traditions from around the world. New this year is a children's tent and a craft and visual arts demonstration stage.

The planning committee is seeking volunteers ranging from stage crew and beverage sales, to guest relations and parking assistance. Information: 871-4626.

Wallace Roney at the Fox

Trumpeter Wallace Roney's quintet will perform a show tonight at the Fox Theater, 1135 13th St., Boulder. Roney has earned the respect of his peers in his more than 20 years in the jazz world. He has soloed alongside Miles Davis as well as joined veterans Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Ron Carter and Tony Williams on a tour billed as "A Tribute to Miles Davis." Tickets are \$10.50 for this 21 and older show. Information: 447-0095.

Cowboy poet show

Peggy Godfrey, Nyle Henderson and Mike Lee will highlight the The Lazy B Ranch's fourth annual Cowboy Poets Show May 25 in Estes Park. Entertainment will be provided by the Lazy B Wranglers. Dinner will be at 7 p.m., with the show beginning at 7:45 p.m. Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$12 for kids 5 to 12. Show-only tickets are \$9 for adults, \$5 for kids. The ranch is at 1915 Dry Gulch Road, Estes Park. Information: 970-586-5371 or 800-228-2116.

SYMPHONY NOTES

Saturday is the ticket deadline for the Junior Symphony Guild Spring Luncheon and Awards Presentation. The event begins at 10 a.m. May 23 at the Brown Palace Hotel. The program includes maestra Marin Alsop and a membership awards presentation. Tickets are \$23. Information: 355-7855.

TODAY'S BEST BETS

Television

■ Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert speak with Tom Hanks and Brad Pitt on *The Siskel and Ebert Interviews*, at 7 p.m. on KCNC-Channel 4.

Dancing with language

Ex-ranchhand, newspaperman Ivan Doig captures spirit of Depression-era Montana

By Margaret Carlin

Rocky Mountain News Books Editor

When Ivan Doig was researching his novel, *Bucking the Sun*, based on the construction of the Fort Peck Dam in Montana during the 1930s, he was struck by the happy memories of the people who worked on the giant structure.

"There are taped oral histories, so I could listen to the actual voices. These people felt lucky . . . it was the Depression, you know, but they were young, they were learning new skills, they had money in their pockets, they were meeting new people, there were bars and lots of high jinks . . . the people remembered that period as the apex of their lives, exciting times."

Doig will be in the Denver area Friday and Saturday to discuss *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster, 412 pages, \$23). Speaking by phone from his home in Seattle, the author traces the genesis of his novel to a Montana newspaper article.

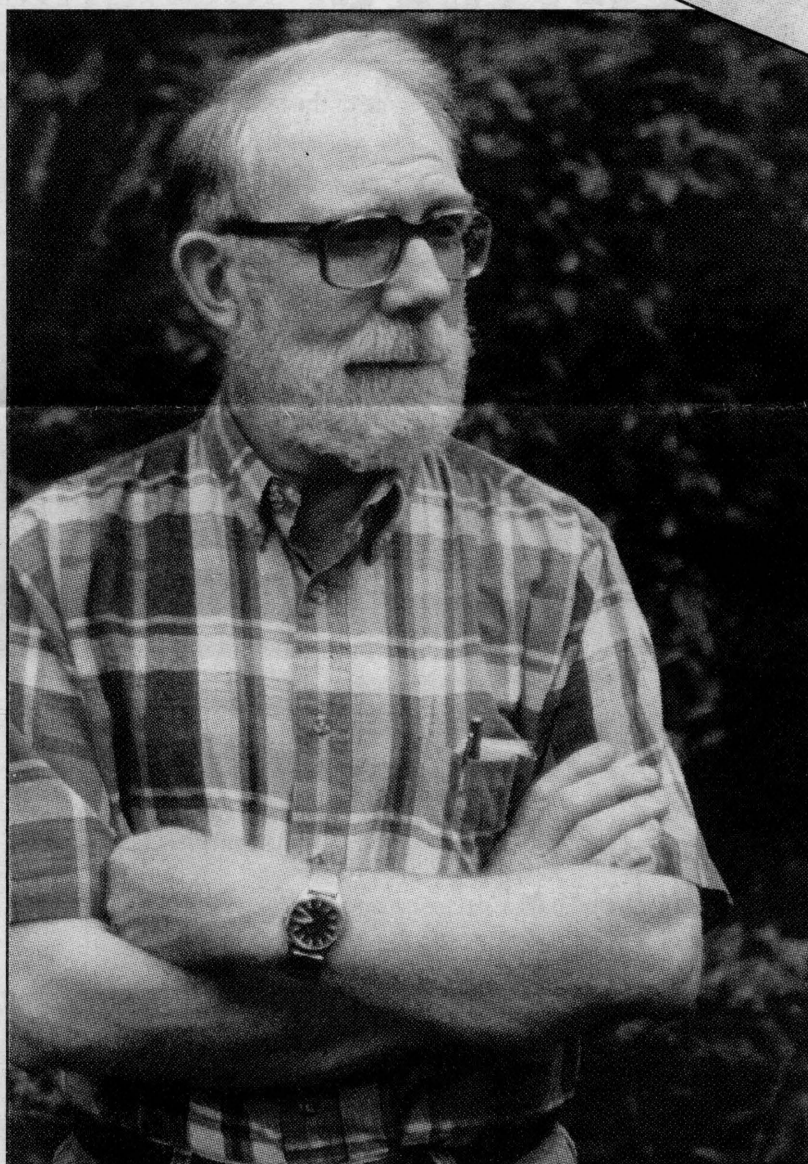
"The story was about a couple found dead in a truck in a compromising situation. I decided to use the couple as a plot turn — two people in the same family, married, but not to each other."

Doig, 57, who grew up on a Montana sheep ranch, chose the title of his book from one of his rugged father's frequent laments: "We'd be driving early in the morning or late afternoon, and he'd always say, 'Oh, we've got to buck the sun all the way til we get there!'"

The title also refers, of course, to the contentious Duff family which bucks the world, playing out adventure and tragedy against the building of the giant dam and the taming of the mighty Missouri River.

The story involves Hugh Duff, the hell-raiser; his wife, Meg, "who peers at you as if clerking for God"; and their sons, Owen, an engineer, and twins Neil and Bruce.

Owen marries social-climbing, "panther beautiful" Charlene Tebbet; Neil marries her sister, "cute as a wink" aspiring writer



Carol M. Doig

Ivan Doig will be in Denver Friday and Saturday to discuss *Bucking the Sun*.

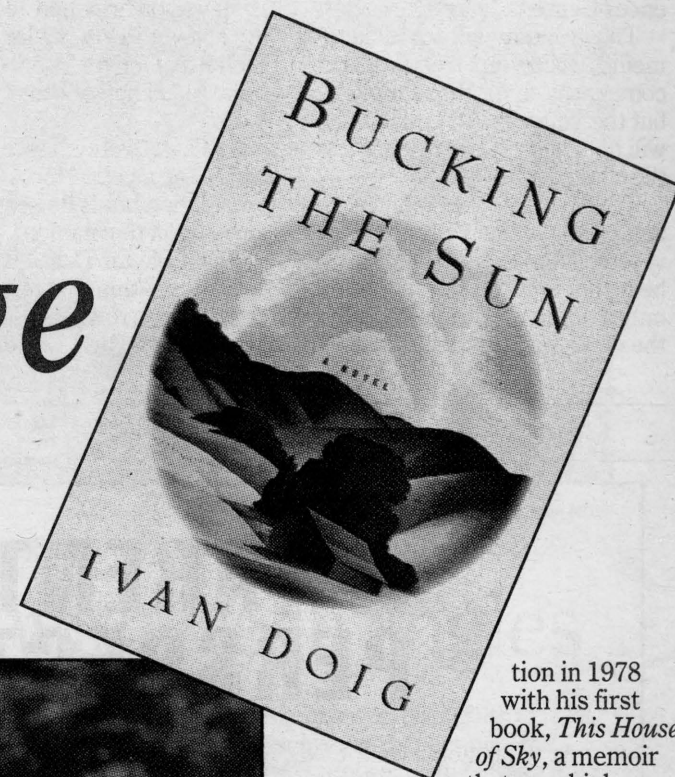
Rosellen; daredevil Bruce marries Kate Millay, a tall, saucy redheaded waitress. Into this scene comes Hugh's brother, Darius Duff, a "bachelor curio" on the run from Scotland, who's long been in love with Meg, but has a go with the delectable Susannah (nicknamed Proxy, "short for peroxide") Shannon, a prostitute and taxi dancer.

Doig's favorite character is Sheriff Carl Kinnick, a diminutive, ornery "fierce doll of a man" who tries to keep law and order in the rambunctious boomtowns that grew up around the dam. "Kinnick

is a short, fine-boned man who looks out of place in big sprawling Montana — his physique is at odds with his landscape and at odds with his personality."

Interspersed with the family brawls is Doig's historically accurate detailing of the construction of Fort Peck Dam, the enormous man-made earth structure in remote northern Montana. He also depicts the Dust Bowl days, with its despairing people clinging to hope.

Doig, a former ranchhand and newspaperman, gained recogni-



tion in 1978 with his first book, *This House of Sky*, a memoir that won high praise. He followed

that with his dazzling Montana trilogy, *English Creek* (1984), *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* (1987) and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* (1990). He's also written the novel, *The Sea Runners* (1982), as well as two non-fiction books, *Winter Brothers* (1980) and *Heart Earth* (1993).

There have been numerous prizes, but Doig says that for him, the ultimate pleasure is building a story on yellow legal pads, word by carefully crafted word. He's an admirer of literary fiction and in fact, dedicates *Bucking the Sun* to six writers around the world: "Roddy Doyle (Ireland), Nadine Gordimer (South Africa), Ismail Kadare (Albania), Maurice Shadbolt (New Zealand), Thomas Keneally and Tim Winton (Australia)."

"I like their eloquent writing of the edge of the world," he says. "They use true experiences, in contrast to so much contemporary writing that comes from the author's own psyche."

Writing for him, Doig says, is a kind of dance with the language. "I keep polishing. If I get stuck in one part, I leap to another section, until I think it works."

This, his fans can be assured, Doig does with distinction in *Bucking the Sun*.

IF YOU GO

Ivan Doig will be in Colorado this weekend to sign copies of his novel, *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster, 412 pages, \$23): Friday from noon to 1:30 p.m. at Stone Lion Book Store, 107 N. College, Fort Collins (970-493-0030) and 7:30 to 9 p.m. at Boulder Book Store, 1107 Pearl St. (447-2074); Saturday from noon to 1:30 p.m. at McKinley-White Book Store, 8005 N. Academy, Colorado Springs (719-590-1700) and 7 to 9 p.m. at Tattered Cover Book Store, 2955 E. First Ave., Cherry Creek. Information: 322-7727.

Stormy Weather

Seven stories about the perils and pleasures of life on the Gulf Coast.

TORRID ZONE

Seven Stories
From the Gulf Coast.
By Jonathan Maslow.
277 pp. New York:
Random House. \$25.

By Susan Larson

THE fringed coastline of the Gulf of Mexico, with its lacy bayous, crystalline beaches and fragile wetlands, is a stormy place. Hurricanes approach from afar and change lives forever in only an instant; sudden storms move across the water without warning. Still, human beings are drawn to this shore, staking a tenuous hold. Long a kind of geographical fantasy object, the Gulf Coast is also a landscape with a complex social history. Jonathan Maslow explores the region to great effect in his fine first collection of stories, "Torrid Zone."

He trains his naturalist's eye — he is the author of books on natural history, including "Sacred Horses" and "The Owl Papers" — on the human denizens of the Gulf Coast. In "The Last Lector," an old woman named Julieta Suarez recalls the memory of Cesar Fuentes, the lector who read to cigar makers while they did their boring work. Cuban immigrants went on strike for the sake of hearing his *voz de oro* — his voice of gold. Listening to him was their education as well as their pleasure. When Fuentes read Zola's "Germinal," Julieta said, "I swear to you, it was like every one of us was reading, only he had the voice." Julieta tells this moving story to a younger co-worker over a long afternoon spent rolling cigars. But will the young woman, who is listening to music on her Walkman instead of to Julieta, ever really understand its meaning?

In "Africatown, Children," the hundred-year-old matriarch Mama Lulu recounts the African origins of her neighbors, descendants of passengers on the last slave ship to sail into the bay at Mobile, Ala. Like Julieta, she has experienced betrayal in the New World, and she knows how to tell a story. Like Julieta, Mama Lulu loves her stories, and she loves her cooking, serving up "a menu of

Susan Larson is the book review editor for The New Orleans Times-Picayune.

earthly pleasures, long as your arm, for all the ages to enjoy."

In "A Mermaid Pining for Her Sailor," Stevie Rae, who performs in the Live Mermaid show in the town of Crystal Springs, tells a fast and funny tale of lost love. After a long night at the House of a Thousand Daiquiris, she and her sailor, Jack, got hitched at an "evangelical trailer." War took him away, but he comes back from time to time. Now she cracks her gum and tells her story in bars. In the show she drinks her Coke underwater, toasting international friendship, and stares down gators.

The concluding and particularly lovely story, "White Cranes," brings the reader around the Gulf Coast to present-day Port Aransas, Tex., where Charles Cincinnatus Coxmoor Jr., a one-legged Vietnam veteran and self-proclaimed Bubba, takes charter boat groups out to see the whooping cranes. One day he guides a Vietnamese delegation, knowing that the birds have flown. Led to a particular location by his passengers, Bubba and his wife and daughter are rewarded with the sight of the entire flock — a confirmation of their suspicion that "there was something holy about the whoopers" — as well as with a kind of emotional healing of his war wounds.

The stories featuring historical figures — "Prince Hamlet of the Florida Territory," about Osceola, the Indian chief, and his betrayal by the white man; "The Journal of Jean Lafitte, Corsair," the weakest in the collection, that old pirate's attempt to set the record straight about his life and loyalties; and "The Healer: Chronicle of a Lost Expedition," in which the Moorish slave Estevanico reconstructs Cabeza de Vaca's wanderings — are less successful than those about ordinary lives touched by history.

In a self-indulgent, distracting introduction, Mr. Maslow says that this book of fiction was written in an attic in New Orleans, where he "lived off oysters and women in the time-honored tradition." Maybe so, but he's been out on the salt, walked on the beaches, maybe even been in the famous bars late at night. That coastal reality, from the serene moonlight on water to the garish lights of tawdry beach towns, runs through "Torrid Zone" and gives it magic. □

"Ivan Doig is a writer who makes readers recall why they love to read...."*

"His novels lay whole worlds at your feet and invite you to make them your own."

—THE WASHINGTON POST*

"One of the great American voices, full of grace, abounding in humanity, easeful in narration, hypnotic in pace, grand in range."

—THOMAS KENEALLY

"Ivan Doig is one of the best we've got, a muscular and exceedingly good writer who understands our hunger for stories."

—E. ANNIE PROULX

"It's hard to say enough good things about what Ivan Doig does when he sets words down on a page. His prose is at once simple and direct, yet rich and fanciful."

—CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

BUCKING THE SUN

IVAN DOIG

Illustration: Detail from *Into the Sun* by Tom Craig, courtesy of The Buck Collection, Laguna Hills, CA



SIMON & SCHUSTER
A VIACOM COMPANY

Reading group guide available.

Book-signing trend reaches inevitable end point as author signs every copy

By David Streltfeld
Washington Post

The late pop novelist Jacqueline Susann is usually credited with the concept of an author autographing as many books as possible. At the time, signed books supposedly couldn't be returned by the store to the publisher; they had to be kept until sold.

Susann, whose "Valley of the Dolls" is still one of the top-selling novels of all time, realized that adding her signature to a book wouldn't make it better, but might make it more valued. It was a form of personal contact, a way to encourage the idea that the book was written for one special reader — the one holding it.

Although bookstores can now return signed books to the publisher for full credit, very few novelists these days don't do multiple book-signings. At peak periods, like this month, writers embark on multicity and often multicountry tours, usually groaning in despair, realizing the only

"I'm not sure our other writers would necessarily volunteer to do this, but James has always been passionate to do whatever he can to help us find readers for him"

— Sonny Mehta, Knopf

thing worse is no tour at all. Ivan Doig, a novelist whose work often is set in Montana, calculated a few years ago that he would end up signing about a quarter of the 20,000 copies of the first printing of his latest book. Other writers who have endured long signing treks would say the same.

The trend has just reached its inevitable end point. James Ellroy, the self-styled mad dog of modern fiction, has signed every copy of "My Dark Places," his new book about his mother's

murder.

His publisher, Knopf, says that amounted to 50,000 copies. Ellroy, who lives in Kansas, signed about 4,000 blank sheets a day for two weeks. The sheets were bound into the books this past weekend.

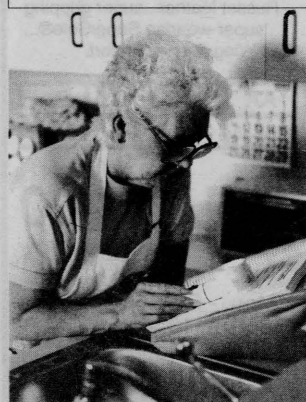
"I'm not sure our other writers would necessarily volunteer to do this, but James has always been passionate to do whatever he can to help us find readers for him," commented Knopf publisher Sonny Mehta.

Usually, a book becomes more valuable when it is signed or, even better, inscribed by the author. For instance, a copy of a novel by Bob Dole's campaign spokesman, John Buckley, "Family Politics," warmly inscribed to columnist Michael Kinsley, was on sale for \$10 at a Goodwill book sale last weekend; without Buckley's personalized touch, it would have been \$3.50 at most.

But with "My Dark Places," the truly valuable copy will be an unsigned one. Assuming even one such copy exists.



When my vision started to go, I thought I couldn't cook anymore. Then I learned about visual aids for my kitchen so I could keep cooking for myself.

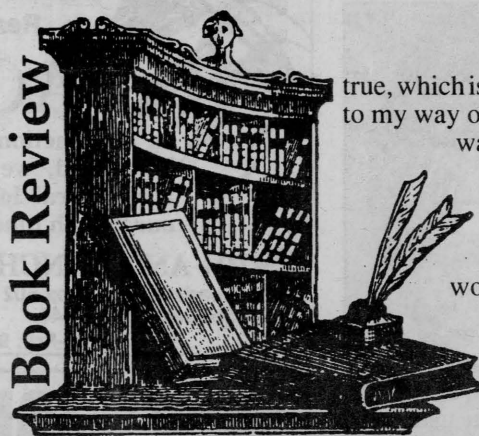


American Foundation for the Blind

We help those who don't see well, live like those who do.

Call 1-800-AFB-LINE.

Book Review



true, which is a compliment, to my way of thinking anyway.

Bucking the Sun is at least the fourth book where he works in the fictional family from his book English Creek (1984), the McCaskills

and their Two Medicine country—and that's kind of neat, a thread that runs from one to the other.

The story, without preamble, gets a jump start into a 1938 scene with the sheriff of Glasgow watching a crane pull a submerged pickup out of the waters of the Missouri River, "...For a moment he hoped the Ford's cab would be empty, then canceled that at the prospect of having to dray this river...for a body....The section watchman swore he hadn't heard a motor running, only the splash....But if there wasn't some brand of human misbehavior involved in a truck visiting the bottom of the Missouri on a Saturday night at Fort Peck, Sheriff Kinnick was going to be plentifully surprised....When the crane operator lowered the load as far up the face of the dam as

Bucking the Sun

the boom arm would reach, the men clambered to it and the undersheriff...wrenched the driver's-side door open. The body question was settled instantly. Plural. The woman lay stretched behind the steering wheel...the man had slid lengthwise off the seat...both were naked....'You know them or don't you?' the sheriff demanded over his shoulder...The last name, Duff, the sheriff recognized from some trouble report or another—quite a family of them on the dam crew, a tribe of brothers and their wives, and a father, was it, into the bargain? But the first names meant nothing to him....'They're married people, right? You said their names are both Duff.' The undersheriff hesitated. 'That's the thing about this, Carl,' the undersheriff said at last. 'Married, you bet. Only not to each other.'

If you don't want to read about sex, then don't read this book. It's one of the main components of this story—it's not dirty, but it's explicit, and it's ever-present, and it shadows the Duff family's complex relationships.

Basically, the rest of the book is spent revealing the identity of the Duffs inside that pickup cab and how they got to be there—is this a murder, a suicide, or an accident? And Doig makes you want to know which two Duffs it is, and I did a lot of conjecturing—to no avail, I might add.

From that opening scene, the story back tracks immediately in time 5 years and in location 125 miles downstream to the Duff farmstead as a government man arrives to deliver news to Hugh Duff—the bad news is that a new government project calls for the building of a huge dam upstream and, when it's finished, their homestead will be under water. The good news is that

the government will pay them for their land upon which they were starving anyway and, even better, give them a job building the dam—which during the Depression is something hard to come by, a paying job.

The long and the short of it is that Hugh Duff packs up his wife and twin 20-year-old sons and moves them to the dam site. Duffs have a third and older son who happens to be the civil engineer in charge of the dam construction. As in all families, there's friction between different members of the Duff family, and that waxes and wanes as the dam grows. The ever-present question—which two Duffs were in the pickup—is a problem early on because none are married except the parents. Then each son gets married, and those three young and pretty wives add to the tension and possibilities quickly!

Next, Hugh Duff's brother Darius unexpectedly arrives on the scene from Scotland, and the plot thickens even more as it is revealed that there's bad blood between these two brothers and that Hugh's wife Meg has always been attracted to her brother-in-law Darius.

To top it off, Darius soon marries a peroxide-blond prostitute! Now there are 5 male Duffs, 5 female Duffs, and 5 Duff marriages, so the arithmetic possibilities take on sizable proportions as Doig tickles and teases the reader by developing various attractions and disagreements between them.

Behind and around all this family relationship business and the clues and wild goose chases provided to the reader willing to take the bait is the building of the Fort Peck Dam itself, which is really quite interesting.

The story is told in an interesting way—sometimes the Sheriff is the one doing the narrating, and then suddenly we the reader are in-

side the head of one of the Duffs, which is usually quite an interesting place to be!

If you'll remember, I always like to figure out where the book's title comes from. It's usually some obscure little line tucked in unobtrusively, and if you're into symbolism (which I'm not), it's usually full of that. This title was no exception. "The sun came up now, Neil conscientiously squinting down toward the side of the road, same as he always did the first minutes of bucking the sun on any of these drives into dawn or dusk...." I found the line for you, but if you're interested in its bigger meaning, you're going to have to read the book and dig it out for yourself.

All in all, Bucking the Sun is what they call these days "a good read." It wasn't revealed until the very end which two Duffs were in that Ford pickup, and although I drummed up a lot of combinations, I never got it right—thanks to the skill of Doig at leading me off in the wrong direction all the time.

When all was said and done, I've liked some of his other books better...but I couldn't have been persuaded to put Bucking the Sun down until I found out who was in the pickup and why!

Note: The editor invites books for possible review. Bear in mind, however, that I will neither read nor review books I don't like. Given my limited amount of reading time and my exasperating habit these days of falling asleep once prone, I can't possibly get through material that I don't find interesting, and I prefer not to write negative reviews. I like well-written books of any genre, although for the purposes of this column I lean to books with a western flavor.

Willamette Week (Portland, Oregon) Dec. 4, 1996

WORDS

BY SUSAN WICKSTROM

Cascade Ave., Beaverton, 643-3131. 2 pm
Saturday, Dec. 7. Free.

To be considered for listings, send information at least two weeks in advance to Words, *WW*, 822 SW 10th Ave., Portland, OR 97205
Fax: 243-1115

also reading

DAVID LEE

Lee, the Utahan dubbed "the poetry-hater's poet," will read from his work, which includes *My Town*, the 1995 Western States Book Award winner.

West Linn Public Library, 1595 Burns St., West Linn, 656-7853. 6:30 pm Thursday, Dec. 5. Free.
Visual Arts Center Theatre, Mt. Hood Community College, 26000 SE Stark St., Gresham, 667-6422. Noon Friday, Dec. 6. \$3, \$2 for students and seniors.

SYDNEY J. THOMPSON

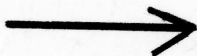
Local poet Thompson will read from her collection, *Habitats*, which explores abuse issues.

Coffee Time, 712 NW 21st Ave., 497-1090. 8 pm Thursday, Dec. 5. Free.

IVAN DOIG

Revered and oft-honored Seattleite Doig will read from *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, his latest novel set in turn-of-the-century Montana.

Powell's Books at Cascade Plaza, 8725 SW



Ivan Doig's Western characters are stuff of legend

By David Bean

Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph

The ranchers and rowdies of Ivan Doig's West are a hardy lot, and he expects a lot from them.

He should. In these mountains and on these plains, Doig sees civiliza-

tion taking its next great leap forward.

"If we don't grind the land and the beauty that brought us here, we have a chance to make something very interesting," Doig said during a brief stop in Colorado Springs recently to promote his new novel, "Bucking the Sun."

Not that the motives and methods of his characters are always pure — far from it. But they are the stuff of legend: tenacious brawlers, stoical survivors, brilliant scoundrels and misunderstood visionaries.

"I try not to be nostalgic in my writing," said Doig, whose substantial body of fiction and nonfiction centers around life in the West.

"It's OK to miss how things were at the age you were then — if you realize there's a difference in life now. Nostalgia is unrealistic."

For "Bucking the Sun," Doig picks the perfect time and place to show-

case his vision of the grandness we can attain, and why it's such a long time coming — construction of the Fort Peck Dam in Montana during the early days of the New Deal.

The Duffs, driven from prime Missouri River bottom-land doomed by the dam, take relief jobs at the massive construction site. It's not, for the most part, a happy time.

Doig mixes his tale of the Duffs' fortunes and misfortunes with a careful chronicling of the ill-fated project itself.

"I hope I didn't get too much of the dam-building in there," he said.



Ivan Doig

"But history is good for us. It reminds us that the West is old — a lot older than the white people here."

For a short time, this novel brings to mind Ken Kesey's "Sometimes a Great Notion." The Duffs and Kesey's timber-clearing Stampers are alike in the wide swath they cut across the landscape, and the difficulty they have finding and holding their place in that landscape.

But "Bucking the Sun" isn't a copy. Doig's is one of the most original voices out there and has been for a long time.

He works at it. Up at 4:30 a.m., he warms up with 10 pages of the American Dictionary of Regional English.

"To put me in a writing mood," he said.

At 6, he begins crafting the day's 400 words.

"I really enjoy doing the third

draft," he said "I'm more of a natural editor, where I can see myself making a difference — finding a richer verb or toning down a verb. That's the real fun."

Doig wears his love for the queen's own on his flannel sleeve. His other great love is the West, a place he got to know growing up with a roustabout dad on Montana ranches and in small-town saloons.

"Where I'm from in Montana, almost nobody stuck," he said. "A lot of the West has a ghost-farm, ghost-ranch aspect to it. Not that people didn't try, but the forces of nature were more than they could cope with."

"We should accommodate nature in the West, instead of trying to bend it to our purposes. ... We have to see ourselves as part of this modern West — things don't have to turn bad."

*I don't know where this came from
Someone sent this to me
apparently confusing me with his Honor.
to be married
Paul from
W.D.*

Boston Globe - I suspect this came from Dave Gordon - a former Medill prof who defected to Boston - some school please. (???)

Book Review

Big drama in Big Sky Country

By Alison Arnett
GLOBE STAFF

Montana was once mainly famous as Big Sky Country, but lately, what with accused mad bombers in its rugged hills, holed-up antigovernment ranchers defying the law and reclusive movie stars, it has gotten attention for tales of fact stranger than fiction. Now Ivan Doig, a native Montanan, has woven an epic-size novel in "Bucking the Sun," and one wonders if there's something about the state's very extremes of sky and earth that draw out this rush of plot and character.

One family is at the center of the story. From mettlesome mother Meg and cantankerous father Hugh to their three lanky sons and their colorful wives to Hugh's radical brother Darius, lately arrived from Scotland, each member of the Duff family has a story and a piece of the action.

It's a mystery, a puzzle still haunting a bad-tempered little sheriff toward the end of his days: how a pickup truck containing two Duffs, both nude, plummeted down a ramp and into the vast lake formed by the Fort Peck Dam. As his undersheriff told him the day the bodies were found: "Married, you bet. Only not to each other."

The mystery frames the book, the beginning and the end, a seemingly neat package on which to hang the story. But there's nothing neat and tidy about "Bucking the Sun," an expression signifying pushing on against the glare of the sunrise or sunset. Like the title, the characters, for all their foibles, seem almost dwarfed by the descriptions of nature vs. machinery.

The battle lines form as the family struggles to fight off grasshoppers plaguing its alfalfa farm on the rich Missouri River bottomland. Doig lovingly describes the June green of the fields, the line of rocky bluffs, the curl of the river against the land. He evokes as well the lurking danger and the sounds of munch-

BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig

Simon & Schuster, 412 pp., \$23

ing as the insects inexorably destroy the crop.

With the passage of decades, the horrible sweep of agricultural disasters that set the stage for the Great Depression have been instilled into the national memory, especially images of dusty Oklahoma fields. We tend to forget the other plagues - of grasshoppers, jackrabbits and plunging prices. Hugh Duff is deter-

**The battle lines
form as the family
fights a
grasshopper
plague on its
alfalfa farm. Doig
evokes the lurking
danger and the
sounds of
munching.**

mined to hold on, to fight off nature's villains and reap the green gold. His wife is convinced the battle is lost. When a government agent shows up to tell them President Roosevelt is offering salvation by drowning their land and giving them jobs, he is furious. He is even more furious when he discovers his eldest son, Owen, will design the dam's earthen fill.

This antagonism - the father's stubbornness about agriculture, the brilliant son's belief in technological progress - develops as the clan moves to the site of Fort Peck Dam, a monumental project devised as much to produce jobs and wages, to drive back the national sense of de-

spair, as to protect downstream land from flooding. Doig's descriptions of the engineering of this massive earthen project, designed to hold back the Missouri River, are as detailed as those of nature.

The characters multiply as the story moves along, from the original Duffs to lovers in quickly sketched romances, to wives for the dirt engineer and his less talented brothers, who are twins. The women are more fully drawn than the men; there are the ambitious and beautiful Charlene, who resents her husband's romance with a pile of dirt; her aspiring novelist kid sister Rosellen and the spunky Kate. The clan might well have muddled along with resentments under the surface, couples getting along and sometimes fighting, with jealousies and flirtations, all sticking together in the end.

They might have, except that into the mix comes Hugh's brother Darius, fleeing union trouble in Scotland. Darius, long in love with Hugh's wife, Meg, settles into work on the dam, but agitates among the workers on the side, his anarchic beliefs settling into the family and the story like grit into a machine. His colorful choice of a wife, Proxy, a taxi dancer who does her business in the saloon boss' roomy Packard behind the bar, adds to the ferment.

Doig adroitly plays his historical cards as the dam work fills in the years and the landscape. His sense of the drama of the West, of man against nature, of FDR's push to employ a destitute population, of the dark worldview of Darius the spoiler, is effective. His characters, particularly the women, sound modern and believable.

The abrupt ending, the solving of the mystery, is a surprise, with little shading and few telltale signs. It's as though Montana's natural drama ran away with the author. In the rush to tell the story, to fit in the history, to get in all the characters, "Bucking the Sun" seems to plunge into the man-made lake itself.

the Demi Moore movie now doing poorly at the box office. Having seen the film twice, Hiaasen expresses little disappointment. He describes his limited involvement with Hollywood as "really pleasant" and says he laughed at many scenes in the movie. Moreover, it hasn't changed his life. He still has to sit in a room and write his next book, due out in 1997. And every book is "an agony."

By Deirdre Donahue

About this list: USA TODAY's list is based on a computer analysis of retail book sales nationwide last week. Included are more than 1 million volumes from approximately 3,000 large-inventory, diverse-content bookstores. USA TODAY calculates a list of approximately 250 best-selling books. The first 50 are listed at right. Others may be referred to elsewhere in the newspaper.

Reporting stores include: Borders Books & Music, Bookstar, Bookstop, Brentano's, Crown Books, Davis Kidd Booksellers (Tennessee), Doubleday Book Shops, Hungry Mind Bookstore (St. Paul), Joseph-Beth Booksellers (Lexington, Cincinnati), Ingram Book Company (reporting retail sales for independent bookstores including Hawley-Cooke Booksellers, Louisville and a sampling of Little Professor Book Centers), Lauriat's and Royal Discount Book Stores, Oxford Book Stores (Atlanta), Scribner's Bookstores, Tattered Cover Book Store (Denver), Waldenbooks, Waterstone's (Boston), B. Dalton Bookseller, Barnes & Noble Inc., Books-A-Million and Bookland, Books & Co. (Dayton).

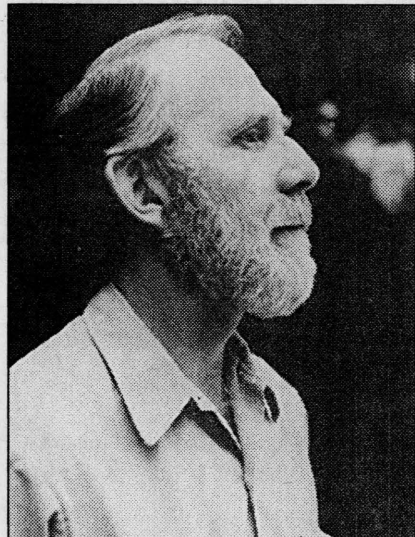
The book list appears every Thursday

| | | | | |
|----|-----|--|---|-------------------------|
| 20 | 22 | How Stella Got Her Groove Back/Terry McMillan | Stella, 42, finds love with a younger man on her Caribbean vacation (F) | Viking, \$23.95 |
| 30 | 20 | Bad as I Wanna Be/Dennis Rodman with Tim Keown | Janitor turned NBA star tells how he learned to be himself (NF) | Delacorte, \$22.95 |
| 31 | 26 | The Celestine Prophecy/James Redfield | The search for an ancient Peruvian manuscript (F) | Warner, \$17.95 |
| 32 | 28 | Chicken Soup for the Soul/Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen | 101 short takes that aim to inspire (NF) | HCI, \$12.95 |
| 33 | 29 | Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution/Robert C. Atkins | Low-carbohydrate diet in four stages (NF) | M. Evans, \$12.95 |
| 34 | 262 | Stormy Weather/Carl Hiaasen | Scam artists, lowlifes and good guys converge after Florida hurricane (F) | Warner, \$6.99 |
| 35 | 45 | Vertical Run/Joseph Garber | Dave Elliot has 24 hours to find out why everyone wants to kill him (F) | Bantam, \$6.50 |
| 36 | 24 | The Witness/Sandra Brown | Public defender's dream come true turns into a nightmare (F) | Warner Vision, \$6.99 |
| 37 | 166 | Finding Moon/Tony Hillerman | Newspaper editor searches for dead brother's baby in Asia (F) | HarperPaperback, \$7.99 |
| 38 | 50 | Gods and Generals/Jeff Shaara | Son of the author of <i>The Killer Angels</i> writes prequel (F) | Ballantine, \$25 |
| 39 | 60 | Emotional Intelligence/Daniel Goleman | Emotional intelligence can lead the way to success and happiness (NF) | Bantam, \$23.95 |
| 40 | 37 | The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People/Stephen Covey | How to get your life priorities straight for success (NF) | Fireside/S&S, \$14 |
| 41 | 35 | A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul/Canfield, Hansen | Collection of 101 stories on parenting, love and more (NF) | HCI, \$12.95 |
| 42 | 38 | Simple Abundance/Sarah Ban Breathnach | 366 inspirational messages for women (NF) | Warner, \$17.95 |
| 43 | 238 | Strange Highways/Dean Koontz | Six novellas, six stories and two novels, including the title novel (F) | Warner Vision, \$6.99 |
| 44 | 43 | Reviving Ophelia/Mary Pipher | How parents can help daughters get through adolescence (NF) | Ballantine, \$12.50 |
| 45 | 33 | In Contempt/Christopher Darden with Jess Walter | Black prosecutor tries to maintain integrity during O.J. trial (NF) | ReganBooks, \$26 |
| 46 | 27 | Op-Center 3: Games of State/Tom Clancy, Steve Pieczenik | Paul Hood and his team become entangled in neo-Nazi violence (F) | Berkley, \$6.99 |
| 47 | 56 | Matilda/Roald Dahl, art by Quentin Blake | 6-year-old genius develops telekinetic powers (F) | Puffin, \$4.99 |
| 48 | 54 | What to Expect When You're Expecting Arlene Eisenberg, Heidi Murkoff, Sandee Hathaway | Reassuring guide for mothers-to-be (NF) | Workman, \$10.95 |
| 49 | 259 | Burning Angel/James Lee Burke | Robicheaux's case involves Vietnam, voodoo, the mob, racial scandal (F) | Hyperion, \$6.99 |
| 50 | 32 | The Eyes of Darkness/Dean Koontz | Mother begins to believe that her son is not dead (F) | Berkley, \$7.50 |

child. He embraced the structure and purpose of the military.

