

ca. 1

say just this

I will say this: if other people of the world know how to dance,
they must first have seen the Scotch do it.

...the Scotch do it.

"I know."

...the Scotch do it.

after p. 50.

A few scenes about their living situation with Lucas and Nancy, showing that Nancy remains enigmatic; that Lucas is alternately gruff and accepting toward Rob and Angus, ~~whom~~ the first people to see him in his handless condition who knew him before. Angus evaluates him something like this:

His only steady passions, so far as I could see, were Nancy and Gros Ventre.

Rob's mood improves and stays that way because of the wheel work, a chance to have instant reputation; and Angus is interested in the life of Gros Ventre. A few days, maybe a week, go on like this.

after p. 55

The next morning, Angus rides up English Creek; description of the creekside country, the mountains. At the forks of the creek (near DenBoer's, the eventual site of the English Creek ranger station) he notices the knob of land we climbed for photos and he aims for it, saying something like:

I would have made a fine lighthouse keeper. Turn me loose in any land and I climb up to the highest point I can and look and look and look.

As I was now.

He can see to the Sweetgrass Hills, to the mountains towering in the west; but most of all, he is taken with the little valley of the North Fork, Breed Butte over it and the meadows along its creek; the valley has just two homesteads, one not far below where he is and the second up the creek about half a mile. He is all but sure this is the most promising place for him and Rob to homestead.

after p. 58

Angus rides the valley of the North Fork, up onto Breed Butte; eats with the Duffs, learns from Ninian that he is going to switch from cattle to sheep, making use of the free range west of the North Fork valley, and he advises Angus to do the same. He tells Angus more Scotch families will ~~be coming the same way~~ come to the North Fork, three or four coming with Ninian's brother from Fife. Ninian makes it plain that he is favoring Angus because he's Scotch.

It all sounds great to Angus, but before he leaves he figures he'd better tell Ninian about the connection he and Rob have with Lucas. Ninian listens and says only:

"Lucas has had a misfortunate life." Whether by this Ninian Duff meant Lucas's loss of hands or his lack of ~~churchliness~~ churchliness or the presence of Nancy under his roof unmarried, I couldn't tell. Around Ninian Duff, all lapses sounded equal.

ch. 2 possible change: end ch. 2 with line about Lucas's amputation, from there on
make it another ch., possibly "Medicine Lodge".

pulling out shotguns to moderate their unruly customers. By the holy, though, could anyone with eyes think Rob and I were anything like unruly right then?

Finally the saloonkeeper emitted low and fierce to Rob what his face was already raging out: "Are you demented? Who to hell are you anyway, to come saying that?"

"Rob!" from Rob the bewildered. "Lucas, man, I know you like myself in the mirror! I'm Rob, your nephew."

The saloonkeeper still stared at him, but in a new way. Then: "By Jesus, you are. Chapter and verse. By Jesus, you're John's lad Robbie, grown some." The fury was gone from Lucas Barclay's face, but what passed into its place was no less unsettling. All emotion became unknown there now; right then that face of Lucas Barclay could have taught stoniness to a rock.

Still as baffled as I was, Rob blurted next: "Lucas, what is the matter here? Aren't we welcome?"

At last Lucas let out a breath. As if that had started him living again, he said as calm as cream to Rob: "Of course you're welcome. You've come late, though, to do any handshaking with me." Lucas raised his forearms from beneath the bar and laid on the dark polished wood the two stumps of amputation where his hands had been.

MEDICINE LODGE

To your ink minion's attention have come the remarks of Judge Jason W. Strevell, a civic pillar of our Montana. In response to a San Francisco correspondent's inquiry about the somewhat boisterous reputation our state has in some quarters, Judge Strevell elucidated: "Civilization throws its bad material to the outer confines, resembling in this respect the action of the sea. The unruly classes seek a place where they are not disturbed by the restraints of society, and they go there because it is a convenient locality for the exercise of their vices." The good Judge is remarkably apt about the flotsam and jetsam of our own fair county of Choteau, which tends to collect northward in the whiskey mills of what tries to call itself the "town" of Gros Ventre.

--Choteau Quill, May 1, 1890

I tell you true, I did not know whether to stare or look away, to stay or turn tail, to weep or to wail. There was no known rightness of behavior, just as there was no rightness about what had happened to Lucas. Like the clubs of bone and flesh he was exhibiting to us, any justice in life seemed ripped, lopped off. To this day the account of Lucas Barclay's mining accident causes my own hands to open and close, clench their fingernails hard against their palms, thankful they are whole. It happened after the Great