155 *Jack and Jackie: Portrait of an American Marriage* by Christopher Andersen (Morrow, \$24). J&J punctures the Camelot myth based on more than 450 interviews. Some of the book's contentions: Jack had a premarital affair with Audrey Hepburn, and Jackie had a brief romance with actor William Holden.

191 *I Lived to Tell It All* by George Jones with Tom Carter (Villard, \$23). The country music great started out in poverty as one of eight children growing up in east Texas. After he became famous, he had other demons: drugs, alcohol and debt.



By Carol M. Doig

Ivan Doig: A Montana clan clashes in his eloquent novel 'Bucking the Sun.'

In 'Sun,' traveling a family's dark and rocky terrain

Bucking the Sun
By Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster
409 pp., \$23

By Angela Herrin
USA TODAY

In the spring of 1938, a pickup truck is pulled from the Missouri River, near Montana's mammoth Fort Peck earthen dam project. The bodies of a man and woman are inside, their clothes floating beside them.

Is this a married couple, the sheriff asks the crowd of dam workers, and was this murder or an accident? Well, their last name is Duff and

they're married all right, an embarrassed worker finally says — just not to each other.

The sheriff will spend the next 50 years pondering this riddle, trying to unravel just how he and this couple arrived at the riverbank that day. But the story really belongs to the

Duffs, a rough, raucous family struggling with the cross-currents of secrets and grudges swirling around them.

This is familiar territory for Ivan Doig: the misunderstandings and tragedies that plague generations of the same family, that divide brothers and estrange lovers.

In earlier books, like *Dancing at*

the Rascal Fair and *English Creek*, these tales were set in the Montana of the past as ranchers struggled to hold onto homesteads and their families in the raw, unsettled West. They fight floods, blizzards and locusts.

More importantly, they fight each other.

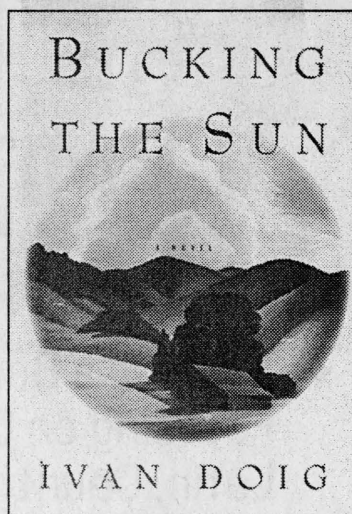
This time, it is government and technology in the form of the unrelenting advance of the Army Corps of Engineers that threatens the family. In a New Deal program worked out in Washington, the government takes the Duffs' bottomland farm so a huge earthen dam can be built across the Missouri.

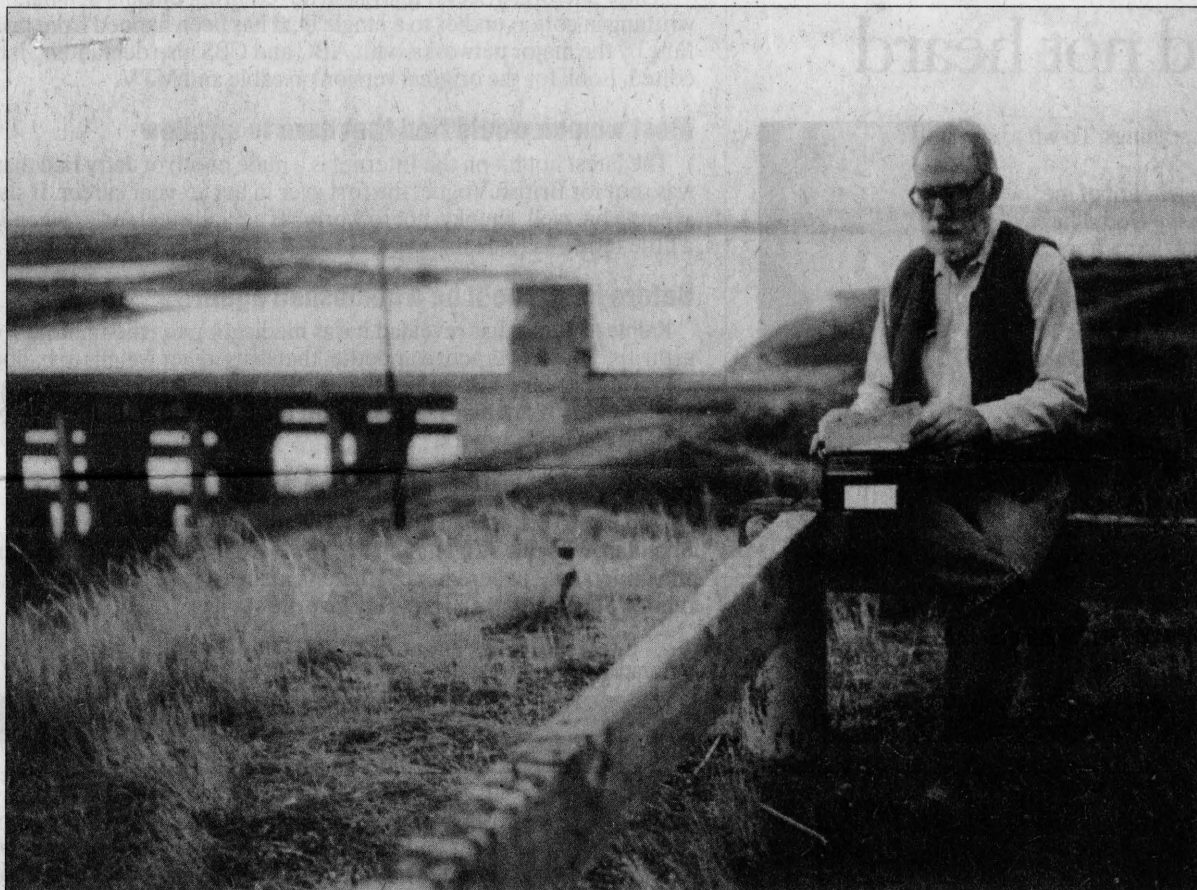
The Duffs all find work at the dam, but it's an uneasy alliance. Oldest son Owen, who left the farm for

college, is a head engineer on the project, while his father and two younger brothers find jobs as laborers.

The family resentments don't prove any easier to tame than the river itself. Hugh Duff can't relinquish his role as powerful patriarch of the family; his wife can't forgive his harsh carelessness. As each son marries, new tensions emerge over the limits of love and control.

The answer to the riddle — which two members of the Duff family end up in that submerged truck in the Missouri River? — doesn't show up until the last page of the book. But in such an epic tale, written in such a geography of love and pain, there's little temptation to skip pages.





Carol M. Doig photo

Ivan Doig at the Fort Peck Dam Spillway. Below, President Franklin D. Roosevelt visits Glasgow, Mont., in 1934.

More than

*Spokane
Spokesman - Review*

Montana

Ivan Doig aims for a new dimension with his latest book

By Dan Webster
Staff writer

Few contemporary novelists are more closely associated with Montana, the state *and* the mystique than Ivan Doig. Certainly his literary output, which includes the Montana-based trilogy "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," suggests that.

Especially Montana-like is his 1978 memoir, "This House of Sky."

In fact, each of these books alone bears more of a feel for the Big Sky state than do a whole shelf of self-styled reminiscences of what it's like to pass a season or two in the wilds of Libby, Livingston or Wisdom.

Yet Doig, reflecting a sensibility that has been tempered by years of living in such non-Montana locales as Chicago and Seattle, doesn't define his work as "inherently Montanan."

And that goes particularly for his newest novel, "Bucking the Sun," Doig's fifth work of fiction (and his eighth book overall). For despite having a trademark Montana setting, the Fort Peck Dam building project of the 1930s, "Bucking the Sun" is Doig's attempt to capture something bigger.

"I kind of wish, in fact, that the dam was not set in Montana," Doig said during a recent phone interview from a Chicago hotel. "It might have given the book a different dimension. It might not have been seen so much as a Montana novel as what I see it as — which is an American West novel."

Trouble is, it's difficult to separate what is specifically Montana from what is traditionally the West.

The themes in "Bucking the Sun" are certainly emblematic of the West as a whole: the struggle between those who work their own land vs. those who see the land as something to use for the greater good of society; the spirit of individuality

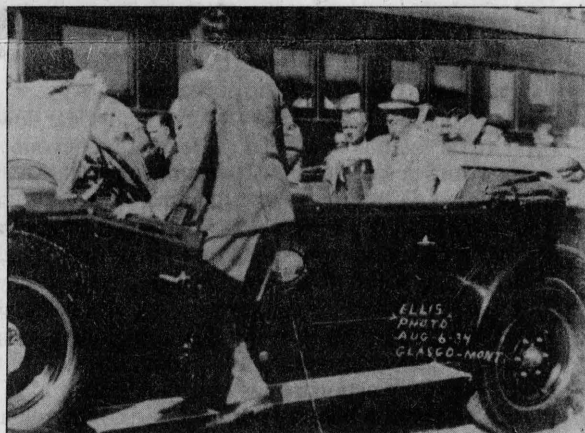


Photo courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Helena

BUCKING
THE SUN



IVAN DOIG

Reading

Ivan Doig will read from his novel "Bucking the Sun" at 7 tonight at Auntie's Bookstore, Main and Washington.

vs. the power of government; family closeness vs. the prevailing tensions inherent among self-reliant family members.

Yet those same themes apply perfectly well to Montana, too. Thus it's only natural for Doig to center his story on the Fort Peck Dam, Roosevelt's New Deal project that still ranks as one of the most amazing engineering feats ever imagined, much less accomplished. It entailed building an earthen dam 25 stories high, four miles wide to hold back the waters of the

Continued: **Doig/C3**

Doig: 'Bucking the Sun' reaches beyond Montana

Continued from B1

Missouri River.

In addition to flood control, the dam — which took six years to build (1933-39) — provided some 10,500 jobs during the middle years of the Great Depression.

Doig explores the project, and examines his themes, through the family Duff. A brood of Scottish ancestry, the Duffs are headed by proud Hugh, whose industrious nature has been doubly wounded. The first injury came courtesy of a seeming betrayal by his eldest son, Owen; the second involved losing the family farm to the very dam project that Owen is helping honcho.

Owen is the one who left, deserting his demanding and needy father in the search for more education and a better chance to make his mark.

Owen's younger brothers, twins Bruce and Neil, are the ones who stayed. The first is a wild sort who speeds through the boomtowns surrounding the impending dam on his motorcycle; the second is more sober and unafraid to work double shifts if it means a better life.

And there are the women who live with, and all in their own way love, these men. Mother Meg endures Hugh's occasional drunken benders while overseeing the lives of her children. Charlene is bound to Owen, her pride in him matched only by her resentment of Meg. Spirited Kate and bookish Rosellen are the respective wives of Bruce and Neil.

Into this mix comes Darius (pronounced Da-rye-us), Hugh's brother and a socialist with a shady past. And the complicating factor here is that Darius marries a saloon doxy named Proxy (short for peroxide) but maintains his torch for Meg.

All of this family tension is heightened by the fact that Doig reveals early on that two of the Duffs, each married to someone else, have been found not only in a compromising situation but also dead, drowned by the very water held hostage by the new dam.

The rest of the book, told in flashback, is a guessing game as to who these individuals are, with Doig revealing clues as the pages pass by.

The backdrop against which this literary melodrama plays out,

though, is what provides "Bucking the Sun" its special feel. The Fort Peck project was something that has intrigued Doig since his youth.

It was as a boy that the 56-year-old White Sulphur Springs native read the first issue of *Life* magazine, whose cover featured Margaret Bourke-White photographs of the eastern Montana site. Later on, he was fascinated by stories of "the big slide of 1938," an accident that killed eight dam workers.

Years later, long after he had moved away, earning college degrees at Northwestern University and working as a journalist at various Midwestern spots, he again heard about Fort Peck while working on his trilogy.

"It's bound to be like this in Spokane and other parts of the West," Doig said. "Whenever you talk to somebody, you only talk for a few minutes before you find that you know somebody in common."

That was how Fort Peck came up again and again. "Everybody had a relative who worked there or something of that nature," he said.

Doig spent three years on the book, the first 12 months doing nothing but research. He found the technical information he needed in an obscure trade publication, and he buoyed this both with interviews of 50 Fort Peck veterans collected by the Montana Historical Society and by finding other dam vets on his own.

Doig admits that he might have set his story somewhere else, maybe even putting the Duffs to work on another well-known Roosevelt-era project, the Grand Coulee Dam. But, he said, "That would have lost all the earthen dam aspects and some of the other shimmering elements like the *Life* magazine cover and people being driven out of this particular Missouri River valley."

Ultimately, it may not matter. In the end, "Bucking the Sun" ends up being pure Doig — at once Montanan and Western, coexisting parts of the same geographic pie.

"That's what I'm always after," he said. "And it's not just the West of America: It's west of the places that run things. . . . That's the kind of writing that interests me, and that's what I think we're trying to do in the West. We're out beyond the usual suspects in the literary and power centers."

From
rep's
all
reports

New titles selling well are **DR. ATKINS' QUICK & EASY, GOD WANTS YOU TO BE RICH** (this one sold very well in hardcover, Tattered took 60), **TIMELESS HEALING** (Tattered took 80), **SUCCULENT WILD WOMAN** (the accounts do have excellent sales with **LIVING JUICY**, Tattered sold 289 copies total and took 100 of this one, most accounts are going for the display), **TUMBLING, MEGATRENDS ASIA** (this also has great hardcover sales Tattered took 100), **THE END OF ALICE, FOUNDING FATHER, MANAGEMENT OF THE ABSURD, BEACHCOMBING FOR A SHIPWRECKED GOD** (a personal favorite, I am stacking this title with reps choice help), **BLOOD SPORT, THE SONG OF THE DODO** (Tattered sold 132 of the hardcover and most stores report good sales), **BUCKING THE SUN** (This is my best paperback on the list. Tattered took 240, they sold 279 copies ytd). Not a lot of problem titles on this list, accounts are not taking big amounts of **HEART FULL OF GRACE, GODFATHER LEGACY, MY DEAREST LOVE, CLICK** (crowded field) or **PERSONA PRINCIPLE** but they are representing them. I have had some problems with **STEPHEN POLLAN'S GUIDES** as the sales history is awful, the promo is good but only my largest accounts will bring in the amount of books required. I have also had two comments on Rohde's **ITALIAN SO FAT, LOW FAT, NO FAT** that Italian low fat cookbooks are numerous. I could use some more information on **THE ZONE GARDEN**, it seems most of my territory is in Zone 5 but Tattered's expert said mountains are Zone 4, now I am a little confused as to which book to push (I was pushing 567, Tattered wanted 345, now I am selling both. **HELP** is needed here for Colorado and Utah, which book do I sell?).

(evidently Terry Warnick's Colo. report)
fall '96

The Virginia Quarterly
Review
Charlottesville, VA

QUARTERLY

FALL 1996

M64811

LUCE PRESS CLIPPINGS

| *Bucking the Sun*, by Ivan Doig.

Bucking the Sun opens with a murder and ends with its solution, but this novel is anything but a fast-paced thriller. Doig follows the experiences of the extended Duff family as their lives intersect and overlap while they work on the New Deal financed Fort Peck (Montana) Dam project. Doig's concentration on detail and historical accuracy, as well as his large cast of characters, demands the slow delivery. But what the novel lacks in pulse-pounding plot twists it gains in rich prose, human insight, and character development. Doig excels at creating the world in which his characters live and making the reader feel that he, too, inhabits that world. His storytelling is nuanced and always rings true. *Bucking the Sun* is an extremely satisfying book.

Simon and Schuster \$23 ✓

BUILDING CHARACTERS

by Joseph Bourque

IF YOU'RE TAKING THE TROUBLE TO plow through book reviews, you probably love to read. In my experience, book readers also love to eat, so please forgive me a few trite but apt conceits—culinary references to the two books reviewed here. The first is a solid concoction of historical fact in a spicy fictional sauce, served on a bed of whodunit mystery. The other is a gourmet feast of original and dazzling complexity presented by a superbly talented chef.

BUCKING THE SUN

by Ivan Doig
Simon & Schuster
\$23.00 (hardcover)

The first bite into Ivan Doig's new novel, *Bucking the Sun*, leaves a bitter taste, in my opinion. The dedication page reads "To novelists who deliver the eloquence of the edge of the world rather than stammers from the psychiatrist's bin," and there follows a short list of authors, including the inescapable implication that Doig is one of their number. Both the language and the sentiment seem to me inexcusably arrogant and the book is not the eloquence of the edge of the world, whatever that is. It is, fortunately for his readers, an ably executed novel.

Bucking the Sun is based on the building of northeastern Montana's Fort Peck Dam in the 1930s, a project that still ranks high among the engineering feats of this century. At the time, it was the largest earth-filled dam ever attempted: a hundred million cubic yards of fill dirt, not counting the stupendous amounts of gravel and rock, to build a berm four miles long and as high as a twenty-five-story building. Missouri River water backed up behind the dam



eventually submerged farmland more than a hundred miles away.

So awesome was the project that journalists and historians scrambled for comparisons to translate its size into humanly understandable terms. Three and a quarter million people could stand on the surface of the dam and each have a square yard to move around in. All the fill dirt loaded into twelve-foot-long, one-and-a-half-ton trucks would circle the globe at the equator more than nine times. It's still so important to the state of Montana that then-Governor Stan Stephens convened a roundtable in 1992 to discuss the recreational and development potential of Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River.

The author clearly did a lot of research into the building of the dam. His descriptions of the work, the machinery, the events, the townsites, and even the sheer scope of the enterprise have the ring of authenticity. Certainly he startled me with the realization that in the twenty-six years I've

been in Montana I've never seen Fort Peck Dam, and his presentation of the history was compelling enough to prompt me to plan a trip to see it.

Doig has enlivened his gargantuan historical framework with the fictional Duff clan, a semi-dysfunctional family consisting of the parents, three sons, and their wives. Owen, the eldest son, is chief civilian engineer for the dam. Hugh, the patriarch, and the two youngest sons, are put to work on the dam as laborers when their farm is gobbled up by the U.S. government to make way for the dam waters. For the duration of the novel, which roughly coincides with the years it takes to build the dam, the family's life is centered around that huge dirt and concrete structure.

The mystery facet of the novel is presented in the first chapter, a pair of deaths for which there is no explanation or even identification until the end of the novel. Quite a few novelists have recognized recently that mysteries sell like hot dogs at a ball game. To Doig's credit, his "whodunit" remains a subplot that grows naturally out of the characters' personalities, and he keeps it suitably in the background, contributing to the overall tension without getting in the way of character development, which is his real strength.

Owen, the central character, is the rebellious son who left the farm against his father's wishes and got himself an engineering education. Ironically, he's responsible for building the dam that displaces his family's farm and disrupts their lives. His status as insider/outsider adds further complications to family relationships in crisis. And to further roil the mix-

OCT 6 1990

N2254

LUCE PRESS CLIPPINGS

Can we have community without authority?

PAPERBACKS

BY DOLORES AND
ROGER FLAHERTY

Too much choice and too few voices of authority are the chemicals of social instability, the fine kettle of fish where we find ourselves in the late 1990s with no guidelines on how to live. So Alan Ehrenhalt writes in his provocative and readable defense of communitarian virtues, **The Lost City** (Basic Books, \$14). The book seems destined to be a classic of social criticism.

Chicagoans—we and our parents—are his case studies.

Longing for community, often based in nostalgia for the 1950s, has been expressed often in this decade. Basic to all the writing is a yearning for safety, stability and the network of relationships the middle-aged recall from their childhoods. At the same time, no one seems nostalgic for the authoritarianism of the same time. But, Ehrenhalt writes, "authority and community have in fact unraveled together" and the unraveling will stop only with the reimposition of some authoritarian structures.

There are other costs to community, as Ehrenhalt shows in unsentimental portraits of 1950s life in St. Nicholas of Tolentine parish on the Southwest Side, in the South Side's Bronzeville and in split-level subdivisions of Elmhurst. To have a sense of common purpose, people in all three communities gave up a certain personal autonomy in choosing friends and of places to shop and worship. They accepted authorities in school, at work and at home who often overstepped fairness and common sense.

But these people had a sense of place, in communities where neighbors kept an eye out for each other's kids, where the local butcher knew everyone and everything, where the president of the savings and loan insisted on the personal integrity of borrowers, where the parish priest walked the streets to talk to families gathered on front stoops and black Baptist

ministers used political clout to serve their congregations.

The virtues of that time—but not necessarily all their manifestations—cannot and should not be dismissed with the "can't go back to Oz" and "Harriet" putdown. Ehrenhalt writes. He cites the 1920s in America and the pre-Victorian era in England as times of rampant individualism that were rolled back to more communitarian ways, the first by World War II, the other by the ascendance of Queen Victoria, a very authoritarian monarch.

Perhaps, the author says, the moral crisis of our time is as strong as war or economic collapse were in the past as a force sufficient to foster a return to older values.

Ehrenhalt holds little hope that our Baby Boom generation is ready "to recognize that privacy, individuality and choice are not free goods, and that the society that places no restrictions on them pays a high price for that decision."

Better, he says, to look to the next generation.

Dancing at the Rascal Fair, by Ivan Doig

(Scribner, \$13). In this 1987 novel, the middle volume of a trilogy, Scottish settlers grapple with the challenges of life in the Montana highlands during the first three decades of this century. Other titles in the trilogy are *English Creek* (1984) and *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana* (1990).

City Life, by Witold Rybczynski (Touchstone, \$12). In this cultural history of American cities, special attention falls on the effect of design, planning and architecture on the quality of everyday urban life. Chicago is singled out as the place that invented the skyscraper, fine-tuned the notion of a commercial downtown

and reinvigorated interest in urban design, drawing heavily on new technologies emerging as the city rebuilt after the Great Chicago Fire.

Into Love and Out Again: Stories, by Eleanor Lipman (Washington Square, \$10). A humorous view of romance holds sway in these lighthearted tales of love, tellingly borrowing its title from a self-mocking verse by Dorothy Parker. Lipman is the author of three novels, *The Way Men Act*, *Then She Found Me* and *Isabel's Bed*.

The Nightingale's Song, by Robert Timberg (Touchstone, \$14). In this multiple biography by a Naval Academy graduate and Marine veteran of Vietnam, the careers of five Annapolis graduates who rose to national prominence during the Reagan years become emblematic of the lingering significance of America's failed military hopes in Vietnam. The subjects are: Arizona Sen. John McCain, Iran-Contra player Oliver North, novelist and former Secretary of the Navy James Webb and North's immediate superior on the National Security Council, Robert McFarlane and John Poindexter.



Ivan Doig

MASS MARKETS: **The Nun's Tale**, by Candace Robb (St. Martin's/Dead Letter, \$5.99), a mystery that shares its period and setting as well as its title from Geoffrey Chaucer, with detective Owen Archer up to his quiver in wimpled intrigue in 14th century England; **The Fallon Blood**, by Robert Jordan writing as Reagan O'Neal (Forge,

\$6.99), a novel of the American Revolution set in Charleston, S.C.; **Witches' Bane**, by Susan Wittig Albert (Berkley/Prime Crime, \$5.99), a Halloween mystery involving Texas herbalist China Bayles in murder linked to charges of New Age witchcraft; **Stone Tears**, by Terry Goodkind (Tor, \$6.99), a fantasy novel, sequel to the *Wizard's First Rule*, set in a vaguely British-sounding land where Sisters of the Light aid the Keeper of the Underworld, with only a magic sword to keep matters in hand.

OCT 6 1996

31
X. EAA

BURRELLE'S

WF
A...N

New in Paperback

34473 NONFICTION

The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929-1968, by Andrew Sarris (Da Capo, \$14.95). When this book was first published, in 1968, many critics looked down on American movies as standardized products of the Hollywood assembly line. In contrast, European movies, with their realistic settings, open-ended stories, and raw sexuality, were held up as better models for young filmmakers and grist for academic analysis. It was Andrew Sarris's mission to reclaim the studio movie; his method was the auteur theory—actually less a theory than a way of seeing. Sarris claimed that, wittingly or not, Hollywood directors had subverted the studio system by imprinting their movies with their own predilections and styles. After a section on “pantheon directors” (which includes such foreigners as Jean Renoir and Fritz Lang), the book discusses the careers of hundreds of Hollywood directors, from the renowned (Ford and Hawks and Welles) to the obscure (Rex Ingram and Harry D'Arrast). If the theory hasn't held up all that well, the impulse behind has succeeded: The heyday of the studio movie, from roughly 1930 to 1945, is now recognized as the classic period for the collective art of movie-making.

FICTION

→ **Dancing at the Rascal Fair**, by Ivan Doig (Scribner, \$13). The central volume in the author's acclaimed trilogy (*English Creek*, published in 1984, was the first), *Dancing* follows the story of two Scottish immigrants, Angus McCaskill and Rob Barclay. The two left a Scottish port in 1889 to head for a new life in a new land. Doig charts their lives and fortunes for the next 30 years as they settle into the beautiful, brutal Two Medicine Country, an area at the base of the Rocky Mountains in Montana. As they raise families and make lives for themselves, Angus finds himself in a fateful contest of the heart with Anna Ramsay, the woman he has come to love.

The History of Danish Dreams, by Peter Hoeg (Delta, \$12.95). Hoeg's best-selling *Smilla's Sense Of Snow* was his first novel to have been published in English, in 1993, but *History* is actually his first



Fritz Lang (right)

book. Published in Hoeg's native Denmark in 1988, the sprawling narrative chronicles the history of that country through a series of vignettes about various eccentric characters. The author propels events at a relentless pace, rapidly spanning generations of oddballs, mystics and iconoclasts. Among his eclectic band: a visionary girl who leads her fellow villagers on a holy pilgrimage to the coast; a circus acrobat romantically involved with a criminal; and a count who attempts to prevent the passage of time by stopping all the clocks on his estate.

← **Salt Dancers**, by Ursula Hegi (Scribner, \$11). Having left her childhood home in Spokane, Wash., right after high school, 41-year-old Julia Ives returns to confront her painful past. Divorced and pregnant, Ives wants to solve the mystery of her mother's disappearance—apparently voluntary—before giving birth to her own daughter. “With this pregnancy my old memories had begun to swell within me,” she reflects, “rising through the fabric of my adult life which I'd woven so soundly, and I had no idea what would be left of me once all those memories broke through.” To find out she must face her father, whose hard drinking filled her youth with terror, and revisit all the significant sites and personalities she escaped from 23 years earlier. Hegi expands Ives' journey toward self-discovery into a poignant examination of an American family.

Ivan Doig shares vision of old west with SU

Local author tries to dispell some of the myth surrounding the "old West."

Seattle U. Nov. '96

SUSAN MYERS
Staff Reporter

Cowboys.

Horses.

Sheriffs and gunfights.

The American West has long been mythologized in terms of action and individuals.

Author Ivan Doig, who visited campus last Thursday, hopes to change this tradition.

Doig, best known for his novels "English Creek" and "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," writes about community life in the American West.



Ivan Doig

"[I'm] interested in how things work out here and how they don't. [I] write not just about the other side but the other sides, plural, of the West," he explained.

Ivan Doig is one of this country's most notable living writers; he is also a voice from the Northwest.

Montana born and bred, Doig has lived in Seattle for the past thirty years. His stories, which deal with these two landscapes, are mas-

terful blends of place, time, and communities.

boys in a small Montana town and suddenly they were fighting a war in Europe.

"This kind of thing has interested me. It can change your life," concluded Doig.

Ivan Doig's latest novel, "Bucking the Sun," deals with change on all levels: personal, political, familial and environmental.

It is set in the 1930s and centers around the building of Montana's

terful blends of place, time, and communities.

"I see memories as the stories our own lives tell us," said Doig, who is usually considered a historical fiction writer. However, this Ph.D. historian thinks of himself simply as a novelist.

"I grew up during some important historical events," he explained with an example of his uncles in World War II. They were just two

Fort Peck Dam, one of Roosevelt's New Deal projects designed to create jobs.

Fort Peck, which stops up the mighty Missouri River, spans four miles and rises twenty-five stories into the air.

*I see memories
as the stories
our own lives
tell us.*

IVAN DOIG

When it was built it was the largest earthen dam ever created.

Although Doig considers the dam just another character in his book, it is undoubtedly a metaphor for many of the other ideas he deals with.

Whether it is the slow, frustrating progression through the Depression or the dangerously unbalanced tensions between two brothers, Doig addresses large life issues that must be dealt with step by step.

"Dams are a wildly complicated issue," Doig mentioned, alluding to their political significance.

Indeed, although we usually give

them little thought, dams influence all of our lives.

They bring us water, make electricity and alter our environment. And, as Doig shows us, there are dams just as large and complicated between ourselves and other people.

"I'm not an expert on anything I write about," claims Doig; but you'd never know it.

Ivan Doig is an intense researcher. His characters, stories, and settings are usually made up, but a tremendous amount of research goes into every detail of his books.

"He always believes in going to a place," explained his wife, "looking at what's there, taking notes, and listening to whatever's there—even if it's only the birds."

Perhaps Doig's greatest talent is the grace with which he weaves together fact and fiction, research and imagination, personal memory and the memories of a nation.

"I don't like stuff about guys and their horses," he said; although he admitted the need for these cultural myths.

"In the end," he concluded, "if we focus on families and how they try to cope, if we go through the old human stories and the new human stories—love, betrayal, and just trying to get on with life—I think we'll have enough to write about."

Northwest Bookfest

A reader's guide

A Special Section of Seattle Weekly

All by myself



ILLUSTRATION BY WHITING TENNIS

The Northwest Bookfest celebrates its second year, and the memoir takes center stage. By **Claire Dederer**

t's the question forever on the lips of literal-minded novel haters: "Why should I read something that never happened?" Authors now seem to be asking themselves, "Why should I *write* something that never happened?" The memoir is enjoying a vogue. Publishers' lists are swelling with slickly packaged tell-alls; autobiography has a presence on the best-sellers lists with truly literary books

like Mary Karr's *The Liars' Club*; novelists like Tobias Wolff are flocking to the format. James Atlas explored the resurgence of the confessional in *The New York Times Magazine* last spring: "... Nearly two dozen memoirs are being published this spring, with more to come, supplementing the 200 titles—by one book review editor's estimate—published last year." >

The importance of this trend was not lost on the people at the Bookfest, whose presentations are put together by several planning committees of writers, publishers, agents, and bookstore managers. Each committee has a specialty: "Literary Fiction and Nonfiction," "Category Fiction," and so on. According to programming coordinator Jennifer O'Neal, two of this year's committees, independent of each other, insisted on addressing the memoir. "They both said that there's so much happening this fall with memoirs, it could easily justify at least two separate panels." The result was three memoir-specific events: the panels "Through the Looking Glass: When Memoir Takes on a Life of Its Own," and "Welcome Home: Bringing Family into Fiction and Nonfiction," as well as a workshop on "Writing What You Know," moderated by noted Seattle memoirist Brenda Peterson.

The events will probably be packed, thanks to the memoir's almost universal appeal. "The contemporary memoir is like the Nature Theater of Oklahoma in Kafka's fable 'America,' where everyone can be an artist. Everyone can be an autobiographer," writes Atlas. To write a memoir, all you need is a childhood—it's the author's early life that drives the story bus. Done well, autobiography spins childhood nightmares into gold: Carolyn See's *Dreaming: Hard Luck and Good Times in America* torqued a background of alcoholism into a beautiful, funny meditation on family. Susannah Kaysen coldly exhibited, like a scab, her year in a mental institution in the highly effective *Girl, Interrupted*. In the recent movie *Small Faces*, a kind of film memoir, the character Lex McLean says, "I dreamt I was a man. Luckily when I woke up I was still a boy." Lex is a boy after the memoir writer's heart. In the contemporary memoir, childhood is allowed its due. It exerts such a strong influence that sometimes subsequent accounts of adulthood do feel like a dream.

But that's when all goes well. When it

doesn't work, memoir mirrors victim culture or shock culture: Shabby memoirists write as if the extremities of their personal histories automatically render their narratives meaningful. The young writer in particular seems to be drawn to the healing promise of autobiography. In *Secret Life*, a memoir of an abused childhood, Michael Ryan reveals that he has had sex with his dog. (Neatly appealing to both victim and shock camps.) Ryan's book is but one example: "Poor little me" has never been said so many ways. The upshot: While it's true "everyone can be an autobiographer," it's not true that everyone else will want to be an autobiography reader.

Still, the memoir's strong pull on aspiring writers is what makes it such a good topic for the Bookfest, which has become a major destination for writers: all those famous authors, all those workshops, all those publishers gathered under one roof. Last year, the writing and publishing workshops overflowed with eager writers. This year, the Bookfest is ready and waiting.

Aside from the memoir writers participating in the above-mentioned workshops and panels, many of the featured speakers—novelists, journalists, and poets—have also written memoirs: Ivan Doig's *This House of Sky*; poet Louis Simpson's *The King My Father's Wreck*; Robert McNeil's *Wordstruck*. Jonathan Raban writes a kind of memoir with his reportage of his adventures, as does Jon Krakauer. There's a wide gap between the having and the telling of a story, and these writers have bridged it handily. Maybe it's because they're old enough, or bold enough, to have collected really interesting experiences. Maybe it's because as seasoned writers, they know that what you leave out is as important as what you put in. (For all we know, they too have had sex with their dogs, and just had the sense not to mention it.) Or maybe—call me simplistic—they were simply good writers before they became good memoir writers. ■

Bookfest highlights

F e s t
f a c t s

Dates: October 26-27

Time: 10am-6pm, both days

Location: Pier 48 on the Seattle waterfront. The pier is located on Alaskan Way at S Main, just south of the Coleman ferry dock. Pier 48 served as cold storage in the late '40s, so wear something warm to insulate yourself inside this giant uninsulated box.

Admission: Free, but donations to support state literacy programs will be accepted.

Parking: You can park in the garage at the Art Institute of Seattle, about a mile north of the Fest site, for an all-day \$4 fee, or use the metered parking to the south. Drivers, beware: A Seahawks game will be under way on Sunday afternoon, so give yourself plenty of time. (The bus is starting to sound like a good option, isn't it?)

There will be commercial venues serving food and, of course, espresso. For more information, you can reach the Bookfest at 789-9868, bfestival@aol.com, or at the Web site: www.speakeasy.org/nwbookfest.

Forthwith, a selection of recommended readings and highlights selected by *Seattle Weekly* critics Claire Dederer and Emily Baillargeon. For reasons of space, we couldn't cover everything: There are some impressive genre fiction presentations (though now it's called *category fiction*—how's that for correct?), and lots of great stuff happening for kids, too. The book arts lineup is also promising this year, including cool papermaking, marbling, and binding how-tos.

Saturday

10 Mistakes Writers Make When Trying to Publish— Maybe the biggest mistake is that everyone wants to be a writer. **Mary Alice Kier**, a literary agent, leads a panel of editors and agents, including **Betsy Amster**, **David Browster** (an editor at Houghton Mifflin, not the *Seattle Weekly* publisher), and **Phyllis Hatfield**, who will offer their lists of mistakes and positive solutions. According to Kier, who travels frequently between NYC and Seattle to pitch Northwest authors, we are a hot property right now. But—and it's a big but—the market isn't able to support the glut of would-be Gutersons. You've got to put your artistic detachment aside and learn the business of marketing to get out of the slush pile. 10:15-11:30, Stafford Stage.—E.B.

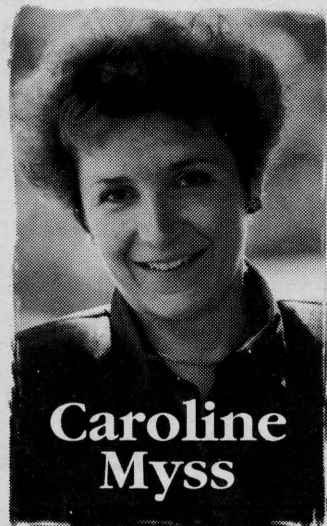
On Her Own Adventure— Last year, the panel on women's travel writing was filled to the rafters. This year, on a bigger stage, find moderator **Susan Fox Rogers**, editor of *Solo: On Her Own Adventure*, as well as **Gretchen Legler**, fishing memoirist, **Marybeth Bond**, who has edited books of women's travel essays, **Jean Gould**, who edited a book on adventure travel for women over 50, and novelist **Katherine Govier**, who edited the travel book *Without a Guide*. Expect a lot of inspiring Extreme Travel anecdotes, as well as advice for women travelling alone. An antidote to that voice inside you telling you not to go. 10:30-11:45, MacLean Stage.—C.D.

Andrew Grove— Intel president Andrew Grove took, as the title of his new book, his own famous Silicon Valley epigram, *Only the Paranoid Survive*. He'll be interviewed by the *Weekly's* **Fred Moody** (*I Sing the Body Electronic: A Year with Microsoft on the Multimedia Frontier*), who assures me that though Grove is indeed a business guy, the interview will be far from dull. "He's witty, he's charming, and he swears extravagantly with flair and style," promises Moody. Though Grove's bio makes him sound like an elder statesman of the computer business, Moody says that's not the case. "He's Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*, down there in the trenches fighting. In fact, I think he's going to have his face painted blue for the interview." 10:30-11:30, Carver Stage.—C.D.