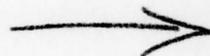
Maybe and Helena, when Lucas had moved on to a silver claim called the Fanalulu in the outcropping country between Wolf Creek and Augusta. My partner on that was an old Colorado miner, Johnny Dorgan. This day we were going to blast a lead. I was doing the tamping in, Johnny was behind me ready with the fuse. What made this worse was that I had miner's religion, I always made sure to use a wooden tamp on the powder so there'd be no chance of spark. But this once, the blasting powder somehow did go off. Dorgan had turned to reach for his chewing tobacco in the coat behind him and was knocked sprawling, with quartz splinters up and down his back. He scrambled on all fours to where Lucas had been flung, a burned and bloody mass. The worst was what was left--what was gone--at the ends of Lucas's arms. Dorgan tied a tourniquet on each, then took Lucas, a wagonload of pain, to the Army post hospital at Fort Shaw. Johnny thought he was delivering a corpse, I suppose. He very near was. The surgeon there saved what he could of Lucas, starting at the wrists. Did I want to die, at first? By Jesus, I wanted worse than that. I wanted the world dead. I hated everything above snake-high. For months, Lucas was tended by the Fort Shaw surgeon. I was his pastime, his pet. He made me learn to handle a fork and a

might take it between its paws, and he could spoon sugar into his coffee without a spill and stir it efficiently. We learned by Lucas's telling of it that he could dress himself except for the buttoning; "I'd like to have my knee on the throat of the man who invented buttons." That he could wind his pocket watch by holding it against his thigh with one stub and rolling the stem with the other. That, what I had wondered most about, he had taught himself to write again by sitting down night after night, a pen between his stubs, and copying out of an old book titled Stone Stories: Collected English Epitaphs. "It fit my mood. I made myself work at a line a night, until I could do it first try. Then two lines a night, and four, on up to a page of them at a time. Not only did I learn writing again, lads, the epitaphs were instructive. Here lies John Jones, man of worth, /repaying in full his borrowed earth. Angus, what would your man Burns think of that one, ay? Or the favorite of mine. Alone man must find his way among/ the cold lunar beams/alone the sun arises, and alone/spring the great streams. That's entirely what I was, alone, after the accident to my hands. At least"--he indicated Nancy, buttering bread for him--"I'm over that now." We learned by Lucas's ironic telling that he had earned good money from the Fanalulu mine before the accident--"the great secret to silver mining, lads, is to quit in time; otherwise, the saying is that you need a gold mine to keep your silver mine going"-- and we inferred from this house and its costly furnishings that those were not the last dollars to find their way to Lucas. We learned as much as he could bring himself to tell us about that

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Q. 2

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Rob's house was just out of view behind the shoulder of ^{Bar. Butte} the ridge.

*combs
sentence.*

Indeed, no other homesteads could be seen from mine, and for some reason I liked that, too.

Positioning my house was the matter Rob and I held opposite views of. He insisted a house ought to sit square with the world. His did, the length of the house straight east and west. No, I maintained, I wanted to face the creek, which cut at an angle through my acreage. Angling the house would put the front door around a corner from the wind, too, and provide a view of the nearest coulee and the long ridge up to--

Not a right policy, he told me, to build off center such a way. But it was my house and if I wanted it to sit cattywampus and skewgy and cockeyed--

That's right, it was nobody's but mine, said I, and it was going to be built facing the creek.

Bad policy, he repeated, but began hewing the first corners of my logs.

at the forbearance of the planet.
Which was to say, it was yours ~~as much as the planet would~~

*of
similar
forces.*

The balance sheet of men and women was close to even, with Judith
Findlater and the teacher Ramona Jeffers now on hand. Neither ^{of them} was that
much to look at, and Miss Jeffers always retained the starch she thought
a school teacher had to have, but they served. For that matter, the ^{single} ~~one~~
time I had a decent chance ^{get Judith aside} to coax a kiss out of ^{her} Judith, she ^{delivered} ~~produced~~ one
that I could feel all the way to my ears.

what
writers

Judith

3
bachelors

25
9

use as
consult in
with Angus
& Donald
Erskine

edit

Work was out of the question. The Duffs and Erskins frowned upon any hard breathing on Sunday that wasn't asthma. But it seemed to me that fishing was excusable. At least I could do it in the brush of the North Fork out of sight of the Sunday-sentinels.

The South Fork was hedged with willows along both banks. The North Fork was equally willowed and was thick with beaver dams. compared with the Carrou, this creek was jungle. I asked OO, "Are there fish in all that?"

Ninian
7 2

"Ones big enough to halter, back in those dams. [You'll want to learn to tell them apart from the beaver, they're so close in size. There's a bit of fur, like, on the beaver, and--"]

cut?

"Truth now, OO. How does a person fight his way to the water?"
You're just said it yourself.
"Fight is the word for it."

1
2

Strange to turn oneself into an eel, easing through willows and slipsiding onto dams to catch fish.

"Have a guess as to what I'd rather be doing instead of this."

We were haying in Ninian Duff's meadow.

"Eating thistles with the horses."

"Close. Have another."

"Hammering your thumb, up there at the House of Barclay."

"Haying hasn't sapped your mental powers, Angus. We could be almost done with the house by now."

"Yes, and if Ninian hadn't lent us his horses and wagon to bring the logs down, we'd barely be started on the house."

"You're right, you're right. I can't wait to see it done, though."

Up to that point in life Rob's materials of work had been wood and metal, mine had been words and numbers. Now we were trying to fathom the mysterious substance known as sheep.

from
p. 7

"do you miss Nethermuir?"

~~The look of the town, its solid roundheaded walls of stone and the market cross and the cathedral spire, I did indeed. I missed the talk of Adam Willox. I missed in a way the mornings of opening the wheelwright shop, 00 stepping in and say 00. [I suppose I must be called a man of habit.]~~

"Some, I do."

~~"You're a great one for yesterdays, Angus." There was more there than he said.~~

~~"They've brought us to where we are. k And how do you know that, without looking jback?"~~

"You look around you."

"All right, here are walls around you. Look at them and tell me whether you're in Montana or Alberta or Manitoba."

"Now, walls aren't what I mean."

"Walls are ^{what's} wha't around us the majority of the time."

"You're the book learner. But there are times when you can't see beyond walls."

I thought of making myself lie in the steerage bunk of the Jemmy. Of finding this land on the North Fork. Of... No, Rob, I did not do matters a^s unblinkingly as you. But I could argue that I was doing them.

MORE TO COME -- a section about Angus living by himself. Still wifeless and wondering if he's doing the right thing, slaving at the homestead, staying partners with Rob. This leads into the next page:

27

28

The rig, one of Danley's hires, clattered to a stop just short of running over us and the house. The horses were sweat-wet and looked astounded at what was happening to them. Nancy seemed as impervious as she did in the kitchen. Lucas was as merry as chick jam on thin bread.

"By Jesus, there's nothing like a buggy ride to stir the blood," he announced as the buckboard's frame of dust caught up with the contingent. "Air into the body, that's the ticket. Angus, lad, you're working yourself thin as a willow. Come to town for some

alternative pp.

valley--and making the journey to the land office at Fort Benton and saying to the registrar, this quarter-section is the square of earth that will be mine. And after three years of living upon it and improving it by your building and husbandry labors, yours it legally became.

"Hotter'n not, said the Hottentot."

"And what do you expect, man. Montana is so high, it's up close to the sun."

"From what Ninian says of winter in here, we'll be wanting some of this heat about January."

"Then we'd better put up some sunshine like blocks of ice, had we?"

"Or we could save warm buckets of sweat, what if. You're dripping like a fish."

"You're liquid enough yourself. We wouldn't last an hour on this roof without Mr. Stetson's shade. Hats, now there's what we ought to have invented. Even Lucas won't step out a door without his Stetson on. And look at the situation of cowboys. Their horses wouldn't respect them if they didn't wear hats that'll hold a bushel of oats."

"Cowboy yourself, ride that rafter a bit my way. There, that's the place."

Do I laugh or cry, now, at the innocence with which we became homesteaders? Either is apt. Nobody new to it knows thing one

*spread this
2 lines at
a time
- thru -
non-dialog
material!*

*cut or
change?*

about the homesteading life. Grant Rob and myself our due credit, we at least strove diligently to learn our ignorance.

"Angus, I wish we had oakum to do the chinking with. Make nice dark seams against the logs instead of this clay."

"Toussaint told you how to darken it."

"Considering the cure, I'll accept the ill, thank you just the same." The Toussaint Rennie formula for darkening the chinking clay was to mix it generously with horse manure.

Here then is land. Just that, land, naked earthskin. Now put upon it house, outbuildings, fences, crop, livestock, haystacks, performing every bit of this at once and irrespective of weather and wallet and whether you have ever laid hand to any of these tasks before. Build before you can plan, build in your sleep and through your mealtimes, but build, pilgrim, build, claimant of the earth, build, build, build. You are permitted to begin in the kind delusion that your utensils of homestead-making at least are the straight forward ones--ace, hammer, adze, pick, shovel, pitchfork. But your true tools are other. The nearest names that can be put to them are hope, muscle, and time.

Rob's choice of claim was lofty; his land lay across the middle of the south slope of Breed Butte itself, like a saddle blanket down a horse's side. By choosing so high onto the butte he was forfeiting the meadow of wild hay that meandered beside the North Fork the full length of the valley, hay that seemed to leap from the ground and play racing games with the wind as we hammered together Rob's house. More serious, to my way of thinking, he was spurning the creek itself, source for watering livestock.

"In the eventual, a dab of hay or water more or less won't make the difference," he assured me in that Barclay future-owning style. "What counts, see now, is that no one can build to the west of me here"—the timbered crest and long rocky shoulder of Breed Butte indeed making that an unlikelihood. "Angus, this butte will be the high road into all the pasture there ever was and I'll be right here on it." There he had me. The key to Scotch Heaven was not our homesteads, because 160 acres is not nearly enough to pasture a band of sheep on. It was the free range, the grass of the foothills to

the west and on up into the mountains, that was going to be the larder for our livestock. Ninian Duff had seen so, and Rob and I, not to mention our treasurer Lucas, could at least puff ourselves that we glimpsed old Ninian's vision. So I could not really naysay Rob's choice of site.