Jonathan Raban— The man who has been called the best writer in Seattle has a new book out: *Bad Land: An American Romance*. The book,

Your 1st opportunity to hear the material from her long-awaited new book!

The Anatomy of the Spirit Tour



Caroline Myss

author of *Anatomy of the Spirit: The Seven Stages of Power and Healing*

Purchase tickets locally at:

University Bookstore, 4326 University Way, NE, Seattle • 206/634-3400
Seattle Unity, 200 Eighth Av N • 206/622-8475

Tickets \$22 in advance • \$30 at the door

For an opportunity to learn in depth, attend the seminar:

Friday, December 6-7
Red Lion Hotel Bellevue

Learn how to use seven universal spiritual laws as a blueprint for healing & developing personal power.

Contact The ConferenceWorks! to register or for a free brochure. fax 317/328-1475
phone 800/395-8445

Continuing Education Credit available for seminar

"An intellectual romp through the north woods."

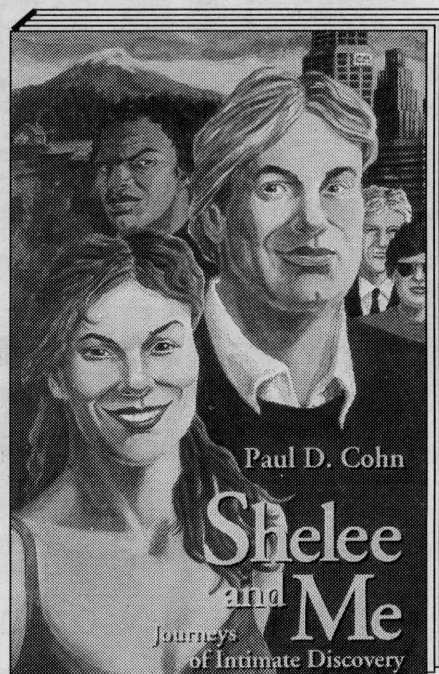
—Kathryn Anderson

"*Shelee and Me* is thoroughly erotic...Superb."—*Tributary Magazine*

"Paul Cohn's *Shelee and Me* is a life metaphor masquerading as an American love story...Important fiction."—*The View*