Or at least no more than he did mine. My homestead selection lay southwest of his, down into the last of the North Fork valley just before the buttes and foothills took command of the geography. To me the nearness of the creek was a pleasure; as the North Fork wound down the valley it seemed as if the water and the land were working together, making a fit. Meadows of wild hay stood along both sides of the creek, and the bottomland was flat enough to build on in comfort--for all the open glory of Rob's site, you always were trudging up or down slope there. Ridges, coulees, the mountainwall of rock called Roman Reef in the notch at the west end of the valley, the upmost trees on Breed Butte, all could be seen from my yard-to-be; the tops of things have always held interest for me. Rob's house was just out of view behind the shoulder of the ridge. Indeed, no other homesteads could be seen from mine, and for some reason I liked that, too.

Positioning my house was the matter Rob and I held opposite views of. He insisted a house ought to sit square with the world. His did, the length of the house straight east and west. No, I maintained, I wanted to face the creek, which cut at an angle through my acreage. Angling the house would put the front door around a corner from the wind, too, and provide a view of the

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Bad policy, he repeated, but began hewing the first corners of my logs.

Up to that point in life Rob's materials of work had been wood and metal, mine had been words and numbers. Now we were trying to fathom the mysterious substance known as sheep.

In its way, a band of sheep is like a garden on legs. Every spring a crop of lambs, every summer a crop of wool. Feed us and clothe us too--not even potatoes yield so beneficially. But the fleecies are a garden that wanders around looking for its own extinction. In the Two Medicine country there was much that was willing to oblige their mortal urge. I can tell you to this moment the anguish when, a week after we had trailed our yearlings home to the North Fork from their former owner in the Choteau country, Rob and I found our first dead sheep. A fine fat ewe on her back, four legs in the air like hooved branches. In her clumsy cocoon of wool she had rolled helplessly onto her back when she lay down to scratch a tick itch. Rob was shocked, I admit I was a bit unsettled myself. And as any sheep owner does, we began thinking the awful arithmetic to ourself: if we lose another ewe next week...if we lose

one again tomorrow...A little of that and in your mind you not only have no sheep left, you possess less than that, cavities of potential loss that will grow to the extent of however many sheep you can possibly buy in the future.

Thus you try to think instead of the benefits of sheep. Watch them thrive on grass a cow wouldn't even put its head down for. Watch the beautiful fleeces, rich and oily to the touch, come off them as they are sheared with the Duff and Erskine bands. Dream a year ahead to when you can watch your first crop of lambs enlarge themselves week by week.

"You can see into tomorrow from up here, I will say that," saying it in spite of my own creekside inclinations. All the valley of the North Fork sat sunlit below Rob's site this day, and the mountainline crowding the entire sky to the west, and by strolling to the brow of the butte the eastward expanse of plains all the way to the far, far Sweetgrass Hills was presented.

Rob aimed his chin down at the Duff and Erskine homesteads, one-two there beside the creek at the mouth of the valley. "I didn't come all the miles from one River Street to live down there on another."

Ninian Duff brought his own decree when he rode up to examine Rob's aloof site. "You'll eat your fill of wind up here," Ninian warned. Rob found that worth a laugh. "Is there somewhere in this country that a man wouldn't have wind in his teeth?"

Even while we three stood gazing, the tall grass of the valley bottom was being ruffled. A dance of green down there, and the might of the mountains above, and the aprons of timber and grazing land between--this was a view to climb to, you had to give Rob that. Even Ninian looked softened by it all, his prophetic beard calm against his chest. I was moved enough to say: "You did some real choosing when you found us the North Fork, Ninian."

The beard moved back and forth across the chest. "None of us has bragging rights to this country yet."

A buckboard was coming. Coming at speed along the road beside the North Fork, past Duffs' without slowing, past Erskines' just short of flying. It looked like a runaway, but at the track which led up the butte to us the light wagon turned as precisely as if running on a railroad track. Then Rob and I saw one of the two figures wave an arm. Arm only, no hand to be seen. Lucas. And Nancy was driving.

The rig, one of Dantley's hires, clattered to a stop just short of running over us and the house. The horses were sweat-wet and looked astounded at what was happening to them. Nancy seemed as impervious as she did in the kitchen. Lucas was as merry as thick jam on thin bread.

"By Jesus, there's nothing like a buggy ride to stir the blood," he announced as the buckboard's fume of dust caught up with the contingent. "Air into the body, that's the ticket. Angus, lad, you're working yourself thin as a willow. Come to town for some

"All right, all right, tell Kuuvus to put your groceries on my account. By Jesus, sometimes I think none of us in this town will ever get a dollar ahead, we'll all just go through life owing each other."

"Rob and I will think of you with every bite we eat, Lucas."

"You had better. By Jesus, you two would have to line up with the coyote pups for supper if I didn't watch over you."

*action
change*

"You and Rob have worked wonders on those homesteads, I have to say. Of course I ~~knew all along that~~ ^{ed tell him . moment} the pair of you ~~were going to be a credit~~ ^{walked in here that} to the community."

"Credit. Do you know, Lucas, there's ~~a~~ ^{the} word I was going to bring up with you."

"Angus, Angus, rascal you are. ~~Do you and Rob sit up nights inventing~~ ^{What do you find} ways to spend my money? What's the tariff this time?"

"Your penny purse can do this one. ~~All we need are~~ ^{Pennies or porridge, is all} groceries enough to get us through the winter." ^{This money call for ~~me~~ to sell}

"All, you say. ~~I suppose if I sell the Medicine~~ ^{I suppose if I sell the Medicine} Lodge and my second shirt--all right, all right, tell Kuuvus to put your groceries on my account. By Jesus, sometimes I think none of us in this town will ever get a dollar ahead, we'll all just go through life owing each other."

"~~We'll~~ ^{Rob and I will} think of you with every bite we eat, Lucas."

"You had better. By Jesus, you and ~~Rob~~ ^{two} would have to line up with the coyote pups for ~~the~~ supper if I didn't watch over you." He poured a drink for himself and another for me.

Shaking his head gravely, Lucas

Well, we thought maybe if you sold. 42 8 yr second shirt --

of no leads us to a matter

Breathing & breeding, as ^{deuces} . O D said. If we can get sheep to conceive, we'll have a famous lamb crop.
~~on scale of Duffs & Eskine~~

→ There you are on winter again. sure you don't need a swamper? (this winter)

You forget if we see you two eat.

T

There were days when I wondered whether the homestead was worth the work.

changed, Feb. '86.
revision

SCOTCH HEAVEN

Prophetic indeed was the man who uttered, "You can fight armies or disease or trespass, but the settler never." Word comes of yet another settlement of homesteaders in this burgeoning province of ours. Who can ever doubt, with the influx which is peopling a childless land and planting schools by the side of cattle corrals, that Choteau County is destined to be the most populous in Montana? Of this latest colony, situated into the foothills a dozen or so miles west of Gros Ventre, it is said so many of the arrivees originated in the land of the kilt and the bagpipe that Gros Ventrians call the elevated new neighborhood Scotch Heaven.

Choteau?

--Choteau Quill, July 2, 1891

"Tenderly now, Angus. Up a bit with your end. Up up up, that's the direction. A hair more. Almost there. There. Ready to drop?"

"Let's do."

With a sound like a big box lid closing, the log fell into place, its notched ends clasping into those of the cabin's side walls.

Rob the log heavier

"Well?" ~~Rob~~ demanded. "Does your end fit?"

"Snug enough. You could barely toss a cat through the crack."

That brought him in a rush. ~~He~~ *He* eyed along the ~~the~~ *width of* space between

width

logs ~~that you scarcely could have slid a knife blade into and that~~
^{vanish when} would easily be chinked, and lamented, "A tolerant tolerance, Lucas
 (and my father) would have called that in the wheelshop. These
 Montana trees have more knots in them than a sailor's fingers."

~~"As my kindly landlord, you'll of course stand in front of this
 crack all winter to keep the wind off me," I asserted.~~

~~"As my grateful tenant, you'll of course be thankful not to
 have to spend the winter out in a hollow tree with the squirrels,"
 he imparted.~~

~~"Man, this log castle you're building outshines any hollow tree
 I've seen yet, I'll say that much for you as a carpenter any day.
 Add another log to this edifice of yours, had we better?"~~

~~"Let's do."~~

God proctored poor dim old Job about how the measures of the
 earth were laid. If Job had been a homesteader, he could have
 readily answered that the government of the United States of America
 did it.

The vast public domain westward of the Mississippi River, as
 Crofutt put the matter for us when Rob and I were somewhere back
 there on his oceanic border from emigration to immigration, has been
 summed in an idea as simple as it is powerful: the land has been
 made into arithmetic. This is to say, surveyors have established
 governing lineations across the earth, the ones extending north and
 south known as principal meridians and those east-to-west as base
 lines. Having thus cast the main lines of the net of numeration

cut

change

Had Job but seen

across half a continent, so to speak, they further divided the area into an ever smaller mesh, first of Ranges measured westward from the meridians and then of townships measured from the base lines. Each township is six miles square, thus totaling thirty-six square miles, and--attend closely for just a few moments more--it is these townships, wherein the individual homesteader takes up his landholding, that the American penchant for systemization fully flowers. Each square mile, called a section, is numbered, in identical fashion throughout all townships, thusly:

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

As can be seen, the continuousness of the numeration is reminiscent of the boustrophedonic pattern a farmer makes as he plows back and forth the furrows of his field--or, indeed, of the alternate directions in which ancient Greek is written! Thus does the originality of the American experiment, the ready granting of land to those industrious enough to seek it, emulate old efficacious patterns!