This suspense-filled novel scores an emotional knockout: Shelee and Phil together share successful lives and careers. When they befriend three young sexual abuse victims, they become victims themselves and pay a fearful price.

~~~~~



Now at Northwest bookstores and Amazon.com

Dist. By Pacific Pipeline, Kent, WA



which was excerpted last spring in *The New Yorker*, tells the story of the descendants of early 20th century homesteaders in Montana. Native Englishman Raban is beloved for his American odyssey *Hunting Mr. Heartbreak*. Raban's conversation is erudite, not to mention damned funny. Come and hear. 11:45-12:30, Carver Stage.—C.D.

**Poetry Reading: Bart Baxter and Debora Greger**—Talent in our local poetry scene is refreshingly diverse, as with the pairing of these two accomplished writers. Baxter is a storyteller, with a keen sense of narrative and urban setting. He never fails to give a good reading or performance, according to John W. Marshall of Open Books: A Poem Emporium. Baxter's newest book, *Peace for the Arsonist*, should prove him one to watch. In her intelligent new collection, *Desert Fathers, Uranium Daughters*, Debora Greger, formerly of Hanford, writes through her childhood self about her father's job at the nuclear reservation. 11:45-12:45, Beard Stage.—E.B.

**Vi Hilbert speaking with Sherman Alexie**—Upper Skagit elder and storyteller Vi Hilbert will perform, then talk with novelist Alexie, who is so popular that pretty soon bookish Seattleites will be buying "I love Sherman" bumper stickers. The two will discuss efforts to reclaim the Lushootseed language, the language once spoken by tribes in our region. 11:45-12:45, Stafford Stage.—C.D.

**The Power of the Story: Mothered/Fathered**—Once upon a time, my parents used to read to me until I was old enough to oblige my younger brother myself. Now, sadly, it's Nintendo (big bad wolf) or television. The Washington Commission for the Humanities has adopted a program to reinstate the institution of parents reading to their children. In this interactive demonstration, learn how to share stories with children so that the experience transcends the "happily ever after." 12-1, McCarthy Stage.—E.B.

**Life Off the Map**—Why anyone would seek out the danger and discomfort of mountaineering is worth a good deal of discussion. Seattle writer **Jon Krakauer** (*Into the Wild*, *Eiger Dreams*) made a passionate, personal inquiry into the problem in his brilliant *Outside* magazine story on last May's fatal ascent of Mt. Everest. He'll be talking with **David Roberts** (*Moments of Doubt*), who has written about life in the wild for *Outside*, the *Atlantic*, and *National Geographic*. 12:15-1:15, Hugo Stage.—C.D.

**The Considerate Traveler**—Seattle Times writer **Jim Molnar** moderates a vagabond's wet dream team in a discussion of the ethics of travel. **Bill Dalton** founded Moon Publications in 1973 with the classic *Indonesia Handbook*, one of the best

travel guides I've ever had the pleasure to use. Dalton pioneered the interweaving of political and cultural background with basic travelling nuts and bolts. **James O'Reilly** has edited two books (France and Thailand) in the *Travelers' Tales* series. **Rick Steves' Europe Through the Back Door guidebook has spawned a Back Door industry, with a TV show and a newsletter. And Australian **Maureen Wheeler** founded Lonely Planet Publications with her husband Tony, creating a series that has become the Bible of no-budget travelers the world over. 12:45-2, Carver Stage.—C.D.**

**Seeing is Believing: The Novel in Words and Pictures**—I was never a big fan of Nick Bantock's *Griffin and Sabine*; it was such a mess. But other writers working with pictures and collage have come up with far more interesting results. Moderator **Barbara Hodgson**, who founded Byzantium Books with Bantock, has authored *The Tattooed Map*, an imaginary account of her travels in Morocco, including hotel bills, sketches, and photos. **Karen Elizabeth Gordon** wrote the fabulous *Transitive Vampire* series, the coolest grammar books in the world. She uses gothic, Edward Gorey-ish examples to explain gerunds and dangling participles. Artist **Persimmon Blackbridge** has a brand new book coming out: *Sunnybrook: A True Story with Lies*. Vancouver, BC, poet **Michael Turner's Hard Core Logo** tells the story of an imaginary punk band, from garage beginnings to reunion tour, with poems illustrated by photos. His *Company Town* does the same for the year in the life of an imaginary BC fishing town. 1-2:15, Beard Stage.—C.D.

**Ivan Doig**—Doig, one of the foremost chroniclers of the West, reads from his latest, *Buckling the*



Mona Simpson's new novel *A Regular Guy* explores the mother-daughter relationship.

*Sun*. Expect lots of talk about big men in a big land from this big-themed (and brilliant) writer. 1:30-2:15, MacLean Stage.—C.D.

**John Edgar Wideman**—Stopping through on a cross-country sweep to promote his first book in six years, *The Cattle Killing*, Wideman will be interviewed by PBS's *Upon Reflection* host

**Marcia Alvar**. This should be a memorable conversation, highlighting Wideman's intelligence and cultural concerns, his Pittsburgh youth, his recent stint as guest editor of *Best American Short Stories* 1996, and the novel that is riding a tidal wave of acclamations. 1:45-2:45, Hugo Stage.—E.B.

**Louis Simpson**—Heralded for his personal, somehow familiar narratives and his informal observations that read like quiet breaths, Simpson is a poet in tune with modern American life. (One of my favorite poems questions a poet's need to write versus the need to be recognized with the riddle, "What's the sound of one hand clapping?") Memoir is another place Simpson has ventured recently, in *The King My Father's Wreck*. Fully aware of the colloquialisms, history, and traditions of individual and family experience, Simpson's work in either genre is as impressive as it is gently startling. 2:15-3:15, Carver Stage.—E.B.

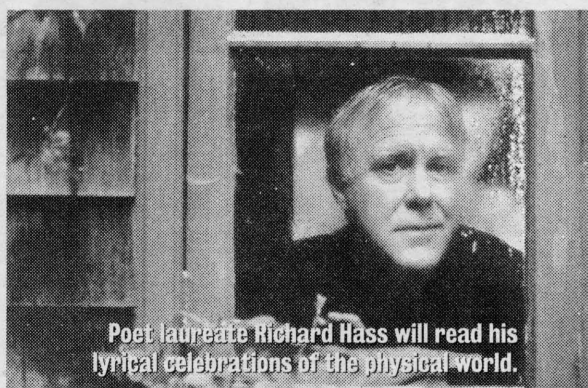
**I'll Take My Stand: Waging War Over Northwest Forests**—A powerhouse panel, moderated by **Richard White**, University of Washington history professor, author of *The Organic Machine*, and certifiable brain since he received a MacArthur "Genius" grant last year. A volatile mixture of panelists will be discussing the contested state of the Northwest forests. Contrarian **Alston Chase** is author of the classic *Playing God in Yellowstone* and of a new critique of the enviro movement, *In a Dark Wood*. **Kathie Durbin** is an editor at *Cascadia Times* and the author of *Treehuggers: Victory, Defeat, and Renewal in the Northwest Ancient Forest Campaign*. Professional hillbilly **Robert Leo Heilman** (author of *Overstory Zero: Real Life in Timber Country*, about his days as a tree planter in the Cascades) will be there to tell them they're all full of yogurt. 2:30-3:45, MacLean Stage.—C.D.

**Writing What You Know**—The mantra of many a writing workshop—"Write what you know"—can be the most friendly of jumping-off points for any aspiring writer. After all, who could possibly see things just the way I do? **Brenda Peterson**, who has written both fiction and nonfiction to high praise, moderates a panel workshop with **Sheila Bender**, **Chelsea Cain**, and **Demetria Martinez**, all of whom have particularly distinctive stories and voices. 2:45-4, McCarthy Stage.—E.B.

**Forget Faulkner**—Writer's writer **Barry Hannah** is touring the States with his latest book, *High Lonesome*. He talks with fellow Oxford, Mississippi, native son **Larry Brown** (*Father's Son*, *Big Bad Love*) about growing up in a town overshadowed by a literary giant—in this case, Faulkner. We hope they'll tell us what Oxford

puts in the water to produce such great writers. Whiskey, maybe. 3:30-4:30, Carver Stage.—C.D.

**Music To Your Eyes: Merging Music and Literature**—Authors/panelists **Alan Chong Lau**, **Nancy Rawles**, and **Jan Wallace** are part of a Writers in Schools program where they explore the paths language



Poet laureate Richard Hass will read his lyrical celebrations of the physical world.

can take when approached through a musical lens such as jazz, in a discussion moderated by Nathan Hale teacher **Shannon Conner**. The authors and featured students will read from their own work. 4:15-5:30, MacLean Stage.—E.B.

**You Can Take the Poetry Out of the Northwest, But ...**—Poetry, time and again, derives from pretty places. But is *our* West, our common topography, the manifest destiny of local poets? **Jim Hepworth**, editor of *Confluence* Press and a poetry teacher at Lewis-Clark State College in Boise, will head this discussion, drawing upon the themes and variations of poetic regionalism. With Seattle-area poets **Sean Bentley**, **Argentina Daley**, and **Sharon Hashimoto**. 4:15-5:30, McCarthy Stage.—E.B.

**Tom Robbins**—Reading a Tom Robbins book is like reading a "Choose Your Own Adventure,"—you're never quite sure where it's headed but you want to hang on for the ride. The LaConner author speaks with KUOW's **Marcie Sillman** and presents his work. 4:30-5:30, Hugo Stage.—E.B.

**Through the Looking Glass: When Memoir Takes on a Life of Its Own**—Our fascination with real life is reflected in bestseller lists week after week, as many authors find that their own lives make for good reading. How should writing distill one's own experience? And how much of what we remember is a) worth retelling and b) accurate? A panel discussion will be led by the award-winning author of *Writing the Memoir: From Truth to Art*, **Judith Barrington**, with writers **Kim Barnes**, **John Daniel**, **Lisa Dale Norton**, and **David Shields**, author of the savvy, splintered memoir *Remote*. 4:30-5:45, Stafford Stage.—E.B.

Get a little language in your life!

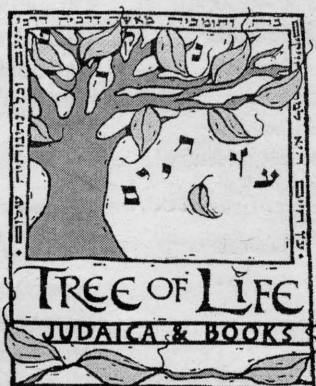
تفوق

Next session begins November 4.

e-mail: info@academy-of-languages.org

Washington Academy of Languages  
(206) 682-4463

OPENING NOVEMBER 10



Your source for Jewish books, gifts, arts, crafts, music & children's specialties

2201 N.E. 65TH ST., SEATTLE  
-across from Bagel Oasis-  
TEL: 206-527-1130

LOSE WEIGHT  
WITH HYPNOSIS

"I went from a tight, uncomfortable size 14 to a sleek size 10 with Dianne's weight control program. Even while traveling, I still lost 8 pounds and did not feel deprived. Hypnosis is terrific! Do it!"  
—W.W., Kirkland



Dianne Cox  
Clinical  
Hypnotherapist

SATISFACTION  
GUARANTEED

STOP SMOKING



"It's tremendous! I smoked for over 40 years and I quit with the first hypnosis session. Hypnosis works!"  
—Barbara W.,  
R.N. Seattle

453-7796

EASTSIDE HYPNOSIS CENTER  
320-108th • Suite 600 • Bellevue



STEVE'S NEWS.  
NOW OPEN IN FREMONT.

Specializing in newspapers and  
magazines from around the world.

Steve's  
FREMONT  
News

DAILY 8AM TO 9PM — 10PM FRI & SAT  
3416 Fremont Ave N (formerly the Daily Planet).



Saturday  
Oct. 26



# Northwest

SEATTLE WEEKLY • October 23, 1996 • Northwest Bookfest Guide

|         | The Seattle Times<br>presents<br><b>The Richard<br/>Hugo Stage</b>                                                                                                                           | Starbucks Coffee<br>presents<br><b>The Norman<br/>MacLean Stage</b>                                                                                                                                           | Amazon.com Books<br>presents<br><b>The Raymond<br/>Carver Stage</b>                                                                                                                                                    | Tower Books<br>presents<br><b>The James<br/>Beard Stage</b>                                                                                                                                            | Public Radio<br>Partnership presents<br><b>The William<br/>Stafford Stage</b>                                                                                                                                        | Arts & Humanities*<br>presents<br><b>The Mary<br/>McCarthy Stage</b>                                                                                                                    | Microsoft<br>presents<br><b>New Media<br/>Stage</b>                                                                                                             | The Book Arts<br>Demo Area                                                    |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00am |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 10:30   |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 10:15 – 11:30am<br><b>Snake Oil<br/>May Be Good for<br/>You After All</b><br>Ralph Golan,<br>moderator, with Carmen<br>Rene Berry, Michael<br>Murray, and Cynthia<br>Waring                            | 10:15 – 11:30am<br><b>10 Mistakes<br/>Writers Make<br/>When Trying to<br/>Publish</b><br>Mary Alice Kier,<br>moderator, with Betsy<br>Amster, David<br>Brewster, and<br>Phyllis Hatfield                             |                                                                                                                                                                                         | 10:30 – 12:00pm<br><b>A Web Site of<br/>One's Own</b><br>Designing and<br>Building Your Own<br>Web Page<br>Free Range Media                                     | 10:30 – 11:15am<br><b>Letterpress<br/>Printing and<br/>Calligraphy</b>        |
| 11:00   | 10:45am – 12:00pm<br><b>Literary Caffeine</b><br>Books That Keep<br>You Up All Night<br>Pamella Goodfellow,<br>moderator, with Mary<br>Daheim, Mary Sharon<br>Plowman, and<br>Mary Jo Putney | 10:30 – 11:45am<br><b>On Her Own<br/>Adventure</b><br>Women &<br>Solo Travel<br>Susan Fox Rogers,<br>moderator, with<br>Marybeth Bond, Jean<br>Gould, Katherine<br>Govier, and Gretchen<br>Legler             | 10:30 – 11:30am<br><b>Andrew Grove</b><br>Interviewed by<br>Fred Moody                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 10:30 – 11:30am<br><b>Wide Awake and<br/>Thriving</b><br>Proactive Business<br>Leadership<br>Practices<br>Kristine Sullivan,<br>moderator, with Jennifer<br>James and Robert Spector    |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 11:30   |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 11:45am – 12:45pm<br><b>Poetry Reading</b><br>Bart Baxter and<br>Debora Greger                                                                                                                         | 11:45am – 12:45pm<br><b>Vi Hilbert</b><br>Speaking with<br>Sherman Alexie                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 | 11:30am – 12:15pm<br><b>Gilding for<br/>the Book Arts</b><br>Charles Douglas  |
| 12:00pm |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 12:00 – 1:15pm<br><b>Next Stop,<br/>Hollywood</b><br>The Art of<br>Screenplay Writing<br>Andy Spletzer,<br>moderator, with Randy<br>Sue Coburn, Victoria<br>Jenkins, David<br>Schulman, and<br>Rick Stevenson | 11:45am – 12:30pm<br><b>Jonathan Raban</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 12:00 – 1:15pm<br><b>The Power<br/>of the Story</b><br>Motherhead<br>Fatherhead<br>Presented by the<br>Washington Commission<br>for the Humanities                                      | 12:15 – 1:30pm<br><b>Potential or Peril?</b><br>Publishing on the<br>World Wide Web<br>Paul Andrews,<br>moderator, with<br>John Alderman and<br>John Healy      |                                                                               |
| 12:30   | 12:15 – 1:15pm<br><b>Life Off the Map</b><br>Jon Krakauer<br>Speaking with<br>David Roberts                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 12:45 – 2:00pm<br><b>The Considerate<br/>Traveler</b><br>The Ethics of<br>Travel Writing<br>Jim Molnar, moderator,<br>with Bill Dalton, James<br>O'Reilly, Rick Steves,<br>and Maureen Wheeler                         | 1:00 – 2:15pm<br><b>Seeing Is Believing</b><br>The Novel in<br>Words and<br>Pictures<br>Barbara Hodgson,<br>moderator, with<br>Persimmon Blackbridge,<br>Karen Elizabeth Gordon,<br>and Michael Turner |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 | 12:30 – 1:15pm<br><b>An Artist Presents<br/>Her Books</b><br>Mare Blocker     |
| 1:00    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 1:30    |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 1:30 – 2:15pm<br><b>Ivan Doig</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1:15 – 2:00pm<br><b>Book-It Repertory<br/>Theatre</b><br>"A Couple of<br>Kooks"<br>by Cynthia Rylant                                                                                                                 | 1:15 – 2:30pm<br><b>Paper Gardens</b><br>Cultivating the<br>Writing Life<br>Linda Stark, moderator,<br>with Ann Lovejoy, Jim<br>Nollman, and Noel<br>Richardson                         |                                                                                                                                                                 | 1:30 – 2:15pm<br><b>Block Print<br/>Illustration</b><br>Larry Lewis           |
| 2:00    | 1:45 – 2:45pm<br><b>John Edgar<br/>Wideman</b><br>Interviewed by<br>Marcia Alvar                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 2:15 – 3:15pm<br><b>Louis Simpson</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2:15 – 2:45pm<br><b>Spider Robinson</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                         | 2:00 – 3:00pm<br><b>From Happening to<br/>Has-Been</b><br>Best and Worst<br>Web Sites<br>Loren Schwartz, modera-<br>tor, with Paul Andrews<br>and David Robison | 2:30 – 3:15pm<br><b>Papermaking</b><br>Chris Chennault                        |
| 2:30    |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2:30 – 3:45pm<br><b>I'll Take<br/>My Stand</b><br>Waging War<br>Over the<br>Northwest Forest<br>Richard White,<br>moderator, with<br>Alston Chase,<br>Kathie Durbin, and<br>Robert Leo Heilman                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 2:30 – 3:45pm<br><b>* ! ? @ # !</b><br>Cartoonists,<br>Commentary, and<br>Campaigns<br>Bill Radke, moderator,<br>with Chris Britt and<br>David Horsey                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 2:45 – 4:00pm<br><b>Writing What<br/>You Know</b><br>Writers' Workshop<br>Brenda Peterson,<br>moderator, with Sheila<br>Bender, Chelsea Cain,<br>and Demetria Martinez                  |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 3:00    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 3:00 – 4:15pm<br><b>Don't Leave Me<br/>Like This!</b><br>When Serial<br>Mysteries End<br>Adam Woog, moderator,<br>with Katherine Beck,<br>Robert Ferrigno, Candace<br>Robb, and John Straley                         |                                                                                                                                                                                         | 3:30 – 5:30pm<br><b>Once Upon a<br/>Screen</b><br>Interactive<br>Storytelling<br>Nana Kuo, moderator,<br>with Mark Hall, Greg<br>Roach, and Scott<br>Rosenfelt  | 3:30 – 4:15pm<br><b>An Artist Presents<br/>Her Books</b><br>Barbara Tetenbaum |
| 3:30    | 3:15 – 4:15pm<br><b>Sherman Alexie</b><br>With musical<br>guests<br>Jim Boyd and<br>Res Bound                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 3:30 – 4:30pm<br><b>Forget Faulkner</b><br>A Conversation<br>with Larry Brown<br>and Barry Hannah                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 4:00    |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 4:15 – 5:30pm<br><b>Music to Your Eyes</b><br>Merging Music<br>and Literature<br>Shannon Conner,<br>moderator, with<br>Alan Chong Lau, Nancy<br>Rawles, and<br>Jan Wallace                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 4:00 – 5:00pm<br><b>Joe Kane</b><br>When Indians<br>and Oil Giants<br>Collide                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 4:15 – 5:30pm<br><b>You Can Take<br/>Poetry Out of<br/>the Northwest,<br/>But . . .</b><br>James Hepworth,<br>moderator, with Sean<br>Bentley, Argentina Daley,<br>and Sharon Hashimoto |                                                                                                                                                                 | 4:30 – 5:15pm<br><b>Creative<br/>Correspondence</b><br>Michael Jacobs         |
| 4:30    | 4:30 – 5:30pm<br><b>Tom Robbins</b><br>Interviewed by<br>Marcie Sillman                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 4:45 – 6:00pm<br><b>The Shape of<br/>Things to Come</b><br>How Science<br>Fiction Writers See<br>the Future<br>Greg Bear, moderator,<br>with Lois McMaster Bujold,<br>Chris Bunch, K. W. Jeter,<br>and Spider Robinson |                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 4:30 – 5:45pm<br><b>Through the<br/>Looking Glass</b><br>When Memoir<br>Takes on a Life<br>of Its Own<br>Judith Barrington,<br>moderator, with Kim<br>Barnes, John Daniel,<br>Lisa Dale Norton, and<br>David Shields |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 5:00    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| 5:30    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |



\*King County Arts  
Commission and  
Washington Commission  
for the Humanities



*There is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in books.*



Evon Zerbetz

# Northwest BOOKFEST

**October 26 & 27, 1996 • 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM • Pier 48 on the Seattle Waterfront**  
**Free admission • \$5 suggested donation for literacy programs**

#### **SPONSORS**

Starbucks Coffee Company  
King County Arts Commission  
Amazon.com Books, Bantam Doubleday Dell,  
HarperCollins Publishers, Tower Books, University Book Store,  
Washington Commission for the Humanities

#### **PRESENTED BY**

**The Seattle Times**

#### **SPONSORED BY**

**Microsoft**

#### **IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS**

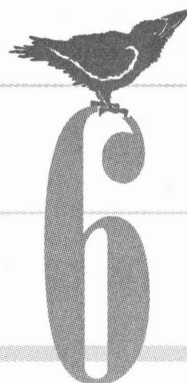
The Public Radio Partnership  
TMA Ted Mader Associates  
Alaska Northwest Books, Consolidated Press,  
Elliott Bay Book Company, Nextel,  
Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association, Pacific Pipeline,  
Publishers Press, Rainier Color, Sasquatch Books, Speakeasy Network



# SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26



|          | THE SEATTLE TIMES<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE RICHARD<br/>HUGO STAGE</b>                                                                                                                           | STARBUCKS COFFEE<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE NORMAN<br/>MACLEAN STAGE</b>                                                                                                                                         | AMAZON.COM BOOKS<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE RAYMOND<br/>CARVER STAGE</b>                                                                                                                                                | TOWER BOOKS<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE JAMES<br/>BEARD STAGE</b>                                                                                                                                        | PUBLIC RADIO PARTNERSHIP<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE WILLIAM<br/>STAFFORD STAGE</b>                                                                                                                                    | ARTS & HUMANITIES *<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE MARY<br/>MC CARTHY STAGE</b>                                                                                                           | MICROSOFT<br>PRESENTS<br><b>THE NEW MEDIA<br/>STAGE</b>                                                                                                      | <b>THE BOOK ARTS<br/>DEMO AREA</b>                                           |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10:00 AM |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 10:15–11:30 AM<br><b>Snake Oil</b><br>May Be Good for<br>You After All<br>Ralph Golan,<br>moderator, with Carmen<br>Rene Berry, Michael Murray,<br>and Cynthia Waring                              | 10:15–11:30 AM<br><b>Ten Mistakes<br/>Writers Make<br/>When Trying to<br/>Publish</b><br>Mary Alice Kier, moderator,<br>with Betsy Amster,<br>David Brewster, and<br>Phyllis Hatfield                            |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |
| 10:30    | 10:45 AM–12:00 PM<br><b>Literary Caffeine</b><br>Books That Keep You<br>Up All Night<br>Pamella Goodfellow,<br>moderator, with Mary<br>Daheim, Mary Sharon<br>Plowman, and<br>Mary Jo Putney | 10:30–11:45 AM<br><b>On Her Own<br/>Adventure</b><br>Women & Solo Travel<br>Susan Fox Rogers,<br>moderator, with Marybeth<br>Bond, Jean Gould,<br>Katherine Govier, and<br>Gretchen Legler                  | 10:30–11:30 AM<br><b>Andrew Grove</b><br>Interviewed by<br>Fred Moody                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 10:30–11:45 AM<br><b>Wide Awake and<br/>Thriving</b><br>Proactive Business<br>Leadership Practices<br>Kristine Sullivan,<br>moderator, with Jennifer<br>James and Robert Spector | 10:30–12:00 PM<br><b>A Web Site of<br/>One's Own</b><br>Designing and Building<br>Your Own Web Page<br>Free Range Media                                      | 10:30–11:15 AM<br><b>Letterpress Printing<br/>and Calligraphy</b>            |
| 11:00    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |
| 11:30    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 11:45 AM–12:30 PM<br><b>Jonathan Raban</b>                                                                                                                                                                         | 11:45 AM–12:45 PM<br><b>Poetry Reading</b><br>Bart Baxter and<br>Debora Greger                                                                                                                     | 11:45 AM–12:45 PM<br><b>Vi Hilbert</b><br>Speaking with<br>Sherman Alexie                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              | 11:30 AM–12:15 PM<br><b>Gilding for<br/>the Book Arts</b><br>Charles Douglas |
| 12:00 PM | 12:15–1:15 PM<br><b>Life Off the Map</b><br>Jon Krakauer<br>Speaking with<br>David Roberts                                                                                                   | 12:00–1:15 PM<br><b>Next Stop,<br/>Hollywood</b><br>The Art of Screenplay<br>Writing<br>Andy Spletzer, moderator,<br>with Randy Sue Coburn,<br>Victoria Jenkins,<br>David Schulman, and<br>Rick Stevenson   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 12:00–1:15 PM<br><b>The Power<br/>of the Story</b><br>Motherhead<br>Fatherhead<br>Presented by the<br>Washington Commission<br>for the Humanities                                | 12:15–1:30 PM<br><b>Potential or Peril?</b><br>Publishing on the World<br>Wide Web<br>Paul Andrews, moderator,<br>with John Alderman<br>and John Healy       |                                                                              |
| 12:30    |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 12:45–2:00 PM<br><b>The Considerate<br/>Traveler</b><br>The Ethics of Travel<br>Writing<br>Jim Molnar, moderator,<br>with Bill Dalton, James<br>O'Reilly, Rick Steves, and<br>Maureen Wheeler                      | 1:00–2:15 PM<br><b>Seeing Is Believing</b><br>The Novel in Words<br>and Pictures<br>Barbara Hodgson,<br>moderator, with<br>Persimmon Blackbridge,<br>Karen Elizabeth Gordon,<br>and Michael Turner | 1:15–2:00 PM<br><b>Book-It Repertory<br/>Theatre</b><br>"A Couple of Kooks"<br>by Cynthia Rylant                                                                                                                 | 1:15–2:30 PM<br><b>Paper Gardens</b><br>Cultivating the<br>Writing Life<br>Linda Stark, moderator,<br>with Ann Lovejoy, Jim<br>Nollman, and Noel<br>Richardson                   |                                                                                                                                                              | 12:30–1:15 PM<br><b>An Artist Presents<br/>Her Books</b><br>Mare Blocker     |
| 1:00     |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |
| 1:30     | 1:45–2:45 PM<br><b>John Edgar<br/>Wideman</b><br>Interviewed by<br>Marcia Alvar                                                                                                              | 1:30–2:15 PM<br><b>Ivan Doig</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              | 1:30–2:15 PM<br><b>Block Print<br/>Illustration</b><br>Larry Lewis           |
| 2:00     |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 2:15–3:15 PM<br><b>Louis Simpson</b>                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 2:15–2:45 PM<br><b>Spider Robinson</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2:00–3:00 PM<br><b>From Happening to<br/>Has-Been</b><br>Best and Worst Web<br>Sites<br>Loren Schwartz, moderator,<br>with Paul Andrews<br>and David Robison |                                                                              |
| 2:30     |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2:30–3:45 PM<br><b>I'll Take My Stand</b><br>Waging War Over the<br>Northwest Forest<br>Richard White,<br>moderator, with David<br>Brower, Alston Chase,<br>Kathie Durbin, and Robert<br>Leo Heilman        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 2:30–3:45 PM<br><b>*!?!@#!</b><br>Cartoonists,<br>Commentary, and<br>Campaigns<br>Bill Radke, moderator,<br>with Chris Britt and<br>David Horsey                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 2:45–4:00 PM<br><b>Writing What<br/>You Know</b><br>Writers' Workshop<br>Brenda Peterson,<br>moderator, with Sheila<br>Bender, Chelsea Cain, and<br>Demetria Martinez            |                                                                                                                                                              | 2:30–3:15 PM<br><b>Papermaking</b><br>Chris Chennault                        |
| 3:00     | 3:15–4:15 PM<br><b>Sherman Alexie</b><br>With musical guests<br>Jim Boyd and<br>Res Bound                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 3:30–4:30 PM<br><b>Forget Faulkner</b><br>A Conversation with<br>Larry Brown and Barry<br>Hannah                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 3:00–4:15 PM<br><b>Don't Leave Me<br/>Like This!</b><br>When Serial<br>Mysteries End<br>Adam Woog, moderator,<br>with Katherine Beck, Robert<br>Ferrigno, Candace Robb,<br>and John Straley                      |                                                                                                                                                                                  | 3:30–5:30 PM<br><b>Once Upon a Screen</b><br>Interactive Storytelling<br>Nana Kuo, moderator,<br>with Mark Hall, Greg Roach,<br>and Scott Rosenfelt          | 3:30–4:15 PM<br><b>An Artist Presents<br/>Her Books</b><br>Barbara Tetenbaum |
| 3:30     |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 4:00–5:00 PM<br><b>Joe Kane</b><br>When Indians<br>and Oil Giants Collide                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 4:15–5:30 P.M.<br><b>You Can Take</b><br>Poetry Out of the<br>Northwest, But ...<br>James Hepworth,<br>moderator, with Sean<br>Bentley, Argentina Daley,<br>and Sharon Hashimoto |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |
| 4:00     |                                                                                                                                                                                              | 4:15–5:30 PM<br><b>Music to Your Eyes</b><br>Merging Music and<br>Literature<br>Vidona Carver and Shannon<br>Conner, moderators, with<br>Rebecca Brown, Alan Chong<br>Lau, Nancy Rawles, and<br>Jan Wallace | 4:45–6:00 PM<br><b>The Shape of Things<br/>to Come</b><br>How Science Fiction<br>Writers See the Future<br>Greg Bear, moderator, with<br>Lois McMaster Bujold, Chris<br>Bunch, K. W. Jeter, and<br>Spider Robinson |                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 4:30–5:45 PM<br><b>Through the<br/>Looking Glass</b><br>When Memoir Takes on<br>a Life of Its Own<br>Judith Barrington,<br>moderator, with Kim<br>Barnes, John Daniel,<br>Lisa Dale Norton, and<br>David Shields |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              | 4:30–5:15 PM<br><b>Creative<br/>Correspondence</b><br>Michael Jacobs         |
| 4:30     | 4:30–5:30 PM<br><b>Tom Robbins</b><br>Interviewed by<br>Marcie Sillman                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |
| 5:00     |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |
| 5:30     |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                              |



\*King County Arts Commission  
and Washington Commission  
for the Humanities



## FEATURED AUTHOR

1:30-2:15 PM Maclean Stage

IVAN DOIG

Ivan Doig joins us for a presentation of selections from his newest work, *Bucking the Sun*—a novel that examines the lives of an extraordinary American family caught up in a monumental national undertaking—and the newly reissued *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*.

Ivan Doig was born in Montana and grew up along the Rocky Mountain Front where much of his writing takes place. A recipient of the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for Literary Excellence and the Governor's Writers Award, Doig was honored in 1989 by the Western Literature Association with the Distinguished Achievement Award for his body of work. • *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster) • *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* (Simon & Schuster) • *This House of Sky* (Harcourt Brace)

## FEATURED AUTHOR

1:45-2:45 PM Hugo Stage

JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN

INTERVIEWED BY MARCIA ALVAR

In plague-ridden eighteenth-century Philadelphia, an itinerant black preacher searches for an endangered African woman. His struggle to find her and save them both plunges him into the nightmare of a society violently splitting itself into white and black, white over black. John Edgar Wideman, "one of America's premier writers of fiction" (*The New York Times*), share passages of his first novel in six years and discusses his literary effort to reconfigure the paradigm of race.

Hailed as one of contemporary America's premier writers of fiction, John Edgar Wideman grew up in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh, a setting used for a number of his award-winning novels and stories. He received the PEN/Faulkner Award in 1984 and 1990—the first author to win that award twice—and was shortlisted for the National Book Award. According to the *New York Times Book Review*, "the more you read John Edgar Wideman, the more impressive he seems." • *The Cattle Killing* (Houghton Mifflin) • *The Best American Short Stories 1996* (Houghton Mifflin) • *Philadelphia Fire* (Vintage)

Host of the PBS television program *Upon Reflection*, Marcia Alvar is highly regarded for her stimulating conversations with accomplished authors. She lives in Seattle.

## NEW MEDIA

2:00-3:00 PM New Media Stage

FROM HAPPENING TO HAS-BEEN:

BEST AND WORST WEB SITES

Last year, Northwest Bookfest featured a panel of local experts who discussed the best and worst on CD-ROM. This year, our esteemed panelists fill you in on the hottest Web sites on-line, as well as those you should simply pass on by.

MODERATOR:

Loren Schwartz, who holds degrees in both fine arts and economics, is currently at Starwave Corporation, where he works on the Sting CD-ROM, *All This Time*, and as an associate producer for ESPN.net.

PANELISTS:

Paul Andrews is a technology columnist for *The Seattle Times*.

David Robison has managed sites such as Hewlett-Packard Internet Solutions, Microsoft BackOffice, and CBS Eye on the Net. A founder of *Current Cities*, a monthly electronic journal, he now works as the production manager for Palazzo deMix.

## FEATURED AUTHOR

2:15-3:15 PM Carver Stage

LOUIS SIMPSON

*The King My Father's Wreck*, the memoir by poet Louis Simpson, brings together autobiographical essays composed over a seven-year period. The stories reflect the drama of Simpson's life: from his early childhood in Jamaica to D-Day with the 101st Airborne, from surviving

a life-threatening illness to winning the Pulitzer Prize. His latest poetry collection, *There You Are*, is considered the most representative work of a poet who is widely recognized as a modern classic.

Louis Simpson, winner of a Pulitzer Prize in poetry and the Columbia Medal for Excellence, is the author of thirteen books of poetry in addition to works of literary criticism and an autobiography. Simpson worked as a professor of English at the State University of New York at Stony Brook from 1967 until his retirement in 1993. • *The King My Father's Wreck* (Story Line Press) • *There You Are* (Story Line Press)

## FEATURED AUTHOR

2:15-2:45 PM Stafford Stage

SPIDER ROBINSON

It's been more than 20 years since Spider Robinson introduced readers to Mike Callahan's Crosstime Saloon—your average neighborhood bar featuring the occasional alien, talking dog, and mythological creature or two. While the original saloon is gone, Callahan's spirit lives on in Mary's Place, featured in Robinson's newest novel, *Callahan's Legacy*. The new bar is just as friendly as the old and, for better or worse, just as unique. Robinson invites sci-fi fans to pull up a stool at the most famous bar in the galaxy. You'll be glad you did.

Spider Robinson lives with his wife and occasional writing partner, Jeanne Robinson, in Vancouver, British Columbia. Since he began writing professionally in 1972, Robinson has received a multitude of awards, including three Hugos and a Nebula. • *Callahan's Legacy* (Tor) • *Starwind* (Tor)

## CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

2:30-3:45 PM Maclean Stage

I'LL TAKE MY STAND:

WAGING WAR OVER NORTHWEST FORESTS

The future of our forests demands a fresh social vision, say those who have led the environmental charge. Join authors in a look back at the human causes and consequences of initiatives to resolve the conflict in Northwest forests. With an environmental movement in crisis, Congress threatening to shred environmental legislation, and increased violence in affected local communities, is a solution possible?

MODERATOR:

Richard White, scholar of the American West, argues that we cannot understand human history without natural history, and vice versa. White is a professor of history at the University of Washington. • *The Organic Machine* (Hill & Wang)

PANELISTS:

Immortalized in John McPhee's *Encounters with the Archdruid*, David Brower, director of the Sierra Club, founded Friends of the Earth and the Earth Island Institute. • *Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run* (HarperSanFrancisco)

Alston Chase is a syndicated columnist and frequent contributor to national magazines, and a leader in environmental ethics. • *In a Dark Wood* (Houghton Mifflin) • *Playing God in Yellowstone* (Harvard)

Award-winning journalist Kathie Durbin began tracking the Pacific Northwest's old-growth forest conflict in 1989. Durbin is a contributing editor for the *Cascadia Times*. • *Tree Huggers: Victory, Defeat, and Renewal in the Northwest Ancient Forest Campaign* (The Mountaineers)

A regular regional commentator for KUOW, Robert Leo Heilman began writing about life as a timber worker in Oregon's Umpqua Valley after an accident prevented him from continuing seasonal work. • *Overstory Zero: Real Life in Timber Country* (Sasquatch)

## COMMUNITY OF READERS

2:30-3:45 PM Beard Stage

\*! ? @ # !

CARTOONISTS, COMMENTARY, AND CAMPAIGNS

David Horsey of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and Chris Britt of *The Seattle Times* square off in a discussion

(with live illustration) of the election season from the humorous viewpoint of the editorial cartoonist.

MODERATOR:

Named Best Public Radio Personality by *Seattle Weekly* readers, Bill Radke is part journalist, part comedian. For several years he's hosted KUOW's Morning Edition, and now hosts Rewind, a light-hearted look back at the week's news.

PANELISTS:

David Horsey is the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer's* award-winning, nationally-syndicated editorial cartoonist. A finalist for the 1987 Pulitzer Prize, Horsey lives in the Wallingford district of Seattle with his wife and kids. • *The Fall of Man* (Seattle P-I Books)

Editorial cartoonist Chris Britt, formerly with the *Tacoma News Tribune*, joined the editorial staff of *The Seattle Times* in July, 1996. Britt is a nationally syndicated cartoonist whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Newsweek*.

## WRITERS' WORKSHOP

2:45-4:00 PM McCarthy Stage

WRITING WHAT YOU KNOW:

MEMOIRS, POETRY, AND JOURNAL WRITING

Learn from practitioners of the craft of autobiographical writing in its many manifestations, with a special emphasis on memoir, poetry, and fiction. What are the benefits to keeping a journal? Can writing about personal experiences help you tap a wellspring of ideas for fiction and poetry?

MODERATOR:

Award-winning writer Brenda Peterson is the author of three novels and two collections of nonfiction. She lives on Puget Sound. • *Sister Stories* (Viking) • *My Mother's Tattoo and Other Family Memoirs* (POD)

PANELISTS:

Author and teacher Sheila Bender inspires writers to put everyday-life stories on paper. She is currently writer-in-residence at Seattle University. • *Writing Personal Essays: How to Shape Your Life Experiences for the Page* (Writer's Digest Books)

Chelsea Cain lives in Portland, where she works as a freelance writer. Her recent memoir is her first book. • *Dharma Girl* (Seal Press)

Albuquerque native Demetria Martinez was charged in 1987 with conspiring against the U.S. government and aiding the entry of Salvadorans, and later acquitted on First Amendment grounds. She now lives in Tucson, where she is at work on her second novel. • *Mother Tongue* (Ballantine)

## MYSTERY

3:00-4:15 PM Stafford Stage

DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS!

The popularity of series fiction confirms that readers often prefer the familiar and are disappointed when an author tries something new. How do authors make the decision to leave a favorite character behind and create a new one? On the other hand, how do they keep a series character interesting and compelling?

MODERATOR:

Seattle native Adam Woog is the author of over a dozen nonfiction books for young adults. His column on crime and mystery fiction appears monthly in *The Seattle Times*.

PANELISTS:

Seattle's Katherine Beck has made a major departure with her most recent novel. Having previously published twelve books in two separate mystery series under the name K. K. Beck, this is her first book to be published under her full name. • *Bad Neighbors* (Doubleday) • *Cold Smoked* (Mysterious Press)

After careers as a poker player, college professor, and newspaper reporter, Northwest native Robert Ferrigno now makes his living as a bestselling mystery novelist. His newest novel will be a major motion picture from Twentieth-Century Fox. • *Dead Silent* (Putnam) • *Dead Man's Dance* (Berkeley)

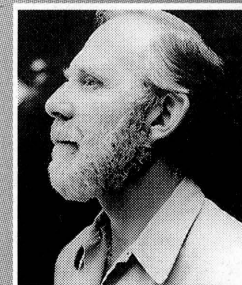
Candace Robb lives in Seattle with her husband, Charlie, and two cats. She recently returned from a research trip to Yorkshire and is working on the next

SATURDAY  
OCTOBER 26

# STAGE PRESENTATIONS

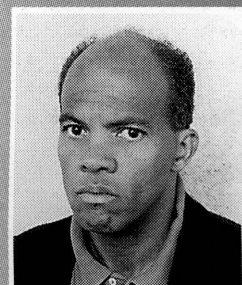


Ivan Doig



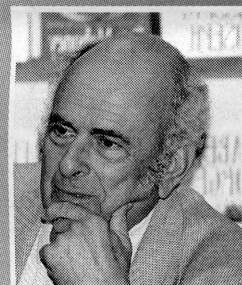
Carol M. Doig

John Edgar Wideman



Jerry Bayer

Louis Simpson



Brenda Peterson



Miriam Berkley

Demetria Martinez



Jeff Smith



15



# AUTHOR INDEX



|                         |          |       |            |  |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>A</b>                |          |       |            |  |
| Sharif Abdullah         | Sunday   | 1:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Alice B. Acheson        | Sunday   | 10:15 | Stafford   |  |
| John Alderman           | Saturday | 12:15 | New Media  |  |
| Sherman Alexie          | Saturday | 11:45 | Stafford   |  |
| Sherman Alexie          | Saturday | 3:15  | Hugo       |  |
| Marcia Alvar            | Saturday | 1:45  | Hugo       |  |
| Betsy Amster            | Saturday | 10:15 | Stafford   |  |