Rob's remark was that Croft himself verged to Greek here, but the system by which we filed our homestead claims of 160 acres apiece did amount merely to finding section markers--Ninian Duff could stride blindfolded to every one of them in the North Fork

empire

valley--and making the journey to the land office at Fort Benton and saying to the registrar, this quarter-section is the square of earth that will be mine.

"Hotter'n not, said the Hottentot."

"And what do you expect, man. Montana is so high, it's up next to the sun."

And now the due sum: from this minute on, the next three years of your life, please, invested entirely into this chosen square of earth of yours.

Think of it as a bit of a wager, lads. The government is betting you that land, against your three years of work. This formulation was not Crofutt but Lucas, and he was all too near the truth with it. Three years of earning ownership of your homestead, of living upon it and improving it by your building and husbandry labors. Do I laugh or cry, now, at the innocence with which we set about to be homesteaders? Either is apt. Nobody new to it knows thing one about the homesteading life. Nobody can know what three years will bring.

Grant Rob and myself our due credit, we at least ^{set in} began diligently to learn our ignorance.

"From what Ninian says of winter in here, we'll be wanting some of this heat about January."

"Then we'd better put up some sunshine like blocks of ice, had we?"

of homesteads

7

Save mine until then, what about above?

"Or we could save warm buckets of sweat, what if."

Here then is land. Just that, land, naked earthskin. Now put upon it house, outbuildings, fences, crop, livestock, haystacks, performing every bit of this at once and irrespective of weather and wallet and whether you have ever laid hand to any of these tasks before. Build before you can plan, build in your sleep and through your mealtimes, but build, pilgrim, build, claimant of the earth, build, build, build. You are permitted to begin in the kind delusion that your utensils of homestead-making at least are the straight forward ones--axe, hammer, adze, pick, shovel, pitchfork. But your true tools are other. The nearest names that can be put to them are hope, muscle, and time.

"You're dripping like a fish."

"You're liquid enough yourself. We wouldn't last an hour on this roof without Mr. Stetson's shade. Hats, now there's what we ought to have invented. Have you noticed, Montana runs on hats. Even Lucas won't step out a door without his Stetson on. And look at the situation of cowboys. They act like their horses won't respect them if they don't wear hats that'll hold a bushel of oats."

change

"Cowboy yourself, ride that rafter a bit my way. There, that's the place."

"You can see into tomorrow from up here, I will say that," saying it against my own inclination in the matter. Rob's choice of

"From what Ninian says of winter in here, we'll be wanting some of this heat about January."

"Save mine for me until then, what about. I'm dripping like a fish."

"I'm liquid enough myself. We wouldn't last an hour on this roof without Mr. Stetson's shade. Hats, now there's what we ought to have invented. Even Lucas won't step out a door without his Stetson on. And look at the situation of cowboys. They act ^{as if} like their horses ~~wouldn't~~ ^{won't} let them on ~~if they weren't~~ ^{unless they're} wearing hats the size of parasols."

"Cowboy yourself, ride that rafter a bit my way. There, that's the place."

Put mine away for me
change?

X
X

Angel believes, come into our perception this way by courtesy of
"the stone and how it handles light. At least to my eye, there's a
softness to the light. It's like the stone just says, 'Okay,
relax, go with the flow.'"
Whatever the 'flow' of any specific Tony Angel sculpture,
under it is a remarkable deepness of form, an essence as if the
sculpted creature is declaring this is what it is to be falcon,
hawk, eagle, murrelet, wassel, hare...
Perhaps put it this way: the English novelist Arnold Bennett
was once told by a discerning admirer that while Bennett's famous
book The Old Wives' Tale was "it," his newer and riskier work was
"better." Similarly, Tony Angel's sculptures are more
"essential," than the actuality of the forms of the

see e Adair dancing e Allan
Anna

Dair dancing was what music had been made for. She floated
on the floor, if swift grace can float....And she looked at me, only
half-seeing me. She was ^{deep} into herself, taken over by the music.

after, she
was her
poor
plain
self
again

"Maybe isn't the word I was hoping for today. Yes doesn't take up as much ^{use} chalk."

^{a shorter}
"Yes isn't ~~so long~~ a word to say."

This was three weeks after the d
, and a dozen more times together with Anna,

later, and I had just brought out what we both knew this was leading

toward, talk of marriage. I was talking of it; she had just said

the maybe equivalent: Angus, it's too short a time. I've only known

you a little more than a month--"

Forty-two days! I thought indignantly, but let her go on.

39

--"We can see at the end of summer. I need to go with Them, as
you say"--my term for her mother and father--"this is our chance to

at last

(make enough money) ~~to~~ settle ourselves. You'll be with the sheep
much of the summer yourself...