| Susan Andersen          | Sunday   | 10:30 | Beard      |  |
| Catherine Anderson      | Sunday   | 10:30 | Beard      |  |
| Hans Christian Anderson | Saturday | 10:30 | Montgomery |  |
| Lisa Anderson           | Sunday   | 12:45 | New Media  |  |
| Cecile Andrews          | Sunday   | 3:00  | Carver     |  |
| Paul Andrews            | Saturday | 12:15 | New Media  |  |
| Paul Andrews            | Saturday | 2:00  | New Media  |  |
| Dr. Elaine Aoki         | Sunday   | 11:00 | Montgomery |  |
| Mary Ashton             | Sunday   | 2:00  | Book Arts  |  |

|                           |          |       |            |  |
|---------------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>B</b>                  |          |       |            |  |
| Bruce Barcott             | Sunday   | 1:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Kim Barnes                | Saturday | 4:30  | Stafford   |  |
| Judith Barrington         | Saturday | 4:30  | Stafford   |  |
| Bart Baxter               | Saturday | 11:45 | Beard      |  |
| Greg Bear                 | Saturday | 4:45  | Carver     |  |
| Ann Beattie               | Sunday   | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Katherine Beck            | Saturday | 3:00  | Stafford   |  |
| Sheila Bender             | Saturday | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Sue Bender                | Sunday   | 10:15 | Carver     |  |
| Judith Bentley            | Sunday   | 3:30  | Big Top    |  |
| Sean Bentley              | Saturday | 4:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Donna Bergman             | Saturday | 4:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Carmen Rene Berry         | Saturday | 10:15 | Beard      |  |
| Persimmon Blackbridge     | Saturday | 1:00  | Beard      |  |
| Mare Blocker              | Saturday | 12:30 | Book Arts  |  |
| Mare Blocker              | Sunday   | 1:15  | Beard      |  |
| Paul Bloom                | Sunday   | 4:00  | New Media  |  |
| David B. Bolen            | Sunday   | 10:15 | Carver     |  |
| Marybeth Bond             | Saturday | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| Book-It Repertory Theatre | Saturday | 1:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Book-It Repertory Theatre | Sunday   | 3:30  | Montgomery |  |
| M. Taylor Bowie           | Sunday   | 11:45 | Stafford   |  |
| David Brewster            | Saturday | 10:15 | Stafford   |  |
| Chris Britt               | Saturday | 2:30  | Beard      |  |
| Martha Brockenbrough      | Sunday   | 12:45 | New Media  |  |
| David Brower              | Saturday | 2:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Larry Brown               | Saturday | 3:30  | Carver     |  |
| Rebecca Brown             | Saturday | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Rebecca Brown             | Sunday   | 4:30  | Beard      |  |
| Sharon Bryan              | Sunday   | 4:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Lois McMaster Bujold      | Saturday | 4:45  | Carver     |  |
| Chris Bunch               | Saturday | 4:45  | Carver     |  |

|                  |          |       |            |  |
|------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>C</b>         |          |       |            |  |
| Chelsea Cain     | Saturday | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Chelsea Cain     | Sunday   | 4:00  | Stafford   |  |
| Stella Cameron   | Sunday   | 10:30 | Beard      |  |
| Keo Capestany    | Sunday   | 12:00 | McCarthy   |  |
| John Carlson     | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| Vidona Carver    | Saturday | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Alston Chase     | Saturday | 2:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Chris Chennault  | Saturday | 2:30  | Book Arts  |  |
| Ron Chew         | Sunday   | 1:30  | McCarthy   |  |
| Meg Chittenden   | Sunday   | 1:30  | Carver     |  |
| Randy Sue Coburn | Saturday | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Jim Compton      | Sunday   | 11:45 | Carver     |  |
| Sean Condon      | Sunday   | 4:00  | Stafford   |  |
| Shannon Conner   | Saturday | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Stephanie Coontz | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| Stephanie Coontz | Sunday   | 11:45 | Carver     |  |
| Dorothy Cordova  | Sunday   | 1:30  | McCarthy   |  |
| Sharon Cox       | Sunday   | 1:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Elizabeth Cray   | Sunday   | 11:00 | Montgomery |  |
| Walt Crowley     | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |

|                   |          |       |            |  |
|-------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>D</b>          |          |       |            |  |
| Mary Daheim       | Saturday | 10:45 | Hugo       |  |
| Argentina Daley   | Saturday | 4:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Bill Dalton       | Saturday | 12:45 | Carver     |  |
| John Daniel       | Saturday | 4:30  | Stafford   |  |
| Barthe DeClements | Saturday | 3:00  | Big Top    |  |
| Demi              | Sunday   | 12:00 | Montgomery |  |
| Jo Dereske        | Sunday   | 1:30  | Carver     |  |
| Ivan Doig         | Saturday | 1:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Paul Dorpat       | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| Arthur Dorros     | Saturday | 12:00 | Big Top    |  |
| Charles Douglas   | Saturday | 11:30 | Book Arts  |  |
| Karen Duncan      | Sunday   | 1:30  | Carver     |  |
| Kathie Durbin     | Saturday | 2:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Alan Durning      | Sunday   | 3:00  | Carver     |  |

|              |          |       |          |  |
|--------------|----------|-------|----------|--|
| <b>E</b>     |          |       |          |  |
| Earl Emerson | Sunday   | 1:30  | Carver   |  |
| Meade Emory  | Sunday   | 11:45 | Stafford |  |
| Susan Ewing  | Saturday | 4:00  | Big Top  |  |

|                       |          |       |           |  |
|-----------------------|----------|-------|-----------|--|
| <b>F</b>              |          |       |           |  |
| Roxane Farmanfarmaian | Sunday   | 10:15 | Stafford  |  |
| Robert Ferrigno       | Saturday | 3:00  | Stafford  |  |
| Susan Fletcher        | Sunday   | 3:30  | Big Top   |  |
| G.M. Ford             | Sunday   | 1:30  | Carver    |  |
| Free Range Media      | Saturday | 10:30 | New Media |  |
| Free Range Media      | Sunday   | 10:45 | New Media |  |

|                        |          |       |          |  |
|------------------------|----------|-------|----------|--|
| <b>G</b>               |          |       |          |  |
| Ralph Golan            | Saturday | 10:15 | Beard    |  |
| Pamella Goodfellow     | Saturday | 10:45 | Hugo     |  |
| Terry Goodkind         | Sunday   | 10:30 | Maclean  |  |
| David George Gordon    | Sunday   | 3:00  | Beard    |  |
| Karen Elizabeth Gordon | Saturday | 1:00  | Beard    |  |
| Jean Gould             | Saturday | 10:30 | Maclean  |  |
| Katherine Govier       | Saturday | 10:30 | Maclean  |  |
| Debora Greger          | Saturday | 11:45 | Beard    |  |
| David Gregor           | Sunday   | 11:45 | Stafford |  |
| Nikki Grimes           | Saturday | 2:00  | Big Top  |  |
| Andrew Grove           | Saturday | 10:30 | Carver   |  |
| Brenda Z. Guiberson    | Saturday | 3:00  | Big Top  |  |

|                    |          |       |            |  |
|--------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>H</b>           |          |       |            |  |
| John Haines        | Sunday   | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Mark Hall          | Saturday | 3:30  | New Media  |  |
| Barbara Hambly     | Sunday   | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| Sam Hamill         | Sunday   | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Barbara Hanna      | Sunday   | 12:45 | New Media  |  |
| Barry Hannah       | Saturday | 3:30  | Carver     |  |
| Eileen R. Hannegan | Sunday   | 10:15 | Carver     |  |
| Chris Hansen       | Sunday   | 2:30  | New Media  |  |
| Roger Harrison     | Sunday   | 1:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Sharon Hashimoto   | Saturday | 4:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Robert Hass        | Sunday   | 1:15  | Hugo       |  |
| Phyllis Hatfield   | Saturday | 10:15 | Stafford   |  |
| John Healy         | Saturday | 12:15 | New Media  |  |
| Robert Leo Heilman | Saturday | 2:30  | Maclean    |  |
| James Hepworth     | Saturday | 4:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Devin Hermanson    | Sunday   | 12:45 | New Media  |  |
| Vi Hilbert         | Saturday | 11:45 | Stafford   |  |
| Magda Hitzroth     | Sunday   | 2:00  | Montgomery |  |
| John Hockenberry   | Sunday   | 2:45  | Hugo       |  |
| Barbara Hodgson    | Saturday | 1:00  | Beard      |  |
| David Horsey       | Saturday | 2:30  | Beard      |  |
| Pam Houston        | Sunday   | 4:45  | Carver     |  |
| Scott Hudson       | Sunday   | 4:00  | New Media  |  |

|                  |          |       |           |  |
|------------------|----------|-------|-----------|--|
| <b>I</b>         |          |       |           |  |
| Michael Jacobs   | Saturday | 4:30  | Book Arts |  |
| Jennifer James   | Saturday | 10:30 | McCarthy  |  |
| Victoria Jenkins | Saturday | 12:00 | Maclean   |  |
| Jamie Jensen     | Sunday   | 4:00  | Stafford  |  |
| K.W. Jeter       | Saturday | 4:45  | Carver    |  |

|                  |          |       |           |  |
|------------------|----------|-------|-----------|--|
| <b>K</b>         |          |       |           |  |
| Joe Kane         | Saturday | 4:00  | Beard     |  |
| Carol Keeffe     | Sunday   | 12:00 | Beard     |  |
| Mary Alice Kier  | Saturday | 10:15 | Stafford  |  |
| Eric Kimmel      | Sunday   | 2:30  | Big Top   |  |
| Gregg Kleiner    | Sunday   | 4:30  | Beard     |  |
| Jon Krakauer     | Saturday | 12:15 | Hugo      |  |
| Carolyn Kremers  | Sunday   | 12:00 | Maclean   |  |
| Jayne Ann Krentz | Sunday   | 10:30 | Beard     |  |
| Sandra Kroupa    | Sunday   | 1:15  | Beard     |  |
| Nana Kuo         | Saturday | 3:30  | New Media |  |
| Laura Kvasnosky  | Saturday | 11:00 | Big Top   |  |

|                 |          |       |            |  |
|-----------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>L</b>        |          |       |            |  |
| Christine Lamb  | Saturday | 1:00  | Big Top    |  |
| Kirby Larson    | Sunday   | 11:00 | Montgomery |  |
| Alan Chong Lau  | Saturday | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Gretchen Legler | Saturday | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| Richard Leo     | Sunday   | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Michael Lerner  | Sunday   | 11:45 | Carver     |  |
| Ketzel Levine   | Sunday   | 10:30 | McCarthy   |  |
| Larry Lewis     | Saturday | 1:30  | Book Arts  |  |
| Erika Lopez     | Sunday   | 4:00  | Stafford   |  |
| Ann Lovejoy     | Saturday | 1:15  | McCarthy   |  |

|                         |          |       |            |  |
|-------------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>M</b>                |          |       |            |  |
| Margaret Read MacDonald | Sunday   | 12:30 | Big Top    |  |
| Robert MacNeil          | Sunday   | 12:00 | Hugo       |  |
| Susan Madden            | Sunday   | 2:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Maharajahm Storytellers | Sunday   | 11:30 | Big Top    |  |
| Michelle Malkin         | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| Louise Marley           | Sunday   | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| John Marshall           | Sunday   | 4:30  | Beard      |  |
| Demetria Martinez       | Saturday | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Chris Maser             | Sunday   | 3:00  | Carver     |  |
| Brad Matsen             | Sunday   | 3:00  | Beard      |  |
| Ann Maxwell             | Sunday   | 10:30 | Beard      |  |
| Jennifer McCord         | Sunday   | 10:15 | Stafford   |  |
| Michael Medved          | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| Clare Hodgson Meeker    | Saturday | 1:00  | Big Top    |  |
| Linda Lael Miller       | Sunday   | 10:30 | Beard      |  |
| Jann Mitchell           | Sunday   | 10:15 | Carver     |  |
| Ken Mochizuki           | Saturday | 12:00 | Big Top    |  |
| Richard Moe             | Sunday   | 4:00  | New Media  |  |
| Jim Molnar              | Saturday | 12:45 | Carver     |  |
| Fred Moody              | Saturday | 10:30 | Carver     |  |
| Kathleen Dean Moore     | Sunday   | 4:30  | Beard      |  |
| Pierr Morgan            | Saturday | 4:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Esther Mumford          | Sunday   | 1:30  | McCarthy   |  |
| Michael Murray          | Saturday | 10:15 | Beard      |  |

|                   |          |       |           |  |
|-------------------|----------|-------|-----------|--|
| <b>N</b>          |          |       |           |  |
| Pei-Lin Nee       | Sunday   | 12:45 | New Media |  |
| Jim Nollman       | Saturday | 1:15  | McCarthy  |  |
| Lisa Dale Norton  | Saturday | 4:30  | Stafford  |  |
| William Nothdurft | Sunday   | 11:45 | Carver    |  |

|                     |          |       |            |  |
|---------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>O P</b>          |          |       |            |  |
| William O'Daly      | Sunday   | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Jack Olsen          | Sunday   | 1:30  | Maclean    |  |
| James O'Reilly      | Saturday | 12:45 | Carver     |  |
| Whitney Otto        | Sunday   | 4:30  | Beard      |  |
| Sue Pace            | Sunday   | 2:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Julie Paschkis      | Saturday | 11:00 | Big Top    |  |
| Brenda Peterson     | Saturday | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Elizabeth Pinchot   | Sunday   | 1:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Mary Sharon Plowman | Saturday | 10:45 | Hugo       |  |
| Randy Powell        | Sunday   | 11:00 | Montgomery |  |
| Mary Jo Putney      | Saturday | 10:45 | Hugo       |  |

|                       |          |       |            |  |
|-----------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>Q R</b>            |          |       |            |  |
| Jonathan Raban        | Saturday | 11:45 | Carver     |  |
| Bill Radke            | Saturday | 2:30  | Beard      |  |
| Gloria Rand           | Sunday   | 1:30  | Big Top    |  |
| Ted Rand              | Sunday   | 1:30  | Big Top    |  |
| Mary Ransome          | Sunday   | 10:15 | Stafford   |  |
| Nancy Rawles          | Saturday | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Carol Reed-Jones      | Saturday | 4:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Ross Reynolds         | Sunday   | 12:00 | Hugo       |  |
| Noel Richardson       | Saturday | 1:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Greg Roach            | Saturday | 3:30  | New Media  |  |
| Candace Robb          | Saturday | 3:00  | Stafford   |  |
| Tom Robbins           | Saturday | 4:30  | Hugo       |  |
| Tom Robbins           | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| David Roberts         | Saturday | 12:15 | Hugo       |  |
| R. Garcia y Robertson | Sunday   | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| Spider Robinson       | Saturday | 2:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Spider Robinson       | Saturday | 4:45  | Carver     |  |
| David Robison         | Saturday | 2:00  | New Media  |  |
| Susan Fox Rogers      | Saturday | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| Susan Fox Rogers      | Sunday   | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Mary Rosenblum        | Sunday   | 10:30 | Maclean    |  |
| Scott Rosenfelt       | Saturday | 3:30  | New Media  |  |
| Hugh Rubin            | Sunday   | 4:00  | New Media  |  |

|                     |          |       |            |  |
|---------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>S</b>            |          |       |            |  |
| Carol Sanford       | Sunday   | 1:15  | Stafford   |  |
| Carol Lexa Schaffer | Saturday | 4:00  | Montgomery |  |
| David Schlatter     | Sunday   | 1:15  | Beard      |  |
| David Schlatter     | Sunday   | 3:15  | Book Arts  |  |
| Shirley Schneider   | Sunday   | 11:45 | Stafford   |  |
| David Schulman      | Saturday | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Loren Schwartz      | Saturday | 2:00  | New Media  |  |
| George Shannon      | Sunday   | 11:30 | Montgomery |  |
| David Sharp         | Sunday   | 12:00 | Beard      |  |
| Will Shortz         | Sunday   | 10:45 | Hugo       |  |
| Marcie Sillman      | Saturday | 4:30  | Hugo       |  |
| Louis Simpson       | Saturday | 2:15  | Carver     |  |
| Mona Simpson        | Sunday   | 1:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Mona Simpson        | Sunday   | 3:00  | Maclean    |  |
| Judith Skillman     | Sunday   | 4:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Robert Spector      | Saturday | 10:30 | McCarthy   |  |
| Andy Spletzer       | Saturday | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Kim Stafford        | Sunday   | 1:15  | Hugo       |  |
| Linda Stark         | Saturday | 1:15  | McCarthy   |  |
| Erica Sternin       | Sunday   | 2:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Rick Stevenson      | Saturday | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Rick Steves         | Saturday | 12:45 | Carver     |  |
| J. T. Stewart       | Sunday   | 4:00  | Hugo       |  |
| John Straley        | Saturday | 3:00  | Stafford   |  |
| David Sucher        | Sunday   | 3:00  | Carver     |  |
| Kristine Sullivan   | Saturday | 10:30 | McCarthy   |  |

|                   |          |      |           |  |
|-------------------|----------|------|-----------|--|
| <b>T</b>          |          |      |           |  |
| Tabula Rasa       | Sunday   | 4:15 | Book Arts |  |
| Diane Tchakirides | Sunday   | 1:00 | Book Arts |  |
| Barbara Tetenbaum | Saturday | 3:30 | Book Arts |  |
| Barbara Tetenbaum | Sunday   | 1:15 | Beard     |  |
| Ray Troll         | Sunday   | 3:00 | Beard     |  |
| Michael Turner    | Saturday | 1:00 | Beard     |  |

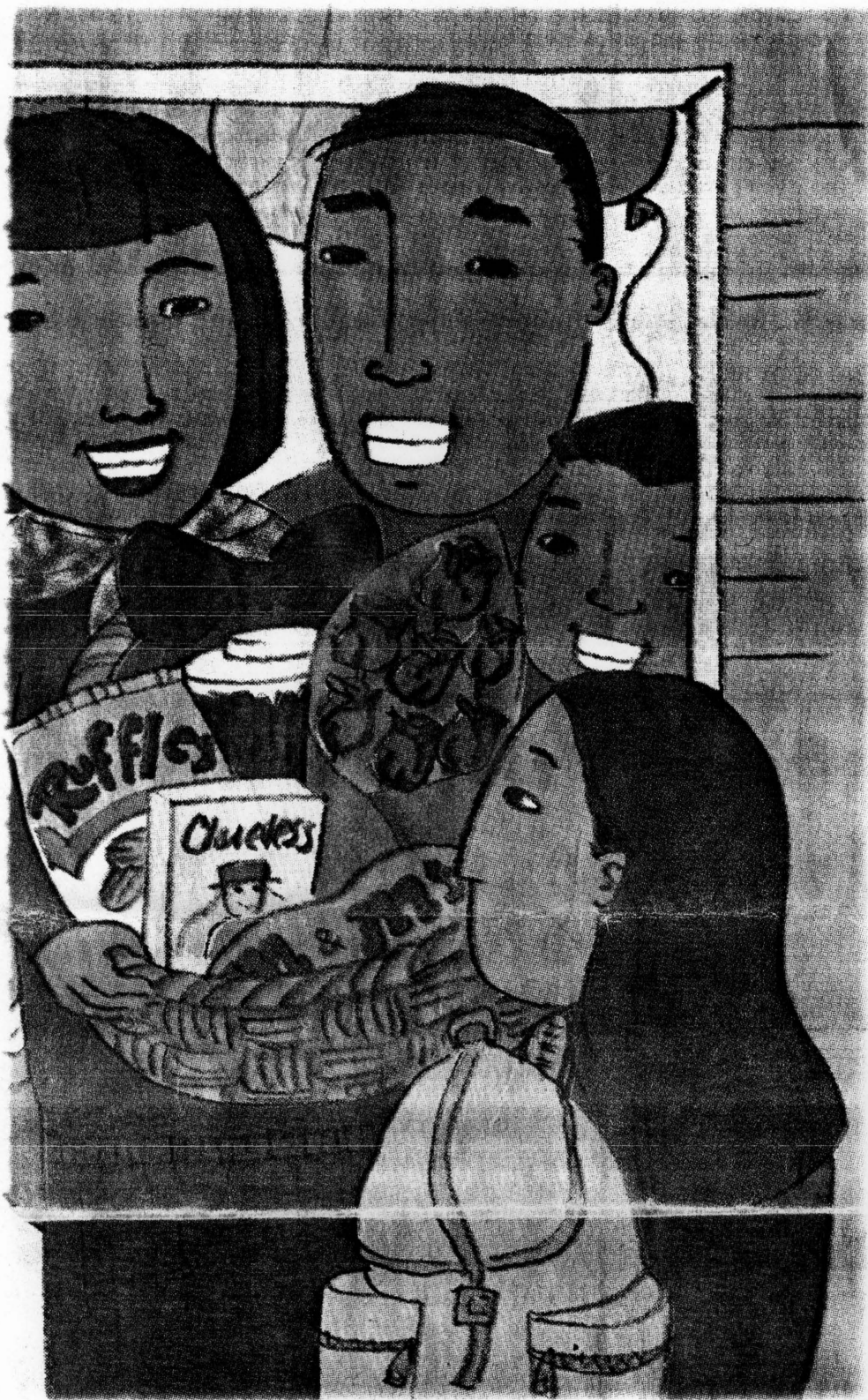
|                              |          |       |            |  |
|------------------------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>U V W</b>                 |          |       |            |  |
| Michael Upchurch             | Sunday   | 1:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Jan Wallace                  | Saturday | 4:15  | Maclean    |  |
| Velma Wallis                 | Sunday   | 12:00 | Maclean    |  |
| Walter the Giant Storyteller | Saturday | 11:30 | Montgomery |  |
| Walter the Giant Storyteller | Sunday   | 1:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Cynthia Waring               | Saturday | 10:15 | Beard      |  |
| Emily Warn                   | Sunday   | 2:45  | McCarthy   |  |
| Mark Wessel                  | Sunday   | 11:45 | Stafford   |  |
| Maureen Wheeler              | Saturday | 12:45 | Carver     |  |
| Tony Wheeler                 | Sunday   | 4:00  | Stafford   |  |
| Richard White                | Saturday | 2:30  | Maclean    |  |
| Jan Kowalczewski Whitner     | Sunday   | 10:30 | McCarthy   |  |
| Mary Whittington             | Sunday   | 2:00  | Montgomery |  |
| David Whyte                  | Sunday   | 2:45  | Stafford   |  |
| John Edgar Wideman           | Saturday | 1:45  | Hugo       |  |
| Art Wolfe                    | Saturday | 3:00  | Montgomery |  |
| Janet Wong                   | Saturday | 2:00  | Big Top    |  |
| Adam Woog                    | Saturday | 3:00  | Stafford   |  |

|                 |          |       |            |  |
|-----------------|----------|-------|------------|--|
| <b>XYZ</b>      |          |       |            |  |
| Andrew Yeoman   | Sunday   | 10:30 | McCarthy   |  |
| Evon Zerbetz    | Saturday | 4:00  | Big Top    |  |
| Ken Zick        | Sunday   | 12:45 | New Media  |  |
| Linda Zuckerman | Saturday | 4:00  | Montgomery |  |



Why teenage baby-sitters  
so much power

# 5 pretty



MICHELLE KUMATA / SEATTLE TIMES

aurants.  
ars of baby-sitting,  
Pittsburgh is consider-  
other kind of job this  
experience for when

keep good sitters to themselves. Pamela  
Weinberg says she has always shared  
everything — books, clothes, even her  
most expensive jewelry — with friends.  
But she now draws the line at her sitter's

## Bookfest opens eyes and ears to reading

BY DONN FRY  
Seattle Times book editor

The success of this year's Northwest Bookfest was apparent to festival director Kitty Harmon in a personal way: This year, she finally got to be a fairgoer herself.

"Everything's been going so smoothly, I've actually been able to sit down and enjoy a couple of the events," said Harmon yesterday afternoon, as festival browsers jammed the aisles and crowded into author presentations.

"My fun festival moment was when a friend and I were taking on a tournament Scrabble player, and Will Shortz walked by and got to see us make a 43-point play — we had a triple-word score."

This was like making a reverse two-handed dunk in a game of pickup basketball, only to discover Shawn Kemp watching from the sidelines. Shortz, who delighted a festival audience yesterday with round of word games and brain-teasers, is crosswords editor of The New York Times. But he is perhaps best-known in Seattle as the weekly "puzzlemaster" on National Public Radio's Sunday version of "Morning Edition."

Harmon and her staff of three, along with approximately 350 on-site volunteers and about 100 planning-committee members, managed to pull off a second annual Northwest Bookfest at Pier 48 that seemed to please 23,000 fairgoers as well as 175 exhibitors ranging from bookstores, to small presses to major publishing houses.

Improvements compared with the inaugural festival were noticeable, if not palpable: The unheated 110,000-square-foot warehouse was comfortable throughout the weekend, aided by sparkling fall weather; indoor "comfort stations" seemed to eliminate much of last year's queuing-up for outdoor porta-johns; and concentrating most food services in connecting galleries along the south side of the warehouse avoided last year's gridlock between exhibit browsers and food-line customers.

Once again, all proceeds beyond expenses will be turned over to selected literacy projects in the five-state Northwest region. Harmon said counting the donations (the event was free, but fairgoers were asked to consider donating \$5) would be completed later today or tomorrow.

Since the Bookfest celebrates all aspects of books, reading and writing, the event is large and pleasingly unwieldy. But here are a few observations throughout the festival:

- Jonathan Raban, the British writer who has lived in Seattle since 1990, noted that his new book, "Bad Land: An



# Open eyes, ears to reading

**Bookfest**  
CONTINUED FROM F 1

American Romance," is "the usual American story of seduction and betrayal, of dreams gone sour — but also, it's a kind of love letter to a landscape."

The book, which recounts the hard lives of would-be farmers and ranchers lured to the parched eastern Montana plains early in this century, is set 1,000 miles from the nearest seacoast, Raban noted, "but in a sense, it is the story of a shipwreck... It is at heart a book about a voyage, about people coming west with the highest of hopes, and coming to grief in that West."

Raban went on to read a chapter recounting his entrance into that landscape of failure, his search of a long abandoned farmhouse to find rotting dresses and fossilized boots, lace curtains that atomized at a touch and a sheaf of desperate figures documenting the family's inexorable descent into financial ruin. The mountainous debt was \$1,040.40.

And Raban's rapt audience was treated to the most graceful, nuanced and beautifully cadenced English prose they ever are likely to hear in any reading.

"Travel writing has always been about self, and the self in relation to place... I think travel

writing is becoming more and more about interior spaces. Travel writers are more and more staying closer to home," said Alaskan writer Gretchen Legler to the standing-room-only audience for "On Her Own: Women and Solo Travel."

"I have found that traveling with children opened doors into women's lives," added Maureen Wheeler, co-founder of Lonely Planet Publications, which produces some of the world's most practical and widely used travel guides, and author of "Traveling with Children." "I was having conversations in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America and finding how similar we were, despite the difference in circumstances on the surface."

Seattle writer Ivan Doig read from his new novel, "Bucking the Sun," to an overflow crowd that spilled from the Norman Maclean Stage area into the Bookfest aisle.

Doig knew his audience, and they knew him. Seated at a table on the stage, and reading in a chirpy, lively voice that so well conveys the bluff, frontier spirit of his Montana characters, it was almost as if Doig were telling a story over the dinner table, across from a loving audience of friends and family.

"People are, I believe, writing more now that they're writing on the Internet," said John Healy, publisher

and editor-in-chief of Outside Online in a session titled "Potential or Peril? Publishing on the World Wide Web." "Sure, some of it is sloppily composed and poorly spelled — but I think that, too, is changing as people realize that to communicate well on the Net, they have to organize and cogent — just like in any form of writing."

Tom Robbins, the bard of La Conner, gave testament to the power of language before a huge audience, most of whom had kept their seats following Seattle writer Sherman Alexie's monolog about his new novel, "Indian Killer," and his thoughts on race relations and the plight of Native Americans.

Robbins recalled how a New York Times book reviewer years ago observed of a novel (not one of his own), "If you can overlook the language, this is a whopping good yarn."

"Well, excuuuuuse me," said

Robbins, still incredulous. "That's like saying...if you can overlook the fact that he or she has been dead for a week, that person in bed next to you is a stimulating companion."

But perhaps the most compelling witness to the weekend's celebration of books was James Harper, a disabled shipyard worker who staffed the booth for the Goodwill Community Learning Center. Seven years ago, at age 40, Harper began classes there to learn to read and write.

"I came into the program as a

non-reader, not a beginning reader, but a non-reader," said Harper, who not only learned to read but now tutors other adults and addresses civic organizations about literacy.

"In all my jobs, I would always get promoted, but it would always reach a point where my inability would stop me. Finally, when I went out with an injury, I said, 'I got the time now, and this is what I'm gonna do.'"

"It worked out great," said Harper. "Every night I thank God I got my eyes opened."

**MICHAEL DOUGLAS VAL KILMER**

**"A HYPNOTIC SPECTACLE."**

Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

**THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS**

**BARGAIN MATINEES TILL 6 PM DAILY**

**TUESDAY IS BARGAIN DAY**

**BARGAIN MATINEE PRICE**

**ALL SEATS-ALL SHOWS**

**ALL DAY & NIGHT TOO!**

**TUESDAY ONLY!**

**AURORA 364-8880**

**BARGAIN TUESDAY ALL DAY-ALL NIGHT \$3.75**

HIGH SCHOOL HIGH 2:45 5:15 7:15 PG13

THE ASSOCIATE 2:30 5:00 7:30 PG13 DOLBY

LONG KISS GOODNIGHT 2:20 4:50 7:40 PG

**RENTON VILLAGE 228-7241**

MasterCard/VISA ACCEPTED FOR ALL PURCHASES

**BARGAIN TUESDAY ALL DAY-ALL NIGHT \$4.00**

**YO GILLIAN ON HER 37th BIRTHDAY**

12:15 2:40 4:50 7:15 9:40 PG13 DOLBY

HIGH SCHOOL HIGH 12:45 2:55 5:15 7:20 9:30 PG13 DOLBY

LONG KISS GOODNIGHT 11:30 2:15 5:05 7:45 10:15 R DOLBY

D3: THE MIGHTY DUCKS 12:00 2:30 5:10 7:30 9:45 PG DOLBY

THE CHAMBER 11:45 2:30 5:15 8:00 10:30 R DOLBY

FLY AWAY HOME 11:30 2:00 4:30 7:00 PG

SLEEPERS ON TWO SCREENS R

SCREEN 1 - 12:30 3:40 7:00 10:05

SCREEN 2 - 1:30 4:40 7:50 DOLBY

PG-13 NIGHT 9:55 R

"One of the finest films of the year. A moving, provocative, and highly entertaining masterpiece."  
— Paul Wunder, WBAT Radio

A Merchant Ivory Production

*The Proprietor*

**Now Playing**

633-0055  
**METRO**  
NE 45TH & ROOSEVELT

DAILY: (1:50), 4:40, 7:20 & 9:50 PM

**EXCLUSIVE SEATTLE ENGAGEMENT**

*The FIRST WIVES Club*

TM & COPYRIGHT © 1996 BY PARAMOUNT PICTURES. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

SEVEN GABLES/LANDMARK  
**METRO**  
THEATRE 633-0055

CINEPLEX ODEON  
**UPTOWN**  
CINEMA 285-1022



# Northwest Bookfest: Read all about it

BY DONN FRY  
Seattle Times book editor



It looks better than ever.

Or, maybe that should read "better than last time," since the Northwest Book-

fest has had only one previous edition. The program for this weekend's annual event clearly shows that the organizers have built on last year's success to design a festival that not only is larger but also more responsive to the interests shown by 1995's 23,000-plus fairgoers.

"We took to heart the feedback people gave us on last year's festival and did our best to tackle the challenges that were in our power to improve," said festival director Kitty Harmon, whose staff examined hundreds of response forms filled out last year by exhibitors, volunteers and fairgoers.

"They may be subtle improvements, but they'll make a difference."

Purely in terms of physical comfort, festivalgoers Saturday and Sunday will find significant improvements: The outdoor port-a-johns that created queues in the October chill last year have been replaced by indoor "comfort stations." Lap blankets also will be available for audiences at the Richard Hugo Stage, the festival's largest — and chilliest — presentation area at the far waterside end of the warehouse.

Activities and presentations for children have been increased, too. So has attention to the art of the book — presentations will include everything from papermaking, to the computer-generation of books, to a handmade-books-as-art exhibition.

Though Bookfest's home — the large, unheated warehouse facility on Seattle's Pier 48 — has not grown, the number of stages and presentation areas has increased from 14 to 16. So has the number of readings, panel discussions and demonstrations — from 71 to 82.

More major publishing houses will be exhibiting their books this weekend, and last year's roster of visiting big-name authors — Norman Mailer and Studs Terkel — looks pretty modest compared with this year's stellar lineup: how about Ann Beattie, Barry Hannah, Mona Simpson, John Edgar Wideman, Robert MacNeil, Pam Houston, Pulitzer-winning poet Louis Simpson, Larry Brown, puzzle master Will Shortz and U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Hass?

They will be joined, of course, by a host of luminaries who happen to live in the Seattle area — writers such as Tom Robbins, Jonathan Raban, Jayne Ann Krentz, Ivan Doig, Sherman Alexie, Brenda Peterson, Greg Bear, David Shields, Jon Krakauer, Kathrine

## General information

- *Bookfest hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday at Pier 48 on the Seattle waterfront. That's at the foot of Main Street, in the Pioneer Square area.*
- *Parking on the pier is limited to exhibitors and media. Metered and free parking is available in the area, though Sunday fairgoers are reminded that a Seahawks' game at the Kingdome will limit available parking.*
- *Parking also is available in the garage of the Seattle Art Institute, 2375 Elliott Ave., for the special all-day rate of \$3 (the Bookfest program mistakenly says \$4); free shuttle buses run between the garage and Pier 48. The garage is also accessible to the waterfront trolley along Alaskan Way.*
- *Fairgoers with handicapped or elderly passengers may drop them off in the Pier 48 parking area before finding off-site parking.*
- *The Pier 48 warehouse can be chilly, so dress appropriately.*

Beck, Robert Ferrigno and many, many more.

All told, some 200 authors will be giving readings or taking part in discussions and presentations. And there will be approximately 175 exhibits — from small local bookstores (Brothers Books, Gregor Books, etc.) and publishers (Epicenter Press, Fjord Press, etc.) to publishing giants such as HarperCollins and Random House.

Most reassuring, however, is the one thing that hasn't changed: Beneficiaries will still be selected literacy programs in the five-state Northwest region. The Northwest Bookfest is free, but fairgoers are asked to consider a \$5 donation toward literacy. Last year's inaugural Bookfest raised \$27,311.

Free Northwest Bookfest programs are available at more than 60 branches of the Seattle and King County public library systems, as well as about 50 bookstores in the Seattle area. Space doesn't permit reproduction of the entire schedule, but here are some basic details and Bookfest highlights:

## Ongoing activities

**Microsoft Explorer Theater** features a program each hour about the Internet, interactive books and games, library access and other online activities.

**Speakeasy On-line Cafe**, a Bookfest version of the cafe at 2304 Second Ave., provides access to the World Wide Web, Internet video

links to authors in other countries and assistance in creating your own literary Web page.

**Antiquarian Row** features displays by Seattle used- and rare-book dealers.

**I Envision** has information about the Goodwill Community Learning Center's literacy program.

**Reading Club Clubhouse** provides information and advice to book clubs or those hoping to start one. Make contacts, get title suggestions or solicit new members here.

**The Giant Book Swap** allows you to trade your old paperbacks for someone else's old paperbacks.

**The Book Arts Center** features ongoing demonstrations of letterpress and woodblock printing, calligraphy, gilding, papermaking and marbling and bookbinding, as well as presentations by book artists Mare Blocker and Barbara Tetenbaum.

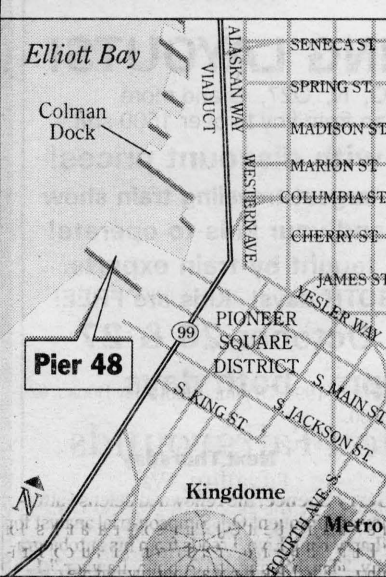
**Young Writers and Readers** includes an extensive program of book- and reading-related activities for children. For details, see the Weekend section in Saturday's Seattle Times.

## Special events

**The Governor's Writers Awards Ceremony** kicks off Bookfest weekend at 7 p.m. tomorrow at the Museum of History and Industry. With Ivan Doig as emcee, Gov. and Mrs. Lowry present the 1996 awards to the authors of 10 books. Spencer G. Shaw, master storyteller and professor emeritus of library science at the University of Washington, receives the Nancy Blankenship Pryor Award for his contributions to the state's literary heritage.

**OK Hotel Spoken Word** closes Bookfest weekend with performances by rhythmic rockers and spoken-word artists John S. Hall, Roger Manning, Kinnie Star and others. Doors open 8 p.m. Sunday at the O.K. Hotel, 212 Alaskan Way S. (\$5; 621-7903).

## Northwest Bookfest



## Authors, presentations

### Saturday

"Ten Mistakes Writers Make When Trying to Publish," William Stafford Stage, 10:15 a.m.

"On Her Own Adventure: Women & Solo Travel," moderated by Susan Fox Rogers, 10:30 a.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

"A Web Site of One's Own," building your own page on the World Wide Web, 10:30 a.m., New Media Stage.

Jonathan Raban, 11:45 a.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

"Potential or Peril?," publishing on the World Wide Web, moderated by Seattle Times Personal Technology columnist Paul Andrews, 12:15 p.m., New Media Stage.

"Life Off the Map" features outdoors writers/climbers Jon Krakauer and David Roberts, 12:15 p.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

"The Considerate Traveler," the ethics of travel writing, moderated by Jim Molnar of The Seattle Times, 12:45 p.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

Ivan Doig, 1:30 p.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

Novelist John Edgar Wideman, interviewed by Marcia Alvar, 1:45 p.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

Science-fiction writer Spider Robinson, 2:15 p.m., William Stafford Stage.

Louis Simpson, the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, 2:15 p.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

"I'll Take My Stand," waging war over the Northwest forest, moderated by UW historian Richard White, 2:30 p.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

"Cartoonists, Commentary and Campaigns," moderated by Bill Radke, 2:30 p.m., James Beard Stage.

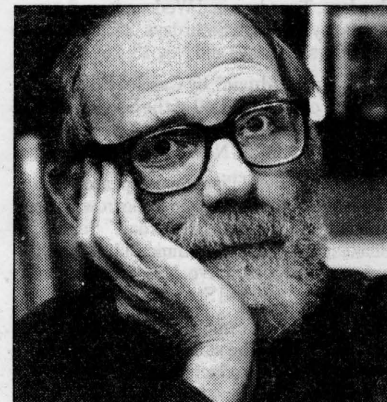
"Don't Leave Me Like This!," on series mysteries, moderated by Seattle Times mystery columnist Adam Woog, 3 p.m., William Stafford Stage.

Novelist and poet Sherman Alexie, with musical guest Jim Boyd, 3:15 p.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

"Forget Faulkner," a conversation with Barry Hannah and Larry Brown, 3:30 p.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

Tom Robbins, interviewed by Marcie Sillman, 4:30 p.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

"The Shape of Things to Come," how science-fiction writers see the future, moderated by Greg Bear, 4:45 p.m., Raymond Carver Stage.



MIKE SIEGEL

**Ivan Doig appears at 1:30 Saturday on the Norman Maclean stage.**

### Sunday

"If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Regency England," romance novels, moderated by Susan Andersen, 10:30 a.m., James Beard Stage.

"The Way Things Weren't," fantasy writing, 10:30 a.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

Will Shortz, New York Times crosswords editor and "puzzlemaster" for National Public Radio, 10:45 a.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

"Whose Family? Whose Values?," moralism in politics, moderated by Jim Compton, 11:45 a.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

"How to Collect, What to Collect, Why to Collect," symposium on book collecting, moderated by Mark Wessel, 11:45 a.m., William Stafford Stage.

Novelist and former PBS newsmen Robert MacNeil, interviewed by Ross Reynolds, noon, Richard Hugo Stage.

"Cyberspace, Here I Come!," how to break into multimedia, 12:45 p.m., New Media Stage.

Poet Laureate Robert Hass, interviewed by Kim Stafford, 1:15 p.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

"Reflecting the World," artists' books and book artists, 1:15 p.m., James Beard Stage.

"A Cabal of Critics," moderated by Bruce Barcott, with Jack Olsen, Mona Simpson and Michael Upchurch, 1:30 p.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

"The New Frontier of Censorship," content restrictions on the World Wide Web, 2:30 p.m., New Media Stage.

"Copper Canyon's Silver!," 25 years of poetry at Copper Canyon Press, moderated by Sam Hamill, with poets Emily Warn and William O'Daly, 2:45 p.m., Mary McCarthy Stage.

Mona Simpson, 3 p.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

"Living with Ourselves," promises and perils of the sustainability movement, moderated by Seattle Times columnist Cecile Andrews, 3 p.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

"The Sixties: A Force for Good or Evil?," moderated by Walt Crowley, with Tom Robbins, John Carlson et al., 4 p.m., Richard Hugo Stage.

Ann Beattie, 4:15 p.m., Norman Maclean Stage.

Pam Houston, 4:45 p.m., Raymond Carver Stage.

**Mona Simpson speaks Sunday at 3 p.m. on the Norman Maclean stage.**



GASPER TRINGALE



## Single, tall, short or skinny: Authors, like lattes, come in all sizes at Bookfest

By JOHN MARSHALL  
PI REPORTER

**G**etting a new festival off the ground is heavy lifting. Staging the same festival a second time is more a matter of fine tuning.

That is the hope of the organizers of the Northwest Bookfest, which will be held tomorrow and Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., in its second edition at Pier 48 on the Seattle waterfront.

More than 200 authors — both regional and national — will make appearances, participate in panel discussions or readings and sign their books. There will be 175 booths showcasing the wares of publishers and related exhibitors, giving the event the air of an indoor country fair for books.

Just pulling off a major new event that drew 23,000 people to an unusual setting was a considerable accomplishment last year. Trying to improve the festival experience for those who attend has become the top priority this year.

"We've tried to improve or get around the limitations of the facility," promises Kitty Harmon, festival director.

Much has been done to try to transform the chilly, drafty confines of Pier 48 into a more hospitable setting, although organizers still urge festivalgoers to dress warmly. More heaters and lighting have been brought in and sound baffling has been added to improve acoustics at the various stages. And of great concern to latte-crazed Northwesters: the number of espresso pumping stations has been tripled (to three).

What Northwest Bookfest organizers cannot do much about is the difficult parking situation along the waterfront and in neighboring Pioneer Square, especially on Sunday when the Seattle Seahawks play a home game in the Kingdome. Organizers would clearly have chosen a weekend without a Seahawks game if they could have, but it was not possible since the date of the book festival was set long before the 1996



schedule was announced for the National Football League.

One possible remedy for festivalgoers is to park in the garage of the Seattle Art Institute on Western Avenue (just north of the Pike Place Market). The garage is offering half-price parking (\$3 per day) and a free shuttle bus will run regularly between the garage and Pier 48. Riding the waterfront streetcar is another option.

But those intent on avoiding traffic and crowds would probably be well advised to attend the festival during its initial hours tomorrow.

Admission is again free, with a donation of \$5 suggested. Donations at the door last year raised \$27,311 for area literacy groups.

Food and drink is available at the festival, including the Frankfurter, Piccora's Pizza, Noah's Bagels, Starbucks and Fratelli's Ice Cream and the Blue Moon Tavern.

Organizers are particularly proud of the wide variety of activities for children, which have been increased this year. They include a kids' scavenger hunt (11 a.m. both days), reading cave, create-a-book center, storytellers' big top and appearances by such well-known children's authors as Nikki Grimes, Demi, Ted and Gloria Rand, plus a slide show by noted animal photographer Art Wolfe.

Among the headlining authors for adults are Southern novelists Larry Brown

and Barry Hannah (3:30 p.m. tomorrow), poet laureate Robert Hass (1:15 p.m. Sunday), novelist Ann Beattie (4:15 p.m. Sunday), novelist Mona Simpson (3 p.m. Sunday), novelist and journalist Robert MacNeil (noon Sunday), short story writer Pam Houston (4:45 p.m. Sunday), and novelist John Edgar Wideman (1:45 p.m. tomorrow).

Northwest writers include Ivan Doig (1:30 p.m. tomorrow), Tom Robbins (4:30 p.m. tomorrow), Brenda Peterson (2:45 p.m. tomorrow), Sherman Alexie (3:15 p.m. tomorrow), J.A. Jance (2:45 p.m. Sunday), Jon Krakauer (12:15 Saturday), Jayne Ann Krentz (10:30 a.m. Sunday), Sam Hamill (2:45 p.m. Sunday), Jonathan Raban (11:45 a.m. tomorrow), Earl Emerson (1:30 p.m. Sunday), Kathleen Dean Moore (4:45 p.m. Sunday), Robert Ferrigno (3 p.m. tomorrow), Jack Olsen (1:30 p.m. Sunday), and Whitney Otto (4:45 p.m. Sunday).

Three people whose work appears in the Post-Intelligencer and who have done books are on discussion panels: cartoonist David Horsey (2:30 p.m. tomorrow), garden columnist Ann Lovejoy (1:15 p.m. tomorrow) and reporter John Marshall (4:45 p.m. Sunday).

Among the more intriguing panels are likely to be the following:

■ "I'll Take My Stand: Waging War Over the Northwest Forest," at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow, with Richard White, Alston Chase, Kathie Durbin and Robert Leo Heilman.

■ "The Shape of Things to Come: How Science Fiction Writers See the Future," 4:45 p.m. tomorrow, with Greg Bear, Lois McMaster Bujold, Chris Bunch, K.W. Jeter and Spider Robinson.

■ "Whose Family? Whose Values? Moralism in Politics Today," 11:45 a.m. Sunday, with Jim Compton, Stephanie Coontz, Michael Lerner and William Nothdurft.