"Come with me to the hills (Burns' sheep verse?)" I urged grinning,

"Life isn't that simple. There are other we have to think of.

But I'll be thinking of you.

"Just tell me this: do I have the prospect I want to have?"

"Yes," she said.

"Yes!" I shouted, and the ~~she~~ echo yes...es...es flew back. "Do

you hear that, world? Miss Anna Ramsay ^{knows the word} said Yes!"

She knows word!

she can't find
purity.

1-14 - ↳ where ---
↳ like the Ashes

1-17 double #

1-17 types

1-20 (a) squirrel only ?

5 - T Sunday cy ?

34 - connect sentences

35 - Kramlin etc. all these places exist then?

40. the

42 - have

44 observed

45 softly

59 - more on getting blurry on leaves?
Dialogue?

"Where does this famous shearing take place?" (Adair)

"At Angus's."

The shearing shed in my land's northwest corner had been Lucas's idea. Rather, the shed was his idea and the site chose itself, my homestead nearest the mountains, natural place for the bands before trailing up to summer pasture.

cut?

Six sheep into the catch pen in its first fill; when only one was left, so the others would have something to see, add five. And so on through the day, penfull upon penfull. The sheared sheep were turned out to bleat along the corral holding their lambs; at night, the lambs would mother up with them.

It was in no way clear what supported Toussaint's place. More than that, what supported its population. There were children here and there, all of whom Toussaint ignored.

"The buffalo cliffs," Toussaint indicated across the river with a nod. "They were good ones. These Blackfeet put their medicine lodge near. Two times. The river got its name." (epitaph or poem: "I fell through life...")

"This country will develop," Rob asserted, sounding more and more like the echo of Lucas. "With the railroad now, homesteaders can come straight from anywhere to here, in a matter of days."

"Jim Hill's haywagons," Toussaint summed the Great Northern railroad.

"One more way people will bring themselves."

"The winter of '86. What was that like, up here?"

"That winter. That winter, we ate with ^{the} axes."

Rob made as if to clear an ear with his finger. "You did what?"

"We ate with axes. No deer. No weather to hunt them in. I went
Look for a hump under the snow. Do you know, a lot of snowdrifts
out. Find a cow if I can. Chop her up, bring home as much as the look like
a cow carcass.
horse carries.

Everything drifted east, all those cows went on the wind. You had
to guess. Whether the horse could break ~~enough~~ snow far enough to find
a cow."

Rob was incredulous. "Toussaint, you mean you'd go out and find
a dead cow."

"Any I found was dead."

"That winter was long. Those cattlemen found out."

Rob:
"Once a
lifetime
winter.
We know
to have
any."

"It must've made it hard to get to Gros Ventre." Toussaint

~~looked~~ gave away nothing in his look. "For groceries and the like,"

②
1

I added.

"When I had to, I ^{did} ~~made~~ that ride," Toussaint said. "There was ^{one time} ~~there~~ was

~~all~~
~~snow."~~

Supper was presented to we three men, but Toussaint's wife Mary ate standing at the stove. The domestic arrangement was baffling. So far as I could see, Toussaint and Mary paid no heed to one another. That must have had limits, though, because somehow all those children happened. At least ~~there was~~ a domestic arrangement ^{of some sort existed} here, which was more than I could say under my own roof.

The supper meat was tender but greasy. Rob asked Toussaint, "What is this we're eating?"

"Bear."

Rob cocked an eyebrow to me. Then turned and called to Toussaint's yokemate, "The very best bear I've ever eaten, Mary."

Toussaint turned to me. "Lucas ^{says} ~~tells me~~ Scotch ^{soldiers} ~~men~~ wear dresses for fighting. How ^{does} ~~did~~ that work?"

cut?

Toussaint shooed two of his sons to the barn loft and awarded Rob
and me their bed. I could feel the solemn attention of the other children
in the dark, until Rob started snoring. Then there were giggles

Angus-Anna scene: do entirely, or almost entirely, in dialogue?

- or preparation for shearing?

*picnic
supper?*

--dance after shearing: Anna and Adair meet

--Angus and Anna part for the summer, with Angus sure of their future together.

INSERT: as they tidy themselves, Angus asks her to marry him.

the two of them having

to await ~~the~~ the two of us for the ^{sociality}ritual none of us wanted.

"We came to offer our congratulations," Anna said.

"Mare itch is good," came Isaac's matrimonial testimony. "^{Vun}~~Three~~

week, and we like it ^{yet}~~still~~."

we're that."

from the era of wagon wheels. that it looked like a kind of nose praid
across the grassland. My father turned his gaze from the twisted turn

to me and asked: Everything under control at Walter's?

Up now, I affirmed.

His

All right. Walter's businesslike expression had declined into

what I think is called dolor. Let's go do it. And we set off into the

wave of tracks toward the Heber place.