■ "The Sixties: A Force for Good or Evil," 4 p.m. Sunday, with Walt Crowley, John Carlson, Stephanie Coontz, Paul Dorpat, Michelle Malkin, Diane Medved, Tom Robbins and J.T. Stewart.

### Readings and signings

A check mark indicates a recommendation by the P-I's John Marshall.  
**TODAY**

**MICHAEL BERUBE** — Reads 'Life as We Know It,' noon, University Book Store, 4326 University Way N.E. 634-3400.

**RICHARD SIMMONS** — The exercise guru signs 'Farewell to Fat,' 12:30-2 p.m., Price Costco, 8629 120th Ave. N.E., Kirkland.

**LOIS McMASTER BUJOLD** — Reads 'Memory,' 3:30-5 p.m., University Book Store. 634-3400.

**MICHAEL J. NORDEN** — Author reads 'Beyond Prozac,' 7 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 2700 N.E. University Village. 517-4107.

**TERRY GOODKIND** — Reads 'Blood of the Fold,' 7 p.m., University Book Store. 634-3400.

**AFTER LONG SILENCE** — Writers of the anthology 'Sisterfire: Black Womanist Fiction and Poetry,' 7:30-9:30 p.m., Rose Room, North Seattle Community College, 9600 College Way. N. 527-3709 or 525-5373.

✓ **SUE BENDER** — Reads 'Everyday Sacred:

A Woman's Journey Home,' 7:30 p.m., East West Bookstore, 1032 N.E. 65th St. 523-3726.

✓ **JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN** — The noted writer reads from his first novel in years, 'The Cattle Killing,' 7:30 p.m., Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1634 19th Ave. 624-6600.

**KAREN ELIZABETH GORDON with BARBARA HODGSON** — Reads 'Paris Out of Hand: A Wayward Guide,' 8 p.m., The Elliott Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main St. 624-6600.

#### SATURDAY

✓ **JAY LENO** — Television talk show host/comedian signs 'Leading With My Chin,' 12:30 p.m., University Book Store. 634-3400.

**TERRY GOODKIND** — See Friday listing. 2 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 626 106th Ave. N.E., Bellevue. 451-8463.

**TOMASEN FOLEY** — Irish storyteller reads oral traditions at 4 and 7 p.m., Nordic Heritage Museum, 3014 N.W. 67th St. \$10. 621-8646.

**JOHN DANIEL** — Portland poet reads 'Looking After,' 6 p.m., The Elliott Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main St. 624-6600.

✓ **ROBERT HASS** — The U.S. poet laureate reads 'Sun Under Wood,' 8 p.m., Elliott Bay. 624-6600.

#### SUNDAY

**WRITERS' OPEN MIKE** — Poets and short story writers read from their works, 7-9 p.m., Sun & Moon Music, 310 W. Harrison St., Kent. 854-4724.

#### MONDAY

✓ **LADY ANTONIA FRASER** — Noted English biographer signs 'Faith and Treason,' noon, University Book Store. 634-3400. She also reads from her works, 7:30 p.m., 5th Avenue Theatre, 1308 Fifth Ave. Tickets: \$15-\$18. 621-2230.

**MARTHA ROTH** — Minneapolis author reads 'Goodness,' 5 p.m., Elliott Bay. 624-6600.

**MICHELLE BEAUDRY** — Reads 'How to Tell If You're Dead,' 7 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 1530 11th Ave. N.W., Issaquah. 557-8808.

**BARBARA HAMBLY** — Reads 'Mother of Winter,' 7 p.m., University Book Store. 634-3400.

CONTINUED on Next Page



## Top books

Here is The New York Times best-seller list for the week ending Oct. 12, 1996.

| This week | Fiction                                                                     | Last week | Weeks on List |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1         | <b>THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN</b> , by Jacquelyn Mitchard. (Viking, \$23.95) | 3         | 5             |
| 2         | <b>DESPERATION</b> , by Stephen King. (Viking, \$27.95)                     | 1         | 3             |
| 3         | <b>EXECUTIVE ORDERS</b> , by Tom Clancy. (Putnam, \$27.95)                  | 4         | 9             |
| 4         | <b>THE REGULATORS</b> , by Richard Bachman. (Dutton, \$24.95)               | 2         | 3             |
| 5         | <b>JACK AND JILL</b> , by James Patterson. (Little, Brown, \$24.95)         | 5         | 6             |
| 6         | <b>TO THE HILT</b> , by Dick Francis. (Putnam, \$24.95)                     | 6         | 3             |
| 7         | <b>THE CELESTINE PROPHECY</b> , by James Redfield. (Warner, \$17.95)        | 7         | 139           |
| 8         | <b>THE RUNAWAY JURY</b> , by John Grisham. (Doubleday, \$26.95)             | 11        | 22            |
| 9         | <b>FALLING UP</b> , by Shel Silverstein. (HarperCollins, \$16.95)           | 10        | 21            |
| 10        | <b>THE NOTEBOOK</b> , by Nicholas Sparks. (Warner, \$16.95)                 | —         | 1             |

| This week | Nonfiction                                                                                 | Last week | Weeks on List |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1         | <b>THE DILBERT PRINCIPLE</b> , by Scott Adams. (Harper, Business, \$20)                    | 1         | 26            |
| 2         | <b>SLOUCHING TOWARDS GOMORRAH</b> , by Robert H. Bork. (Regan Books/HarperCollins, \$25)   | 5         | 4             |
| 3         | <b>DON'T BLOCK THE BLESSINGS</b> , by Patti LaBelle. (Riverhead, \$24.95)                  | —         | 1             |
| 4         | <b>HOW GOOD DO WE HAVE TO BE?</b> by Harold S. Kushner. (Little, Brown, \$21.95)           | 3         | 5             |
| 5         | <b>UNLIMITED ACCESS</b> , by Gary Aldrich. (Regnery, \$24.95)                              | 9         | 15            |
| 6         | <b>THE RUN OF HIS LIFE</b> , by Jeffrey Toobin. (Random House, \$25)                       | 2         | 5             |
| 7         | <b>ANGELA'S ASHES</b> , by Frank McCourt. (Scribner, \$24)                                 | 4         | 6             |
| 8         | <b>DOGBERT'S TOP-SECRET MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK</b> , by Scott Adams. (Harper, Business, \$16) | —         | 1             |
| 9         | <b>JAMES HERRIOT'S FAVORITE DOG STORIES</b> , by James Herriot. (St. Martin's, \$17.95)    | 6         | 4             |
| 10        | <b>MIDNIGHT IN GARDEN OF GOOD AND EVIL</b> , by John Berendt. (Random House, \$23)         | 10        | 130           |

| This week | Advice/how-to/misc.                                                                  | Last week | Weeks on List |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1         | <b>MAKE THE CONNECTION</b> , by Bob Greene and Oprah Winfrey. (Hyperion, \$18.95)    | 1         | 5             |
| 2         | <b>MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS</b> , by John Gray. (HarperCollins, \$20) | 3         | 179           |
| 3         | <b>THE ZONE</b> , by Barry Sears with Bill Lawren. (Regan Books/HarperCollins, \$23) | 2         | 32            |
| 4         | <b>PRACTICAL INTUITION</b> , by Laura Day. (Villard, \$20)                           | —         | 1             |

The listings are based on computer-processed sales figures from 3,985 bookstores and from representative wholesalers with more than 50,000 retail outlets.

## Northwest bookshelf

Brief summaries of recent books by Northwest authors and publishers, as well as books about regional topics.

■ **Where River Turns to Sky**, by Gregg Kleiner (Avon Books, \$23). An Oregon writer pens an affecting first novel, set in the Northwest, in which an 80-year-old man opens a home where no one will have to die alone; a powerful meditation on aging and friendship.

■ **Wandering & Feasting: A Washington Cookbook**, by Mary Houser Caditz (Washington State University Press, \$22.95). An Issaquah writer, who is a fifth-generation Washingtonian, tours the state and compiles an absolutely charming cookbook that celebrates both the state's history and its regional specialties.

■ **Flying High**, by Eugene Rodgers (Atlantic Monthly Press, \$27.50). A Virginia professor provides a thorough one-volume history of The Boeing Co., after being granted extensive interviews and access to company archives.



Detroit, MI  
Free Press  
Detroit  
Met Area  
D 531,825

MAY 22 1996

LUCE PRESS CLIPPINGS

N3130

# A dam and a family

## Tale revisits Montana of the '30s

### 'Bucking the Sun'

★★★  
out of 4 stars

By Ivan Doig

Simon & Schuster, 412 pages \$23

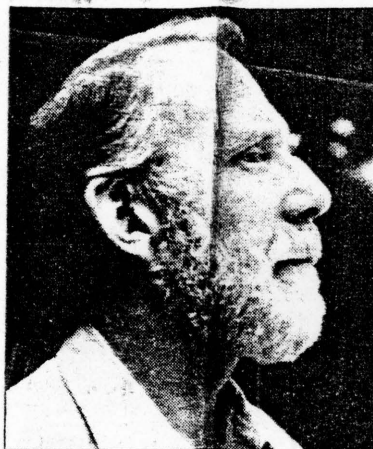
*Review by Barbara Holliday*

Unless you are a U.S. history student, a dam engineer or a Montana native,

you may never have heard of the Fort Peck Dam, built in the 1930s. Good enough reason to read Ivan Doig's new novel, "Bucking the Sun." It is as readable an account of what was then the largest earthen dam ever attempted that you are going to find outside of working texts.

Doig, whose most memorable novel is "The House of Sky," has written a book almost as unwieldy as the 123 million-plus cubic yards of dirt ordered in the 1930s by the Corps of Engineers to harness the Missouri River. That is part of the story. The other part is an engrossing account of boomtown shanty living, everlasting mud, raucous workers, the Depression and a remarkable family of Scots named Duff who give the tale its humanity.

Doig begins with a teaser. A nude couple are found dead in a truck pulled from the bottom of the river. Doig gives nothing away. We



Novelist Ivan Doig

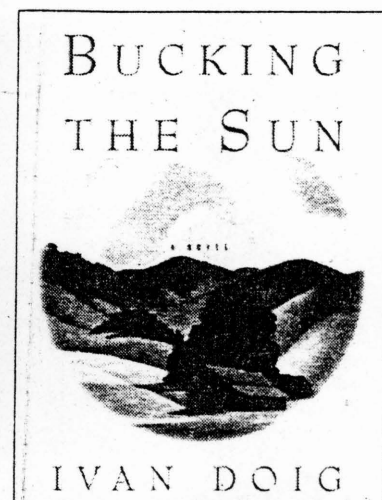
read the entire novel trying to decide which of the Duffs (we guess that much) has been so careless or so victimized. In the meantime, we are treated to a full history of each member of the family.

Hugh and Meg Duff came from Scotland to a homestead in Montana and lost it when the dam was built. Hugh is a binge drinker, Meg an admirable, rather prickly wife "with a little nock in her chin."

Son Owen, who becomes fill master of the dam, is a bright, earnest fellow with a rather uppity wife, Charlene; the twins, Bruce, wild, and Neil, quiet, have restless wives, Rosellen and Kate. Hugh muses, "Were there no jolly, neutral unsharpened women that the Duff men could ever find?"

Finally, there is Darius (accent on the middle syllable with a long "i"), Hugh's brother, who has retained from his shipbuilding days on the Clyde a messianic hotheadedness against authority. Darius hankers after Meg but finally, under duress, marries a prostitute.

The atmosphere reeks with the smell of the river, bad whiskey and



10,000 souls trapped in back-breaking labor. It is a real broth of emotions and ambitions along with the tactical logistics and inevitable mishaps of earthen dam building.

Bruce gets the job of diver, checking pilings in the river. Hugh hates the whole scene and takes it out in liquor. Neil strives. Owen, after his fashion, holds everything together until everything slips. Darius worries himself and us.

• Doig toys a little with the reader at the end. The characterizations to that point do not necessarily match the people in the truck.

But Doig, a native of Montana, has given us a slice of Americana as authentic as the Western trek, as troubling as the newsmaking Freeman of today. Add the ways of men and woman and you feel the pulse of lives "blindfolded and raw," in, to borrow a word from one of the rough-edge characters, a "rangu-tang" of a novel.

*Barbara Holliday is a retired Free Press book editor reading many hundred miles south of the Fort Peck Dam in Arizona.*



### All Roads Lead to Handselling

At the King's English in Salt Lake City, co-owner Barbara Hoagland uses special events to handsell books. For a reading of the children's book *I Know What You Do When I Go to School* by local author Ann E. Cannon (Gibbs Smith), Hoagland held a Friday-night pajama party for 35 kids. And at Christmas she has separate book-signing parties for adults and children, featuring local authors, including Pat Bagley and Elaine Ferguson.

Book groups are excellent sources for suggestions on what to handsell, according to Gregg Parker, owner of the Little Professor Book Center in Erie, Pa. "We also highlight bestsellers from the past, early books from well-known authors and books that have won awards," Parker said. In Erie, books about shipping on the Great Lakes, Native Americans and local history all sell well.

Regional books are big sellers at the UConn Co-op in Storrs, Conn., according to general book manager Suzanne Staubach. *Sweet Revenge* by University of Connecticut faculty member Regine Barreca (Crown) is doing well, as are *Trout: An Illustrated History* by Yale stu-

dent James Prosek (Knopf) and *Provincetown* by Leo Connellan (Curbstone), the new poet laureate of Connecticut. In addition, Staubach is hyping *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling* by James Hillman (Random House), a book she said the staff found "fascinating and accessible," and *The Home Team* by Rebecca Lobo (Kodansha America). "And although it's not out yet, I'm dying to sell *Eros, Magic and the Murder of Professor Culianu* by Ted Anton [Northwestern Univ.]," Staubach said, adding that she was captivated by its mix of intellectual biography and spell-binding true crime.

Local titles are also hot sellers at Bookworks in Whitefish, Mont. *Night of the Grizzlies* by Jack Olsen (Homesstead) sells particularly well, as do nature and star-gazing guides. "We are right next to Glacier Park, and everyone is worried about being eaten by a grizzly," explained owner Susan Zahrobsky. Other popular local titles include the short story collection *Blue Spruce* by David Long (S&S), *Bucking the Sun* by Ivan Doig (S&S) and *Edge of the Crazies* by Jamie Harrison (St. Martin's), Jim's

daughter. Bookworks also claims Richard Ford, who lives in Missoula, Mont., as one of its own.

In the constant effort to highlight books, Zahrobsky often makes "quirky, eccentric groupings of books." Among her favorite groupings are Dead Authors Who Still Publish, People Who Wish They Lived in Montana but Don't and Cookbooks Covered with Grease. She also admits to increasing sales of wedding and divorce books by placing those sections side by side with only the abuse section separating them.

"The beauty of being an independent is that you can have all the fun you want without a corporate suit breathing down your neck," Zahrobsky said.

## Main Street Leads to Heart Of Community

TO MAIN STREET BOOKS in Houston, Tex., being a community leader is as important as being a bookselling engine. Among the store's diverse claims to fame in its community, it offers in-store tutoring and free Internet access, holds health fairs and has its own radio show. And thanks to Main Street's serendipitous location next to a Sears store, it is the only bookstore in the world that accepts the Sears credit card.

Described as "multicultural" by Arthur Akers, who co-owns Main Street with his wife, Phyllis, the store is 5000 square feet and carries 15,000 titles. Its inventory leans toward nonfiction and is tailored to appeal to people of varied ethnic and religious backgrounds; at Main Street, the Torah and the Koran co-exist peacefully.

Opened in November 1994, the store grew out of a wholesale business that the Akerses have run for six years. The company, called Renaissance Books and based in nearby Spring, handles some 35,000 titles, mostly children's and educational, that it supplies to area schools and libraries.

"We're constantly brainstorming coming up with new ways to serve the community," Arthur Akers said. On the day that Akers spoke to PW, he was alone in the store since he had dispatched his staff to two community events to set up tables of books.

As the only bookstore satellite of a local nonprofit literacy group called

## MAKE YOUR MARK IN THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY

LEARN while you earn

## Masters Degree in Publishing Studies

Apply now to gain a place on this distance learning course to qualify you in all aspects of the publishing industry both conventional and electronic. Entering its second year in January, this course from a university in Scotland is open to students in all parts of the world looking to position themselves as leaders in the next century's most significant industry.

PLACES ARE LIMITED SO DO NOT DELAY.

Contact: Lesley Gunn,  
The School of Information  
& Media,  
The Robert Gordon  
University,  
352 King Street, Aberdeen,  
Scotland. UK. AB9 2TQ  
Tel: +44 (0) 1224 262963  
Fax: +44 (0) 1224 262969  
e-mail: l.gunn@rgu.ac.uk



THE  
ROBERT GORDON  
UNIVERSITY  
ABERDEEN

"Fostering excellence in teaching, learning and research."



Denver  
Post

# Intellect in Western hinterlands hardly the stuff of fiction

7/21/96

In 1984, just a day after I had arrived at the University of Colorado, one of my new colleagues told me that he expected me to renege on my promise to take the job.

"Why on Earth would you think that?" I asked, my injured honor immediately reaching a temperature very near boiling.

"It didn't have anything to do with you," he said. "I just couldn't figure out why anyone would leave the East Coast and come to the middle of nowhere." So here was a face-to-face confrontation with that syndrome known as the Western Inferiority Complex.

In a once very well-established pattern of thought, the home of intellect and talent was the East Coast. The accumulation of ability in the East left only a few scattered shreds of intelligence to spread around the hinterlands.

Back in the 1980s, people of intellectual ambition, who found themselves stuck in the West, could only hope for better days, when they might be released from their



**PATRICIA  
LIMERICK**

parable to the Southern literary renaissance in the 1930s."

Trying to stay abreast of this movement is nearly impossible; the established writers keep up a steady rate of production, and striking new writers appear on the scene every month. It is easy to forget how recent, and how sudden, this transformation has been. Take the example of

exile on the periphery.

The sense of regional inferiority was as big as the Flatirons.

And then everything changed. In 1992, Newsweek recorded the transformation, announcing that "the West is in the midst of a don't-fence-us-in literary explosion com-

parable to the Southern literary renaissance in the 1930s." writer Ivan Doig. In the 1990s, you can stand anywhere, throw a stone, and hit an Ivan Doig fan. His memoir of his Montana childhood, "This House of Sky," made his reputation, and his novels — "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," "Ride with Me," "Mariah Montana" and "Bucking the Sun" — raise both the spirits of his readers and the profits of his publishers.

And yet, in the 1970s, 12 publishers in a row rejected "This House of Sky." Most of the editors said that they liked Doig's writing a great deal, but they knew for a fact that the manuscript had no potential as a trade book.

"Unfortunately, as much as I do like your work," one editor wrote, "I find that what you have here is not at all commercial."

One hopes that these editors weren't risking the money for their children's education on the stock market or betting much money on horse races. Like the editors who rejected the manuscript of Nor-

man Maclean's "A River Runs through It" ("These stories have trees in them," one of them explained), these cultural arbiters were prophetically impaired, blinded by their belief that talent sits in a great, centralized, recognizable heap on the East Coast.

"Vindication" is too weak a term for the satisfactions that have come to Ivan Doig and lots of other Western writers in the past 20 years.

Talent is now decentralized; Western writers have built a foundation for regional self-understanding, as well as self-esteem.

The Western Inferiority Complex should be on its last legs. Is it? Old habits die hard, and this one may cling to life for a long time. More important, when Western writers succeed, what impact does this have on the society around them?

Twelve years ago, when my colleague surprised me with his memorable display of the Western Inferiority Complex, my reply didn't reach much past surprise. I

live with the annoying memory of having been caught speechless. So help me out: Go to a bookstore or a library and contemplate the abundance and quality of recent books in the Western literature section.

Then tell me what I could and should have said in 1984. The prize for the best entry is an autographed copy of Ivan Doig's first book.

On Sept. 24, at 7 p.m., at the Denver Athletic Club, Ivan Doig will present CU's Center of the American West Annual Lecture: "Makings: Trying to Put the West Together." For information, call 492-4879. On Oct. 5 and 6, the Rocky Mountain Book Festival will bring some of the West's most accomplished writers to Currigan Exposition Hall; for information, call 273-5933. Both events are free and open to the public.

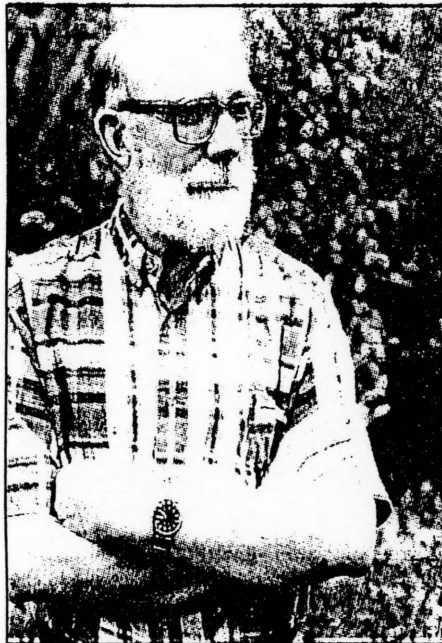
Patricia Limerick is a history professor at CU-Boulder and co-chair of the board of the Center of the American West.



# Author Ivan Doig negotiates a changing West

By Jack Cox  
Denver Post Staff Writer

9/23/96



Doig specializes in 'slow poetry of fact.'

**A**s a kid growing up in Montana in the 1940s and '50s, Ivan Doig often accompanied his father on trips into saloons to hire haying crews.

"We'd be met at the door by a blue fog of cigarette smoke," the award-winning novelist remembers.

"You go back there now to those small towns and it's hard not to find an emergency medical supply firm where these men — now emphysema sufferers — get their oxygen tanks."

It's that kind of "jolting change," says Doig, that he is exploring in his next book, a novel set in San Francisco, Seattle and nonurban Alaska.

"It's a book about the contemporary West, but one that I hope raises an eternal question — Can you go home again?" he says.

"It deals with baby boomers being called back to the West by family crisis and deciding whether to stay.

"What I'm interested in is, what do you come back to? How much change can you swallow?"

And, by the same token, how much lack of change?

"They may have their cell phones, their satellite dishes and their Jeep Cherokees," Doig observes, "but they've still got to contend with Rocky Mountain weather and bad roads in winter."

The book will be the ninth by the author of the acclaimed "This House of Sky" who will be in Denver tomorrow for a free public lecture at 7 p.m. at the Denver Athletic Club, 1325 Glenarm Place.

The talk, after which Doig will be available to sign copies of his books, is sponsored by the University of Colorado's Center of the American West.

Doig, now 57, has put together a vivid picture of the West over the past 20 years, mixing personal experience and regional history in a series of novels set mainly in Montana.

The most recent, "Bucking the Sun" (Simon & Schuster, 1995), takes place against a backdrop of the construction of the Fort

Peck Dam, which was pictured on the cover of the first issue of Life magazine.

"My speech will be about how I and some other writers use ingredients of the West in fiction," Doig said in a telephone interview from his home in Seattle.

"The thrust of the talk will be what I call the 'slow poetry' of fact — details that you pick up in small-town cafes and bars, that are specific to the West, whether they're turns of phrase or cowboys wearing belt buckles the size of truck radiators.

"There are endless stories in the West," he went on.

"Take the comeback of the grizzly bears very near the Rocky Mountain Front Range area where I lived in high school.

"They are starting to become plains animals again. So we have beekeepers and oat farmers having to worry about them."

Western writers may move to other parts of the country, but like such Southern authors as Willie Morris, William Styron and Pat Conroy, "We never go that far

Please see **DOIG** on 2E



# Ivan Doig now regarded as dean of West's writers after passing of Stegner

DOIG from Page 1E

from the home country in our minds, and sometimes not even physically," he noted.

"Even though I've lived in a suburb of Seattle for 30 years, I'm still within a day's drive of Montana. I can leave after breakfast and before dinner be in Missoula."

A former ranch hand and newspaperman, Doig has bachelor's and master's degrees from Northwestern University and a doctorate in history from the University of Washington.

Widely regarded as the dean of Western writers now that Wallace Stegner has passed from the scene, Doig thinks some of the best writing in the region at present is being done in memoir form, much of it by women.

As examples, he cited "Homestead" by Montana's Annick Smith, one of the executive producers of the movie "A River Runs Through It;" "In the Wilderness" by Idaho's Kim Barnes; "Balsamroot" by Mary Clearman Blew, a teacher at the University of Idaho; "Riding the White Horse Home" by Wyoming's Teresa Jordan; and "Refuge" by Utah's

A former ranch hand and newspaperman, Doig has bachelor's and master's degrees from Northwestern University and a doctorate in history from the University of Washington.

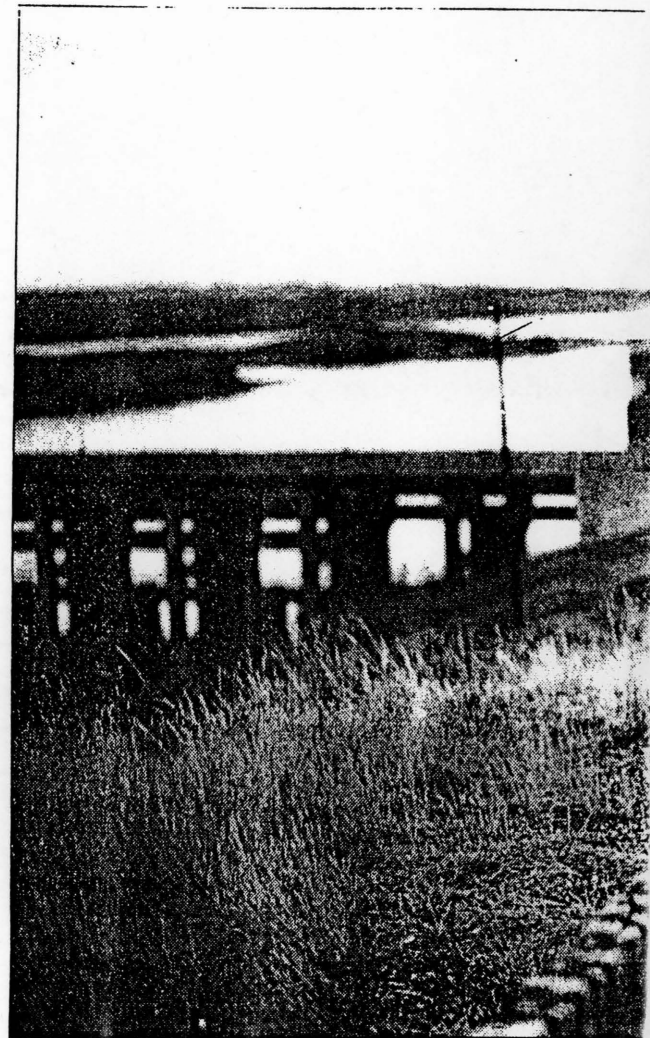
Terry Tempest Williams.

"I would hesitate . . . to call any of us regional writers, because we are all trying to be bigger than that. We're trying to write about life."

"William Carlos Williams said real writers ought to be doing classic writing on local stuff.

"He called it 'words marked by a place.'

"I think that's what a lot of writers are trying to aim for."



Ivan Doig's most recent book, 'Bucking the Sun,' takes pl



# BOOK REVIEW

## ABOVE and BELOW

Aristocrats plot  
and picnic while  
coal miners sweat  
and die underground  
in 'Gorky Park'  
author's new thriller

### ROSE

By Martin Cruz Smith  
Random House; 364 pages; \$25

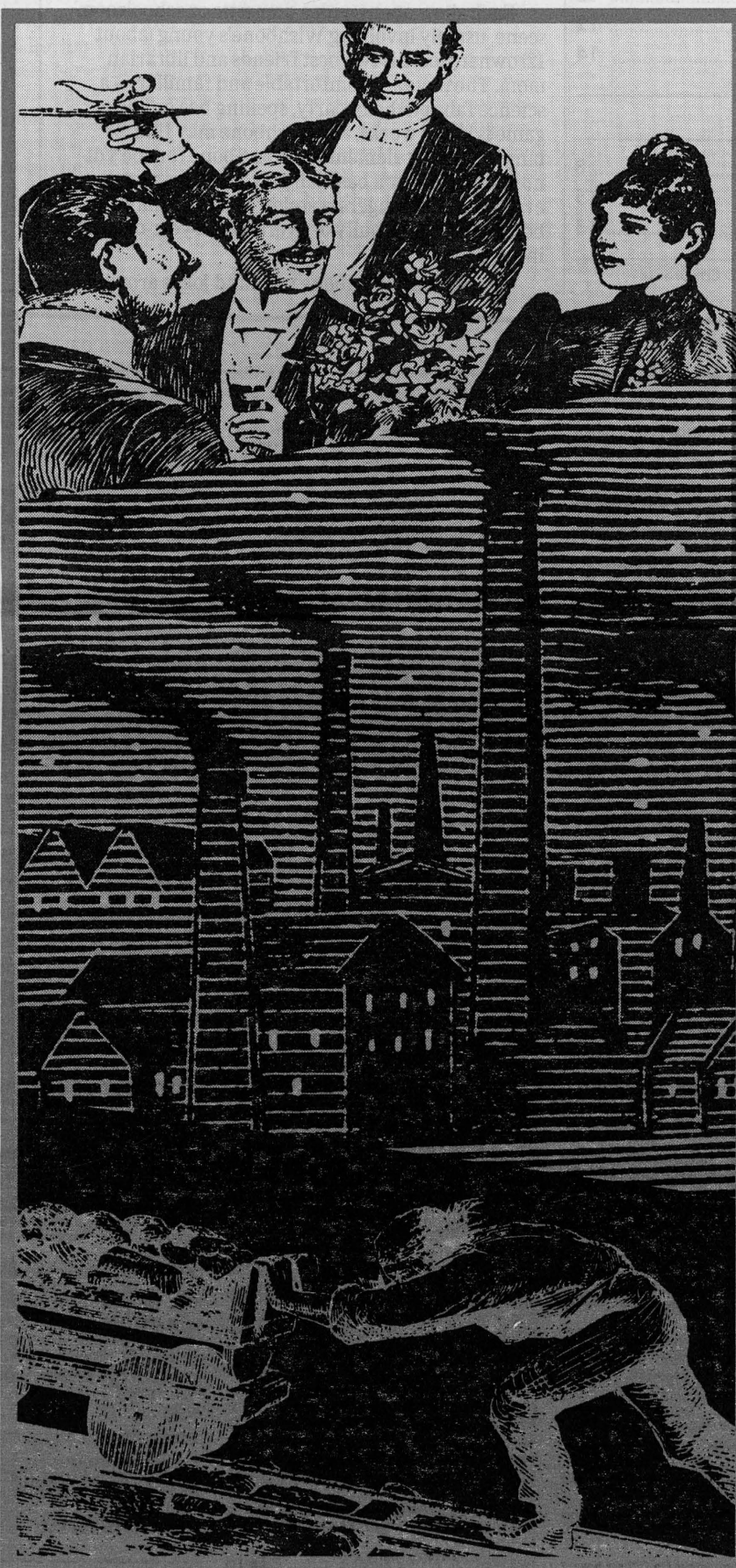
### REVIEWED BY CAREY HARRISON

It is in the brutally divided landscape of Northern England in the 1870s that Mill Valley writer Martin Cruz Smith, whose "Gorky Park" elevated him to the front rank of international best-sellers, has set his new mystery, "Rose."

From its vast coal mines, as Smith notes, the North of England was supplied with fuel that powered its ships and steam machinery. Above ground, Britain's merchant princes dined in palaces; below ground, miners sweated, slaved and often died in the treacherous coal mines.

Of all Britain's mining towns with their "dark satanic mills," none was darker than Wigan, in Lancashire, the scene of Smith's novel. As we might expect, Smith has fash-

See Page 9



BY RICO MENDEZ/THE CHRONICLE

## Waiting to Punctuate

### HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK

By Terry McMillan  
Viking; 368 pages; \$23.95

### REVIEWED BY PATRICIA HOLT

For readers who wonder about the stupendous success of Danville author Terry McMillan's 1992 novel, "Waiting to Exhale," the heroine in McMillan's latest work wants you to know, she doesn't get it, either.

"I pick up the hardcover version of 'Waiting to Exhale' by that Terry McMillan which I bought when it first came out and I've been meaning to read for a couple of years now," Stella Payne explains in her breathless style about 60 pages into "How Stella Got Her Groove Back," "and after reading like the first 50 or 60 pages I don't know what all the hoopla is about and why everybody thinks she's such a hot writer because her s— is kind of weak when you get right down to it and this book here has absolutely no literary merit whatsoever at least none that I can see and she uses entirely too much profanity."



Terry McMillan

It's a typical outpouring from Stella, a securities analyst who later finds herself downsized out of the firm to which she, at 42, believes she has given some of her best years, and about which she says with refreshing bravado, "You know what? F— 'em." That kind of talk is not profanity to Stella; it's simply an accurate expression of the way she feels.

Similarly, Stella does not read critically or seek out consistency in character development or narrative intention in books such as "Waiting to Exhale." Her critique of McMillan's novel comes right off the top of her head, which af-

See Page 12

### INSIDE

Robert Frost bio **3**  
Date rape examined **7**  
Children's Page **14**



"Ivan Doig is a writer who makes readers recall why they love to read...."

"\*

"One of the great American voices, full of grace, abounding in humanity, easeful in narration, hypnotic in pace, grand in range."

—THOMAS KENEALLY

"It's hard to say enough good things about what Ivan Doig does when he sets words down on a page. His prose is at once simple and direct, yet rich and fanciful."

—CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

"His novels lay whole worlds at your feet and invite you to make them your own."

—THE WASHINGTON POST\*

"Ivan Doig is one of the best we've got, a muscular and exceedingly good writer who understands our hunger for stories."

—E. ANNIE PROULX

# BUCKING THE SUN IVAN DOIG

Reading group guide available.



SIMON & SCHUSTER  
A VIACOM COMPANY



## THE EDITORS RECOMMEND

**H**ere are some noteworthy new titles our critics regard highly:

**TAKING BACK OUR STREETS**, Willie L. Williams with Bruce B. Henderson (Scribner; 287 pages; \$23): With sagacity and not a little humor, Los Angeles chief of police Williams describes the long-needed but much-resisted changes he instituted since taking over from Daryl Gates to transform the LAPD's "paramilitary" system to a more "community-based" model. His innovations include neighborhood police substations, use of nonlethal tools such as rubber bullets and pepper spray, unusual-occurrence training, minority hiring policies, foot patrols and crack-downs on internal racism.

**THE TEMPLE BOMBING**, Melissa Fay Greene (Addison-Wesley; 502 pages; \$25): The author of "Praying for Sheet-rock" returns with a revealing study of the 1958 bombing of Atlanta's richest and oldest synagogue after its rabbi took a stand against racism. Investigating the suspects' alibis, exposing the district attorney and looking at the city's contradictory racial history, Greene culminates this riveting story with building suspense as the trial begins.

## BETWEEN THE LINES

Continued From Page 8

fortlessly guides us back and forth to each story. Indeed, we can't take our eyes off this enormously talented little dog who, in "A Tale of Two Cities," moves his head and eyes in such a way that he appears to be reading the letter that brings Charles back to France and certain death until his double (a human being who looks nothing like a dog) takes his place at the gallows.

In romantic scenes, it's amusing but then quite touching to see the beautiful Esmeralda embrace the paw of the Hunchback of Notre Dame; or to watch Roxanne look beyond the furry long snout of Cyrano to the eloquent lover within; or to witness Rebecca come to love Ivanhoe, who in full armor has vanquished a Norman opponent with a ball-and-chain carried between his teeth.

The show does not stint on the issues of modern life — single parents head most households, and African Americans and Latinos (not enough Asians) are integrated into both plot and classic story. Occasionally the thoughts of children prove more eloquent than anything adults might say. Depressed about his parents' divorce, a boy tells Samantha, "Every night I used to wish they'd get back together, but lately, I don't know, they're happier now, so I guess that's good, right?" Sam answers, "Well, I still think of the way it was before my parents got a divorce. They gave me this (present) on my birthday, the one before they decided to split up. I keep it because it reminds me that despite everything, we still had some good times together." Is that maturity speaking or barely masked anger? Viewers are left to decide.

At the end of every show, a key production element — motion-tracking, green-screen photography, makeup for Frankenstein, horses chasing Ali Baba, a slow-motion scene in "Rip Van Winkle" (you should see his little beard!) — is explained by an expert on staff who shows how to use state-of-the-art technology on a shoestring budget.

A new line of **WISHBONE CLASSICS** (HarperCollins; 123-128 pages; \$3.99 each) has been released (the first two are "Don Quixote" and "The Odyssey"), but with mixed results. Unfortunately, there is no parallel story of Wishbone at home with Joe and family. So each retelling of the classic is so abridged and simplified that it becomes plodding in print without another element — well, a dog — to liven things up. Although sketches of Wishbone (not in costume!) appear to explain terms, so far these books resemble stripped-down Cliffs Notes for kids. Better to whet your whistle on classics through the "Wishbone" show now and wait until you're old enough to read the real thing — and that includes all those 52-year-olds who tape the show at 5 p.m. and watch it later as an antidote to mutilation-motif horrors like "Copycat" and "Seven." ■

Patricia Holt is book editor for *The Chronicle*.

## SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE BEST-SELLERS

April 28, 1996

| This Week | Fiction Bay Area                                                                                                                                                                     | Last Week | Weeks on List |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1         | <b>PRIMARY COLORS</b> , Anonymous (Random House; 320 pages; \$24): Scandal galore in this insider's exposé of one governor's (guess who?) presidential campaign.                     | 1         | 13            |
| 2         | <b>INDEPENDENCE DAY</b> , Richard Ford (Knopf; 451 pages; \$24): Sequel to "The SportsWriter" — real estate agent seeks new life.                                                    | 3         | 12            |
| 3         | <b>MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU</b> , Mary Higgins Clark (Simon & Schuster; 332 pages; \$24): Manhattan photographer investigates murders.                                                  | —         | 2             |
| 4         | <b>NEANDERTHAL</b> , John Darnton (Random House; 368 pages; \$24): Secret expedition to find missing link goes awry.                                                                 | 10        | 3             |
| 5         | <b>THE CELESTINE PROPHECY</b> , James Redfield (Warner; 240 pages; \$17.95): Fable about search for ancient prophetic manuscript.                                                    | 4         | 109           |
| 6         | <b>IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ENEMY</b> , Elizabeth George (Bantam; 519 pages; \$23.95): The kidnapping of a Conservative minister's daughter is at the heart of complex mystery.        | 2         | 7             |
| 7         | <b>THE DEBT TO PLEASURE</b> , John Lanchester (Henry Holt; 212 pages; \$20): Witty novel-in-disguise tells story in book of seasonal menus.                                          | 5         | 4             |
| 8         | <b>ABSOLUTE POWER</b> , David Baldacci (Warner; 469 pages; \$22.95): The president is up to no good in sleazy but fast-moving thriller.                                              | —         | 5             |
| 9         | <b>BUCKING THE SUN</b> , Ivan Doig (Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23): Duff family men build controversial dam during New Deal era, by author of "This House of Sky."               | 13        | 2             |
| 10        | <b>ROSE</b> , Martin Cruz Smith (Random House; 364 pages; \$25): Mill Valley author of "Gorky Park" turns to 17th century Northern England in latest riveting thriller.              | —         | 1             |
| 11        | <b>THE HORSE WHISPERER</b> , Nicholas Evans (Delacorte; 402 pages; \$23): Hollywood formula doesn't keep us from caring about injured animal or troubled family.                     | 9         | 30            |
| 12        | <b>LOVE, AGAIN</b> , Doris Lessing (HarperCollins; 352 pages; \$24): Sudden re-emergence of fierce erotic yearnings surprises 65-year-old woman.                                     | 6         | 4             |
| 13        | <b>AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MY MOTHER</b> , Jamaica Kincaid (FSG; 228 pages; \$20): Eloquent story of solitary woman by author of "Annie John."                                              | —         | 12            |
| 14        | <b>BABEL TOWER</b> , A.S. Byatt (Random House; 622 pages; \$25.95): Third in quartet of novels by "Possession" author follows young English intellectual in pre-World War II London. | —         | 1             |
| 15        | <b>MALICE</b> , Danielle Steel (Delacorte; 352 pages; \$24.95): Young woman strikes back against rapist father, seeks new life.                                                      | 15        | 2             |

## Quality Paperbacks Bay Area

|    |                                                                                                                                                          |   |    |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|
| 1  | <b>SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS</b> , David Guterson (Vintage; 501 pages; \$12): Courtroom drama explores postwar Japanese American life.                      | 1 | 30 |
| 2  | <b>MOO</b> , Jane Smiley (Fawcett; 414 pages; \$12): Author of "A Thousand Acres" skewers academia in a funny but complicated novel.                     | 2 | 7  |
| 3  | <b>LADDER OF YEARS</b> , Anne Tyler (Fawcett; 326 pages; \$12): "The Accidental Tourist" author's story of wife who leaves family.                       | 4 | 9  |
| 4  | <b>PAULA</b> , Isabel Allende (HarperCollins; 330 pages; \$12.50): San Rafael novelist's letter to dying daughter creates magnificent autobiography.     | 3 | 3  |
| 5  | <b>DEAD MAN WALKING</b> , Sister Helen Prejean (Vintage; 276 pages; \$12): Louisiana nun's gripping account of time spent with death row inmate.         | 7 | 10 |
| 6  | <b>WE'RE RIGHT, THEY'RE WRONG</b> , James Carville (Random House; 183 pages; \$10): Clinton adviser's funny, instructive response to Republican "myths." | 6 | 7  |
| 7  | <b>GOD: A BIOGRAPHY</b> , Jack Miles (Vintage; 446 pages; \$15): Former Jesuit looks at Old Testament as novel about guy named God.                      | — | 1  |
| 8  | <b>THE LIAR'S CLUB</b> , Mary Karr (Penguin; 320 pages; \$11.95): Two memorable self-destructive yet lovable parents come to life.                       | — | 1  |
| 9  | <b>REVIVING OPHELIA</b> , Mary Pipher (Ballantine; 361 pages; \$10.95): Pulitzer Prize-winning novel celebrates richness of ordinary lives.              | — | 42 |
| 10 | <b>THE SIXTEEN PLEASURES</b> , Robert Hellenga (Delta; 369 pages; \$11.95): Young American book restorer travels to Florence, learns about love.         | 9 | 37 |

The Bay Area best-seller lists are compiled each Tuesday from a telephone survey of booksellers whose reports are weighted according to store volume.

| This Week | Nonfiction Bay Area                                                                                                                                                       | Last Week | Weeks on List |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1         | <b>IN CONTEMPT</b> , Christopher Darden (Regan / HarperCollins; 384 pages; \$26): Prosecutor's revealing lament of O.J. Simpson trial.                                    | 2         | 5             |
| 2         | <b>UNDAUNTED COURAGE</b> , Stephen E. Ambrose (Simon & Schuster; 511 pages; \$27.50): Author of "D-Day" captures romance of Lewis & Clark.                                | 3         | 9             |
| 3         | <b>THE ZONE</b> , Barry Sears (HarperCollins; 234 pages; \$22): Diet book extols proteins.                                                                                | 1         | 20            |
| 4         | <b>HITLER'S WILLING EXECUTIONERS</b> , Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (Knopf; 619 pages; \$30): German anti-Semitism led to Holocaust, says Harvard scholar.                      | 4         | 4             |
| 5         | <b>EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE</b> , Daniel Goleman (Bantam; 352 pages; \$23.95): Psychologist contends that optimism is ignored in IQ tests.                                  | 8         | 30            |
| 6         | <b>STREET SOLDIER</b> , Joe Morgan (Delacorte; 305 pages; \$22.95): Founder of S.F.'s Omega Boys Club tells how he turned boys from the streets to school.                | —         | 1             |
| 7         | <b>RUSH LIMBAUGH IS A BIG FAT IDIOT &amp; OTHER OBSERVATIONS</b> , Al Franken (Delacorte; 271 pages; \$21.95): "Saturday Night Live" alumnus is tough-minded and amusing. | 6         | 14            |
| 8         | <b>MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN . . .</b> , John Berendt (Random House; 388 pages; \$23): Account of murder among Savannah's eccentrics reads like a comic gothic novel.        | 9         | 42            |
| 9         | <b>MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS</b> , John Gray (HarperCollins; 287 pages; \$20): Gender differences explained by the stargazing therapist from Mill Valley.   | 15        | 172           |
| 10        | <b>SIMPLE ABUNDANCE</b> , Sarah Ban Breathnach (Warner; 528 pages; \$17.95): Three hundred sixty-five essays on living with Spirit.                                       | —         | 1             |
| 11        | <b>BLOOD SPORT</b> , James B. Stewart (Simon & Schuster; 479 pages; \$25): "Den of Thieves" author makes Whitewater interesting but offers few revelations.               | 13        | 6             |
| 12        | <b>TRANSCENDENT CHILD</b> , Lillian Rubin (Basic; 229 pages; \$23): S.F. psychotherapist shows how resilient individuals overcame childhood abuse.                        | —         | 1             |
| 13        | <b>APPETITES</b> , Geneen Roth (Dutton; 245 pages; \$20.95): Bay Area author examines friendships, success and fulfillment.                                               | 5         | 2             |
| 14        | <b>THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL LAWS OF SUCCESS</b> , Deepak Chopra (New World Library; 128 pages; \$14): Spiritual how-to.                                                        | 7         | 65            |
| 15        | <b>PIANO LESSONS</b> , Noah Adams (Delacorte; 150 pages; \$20.95): Fiftysomething NPR commentator's journal of his year learning to play the piano.                       | —         | 1             |

## Fiction National

|    |                                                 |    |     |
|----|-------------------------------------------------|----|-----|
| 1  | <b>MOONLIGHT BECOMES YOU</b> , M.H. Clark       | 1  | 2   |
| 2  | <b>MALICE</b> , Danielle Steel                  | —  | 1   |
| 3  | <b>PRIMARY COLORS</b> , Anonymous               | 2  | 12  |
| 4  | <b>THE CELESTINE PROPHECY</b> , James Redfield  | 5  | 113 |
| 5  | <b>SPRING COLLECTION</b> , Judith Krantz        | 11 | 4   |
| 6  | <b>SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE</b> , Steve Perry      | 9  | 2   |
| 7  | <b>THE HORSE WHISPERER</b> , Nicholas Evans     | 7  | 32  |
| 8  | <b>FIRST KING OF SHANNARA</b> , Terry Brooks    | 3  | 4   |
| 9  | <b>MONTANA SKY</b> , Nora Roberts               | 10 | 5   |
| 10 | <b>IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ENEMY</b> , E. George | 6  | 6   |

## Nonfiction National

|    |                                                      |    |     |
|----|------------------------------------------------------|----|-----|
| 1  | <b>IN CONTEMPT</b> , Christopher A. Darden           | 1  | 4   |
| 2  | <b>BLOOD SPORT</b> , James B. Stewart                | 2  | 5   |
| 3  | <b>UNDAUNTED COURAGE</b> , Stephen E. Ambrose        | 5  | 8   |
| 4  | <b>RUSH LIMBAUGH IS A BIG FAT IDIOT</b> , Al Franken | 4  | 13  |
| 5  | <b>THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE</b> , Robert L. Shapiro    | 3  | 3   |
| 6  | <b>MIDNIGHT IN THE GARDEN . . .</b> , John Berendt   | 6  | 104 |
| 7  | <b>HOW COULD YOU DO THAT?!</b> , Laura Schlesinger   | 7  | 12  |
| 8  | <b>EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE</b> , Daniel Goleman       | 8  | 30  |
| 9  | <b>YOU'LL NEVER MAKE LOVE . . .</b> , Robin, et al.  | 12 | 9   |
| 10 | <b>IT TAKES A VILLAGE</b> , Hillary Rodham Clinton   | 10 | 14  |

The national best-seller lists are based on computer-processed reports from bookstores and wholesalers throughout the United States. © New York Times



JUN 16 1996

P5222

**LUCE** PRESS CLIPPINGS

# Summer Fiction

SUSPENSE

## Scottish spunk

*Clan carves out a living from the land,  
but not without hardship*

Bucking the Sun  
By Ivan Doig  
Simon & Schuster, \$23

By BRYAN W. BOGLE  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM

In the early Sunday dawn, when Sheriff Kinnick opens the driver's door of the Ford Model A winched up from the dark Missouri River, the sight of two naked bodies seems not to startle so much as shock the cluster of dam workers crowding around the dripping truck. The dead are identified by the local undersheriff as Duffs — married, but not to each other. These suspicious deaths begin Ivan Doig's latest novel.

Backing up five years from this prologue, the writer introduces the reader to the emigrant, Scottish, Duff Clan. They struggle to farm, contending with drought and grasshopper plagues, only to be uprooted by Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. A dam on the Missouri becomes a perfect project of make-work for the displaced and jobless of the Great Depression.

Like others uprooted from the 100-mile-long lake, the Duffs drift to the government employment offered at the dam site. Hugh and Meg come with their young adult twins, Bruce and Neil, only to meet their older son, Owen, already in place as the chief civilian engineer in charge of the earthen fill that is to make up the heart of the dam. Father and eldest son, both bitter over Owen's choice to leave farming for engineering, arrange a grudging truce. Owen's wife, Charlene, works impatiently to earn respect from Hugh and Meg.

The family settles into the beaverboard shantytown of Wheeler and soon becomes widely known as a clan of strength and

perseverance. All are cast against the difficult birth of the Fort Peck Dam in the late 1930s, then and now the world's largest earth-filled dam. Fighting the endless Montana winters for the chance to dredge tons of mud and gravel, Owen struggles to balance this earthen child, the arrival to manhood of his two brothers, and the savage binges of their father.

Writing as always with his sweeping love of the Montana land and sky, Doig's deep research into the historical archives of the region have created a novel that accurately portrays the vernacular of the Montanan landscape of the 1930s. Doig's sparkling prose dances tightly back and forth within the family.

The night that Uncle Darius marries saloon worker Proxy Shannon brings everyone to his brother Hugh's home:

"The production of coffee began. Hugh insisted they all move on into the Blue Room. Gamely confronting the blueprint decor, Proxy declared it real interesting, it somehow reminded her of a place she once worked in that had mirrors everywhere — Darius asked if the coffee was ready yet.



Ivan Doig

Speaking of ready, Hugh tossed back at him, Darius had taken a scandalous length of time to gird himself up for matrimony, had he not? Just then Rosellen, clued in by a wife's whispers from Charlene on the way over in the truck, wanted to know from Proxy how she ever got into taxi dancing. Oh, Proxy generalized, from pretty early in life she had been on her own. On her back is more like it, Charlene thought and smothered a giggle. Owen, his arm around her, gave her a complicit hug; for his part he was looking ahead with fascination to the mixed tints of red and peroxide."

Equally at home in both fiction and nonfiction, Ivan Doig moves interchangeably from one medium to the other with fiction reading like history and remembrances reading like stories. As the reader follows the complex and shifting relationships within the Duff family, the question of just who is in the truck becomes more baffling.

In tandem with his intricate prose, Doig's plot unfolds subtly to reveal the identity of the two drowning victims in the last pages. Along the way the novel births an archetypal western American family whose descendants we are in spirit if not in blood. In the future, when our children look back to find their roots in 20th-century literature, they'll find no brighter mirror of life than Ivan Doig.

BRYAN W. BOGLE is a Fort Worth builder and free-lance reviewer.



# Taking the plunge in Depression-era Montana

7/4/16  
Chicago Tribune

## Book review

### Bucking the Sun

By Ivan Doig  
Simon & Schuster, 412 pages, \$23

Reviewed by Alison Arnett  
Boston Globe

Ivan Doig has woven an epic-size novel in "Bucking the Sun," set in Depression-era Montana. One family is at the center of the story. From mettlesome mother Meg and cantankerous father Hugh to their three lanky sons and their colorful wives to Hugh's radical brother Darius, each member of the Duff family has a story and a piece of the action.

It's a mystery, a puzzle still haunting a bad-tempered little sheriff toward the end of his days: how a pickup truck containing two Duffs, both nude, plummeted down a ramp and into the vast lake formed by the Ft. Peck Dam. As his undersheriff told him the day the bodies were found: "Married, you bet. Only not to each other."

The mystery frames the book, the beginning and the end, a seemingly neat package on which to hang the story. But there's nothing neat and

tidy about "Bucking the Sun," an expression signifying pushing on against the glare of the sunrise or sunset. Like the title, the characters, for all their foibles, seem almost dwarfed by the descriptions of nature vs. machinery.

The battle lines form as the family struggles to fight off grasshoppers plaguing its alfalfa farm on the rich Missouri River bottomland. Hugh is determined to hold on, to fight off nature's villains and reap the green gold. His wife is convinced the battle is lost. When a government agent shows up to tell them President

Roosevelt is offering salvation by drowning their land and giving them jobs, he is furious. He is even more furious when he discovers that his eldest son, Owen, will design the dam's earthen fill.

This antagonism—the father's stubbornness about agriculture, the brilliant son's belief in technological progress—develops as the clan moves to the site of Ft. Peck Dam, a monumental project devised as much to produce jobs and wages to drive back the national sense of despair, as to protect downstream land from flooding.

The characters multiply as the story moves along and the whole clan might well have muddled along with resentments under the surface, couples getting along and sometimes fighting, with jealousies and flirtations, all sticking together in the end.

They might have, except that into the mix comes Hugh's brother Darius, fleeing union trouble in Scotland.

Darius, long in love with Meg, settles into work on the dam but agitates among the workers on the side, his anarchic beliefs settling into the family and the story like grit into a machine.

Doig adroitly plays his historical cards as the dam work fills in the years and the landscape. His sense of the drama of the West, of man against nature, of FDR's push to employ a destitute population, of the dark worldview of Darius the spoiler, is effective. His characters, particularly the women, sound modern and believable.

The abrupt ending, the solving of the mystery, is a surprise, with little shading and few telltale signs. It's as though Montana's natural drama ran away with the author. In the rush to tell the story, to fit in the history, to get in all the characters, "Bucking the Sun" seems to plunge into the man-made lake itself.



# BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig

Simon & Schuster, \$23

ISBN 0684811715

## REVIEW BY JAMES NEAL WEBB

The played-out soil of the Great Depression provides fertile soil for the novelist. Steinbeck knew this paradox; now a new generation of writers has rediscovered it.

Set in the great wide open of 1930s Montana, *Bucking the Sun* could be called a family saga. A WPA project—a great earthen dam across the Missouri River—is being built, and the family Duff is inextricably involved in its construction.

Owen Duff is an engineer, and his first big break means he will have to uproot his own family from their soon-to-be-flooded valley farm. His younger twin brothers take the change easily, but the bitterness between him and his father festers, despite the jobs they acquire working on the massive project. His long-suffering and strong-willed mother makes the best of her situation, but even she is torn emotionally asunder with the arrival of her husband's leftist brother from Scotland. Stir in this mix a trio of wives, a murder mystery, and the conflicts and temptations

of a booming, brawling construction town alongside the dam, and you have the makings of an engaging story, even in the hands of an adequate novelist.

Ivan Doig is far from merely adequate. He has a unique turn of phrase, echoing the cadences and syntax of his native Montana, and (I'm guessing here) perhaps the voices of Scottish ancestors as well, for the narrative voices of the characters ring true. Everything about *Bucking the Sun* reflects the truth, whether it's the way boisterous people can sometimes be shy, or how a cold wind can make you lean unconsciously.

Work is what this novel is about. It is the driving force of the plot, as it was the driving force of FDR's alphabet organizations. Work permeates the lives of everyone, and it is no different between these pages; the populace of Fort Peck is bound together by what they do. Most striking, Doig depicts perfectly the self-righteousness of people. Let's face it, most people honestly believe they do the right thing, and the

people of *Bucking the Sun* are the same way. The good and the bad rationalize what they do, and sincerely feel they are in the right—just as in real life.

Ivan Doig deserves to have a bestseller with this entertaining novel, and if there is any justice in the world, he will. ☛





Tacoma, WA  
NEWS TRIBUNE

Tacoma  
Met Area

Sunday

SUN 147.284

JUN 9, 1996

P5662

**LUCE** PRESS CLIPPINGS

# 'Bucking the Sun' sizzles, then fizzles

**Bucking the Sun; Ivan Doig**  
Simon & Schuster; \$23

Seattle writer Ivan Doig returns to his cherished Montana roots for the setting of his new Depression-era novel, "Bucking the Sun." Using the massive Fort Peck Dam construction site as backdrop, Doig introduces us to the Duffs, a family long driven by injured pride and cross-purposes. But when the death of two of them under curious – even suspicious – circumstances brings the sheriff snooping around, the family draws together in reflexive self-protection.

In real life, when the Fort Peck Dam straddled the throat of the Missouri River in the late 1930s, it drowned scores of family farms behind it. The people displaced by the dam were thrown life rings, however, in the way of jobs with guaranteed wages, as the federal government hired them as laborers to complete this ambitious project.

This is just one of the ironies Doig exploits in "Bucking the Sun," when patriarch Hugh Duff, wife Meg and their twin sons are uprooted by the land buyout. When they, like the rest, go downriver to find work at the dam site, they

## THE BOOKMONGER Barbara Lloyd McMichael

come across Owen Duff, the estranged eldest son, who had abandoned farming some years before to go to college. He now works as one of the engineers masterminding the dam's construction.

On top of this, throw in the sons' marriages to three spirited young women with agendas of their own and the arrival from Scotland of Hugh's brother – a brooding man with communist sympathies, a long-smoldering desire for sister-in-law Meg, and a dark secret that has precipitated his appearance in Big Sky Country.

These problematic relationships are complicated even further by ramshackle housing, alcohol abuse, violence and prostitution in the temporary and freewheeling settlements where the workers live. The plot becomes as thick as porridge.

Doig is such a gifted writer – the vast Montana landscape and the boundless overarching sky are painted to perfection with his masterful prose. He has an uncanny ear for dialogue,

and his characters crackle with vitality – both in their disappointments and in their dreams. His account of the brutal yet magnificent dam construction reflects painstaking historical and technical research. And when it comes to plot, he threads through the intricacies of ever-changing human relationships with gossamer perfection.

But after 400 pages of purely delicious story development, complex characterization, wonderful scene-setting and top-notch suspense, Doig falls down on the job in the closing pages of the book. While the ending he manufactures is a surprise, the character motivation behind it is lame: One player makes an unconvincing sacrifice while another, who formerly had operated with an interesting set of flaws, suddenly transforms into a completely villainous boor.

While the conclusion to this family saga is a disappointing fizzle, everything leading up to it makes for an immensely satisfying read.

*Barbara Lloyd McMichael's column deals with the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. The column appears in this space on alternating Sundays.*



Louisville, KY  
Courier-Journal  
Louisville  
Met Area  
D 244,379

JUN 22 1996

N2798

**LUCE** PRESS CLIPPINGS

## LUST IN THE WEST

A REVIEW BY JOE WARD

### Bucking the Sun

By Ivan Doig  
Simon and Schuster  
412 pp., \$23

Mr. Ward is a *Courier-Journal* business writer.

**I**VAN DOIG opens his latest Montana saga on the slopes of Fort Peck Dam in 1938, just as that monumental earth-work on the mighty Missouri is nearing completion. A dam crane pulls a soggy Ford Triple A truck out of the new lake, and the sheriff finds a man and woman in the cab, drowned, and naked. Indications are the truck slipped out of gear and rolled into the lake while they were otherwise occupied. The sheriff

knows the pair. They share the last name Duff. Married? the sheriff asks. "You bet," the deputy says. "Only not to each other."

We flash back. Doig's tale of the construction of the dam, a New Deal recovery effort, centers on a bunch of Duffs. They are among the throngs who weathered the last of the Depression working on the dam, and living in shanty towns made famous in the first edition of *Life* magazine.

There are Hugh Duff, an immigrant farmer forced off his land by the project, and his wife, Meg. They have three adult sons, Owen, Bruce and Neil. The sons marry one by one, each latching on to an interesting woman. Then their Uncle Darius, from Scotland — a bachelor who once had an interest in Meg — shows up, quite possibly on the lam from some politics-related trouble in the

old country.

Then he marries. As the builders worry with construction deadlines and the colonels of the Corps of Engineers, and raucous times progress in the wide-open dance halls of the makeshift towns, the possible interesting combinations for the pair in the underwater truck multiply.

We get inside the heads of all the Duffs, who individually and jointly are reaching for goals lofty and not, and trying to sort out what it means to be family. And they are a lusty lot.

Doig is a Montanan who employs a sparse Western style, with cadences that seem to fit the tongue of National Public Radio's Dick Estell, "The Radio Reader."

Estell has read Doig's *This House of Sky and Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, among others.



The Pilot 7/15/96

## *From Sweet Home Remedy To A Diversity Of Crime*

✓ BY FLORENCE GILKESON

**SWEET REMEDY**, by Linda Phillips Ashour. Simon & Schuster, New York, N.Y. 335 pages. \$23.

Polly Harrison has split with her husband, her children are vociferous in their complaints, and her aging grandmother moves in. Polly aspires to write country music but financial woes make it a little difficult to pursue such a career, especially when she tries to juggle her family and household duties.

And Granny Settle is a case all by herself. A former rodeo owner and operator, with her late husband, Granny has distinct ideas about life and living. She brings soil from her native Oklahoma on this visit to Los Angeles.

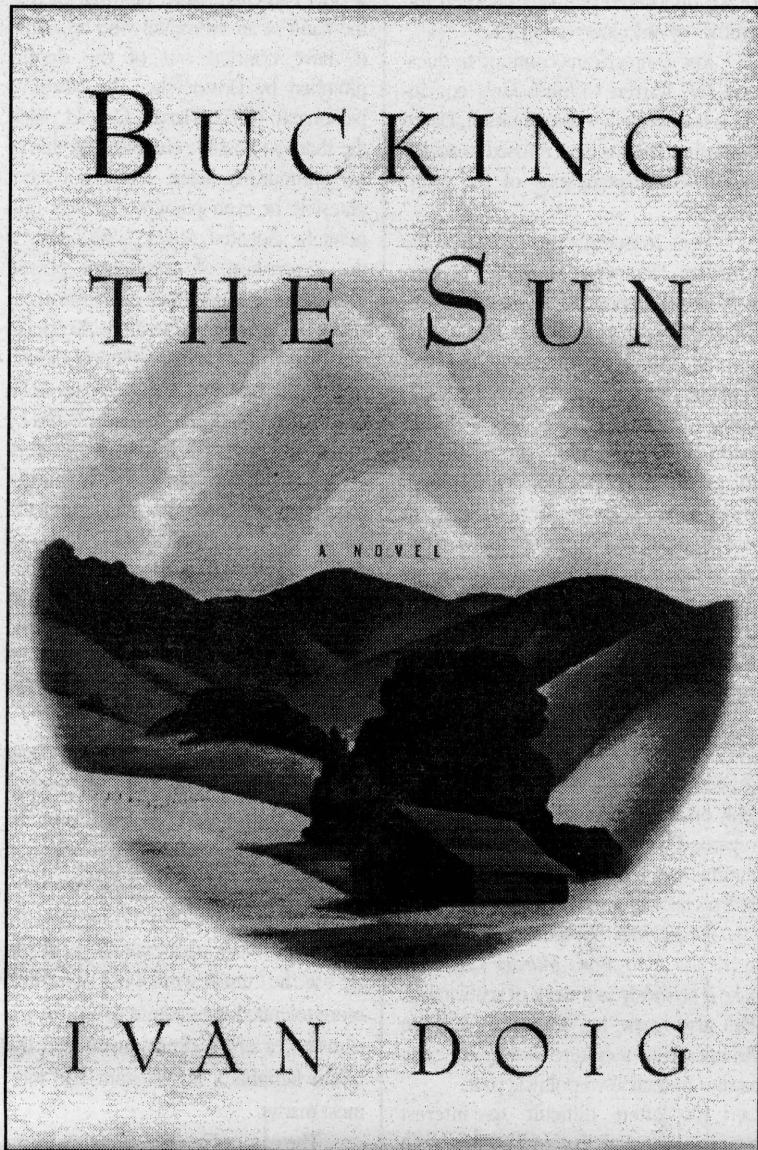
"Sweet Remedy" plays along slowly but steadily to restore a broken family to a degree of normality.

The writing is beautiful--as when she describes a departure by Granny: "She was leaving my home the way she entered it months before...matter-of-factly, with her pure, unblinking view of the world pulled down over her eyes like the brim of a familiar hat."

But the plot is not my preferred reading material, and this reviewer had difficulty completing the book, which reads somewhere between soap opera and daytime talk show material.

Ashour is the author of "Speaking in Tongues" and "Joy Baby." She teaches writing at UCLA and has received a Beck Fellowship from Denison University.

# Doig's *Sun* shines brightly



Bucking the Sun  
by Ivan Doig  
Simon and Schuster

## By DAN OKO

For decades Ivan Doig has crafted some of the most distinct and eloquent prose in the American West. Along with the late Wallace Stegner, his memoirs and novels have given voice to an emergent American culture—a culture defined by its landscapes and heartaches rather than its attachment to the established conventions of New York, Paris and London.

With such a reputation, each new Doig book brings with it a certain clutter. Before the reading begins, Doig fans wonder whether the book will match earlier efforts, or whether it will simply suffice—realizing that sufficiency for Doig marks a literary pinnacle in its own right.

Fortunately for Doig devotees, his latest—the 409 page novel *Bucking the Sun*—secures the author's place among America's literary Pantheon, and probably establishes him amongst the world's most accomplished novelists.

This is not praise given lightly. Indeed, I can imagine Ivan Doig—

whom I interviewed in these pages last year—shaking his head demurely. But the fact of the matter is that *Bucking the Sun* compares to the best work of Tolstoy and Faulkner, breeding a true feel for a place and time which exists beyond the reach of most Americans' memory.

*Bucking the Sun* tells the story of the building of Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River in the 1930s. It's a tale with no real heroes and no single protagonist, focussing rather on the adventures and misadventures of a Scotch-American family by the name of Duff.

Patriarch Hugh Duff and matriarch Meg Milne Duff have three sons—the twins Bruce and Neil, and big brother Owen. Before the book's half over, we meet uncle Darius, Hugh's brother, a Scottish Marxist. For each of these strong-willed Duffs, there is a match, including a pair of sisters—Charlene and Rosellen Tebbet, married to Owen and Neil respectively—and Darius' wife, Proxy (short for peroxide), a taxi dancer/prostitute.

In its clannish scope and geography, Doig's latest yarn is closely related to those he has spun in his *English Creek* trilogy and elsewhere. At the same time, the author charts new territory focussing on the machinations and the politics (Fort Peck was a New Deal project) surrounding the great earthen dam, as well as the desires of the individuals—Duffs and others—who work there.

With this book, Doig manages to take an epic project, the damming of the great Missouri, and place it on a human scale.

Owen is one of the engineers in charge of the project; his father Hugh's farm, abandoned at the book's outset, is situated on the floodplain. In one way or another, every aspect of the Duff's lives—economic, professional, personal—is tied to the project.

Doig capably imbues the damming of the river with symbolic and literary value. As the story unfolds, and the mysteries of the river and its multifarious currents wend their way through the story, the reader finds him/herself carried away.

The only possible complaint against this book is that it covers too much ground. But for those who have entrenched themselves in Doig's work and the West's other voices this criticism will not hold much water.

Doig extensively researched *Bucking the Sun*, and one particular acknowledgement—found at the book's end—seems to capture not just his effort, but his evocative capacity. On page 412 Doig thanks his wife Carol, in his words, “for her love and tolerance while I went away for three years into the 1930s.”

Thank you, Ivan Doig, for bringing so much of that time back with you.

## Excerpt from Ivan Doig's *Bucking the Sun*

The next-to-last Monday in October, ordinarily a time of year when not much is underway in northern Montana except the weather sharpening its teeth, the money began at Fort Peck.

The hiring in Glasgow that morning had a carnival spirit to it. Men milled into lines, expectant, not wanting to hope too much but buoyant with the prospect of a paying job, a steady half-dollar-an-hour after the

cashless bafflement the Depression had brought. Preference, Hugh Duff noted, seemed to be wholesale. From the talk of them, here were other bottomland farmers and back-pocket ranchers from along the river, but the streets of Glasgow had been swept to come of with some of these other specimens. He and Neil and Bruce stayed together in the crowd, for what that was worth. They had filled out employment forms, been given a brass button with an employment number (9 for Hugh, Neil 10, and Bruce inexplicably 57) to pin on a shirt pocket, and stood around waiting for the transportation which the government men told them every five minutes would be here in five minutes; the first day of anything has some wobble to it. At last they climbed up into one of the crew trucks for the jouncing ride of seventeen miles to the river. So far, Hugh thoroughly despised everything about government relief work.

The Duffs knew enough about riding in the back of a truck on rutted sectionline roads to stand up behind the cab, hanging on to the boxboards, and so while the Glasgow street denizens tried to sit and were getting their spines pounded from the base up, Hugh, Neil, and Bruce met the Fort Peck country face-on.

When their truck, in the lead, topped into the view of sprawling river plain, Neil's and Bruce's first thought was the same: that the makeshift little convoy of trucks and pickups and a couple of touring cars would turn one way or the other from this overlook and head off toward tighter terrain where the dam site must be. But there was nothing to head off toward.

Upstream and down, across and beyond, the valley of the Missouri boomed away to horizons of its own making, wide-open country split down its middle by a muscular tan channel—no, on closer inspection, two channels; the river here divided around a massive wedge of silt called Cow Island—where century in and century out these twin flows—no, honestly three flows; the third a river if timber and brush in and of itself substantial, miles of diamond willows and stands of leafless cottonwoods along the near bank—had ebbed and swelled with the methodical might of the seasons.



# Historical Fiction With Contemporary Montana Edge

*Doig delivers what his readers expect*

By Brad Knickerbocker

6/27/96 The  
Christian Science Monitor

IF there is any potential problem with really enjoying a contemporary writer – relishing the thought of the next book – it's that the new work will simply replot safe ground, be too predictable in style and subject matter. Or, alternatively, that there will have been a jarring departure in approach.

With Ivan Doig's latest novel, fans need not worry. All the steel and sweetness, the granite and light, the humor and sharp dialogue, in Doig's writing are here with new flair and depth. The grit and warmth is pure Doig, only more so.

"Bucking the Sun," Doig's fifth novel (he has written three non-fiction books as well), is set in his home state of Montana during the Great Depression of the mid-1930s. Thanks to the Roosevelt administration, Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River is to be a massive public-works project that will employ thousands, including some whose homesteads will be inundated by the lake it creates.

The tale centers on the Duff family. Patriarch Hugh and his wife, Meg, Scottish immigrants who are just barely making it on land tougher than they are; their elder son, Owen, an engineer and "fillmaster" on what will be one of the largest earthen dams ever built; twin younger brothers, Neil and Bruce; and Hugh's brother Darius, a militant Marxist shipyard worker who shows up running from a violent past in Scotland carrying political and personal grudges.

Quite soon, all the Duff men are married – to women (two of them sisters) just as tough-minded, yet vulnerable, as the Duffs are. We know from the start that a man and a woman from two different couples will end up naked and dead in a truck that has rolled off the dam.

Doig has the perfect background for this kind of writing. He grew up on Montana ranches before going off to get a doctorate in history. His factual recounting of the Fort Peck Dam project is full of fascinating historical tidbits. The scenes where Doig himself came to see the project and speak to the awed assembly gives a gritty newsreel quality to events.

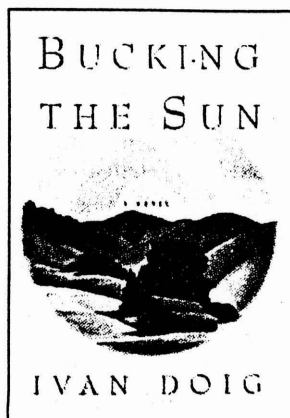
In fact, I kept wishing that photographs from that time had been included.

The promise of the era is fully felt, as well as the growing concern about events in Europe as the shadow of fascism falls. Some of the characters are politically radical to the point of being anarchic – a chilling precursor to the militias and "freemen" found in that part of the country today.

If there is one weakness in "Bucking the Sun," it's that the surreptitious affair between two of the Duffs is not fully developed – not developed at all, in fact. From all we're told, it could just as easily have been any two others, and there's plenty to work with here without it, which leaves one wondering why it's there in the first place.

But this is a relatively minor quibble. Ivan Doig is a terrific writer and a great storyteller with a healthy outlook as indicated in his dedication: "To novelists who deliver the eloquence of the edge of the world rather than stammers from the psychiatrist's bin."

I'm looking forward to his next work, whatever it may be.



**BUCKING THE SUN**

*By Ivan Doig*  
Simon & Schuster,  
412 pp., \$23

■ Brad Knickerbocker is a Monitor correspondent who covers environmental issues from Ashland, Ore.

USA TODAY 7-18-96



By Carol M. Doig

Ivan Doig: A Montana clan clashes in his eloquent novel 'Bucking the Sun.'

# In 'Sun,' traveling a family's dark and rocky terrain

**Bucking the Sun**  
By Ivan Doig  
Simon & Schuster  
409 pp., \$23

By Angela Herrin  
USA TODAY

In the spring of 1938, a pickup truck is pulled from the Missouri River, near Montana's mammoth Fort Peck earthen dam project. The bodies of a man and woman are inside, their clothes floating beside them.

Is this a married couple, the sheriff asks the crowd of dam workers, and was this murder or an accident? Well, their last name is Duff and

they're married all right, an embarrassed worker finally says — just not to each other.

The sheriff will spend the next 50 years pondering this riddle, trying to unravel just how he and this couple arrived at the riverbank that day. But the story really belongs to the Duffs, a rough, raucous family struggling with the cross-currents of secrets and grudges swirling around them.

## Book Review

This is familiar territory for Ivan Doig: the misunderstandings and tragedies that plague generations of the same family, that divide brothers and estrange lovers.

In earlier books, like *Dancing at*

*the Rascal Fair* and *English Creek*, these tales were set in the Montana of the past as ranchers struggled to hold onto homesteads and their families in the raw, unsettled West. They fight floods, blizzards and locusts.

More importantly, they fight each other.

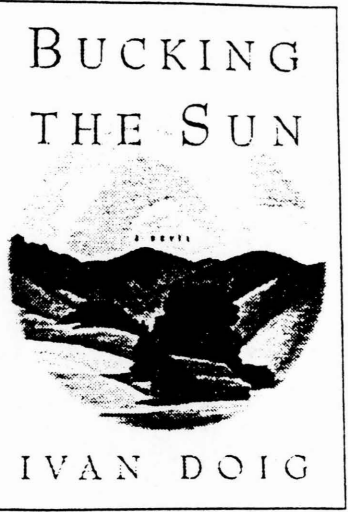
This time, it is government and technology in the form of the unrelenting advance of the Army Corps of Engineers that threatens the family. In a New Deal program worked out in Washington, the government takes the Duffs' bottomland farm so a huge earthen dam can be built across the Missouri.

The Duffs all find work at the dam, but it's an uneasy alliance. Oldest son Owen, who left the farm for

college, is a head engineer on the project, while his father and two younger brothers find jobs as laborers.

The family resentments don't prove any easier to tame than the river itself. Hugh Duff can't relinquish his role as powerful patriarch of the family; his wife can't forgive his harsh carelessness. As each son marries, new tensions emerge over the limits of love and control.

The answer to the riddle — which two members of the Duff family end up in that submerged truck in the Missouri River? — doesn't show up until the last page of the book. But in such an epic tale, written in such a geography of love and pain, there's little temptation to skip pages.





# Authors, fittingly, get the last word at convention



**Jocelyn  
McClurg**

BOOK  
REPORT

6/31/96

**A**uthors are invited to speak at the American Booksellers Association convention every year. The speeches are more than mere "buy-my-book" pleas — they can yield amusing, thought-provoking and sometimes even inspirational remarks. Here's some of what we heard at the convention, held earlier this month in Chicago.

**David Guterson**, who won the ABBY award for the book bookellers most enjoyed "handselling" during the past year, praised bookstores for their part in promoting his novel "**Snow Falling on Cedars**." He singled out the people who work in them as "individuals who care about books, who love them deeply for all the right reasons, who want others to love them, too. It's this love of books that makes a bookstore truly a bookstore. There's no way this love can be faked, either."

**Art Buchwald**, whose new memoir "**I'll Always Have Paris**" (Putnam, September) covers the 14 years he spent in Paris working for the Herald Tribune: "I noticed that the Herald Tribune did not have an entertainment page. So I went to see the managing editor



■ **Buchwald**

and said I would like to write a nightclub and restaurant column. He said that the Trib didn't need one, and if it did I wouldn't be the person to write it. Some people would consider this rejection. But I waited till he went home and then I went in to see the editor, and said the managing editor and I were talking about me doing a nightclub column. The editor thought it was a dandy idea and hired me for \$25 a week. . . . This is really a love story that I wrote, played against the golden age for Americans in the '40s and '50s. To paraphrase Marcel Proust, 'It was the best of times and the best of times.'"

**Neil Simon**, whose memoir "Rewrites" will be published this fall by Simon & Schuster: "What I've been able to put down in prose is something I've never been able to do in a play — put down my own thoughts and my own feelings exactly as I remembered them. . . . Writing this book opened up a treasure chest of joys and sadnesses, of memories long forgotten. . . . I loved writing this book. It was cathartic, it was painful, it was enlightening and it was a terrific time."

**Louise Erdrich**, author of "**Tales of Burning Love**" (HarperCollins), spoke of her childhood love affair with books: "We possess books and are possessed by them in turn."

Every one of us was created out of fictions, and we live out those stories that most profoundly seep into our souls. I don't think, really, that computers are going to replace the book itself, because I think we crave that intimacy with the writer . . . I got book-drunk, and still do."



■ **Erdrich**

**Ivan Doig**, author of "**Buckling the Sun**" (Simon & Schuster): "In my everyday life I try to get poetry and literature on people. On the characters first. People poor in all else are often rich in language. . . . I always try to attain a language that makes a shimmer behind the story — the appeal, the wonder of the vernacular of people's lives coming through. . . ."

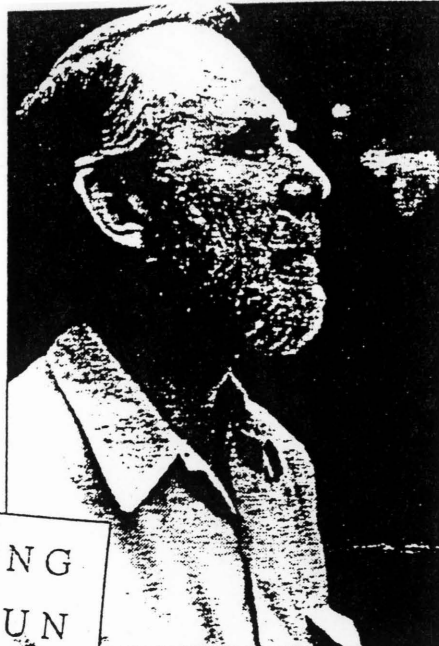
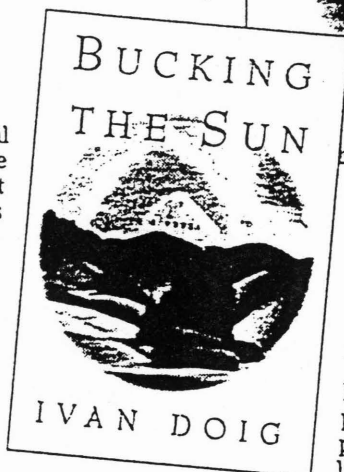
**Donald Hall**, whose book of poems "**The Old Life**" has just been published by Houghton Mifflin, said he has written about only one subject in the last 14 months, the illness and death of his wife, poet Jane Kenyon: "Poetry makes itself poetry by being beautiful, not by lying about what is ugly and not by making what is ugly beautiful. But that strange amalgamation, that energy that comes from conflict, can make out of suffering song, and that song is the blood that flows among us. . . . We need help with our everyday life, and literature, and I think especially poetry, helps the most when life is the hardest."

**John Edgar Wideman**, whose novel "**The Cattle Killing**" will be published by Houghton Mifflin this fall: "Mainstream culture systematically trivializes fiction. . . . In this marketplace what sells is consensus. . . . I seek in fiction some hint that imagination can change the world, that the world is unfinished, a hint that we are not always doomed to make copies of copies but possess the power to see differently and the guts and good fortune to render accessible to others some glimmer of what our souls experience. Stories, after all, are a gift. . . . Unless we're willing to imagine what it might feel like inside another skin, we are imprisoned within our own."

## BOOKS

**Bucking the Sun**  
by Ivan Doig  
(Simon & Schuster)

This is a "historical novel" about one of the greatest of the great Keynesian public works of FDR's New Deal, the building of the Fort Peck dam. (I have no idea why the book isn't called "Bucking the River"—that's what it's about.) It is also a "regional novel" about Doig's beloved Montana; and at the same time it's a "family saga" novel because it charts the way that one particular alfalfa-farming clan, the Duffs, is sucked into orbit around the great dam's irresistible economic gravitation. But none of these somewhat contemptuous genre labels quite fits Doig's writing. You want to protest that this is simply a novel, because it's too well-written to



Doig's writing is alternately brilliant and awkward.

be pigeonholed as genre writing.

Which is not to say I'm an unqualified Doig enthusiast. This book gets back-cover praise from E. Annie Proulx, which is appropriate, because at its best Doig's prose has something of the muscular, almost poetic density with which readers of *The Shipping News* will be familiar. And Doig can also have a casual, clever freshness even in the most superficially ordinary passages. The odd placement of an adverb ("ears still were burning") forces the reader to drink the sentences slower, and think harder about the taste of them.

On the other hand, too much of Doig's prose is just that: prose—overwritten and awkward in a way that fatally reminds you mid-image of the writer laboring at the page. Doig doesn't like the repetition of "he said" in dialogue so he is forever writing things like "'These'll do,' Hugh evaluated"—and the result, instead of a seamless scene, is a Literary Writer who won't quite get out of our way.

As always, Doig has written a book that's clearly based on years upon years of careful research in ancient technical manuals and obscure state archives. One of the pleasures of the book is that you learn so much about the mechanics of the everyday (and the not-

June 7, 1996

so-everyday, like engineering the world's biggest-ever dirt dam) circa 1935. But again Doig betrays himself here; in too many places you can see him at work with his own shovel, piling onto the narrative great wet heaps of interesting technical facts and historical trivia. Hard-won research, and interesting enough: You can tell that he just couldn't bear to put it aside.

People seem to either love or hate Ivan Doig's writing, but I can never decide. He has a great lyrical gift, and an undeniable talent for evoking a sense of time and place. But the shortcomings are strangely obvious and strangely intrusive—as if, after seven well-received books, there's still a novice writing student and Nobel Prize winner inside this man, wrestling for control.

— RICHARD FARR

*The Culture(?)*



# A Family of New Deal Dam Builders

Novel spotlights those who helped tame water in the West

## BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig  
Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23

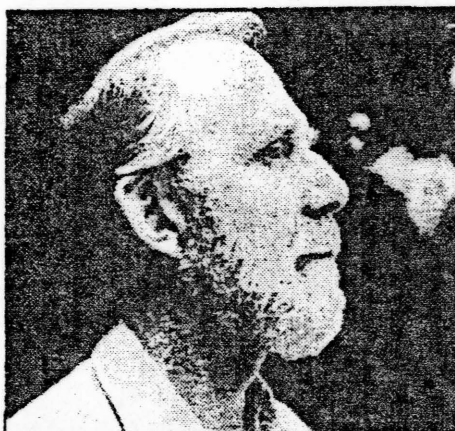
REVIEWED BY JOHN HARVEY

**S**ince his award-winning memoir, "This House of Sky," was published in the late '70s, Montana-born writer and historian Ivan Doig has used the novel form to speculate upon the lives of people who lived and live in the West.

With "Bucking the Sun," which is principally set in the upper reaches of Missouri River country in the Depression years leading up to the start of World War II, he has achieved his most adroit blend of fact and fancy in what is perhaps his best book since that first work.

What sets Doig apart from others who have farmed the same terrain is the deft way he handles the fruits of his research; fact and anecdote are woven into the text with a light and often humorous touch. The sense we have is of a storyteller who is familiar and comfortable with his material; as readers, we trust the teller, and so we trust the tale.

Taking as its basis the construction of the Fort Peck Dam, a major New Deal project that brought work to thousands and in so doing flooded vast tracts of land, Doig centers his story on the lives of the Duff family — whose men were immigrants from Scotland, as was the case with Doig's own kin. If Doig the historian, with his light but liberal use of archive material from the Fort Peck Dam oral history project and the pages of the "Engineering News-Record," gives this saga an authentic structure, it is Doig the novelist who lifts it



to great heights with his portrayal of the five Duff men — two brothers and three sons — and the women they love and marry.

"Selfmade men always do a lopsided job of it," the novel begins — a wonderful phrase — and in part that is what the story explores: Hugh Duff and his twin sons, Neil and Bruce, forever adapting to the changing demands of the land and work around them, learning as they go. Set against them is the older son, Owen, who turns against his father by going to college to study engineering and helps mastermind the building of the dam.

They are a headstrong bunch, creatures of hard work and heady impulse, adroit with their hands in every sense, and given to wooing women on the tight-grained tongue-and-groove dance floor of the Blue Eagle — a floor they laid themselves in a single night.

Hugh, the father, is stubborn and strong-willed, loving his wife Meg almost

*Doig the historian gives this saga an authentic structure, while Doig the novelist lifts it to great heights with his portrayal of the five Duff men and the women they love*

despite himself in a relationship that owes as much to attrition as it does to affection. He respects and admires Meg just as he writhes under the weight of her judgment, her "nurselike sense of attention, the way of peering at you as if clerking for God." And some Friday nights, his pay burning a hole in his back pocket, he kicks over the traces and defies her by spending the night in town, drinking the whorehouse dry.

Hugh never quite forgives Owen for turning his back on him and finding a life of his own — a life that threatens the one Hugh had struggled to build for himself — yet nevertheless he eventually bows to the inevitable and accepts work on the construction of the dam. He moves himself and Meg into an ill-built shack, which Owen, tellingly, papers over with blueprints to stem the cold.

The younger sons also benefit from Owen's patronage and find work attached to the new project; Neil is seemingly the more stable, while Bruce jumps fitfully from one dangerous task to the next, rel-

ishing each new risk. When Hugh's brother, Darius, a left-wing agitator from the shipyards of the Clyde, arrives without call or expectation in their midst, things are thrown up into the air even more. Not only are Darius' political beliefs a potential threat to the building of the dam, the love he has nurtured all these years for Hugh's wife, Meg, has the capability of wrenching that central relationship asunder.

But this is not a book about men doing what men do; women are given nearly equal space in the story. Their strengths are their own — they are handsome, willful, dangerous — and they are not used solely to hold family and community together, though to a point they do that too. There is a pervading sense that Doig, in common with, say, two writers as different as Larry McMurtry and Carl Hiaasen, not only respects women, he actually likes them. For example, Owen's wife Charleen, independent and single-minded, becomes as involved in the running of her own business as Owen is in his work on the dam.

Some way into the novel, Doig uses a perfect simile: "This family is like nine radios going at once. . . . Every Duff a different station." It's apt because these Duffs are talkers, and when they're not talking, they're singing, or dancing, or doing all three at once. The remark also describes how the narrative works, the skill with which we are switched around from voice to voice, location to location, eavesdropping on a sentence here, a brief scene there, a near-documentary description or the most intimate of moments. This is a story about connections, attractions, shifting currents and the relationship between

See Page 4

# LIFESTYLE

CLASSIFIED

Inside

## Ivan Doig's latest novel is a marvel of construction

### Bucking the Sun

By Ivan Doig (Simon & Schuster)  
\$23, 412 pp.

The amazing variety of novels today brings to mind thoughts of concerts, mostly down-home shows in small venues with horrible acoustics and overpriced drinks.

Most of the works seem like warm-up bands. They're a little off-rhythm. They feature eight-minute drum solos for no apparent reason. The fit of applause you give at the end stems more from relief than appreciation.

By contrast, Ivan Doig's new "Bucking The Sun" is a headliner. It is tight and assured. Each narrative song builds on the last, reaching new heights. Any and all encores are blessings.

The Montana author already is deemed among the few great living



Scott Coy  
Lommers

U.S. writers. He has received praise from all sides and stirring reviews for all of his books. Little can be added to raise his stature.

That said, "Bucking The Sun" is a glorious piece of writing. Doig shows no signs of fading. It is another step forward for a novelist already yards ahead of the pack.

The novel is a sweeping story of an ill-fated family and its involvement in one of the most complex engineering feats in U.S. history, the construction of the Fort Peck Dam in Montana in the 1930s. The family, named Duff (think rough), is the heart and soul of the story. Its longing and despair, tinged with

### ▼ In person

**PERFORMANCE:** Ivan Doig will appear for a literary performance and reception at 8 p.m. Saturday at Mount Baker Theatre. Purchase tickets — \$8 — Mount Baker Theatre, 734-6080, or Village Books, 671-2626.

hope, drives the narrative.

Doig wastes no time engrossing the reader in the story. By page 13, the overriding mystery of the novel is set in place. Two members of the 10-strong Duff clan are found together, naked and dead, in a submerged truck.

"Married, you bet," the sheriff investigating the deaths is told. "Only not to each other."

Next, the novel flashes back to



five years earlier without divulging the identities of the dead. You'll fly through the next 400 pages wonder-

ing which Duffs were the unlucky ones.

The novel is immensely intricate, yet it easily carries the reader through the story. Doig's loving portrayals of the Duff family members are entrancing, even though few of the Duffs are lovable.

Even the mundane comes alive in "Bucking The Sun." Never really cared about how an earthen dam was constructed? Neither did I. But Doig made me want to know; I was constantly intrigued.

If there is any downside to such a magnificent book, it is that the novel makes other works seem less worthy by comparison. But then, without marginal opening bands, how can you judge the excellence of the headliners?

Scott Coy Lommers is a Birch Bay writer who reviews books for The Bellingham Herald.



# Against The Current

## BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig  
Simon & Schuster. 412 pp. \$23

By David Laskin

**T**HE BUILDING of the Fort Peck Dam in eastern Montana: not, on the face of it, the most yielding subject for a novel. One of the most massive of FDR's New Deal projects, the earthen dam—the world's second largest—plugged the wide Missouri River with a four-mile cork of dredged-up sand, silt and clay. It took seven years (from 1933 to 1940) and 10,000 civilian workers to get the thing in place. Roaring shantytowns sprang up to house the crews and soak up their overflow wages. When the dam was done, a lake covering a quarter of million acres backed up over the Montana plains.

On second thought, what an absolutely stunning premise for a novel—given the right novelist. In *Bucking the Sun*, Ivan Doig rises admirably to the challenge of turning hydraulic engineering into compelling narrative. A Montanan by birth and by inclination, Doig unfolds the saga of the Fort Peck Dam through its impact on a single family—a clan of recently transplanted, peppery Scots called the Duffs. "They were the damnedest bunch to try to figure out," a new Duff wife muses about the explosive family she has married into. "Tear into each other at the drop of a hat, but stand together if the world so much as looked cross-eyed at them." Parents Hugh and Meg came over from Scotland as newlyweds, struggled for years to farm the fickle soil of the Missouri river valley, and raised three handsome lanky sons. Owen, the eldest and brainiest, incurred his father's everlasting wrath by abandoning the farm to get an engineering degree at Bozeman, his

David Laskin, a Seattle-based writer, is the author of "Braving the Elements: The Stormy History of American Weather."



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY RUSSO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

rowdy twin brothers Neil and Bruce, though coiled to cut loose, are still working for their father, raising alfalfa, killing grasshoppers, cursing drought.

And then the dam rears up and turns the Duffs' world on its head. The government condemns the farm—the dam will flood it—and Hugh, Meg and the twins find themselves with no choice but to sign on with the dam-builders. "Goin' Owen" is already there—he's the "fillmaster," one of the topdog engineers in charge of pumping up river mud to create the staggering earthen barrier. Owen and Hugh promptly resume the war that started when Owen left home. Proud, irascible Hugh hates being beholden to his cocky son and hates "Owen's dam." Ambitious, gung-ho, pressed-crease Owen despises his father's binge-drinking, his bluster and bitterness, and above all

his mulish refusal to admit that the Fort Peck Dam is the niftiest piece of engineering ever.

Subplots, mostly involving sex, love, marriage and politics, proliferate. Bruce and Neil get married after rapid-fire courtships and hurl themselves into energetic sex with their willing new wives. Hugh's brother Darius blows over from Scotland, breathing Marxist politics and unrequited passion for Meg. When she somewhat reluctantly rebuffs him (again), Darius consoles himself with a platinum-headed taxi dancer/hooker named Proxy (one of Doig's more inspired creations), and many torrid trysts later they too tie the knot. And all the while the earthen behemoth looms larger and larger, supplying the Duffs and their women with "the stories, the ingredients of life."

**I**N BOOKS like his acclaimed memoir *This House of Sky* and the brooding *Winter Brothers* Doig has written memorably of the immense, harsh, empty landscapes of the West; but here he brilliantly conjures up a crowded scene of mass energy and momentous civic upheaval. A master prose craftsman, Doig moves nimbly from wide-angle shots of seething barrooms to close-ups of uptight government offices to the pure poetry of construction and destruction. One gem, among scores, is the scene near the novel's end in which Owen looks on "statue-like" as a half-mile section of the dam collapses into the river: "Half a decade of engineering, millions of cubic yards of Fort Peck Dam . . . melting like brown sugar."

*Bucking the Sun* is so good one wishes it were flawless, but the novel does suffer from a serious miscalculation in design. Doig opens the book with the discovery of the drowned naked bodies of two Duffs—a man and a woman, married but not to each other, trapped in the cab of a submerged Ford truck—and he coyly withholds their identities until the novel's final pages. A guessing game of who they are and why and how they died keeps the pages turning, but it's a gimmick and it ends the book on a cheap, sour note.

Aside from this misstep, *Bucking the Sun* is a tour de force of historical fiction—no, fiction period. It's one of those books that takes you over as you read it, invading your daydreams, lodging its cadences in your brain, summoning you back to the page. Doig writes with absolute, perfect-pitch authority on dams, Duffs, the Depression, and the feel of life under Montana's fabled sky. Yes, the building of the Fort Peck Dam is the stuff of a great novel—and this is it.

# Secrets of a Southern Town

## THE KING OF BABYLON SHALL NOT COME AGAINST YOU

By George Garrett  
Harcourt Brace. 337 pp. \$24

By James Hynes

**T**HE NOVELIST George Garrett is one of the wily old foxes of American letters, his work as difficult to pigeonhole as it is a pleasure to read. The author of 25 books, 14 of them fiction, he writes with an energetic and irreverent wit that might be called precocious in a younger man. A native Southerner, conservative by nature, he does not hesitate to write like a postmodernist when it suits his purpose. Author of three of the finest historical novels ever written—*Death of the Fox*, *The Succession*, and *Entered by the Sun*—he is as knowledgeable about, and appears to take as much pleasure in, American popular culture as he does in the plays of Christopher Marlowe.

His latest novel, *The King of Babylon Shall Not Come Against You*, is as difficult to categorize as any of his previous books. The narrative is in the form of a dossier—interviews, bits of trial transcript, depositions, catalogues of unusual facts—compiled by Billy Tone, an author of true crime books. Tone has returned to his hometown of Paradise Springs, Fla., to research the events there of early

James Hynes is the author of "The Wild Colonial Boy."



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY RUSSO FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

April 1968, when a midget evangelist known as Little David and a local bank teller named Alpha Weatherby were found shot to death in Little David's trailer just outside of town. On the same evening, the evangelist's tent was burned down, an Episcopal minister apparently hanged himself in his attic, and a local photographer was assaulted by unknown assailants.

This is not a conventional detective story by any

means. The narrative moves forward, in its own looping, a-chronological way, and the "truth" of the events of April 1968 is revealed at last, but Garrett is clearly more interested in the journey than in the destination. Garrett knows in his bones what every good novelist knows, that if you break a story into its component parts, what you get is more stories, all the way down, like subatomic particles. And, as in physics, the further down you go into the grain of the narrative, the more mysterious and significant the stories become. The result is as much a magnificent piece of social history and cultural commentary as it is a novel, but more exciting, finally, and funnier, than any straight-arrow legal thriller.

Indeed, the novel is best considered as a shrewd, engaged and, in places, acid-etched portrait of the changes over the last 30 years in the life of a Southern small town, told in the voices, then and now, of the people who lived those changes. Perhaps necessarily, Tone himself is the least interesting character in the book, but then most of the book is told by much more entertaining folks: Moses Katz, brainy and libidinous, a Jewish professor at the local Baptist College who has turned to writing porn in his retirement; W.E. Gary, a wry and well-to-do African-American lawyer, who lives halfway between the local black and white communities, not quite accepted by either; Penrose Weatherby, brother of the murdered girl, whose adulthood as a slick, New South developer belies his youthful rage; and, speaking through their depositions and trial transcripts, the putative murderers, "Goathead" Papp, Little David's advance man, and Geneva Lasoeur, the evangelist's 300-pound common-law wife and former exotic dancer.

Together these characters, and others too numerous to mention, tell the stories that make up the larger narrative of the novel, ranging from a learned and rueful disquisition about the ravages of a uniform national culture on a regional one, to a flat-out hilarious story involving a bootlegger, two gallons of moonshine, and a chamberpot (which I wouldn't spoil by

—Continued on page 13





# LIFESTYLE

CLASSIFIED

Inside

## Ivan Doig's latest novel is a marvel of construction

### Bucking the Sun

By Ivan Doig (Simon & Schuster)  
\$23, 412 pp.

The amazing variety of novels today brings to mind thoughts of concerts, mostly down-home shows in small venues with horrible acoustics and overpriced drinks.

Most of the works seem like warm-up bands. They're a little off-rhythm. They feature eight-minute drum solos for no apparent reason. The fit of applause you give at the end stems more from relief than appreciation.

By contrast, Ivan Doig's new "Bucking The Sun" is a headliner. It is tight and assured. Each narrative song builds on the last, reaching new heights. Any and all encores are blessings.

The Montana author already is deemed among the few great living



**Scott Coy Lommers**

is another step forward for a novelist already yards ahead of the pack.

The novel is a sweeping story of an ill-fated family and its involvement in one of the most complex engineering feats in U.S. history, the construction of the Fort Peck Dam in Montana in the 1930s. The family, named Duff (think rough), is the heart and soul of the story. Its longing and despair, tinged with

U.S. writers. He has received praise from all sides and stirring reviews for all of his books. Little can be added to raise his stature.

That said, "Bucking The Sun" is a glorious piece of writing. Doig shows no signs of fading. It

### ▼ In person

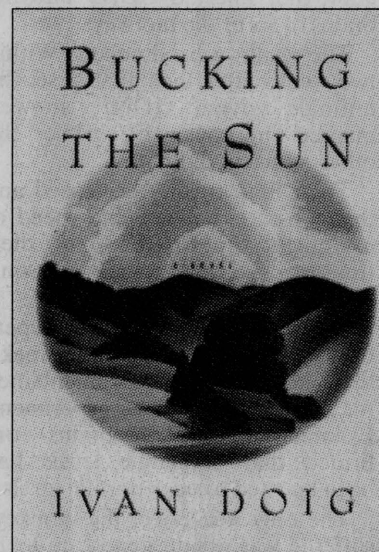
**PERFORMANCE:** Ivan Doig will appear for a literary performance and reception at 8 p.m. Saturday at Mount Baker Theatre. Purchase tickets — \$8 — Mount Baker Theatre, 734-6080, or Village Books, 671-2626.

hope, drives the narrative.

Doig wastes no time engrossing the reader in the story. By page 13, the overriding mystery of the novel is set in place. Two members of the 10-strong Duff clan are found together, naked and dead, in a submerged truck.

"Married, you bet," the sheriff investigating the deaths is told. "Only not to each other."

Next, the novel flashes back to



five years earlier without divulging the identities of the dead. You'll fly through the next 400 pages wonder-

ing which Duffs were the unlucky ones.

The novel is immensely intricate, yet it easily carries the reader through the story. Doig's loving portrayals of the Duff family members are entrancing, even though few of the Duffs are lovable.

Even the mundane comes alive in "Bucking The Sun." Never really cared about how an earthen dam was constructed? Neither did I. But Doig made me want to know; I was constantly intrigued.

If there is any downside to such a magnificent book, it is that the novel makes other works seem less worthy by comparison. But then, without marginal opening bands, how can you judge the excellence of the headliners?

Scott Coy Lommers is a Birch Bay writer who reviews books for The Bellingham Herald.

Ivan - (55chronicles)  
Great Review! Thanks for  
sending it. We've posted it near  
the books. It was a great evening  
at the theater. We actually sold  
164 tickets. We sold about 50  
"Bucking..." around the reading but  
we've rumbled over 100 total. Hope all  
is well - best of luck in your continuing  
endeavors.  
Koen Book Distributors, Inc.  
800-257-8481  
10 Twosome Drive, P.O. Box 600, Moorestown, NJ 08057



**Atticus  
Kodiak**  
as two new  
people in  
his life:  
The woman  
e's been hired  
to protect.  
And the  
psychopath  
who  
wants her  
dead.

Kodiak has to keep one  
e open for a killer and the  
ther on a screaming mob  
of protesters in **KEEPER**  
— the electrifying thriller  
at takes you into the front  
es of today's war against  
home-grown terrorism.

mpelling ... A strong debut  
a real contribution to the  
re. Greg Rucka is going to  
ke his mark ... stay tuned!"

—Andrew Vachss

new novel of suspense by

**Greg  
Rucka**

Available wherever books are sold

# The Dammed

*Ivan Doig's Montanans take part in a huge construction project.*

## BUCKING THE SUN

By Ivan Doig.  
412 pp. New York:  
Simon & Schuster. \$23.

By Timothy Foote

**U**NLIKE most Scots, Ivan Doig wears his heart on his sleeve. He is a man more than half in love with history, his own included. His best book, "This House of Sky," is a nonfiction ticket to the author's boyhood in the Montana of the 1940's, with his mother, who died when he was 6, his ranch-hand dad and his unforgettable grandmother. In matters of work and grief, of place and kinship, he can make you remember with him and sometimes weep — unless, of course, you have a heart of stone and come from the efete East.

Doig novels can be something else again. A historian and journalist by training, he has nonetheless striven for years to bear witness to Montana history in fiction, and to become if not the Homer at least the Virgil of generations of Scots who migrated to northwestern Montana before and after it became a state in 1889.

Mostly they are sheepmen, like his father and grandfather, predictably plagued by coyotes and big cattlemen, small grazing allotments and savage weather. (Doig books rarely spare us a description of a mile-high Montana blizzard; after one of these, few readers will blame him for living in Seattle.) His Scots are stubborn, enduring and reticent, not exactly ideal subjects for popular fiction in an age of tell-all talk shows and whiny therapy.

Like any novelist, especially a novelist bent on giving history lessons, Mr. Doig is obliged to throw a bone to readers who may find themselves in need of fluffy things like romance, suspense and plot. The last time out, in "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," he smuggled a centennial celebration of Montana's past under a fig leaf of fiction. The story involves a rancher father banging around the state with his divorced daughter, who is a photographer, and his former son-in-law, a journalist. The two are collaborating on a series of newspaper articles, so they teach us a lot about Montana. But what is supposed to keep laggards reading is whether or not (as the dad fears) the daughter will fall for the ghastly former son-in-law again and once more ruin her life.

The good news about "Bucking the Sun" is that here Mr. Doig artfully seasons the history lesson by serving it up with an intricate case of murder. This helps with the occasional *longueurs* of what is otherwise a wide-screen, Depression-era narrative largely devoted to the problems of building the Fort Peck Dam. This was a time when 17 million people (in a population of about 140 million) were out of work. When Franklin Roosevelt was pouring Government money into jobs through the W.P.A. and the P.W.A. When Harry Hopkins scored over the less generous Harold Ickes with the line "But Harold, people don't eat in the long run, they eat every day." The Fort Peck Dam (which made the first cover of Life magazine in November 1936) put 10,000 people to work. When finished, it created a reservoir 135 miles long, provided

flood control and was the biggest earth-fill dam in the world.

To shovel this construction epic into narrative as painlessly as possible, Mr. Doig mixes fact and fiction, filtering as much history as he can through the lives of the Duff family, whose members all labor on the dam, often under the tutelage of Owen Duff, one of its chief engineers. An elder brother looking out for his kinfolk and constantly at odds with Hugh, his tipling father, Owen manfully commands fleets of dredges and legions of workers, directs earth-moving miracles and fends off disaster from flood and ice during the inevitable Montana blizzard. His mother, Meg, cooks for workers in a mess hall — and puts up with Hugh. Owen's reckless, feckless younger brother Bruce moves from job to job, finally becoming a diver in the murk of the Missouri. Careful Neil, Bruce's twin, bushwhacks and drives a truck.

Along the way, all three boys get married. We also hear a speech by F.D.R., "the big gravy spreader himself," learn about Fort Peck's shantytown housing and the prevalence of prostitution (remarked upon even by Life) and are taught the difference between "tunnel muckers," "catskinners" and "shovel runners." Loads of rock hauled in from the nearby hills to reinforce the dam bring in piles of angry rattlesnakes — so many that workers make money selling souvenir rattles.

**I**F the Duff men are not exactly from central casting, at least central casting would have little trouble placing them. The women they marry are more interesting — especially one called Proxy (from peroxide blonde), a whore not quite with a heart of gold. Mr. Doig somehow manages to make her believable even though she marries Hugh's long-lost brother, Darius, while still taking on anybody with cash who pleases her down at the Blue Eagle tavern. It is Darius, though, who brings a measure of complexity to the novel. A shipyard union organizer from Scotland with a "need to chew at the heels of the powers that be," he turns out to be a man who actively wishes the dam project ill.

If, while reading the above, you've been wondering about that murder, that's exactly what happens to readers of "Bucking the Sun." With the guile of a Montana coyote, the author lures you through his romance with the big dam with teasing hints and guesses. Bit by bit, he lets you realize that the dead bodies (of two of the Duff clan) are no accident, and that more Duffs seem to be involved. But, full of Scottish family loyalty, how could they be? And so, out of 10,000 workers on the dam, Mr. Doig reduces his suspects to 10 — creating a neat, excruciating Agatha Christie country-house murder set down in sprawling Montana. And even when the who of it becomes clear, the how of it remains a mystery that will hold any summer reader to the very last sentence. □

## Author's Query

For a study of Spaniards who settled in the United States and Mexico after the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), I would appreciate hearing from anyone in possession of unpublished autobiographical materials, including letters, written by exiles.

SHIRLEY MANGINI  
2240 Stanley Avenue, #9  
Signal Hill, Calif. 90806  
E-mail: samg@csulb.edu

Timothy Foote is a senior editor and writer at Smithsonian magazine.

**ANN LOVEJOY:** Drowning out street noise with a few soothing drops. **C4**

■ Ann Landers **C2**    ■ Television **C3**  
■ Coffee Break **C6**

# LIFESTYLE

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Ivan Doig



Sherman Alexie

## Northwest authors draw praise, deflect criticism

By **JOHN MARSHALL**  
FI REPORTER

**C**HICAGO — Northwest authors again had their time in the ABA spotlight this year, especially Ivan Doig, David Guterson, Sherman Alexie and Betty J. Eadie.

Doig was one of five speakers at ABA's premiere literary event, a Sunday luncheon that also featured American poet laureate Robert Hass, novelists Susan Power and John Edgar Wideman, and poet Donald Hall. Hass introduced Doig by describing his memoir, "This House of Sky," as "an American classic."

Doig, looking unusually serious in sport coat and tie, responded with a soft-spoken, but eloquent description of his approach as a writer. He told the crowd of 500, "I see it as my everyday job to get literature and poetry over to people. I've always tried to attain a language that makes a shimmer behind the story."

Guterson arrived at ABA to find himself and his work splashed across the front page of a special convention edition of USA Today. The Bainbridge Island writer's first novel, "Snow Falling on Cedars," was listed as the fourth best-selling book this year, after "The Rainmaker" by John Grisham, "Primary Colors" by Anonymous and "Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus" by John Gray.

The staggering sales of "Snow Falling on Cedars" turned Guterson into the eighth best-selling U.S. writer this year, in USA Today's tabulation.

So it was no great surprise that booksellers named "Snow Falling on Cedars" as the favorite book they sold during the year (it had been a finalist for the same award last year). The "ABBY" carries a \$5,000 prize and a Tiffany glass sculpture.

Accepting the award Sunday morning, Guterson told hundreds of booksellers that he was "greatly honored to have this recognition from those who know books better than anyone else."

Guterson came in for some light criticism in a New York Observer article that was literary Topic A throughout ABA. The article was a savage attack on the selection of 20 writers that Granta magazine tabbed as "the best American novelists under 40." Guterson's Granta photograph, which showed the writer reclining barefoot on a couch, was republished in the New York Observer with the caption: "Granta — or J. Crew? David Guterson." That prompted a huge laugh from the author himself.

Alexie, Seattle's other honoree on the Granta list, did not get off so easily, becoming one of the prime Granta targets of the Observer's Vince Passaro, who wrote, "Mr. Alexie is the Native American representative. The judges probably thought they couldn't do without him . . . Mr. Alexie presents narrative that looks more like notes than finished product."

Alexie had come to his second straight ABA to promote his fall novel, "Indian Killer," for Atlantic Monthly Press and also to receive a book award from the Before Columbus Foundation for his first novel, "Reservation Blues." Instead, Alexie found himself in the unfamiliar position of being harshly criticized, and even controversial.

He minced no words in response, saying, "I'm never surprised by anybody's racism, but to blame Granta for the diversity of its list is absurd. If I hadn't achieved a lot already, I might consider criticism of my selection to have some validity. But I've been one of the most critically acclaimed young writers. I've actually been surprised that I have not received more criticism. Probably 95 percent of my reviews have been positive — and nobody's that good. Certainly not me."

Having a far more pleasant time in the ABA spotlight was Betty J. Eadie of Seattle, who burst onto the best-seller lists with an account of her near-death experience ("Embraced by the Light") that was first released by a tiny publisher. Now, Eadie basked in big commercial publisher star treatment, as Pocket Books fired up its publicity engine for her fall book, "The Awakening Heart."

Eadie's lighted picture had a place of prominence in the Pocket Books booth, she was toasted at a breakfast for booksellers, her autograph session drew throngs of eager fans. And Eadie was treated to the ultimate ABA plum for a writer — a publisher-hosted, invitation-only dinner party at the Ritz-Carlton.

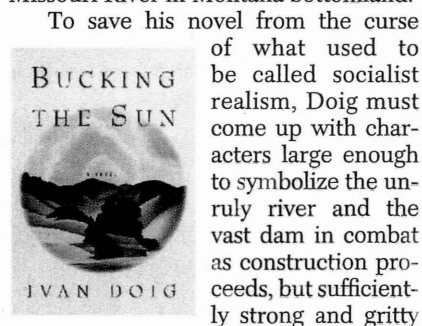
Eadie has arrived, and then some. A few years ago, she was an unknown writer struggling to get published. Now, she is a prime example of what bestsellerdom can bestow.



# Building Lives In Montana

The power of geography  
in a big, roistering novel

**M**ONTANA NOVELIST IVAN DOIG sets himself a challenge in his big, roistering new novel, *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23). His subject—not just the book's setting but also the presence that rules its composition—is a monstrous, chancy construction project in the mid-1930s, the huge Fort Peck dam across the Missouri River in Montana bottomland.

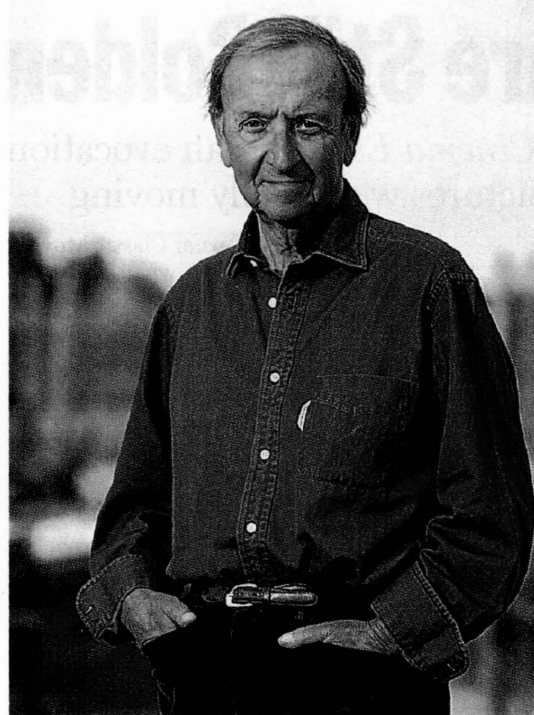


To save his novel from the curse of what used to be called socialist realism, Doig must come up with characters large enough to symbolize the unruly river and the vast dam in combat as construction proceeds, but sufficiently strong and gritty

in their own right so that they can't be yawned away as costumed actors posing in front of a diorama. He finds effective protagonists in the Duff clan, Scottish immigrants and hard-scrabble farmers losing their battle with drought and grasshoppers in the river valley until the dam project lurches into motion. Owen, the bookish eldest son, is an engineer. His twin brothers Neil, a truck driver, and Bruce, a diver, work in the river's murk. Father Hugh is a reluctant laborer and enthusiastic boozier, and Uncle Darius, a union organizer on the run. The younger men marry and risk lives and livers as they watch the river slowly pool up behind the growing dam.

The reader is pulled into their story by a puzzle the author has set: What two Duffs—man and woman, naked, married but not to each other—are extracted drowned from a submerged truck as the construction winds down? This is skillful manipulation, the novelist as conjurer ensuring that the reader's first thought is of human beings, not power shovels and spillways. The device works beautifully, and so does Doig's roguish novel. Though not well enough—perhaps never that well, if your characters wear jeans—for its author to escape the tag “regional.”

—By John Skow



STEVE LISS FOR TIME

## MAKING A STATEMENT: Moore plays tricks with the notion of poetic justice

ed statement identifying the intended victim as “Pierre Brossard, former Chief of the Second Section of the Marseilles region of the Milice, condemned to death in absentia by French courts, in 1944 and again in 1946.” The statement goes on to say that Brossard was charged with the massacre of 14 Jews on June 15, 1945. The document, which the old man realizes was to be pinned on his body, concludes, “The case is closed.”

Not true, of course, because the old man—who is indeed Brossard, although he has called himself Pouliot for many years—survives. But who, in 1989, still wants to punish him for his past by killing him? Brossard assumes that Jewish money is behind this attempt on his life. That belief, a measure of his reflexive anti-Semitism, will have fatal consequences.

*The Statement* may have a classic thriller's plot—a character on the run, private power plays behind public façades—but it unfolds in a moral universe infinitely more complex and

# To Avenge or to Forget the Past?

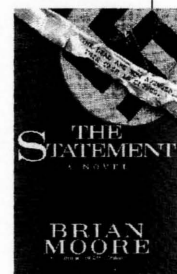
A provocative thriller is set in a  
complex moral universe

**G**IVEN A SCENE IN WHICH AN ASSASSIN stalks a potential victim, most readers will, in the absence of other evidence, instinctively root for the quarry. In the opening pages of his new novel, *The Statement* (Dutton; 250 pages; \$22.95), Brian Moore provides just such a scene: in a village in the south of France an old man is being tailed by a hired killer. The murder, the assassin decides, will take place when his target drives back to the monastery where he has been staying. Feigning engine trouble along the route, he waits for the old man to stop, then approaches as if to ask for a lift, pulls out a pistol and is fatally shot twice in the chest by the man he planned to kill.

This sort of narrative turnaround usually provides the pleasure of surprise, the sense that poetic justice has foiled a malevolent act. Moore quickly cuts off such easy certainties. He shows the old man examining the possessions of his would-be murderer. They include a print-

compromised than the white hats vs. the black hats so typical of the genre. The novel asks not only who is trying to murder Brossard but also why Brossard has been able to remain in France for 44 years, receiving asylum from various Roman Catholic monasteries, and a 1971 presidential pardon for the crimes he committed during the German occupation and the Vichy regime.

“It is hard to pass judgment on what people did back then,” says a French army colonel who is also looking to bring Brossard to justice. This remark is the crux of the novel. Does a time come when people must be forgiven for doing what they mistakenly believed was right or unavoidable? Or should evil never be forgiven or forgotten? By challenging the reader to confront these questions, *The Statement* is ultimately unforgettable. —By Paul Gray





# BOOKS

just over a century ago may well enjoy pursuing **Our Landlady**, a collection of newspaper columns about a small town in the newly admitted state of South Dakota, by L. Frank Baum, who would later give the world the unforgettable tale of Dorothy's adventures in the land of Oz. Baum, a young man from New York who followed Horace Greeley's advice about going West, Baum spent three years (1888-1891) in Aberdeen, S.D., where he contributed a humorous, mildly satirical column to the Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer.

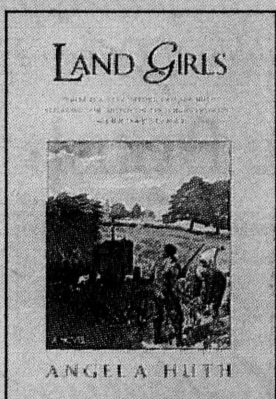
Baum's column featured the fictitious character "Mrs. Bilkins," a lively, opinionated, penny-pinching woman who runs a boarding house and cuts every corner she can when it comes to feeding her sometimes hard-up paying customers.

Mrs. Bilkins' decided opinions on a variety of subjects, from droughts, crop failures, and economic fluctuations to suffrage, Prohibition, and politics, exhibit a distinctive blend of naiveté, shrewdness, cynicism, and dogged optimism.

Although these journalistic vignettes scarcely rise to the artistic and imaginative heights of his Oz books, they constitute a colorful sampling of Americana and are expertly edited and annotated by Nancy Tystad Koupal in an attractive, illustrated volume.

The 28 stories selected by editor John Sutherland for **The Oxford Book of English Love Stories**, were chosen in large part for the ways in which they confound conventional expectations. They are, indeed, a far cry from the world of Harlequin romances.

In these love stories, love does not always conquer all, and even when it does, the result is not always the proverbial happy ending. Many of these stories are surprisingly unsentimental and, perhaps even more surprisingly, most are quite unerotic.

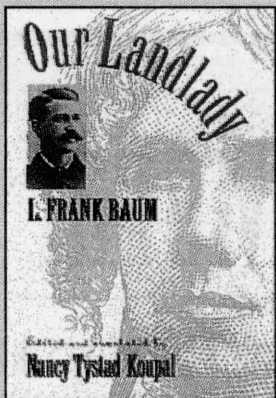


**LAND GIRLS**  
By Angela Huth  
St. Martin's Press/ A  
Thomas Dunne Book  
378 pp., \$23.95 By L.

**A FINE BALANCE**  
By Rohinton Mistry  
Alfred A. Knopf  
640 pp., \$26

**THE OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH LOVE STORIES**  
Edited by John Sutherland  
Oxford University Press  
452 pp., \$25

**OUR LANDLADY**  
Frank Baum  
University of Nebraska Press  
285 pp., \$35



Readers who are prepared to forgo the predictable will find stories that brilliantly illuminate many kinds of love: foolish, wise, casual, caring, obsessive, deluded, self-sacrificing, and selfish. Beginning in the late 17th century with a rather colorless tale by the colorful Aphra Behn, commonly credited as the first Englishwoman to make her living by the pen, the collection skips over the 18th century to proceed chronologically into the 19th and 20th centuries. (Irritatingly, the editor fails to provide the actual dates of the stories' composition or publication, perhaps out of a mistaken belief that to do so invites readers to consider them mere "period pieces.")

Sutherland has done an unusually fine job of finding interesting and relatively unfamiliar works by very famous authors, including Mary Shelly, Anthony Trollope, William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, H.G. Wells, John Galsworthy, Somerset Maugham, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Katherine Mansfield, and Elizabeth Bowen.

It probably says more about the temperament of this particular editor than it does about the English love story in general that most of these stories end unhappily: with noble self-renunciation at best, despair and ruin at worst, and a great deal of betrayal and disillusionment in between.

But there are also shafts of sweetness and light. From Thackeray's daughter, Anne Ritchie, there's a delicate story of devotion narrated by a man unembittered by his disappointment; from Phyllis Bentley, a crisply written account of malice that ends up outsmarting itself.

Although this anthology of love stories may not be a collection to warm the hearts of true romantics, it brings together a fascinating and enlightening variety of perspectives on the harsher realities that may lie in wait for unsuspecting lovers.

■ Merle Rubin regularly reviews books for the Monitor.

## Historical Fiction With Contemporary Montana Edge

*Doig delivers what his readers expect*

By Brad Knickerbocker

IF there is any potential problem with really enjoying a contemporary writer — relishing the thought of the next book — it's that the new work will simply replot safe ground, be too predictable in style and subject matter. Or, alternatively, that there will have been a jarring departure in approach.

With Ivan Doig's latest novel, fans need not worry. All the steel and sweetness, the granite and light, the humor and sharp dialogue, in Doig's writing are here with new flair and depth. The grit and warmth is pure Doig, only more so.

"Bucking the Sun," Doig's fifth novel (he has written three non-fiction books as well), is set in his home state of Montana during the Great Depression of the mid-1930s. Thanks to the Roosevelt administration, Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River is to be a massive public-works project that will employ thousands, including some whose homesteads will be inundated by the lake it creates.

The tale centers on the Duff family. Patriarch Hugh and his wife, Meg, Scottish immigrants who are just barely making it on land tougher than they are; their elder son, Owen, an engineer and "fillmaster" on what will be one of the largest earthen dams ever built; twin younger brothers, Neil and Bruce; and Hugh's brother Darius, a militant Marxist shipyard worker who shows up running from a violent past in Scotland carrying political and personal grudges.

Quite soon, all the Duff men are married — to women (two of them sisters) just as tough-minded, yet vulnerable, as the Duffs are. We know from the start that a man and a woman from two different couples will end up naked and dead in a truck that has rolled off the dam.

Doig has the perfect background for this kind of writing. He grew up on Montana ranches before going off to get a doctorate in history. His factual recounting of the Fort Peck Dam project is full of fascinating historical tidbits. The scenes where FDR himself came to see the project and speak to the awed assembly gives a gritty newsreel quality to events.

In fact, I kept wishing that photographs from that time had been included.

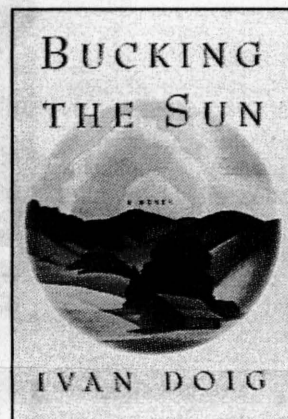
The promise of the era is fully felt, as well as the growing concern about events in Europe as the shadow of fascism falls. Some of the characters are politically radical to the point of being anarchic — a chilling precursor to the militias and "freemen" found in that part of the country today.

If there is one weakness in "Bucking the Sun," it's that the surreptitious affair between two of the Duffs is not fully developed — not developed at all, in fact. From all we're told, it could just as easily have been any two others, and there's plenty to work with here without it, which leaves one wondering why it's there in the first place.

But this is a relatively minor quibble. Ivan Doig is a terrific writer and a great storyteller with a healthy outlook as indicated in his dedication: "To novelists who deliver the eloquence of the edge of the world rather than stammers from the psychiatrist's bin."

I'm looking forward to his next work, whatever it may be.

■ Brad Knickerbocker is a Monitor correspondent who covers environmental issues from Ashland, Ore.



**BUCKING THE SUN**  
By Ivan Doig  
Simon & Schuster,  
412 pp., \$23

## A Jury of One's Peers Goes Up in Smoke

By Lawrence J. Goodrich

JOHN GRISHAM'S latest legal thriller, "The Runaway Jury," has it all: mystery, legal maneuvering, behind-the-scenes views of a trial, jury tampering, and plenty of other skullduggery.

Taking a page from today's headlines, Grisham takes us to Biloxi, on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, and the latest tobacco trial. The combatants/conspirators/protagonists are many, but most of the action centers around two men, Rankin Fitch and Nicholas Easter.

Fitch runs the tobacco companies' secret legal fund. He's a bully who hires the lawyers, jury consultants, and investigators, and who fixes the juries. His clients are scared silly of him, but

they put up with him because Big Tobacco hasn't lost a case since he's been in charge.

The stakes are tremendous for plaintiff and defendant alike. If the jury finds that cigarette smoking killed Jacob Wood, and that he couldn't quit because the

**THE RUNAWAY JURY**  
By John Grisham  
Doubleday, 401 pp., \$26.95

tobacco companies got him hooked as a child and then spiked their cigarettes with more nicotine to keep him hooked, the coalition of trial lawyers financing the case expects to cash in big in future lawsuits. The tobacco companies need to head that off. Both sides are ready to

play hardball — complete with spitballs and beanballs.

This is no civics-textbook trial. As the action unfolds, both sides are trying to fix the jury, but that panel seems to have a mind of its own. Before long it's going on strike and dictating terms to the judge. It's a runaway jury.

As usual, Grisham draws a finely detailed, realistic picture of the action and the characters. The judge, the lawyers on both sides, the witnesses, even the court officers are painted as real human beings with real foibles. And true to Grisham's style, just when you think you know the ending, you suddenly find out that you don't.

■ Lawrence J. Goodrich is a Monitor editorial writer.





Carol M. Doig photo

Ivan Doig at the Fort Peck Dam Spillway. Below, President Franklin D. Roosevelt visits Glasgow, Mont., in 1934.

*More than*

# Montana

*Ivan Doig aims for a new dimension with his latest book*

By Dan Webster  
Staff writer

**F**ew contemporary novelists are more closely associated with Montana, the state and the mystique than Ivan Doig. Certainly his literary output, which includes the Montana-based trilogy "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," suggests that.

Especially Montana-like is his 1978 memoir, "This House of Sky."

In fact, each of these books alone bears more of a feel for the Big Sky state than do a whole shelf of self-styled reminiscences of what it's like to pass a season or two in the wilds of Libby, Livingston or Wisdom.

Yet Doig, reflecting a sensibility that has been tempered by years of living in such non-Montana locales as Chicago and Seattle, doesn't define his work as "inherently Montanan."

And that goes particularly for his newest novel, "Bucking the Sun," Doig's fifth work of fiction (and his eighth book overall). For despite having a trademark Montana setting, the Fort Peck Dam building project of the 1930s, "Bucking the Sun" is Doig's attempt to capture something bigger.

"I kind of wish, in fact, that the dam was not set in Montana," Doig said during a recent phone interview from a Chicago hotel. "It might have given the book a different dimension. It might not have been seen so much as a Montana novel as what I see it as — which is an American West novel."

Trouble is, it's difficult to separate what is specifically Montana from what is traditionally the West.

The themes in "Bucking the Sun" are certainly emblematic of the West as a whole: the struggle between those who work their own land vs. those who see the land as something to use for the greater good of society; the spirit of individuality

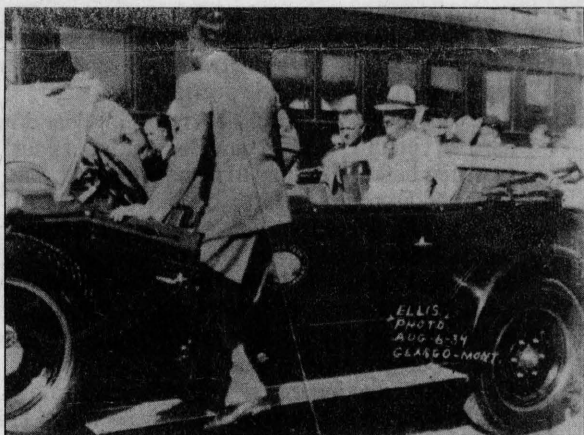
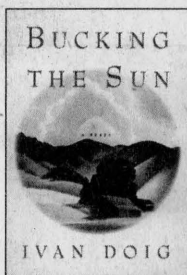


Photo courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Helena



## Reading

Ivan Doig will read from his novel "Bucking the Sun" at 7 tonight at Auntie's Bookstore, Main and Washington.

vs. the power of government; family closeness vs. the prevailing tensions inherent among self-reliant family members.

Yet those same themes apply perfectly well to Montana, too. Thus it's only natural for Doig to center his story on the Fort Peck Dam, Roosevelt's New Deal project that still ranks as one of the most amazing engineering feats ever imagined, much less accomplished. It entailed building an earthen dam 25 stories high, four miles wide to hold back the waters of the

Continued: **Doig/C3**

# Doig: 'Bucking the Sun' reaches beyond Montana

Continued from B1

Missouri River.

In addition to flood control, the dam — which took six years to build (1933-39) — provided some 10,500 jobs during the middle years of the Great Depression.

Doig explores the project, and examines his themes, through the family Duff. A brood of Scottish ancestry, the Duffs are headed by proud Hugh, whose industrious nature has been doubly wounded. The first injury came courtesy of a seeming betrayal by his eldest son, Owen; the second involved losing the family farm to the very dam project that Owen is helping honcho.

Owen is the one who left, deserting his demanding and needy father in the search for more education and a better chance to make his mark.

Owen's younger brothers, twins Bruce and Neil, are the ones who stayed. The first is a wild sort who speeds through the boomtowns surrounding the impending dam on his motorcycle; the second is more sober and unafraid to work double shifts if it means a better life.

And there are the women who live with, and all in their own way love, these men. Mother Meg endures Hugh's occasional drunken benders while overseeing the lives of her children. Charlene is bound to Owen, her pride in him matched only by her resentment of Meg. Spirited Kate and bookish Rosellen are the respective wives of Bruce and Neil.

Into this mix comes Darius (pronounced Da-rye-us), Hugh's brother and a socialist with a shady past. And the complicating factor here is that Darius marries a saloon doxy named Proxy (short for peroxide) but maintains his torch for Meg.

All of this family tension is heightened by the fact that Doig reveals early on that two of the Duffs, each married to someone else, have been found not only in a compromising situation but also dead, drowned by the very water held hostage by the new dam.

The rest of the book, told in flashback, is a guessing game as to who these individuals are, with Doig revealing clues as the pages pass by.

The backdrop against which this literary melodrama plays out,

though, is what provides "Bucking the Sun" its special feel. The Fort Peck project was something that has intrigued Doig since his youth.

It was as a boy that the 56-year-old White Sulphur Springs native read the first issue of *Life* magazine, whose cover featured Margaret Bourke-White photographs of the eastern Montana site. Later on, he was fascinated by stories of "the big slide of 1938," an accident that killed eight dam workers.

Years later, long after he had moved away, earning college degrees at Northwestern University and working as a journalist at various Midwestern spots, he again heard about Fort Peck while working on his trilogy.

"It's bound to be like this in Spokane and other parts of the West," Doig said. "Whenever you talk to somebody, you only talk for a few minutes before you find that you know somebody in common."

That was how Fort Peck came up again and again. "Everybody had a relative who worked there or something of that nature," he said.

Doig spent three years on the book, the first 12 months doing nothing but research. He found the technical information he needed in an obscure trade publication, and he buoyed this both with interviews of 50 Fort Peck veterans collected by the Montana Historical Society and by finding other dam vets on his own.

Doig admits that he might have set his story somewhere else, maybe even putting the Duffs to work on another well-known Roosevelt-era project, the Grand Coulee Dam. But, he said, "That would have lost all the earthen dam aspects and some of the other shimmering elements like the *Life* magazine cover and people being driven out of this particular Missouri River valley."

Ultimately, it may not matter. In the end, "Bucking the Sun" ends up being pure Doig — at once Montanan and Western, coexisting parts of the same geographic pie.

"That's what I'm always after," he said. "And it's not just the West of America: It's west of the places that run things. . . . That's the kind of writing that interests me, and that's what I think we're trying to do in the West. We're out beyond the usual suspects in the literary and power centers."