No matter what time of day you approached it, the Heber place

looked as if demolition was being done and the demolishers were just

now taking a smoke break. An armada of abandoned wagons and car chassis

and decrepit farm equipment—even though Good Help Heber farmed not so

much as a vegetable garden—lay around and between the brown old buildings.

A root cellar was caved in, a tool shop had only half a roof left, the

farm looked distinctly desert. In short, not much ever functioned on

the Heber place except gravity.

As is evident, the topic of family was foremost on my own mind this day, and it occurred to me that none of the three ranches within view of this route Pony and I were following held an actual family. Walter, Merle, Aggie and George: two bachelors, a widow and her long-in-the-tooth bridegroom. That thought was just a thought, though, not a conclusion. For I was in no mood to vouch that a family was a guaranteed shield against warped behavior.

————— My father was waiting at another ruddy offshoot from the North Fork road. This one had so many cuts of track, some of them dating from the era of wagon wheels, that it looked like a kind of huge braid across the grassland. My father turned his gaze from the twined ruts to me and asked: Everything under control at Walter's?

Uh huh, I affirmed.

All right. ^{His} ~~My father's~~ businesslike expression had declined into what I think is called dolor. Let's go do it. And we set off into the weave of tracks toward the Hebner place.

No matter what time of day you approached it, the Hebner place looked as if demolition was being done and the demolishers were just now taking a smoke break. An armada of abandoned wagons and car chassis and decrepit farm equipment--even though Good Help Hebner farmed not so much as a vegetable garden--lay around and between the brown old buildings. A root cellar was caved in, a tool shop **had** only half a roof left, the barn looked distinctly teetery. In short, not much ever functioned on the Hebner place except gravity.

By this time I was confused as to why the Hebners were --

I could really picture this

It was a gathering in any language. Scotch Heaven was there without exception, and nearly everyone from the South Fork and down the main creek as well. Even though Adair had been steadily meeting people ever since her arrival, she underwent constant introductions...

"Angus, we wondered who you've been waiting for."

"Dizzy with names yet?"

~~When I asked her,~~ I asked her, low.

"At least," she said. "Do ~~they~~^{people} flock out like this for every wedding?"

"Only the ones I'm in," I ~~beamed~~^{vouched}.

~~"Angus, I want to be a good wife. I don't want you disappointed in me."~~

~~"Dair, what's this about?" I made it light. "It's been at least a couple of hours since the vow and I'm not ready to trade you in yet."~~

~~"I want you to know. I'll be all I can for you."~~

~~People were calling... "Here now, the lovey-dovey stuff will have just to wait a bit. We're on important matters, like food and whiskey."~~

~~Lucas said, "Have a drop of this." It was a lovely whiskey...~~

~~"Is this the bar brand in the Medicine Lodge now?"~~

~~"Don't get ideas. This happens to be a bottle that's a precious resource, and only the event of good sense in you makes me crack it open."~~

#

kept her eyes open

She closed her eyes to kiss me. But I wanted to see it all, her face ~~was~~ angled as it came to mine, the delicacy of eyelashes, the rounded corner of cheek and the lustre of hair beyond...

"Ahhhh" was softly in the air, and The minister cleared his throat it took a moment to realize it wasn't Adair or me, but the wedding crowd. The minister in front of us hemmed and hankered briefly, Rob as best man gave Adair a mighty kiss. Faces of my pupils were astounded into giggles.

Lucas - Angus shares hand c.

kiss more than "That ought to've done the job, Angus. You'll be married a couple of hundred years on the strength of that."

"I thought it all had to be done at once. You mean there's more of those to come?"

put out her index finger and Adair gave me the first ribpoke of our married life. "Not if you don't behave yourself, Angus McCaskill."

"You'll see behavior, Dair Barc--" I stopped and laughed with the rest until correcting myself--"Dair McCaskill, you'll see all the behavior ^{you} I can imagine."

"We've been married minutes, and already you know the full extent of my imagination. We'll see, we'll just see."

Riding home the morning after ~~that~~^{my} night of souse, I was so hungover it felt as if Scorpion's hooves were clopping atop my head instead of the road and so gloomy I almost welcomed the hangover as company. There at my homestead, Rob was crossing the yard to feed my chickens.

He waited while I dismounted with a wince, then offered: "Her Highness gave ~~a~~ you a wave of her handkerchief, I hear."

"That's what you hear, is it. I suppose even the ~~darned~~^g fence posts are saying it."

Rob shrugged and tried a smile on me. "Not unless Anna spreads the story herself. I only know because Lucas sent the Kuuvus boy out with a note and, yes, man, it was sealed in an envelope. Angus, my bet is that Anna won't even tell Isaac. You're your own worst audience for all this." I knew he was right. Anna would put away what had happened between us yesterday; I hoped with some twinge of her own, some taste of regret, but she would put it away and make her life with Isaac.

"Those Ramsays think they're God's first cousins," Rob was going on, "though where they get it from I can't see. Angus, she's not the only woman in this world. You'll find somebody else and be populating your own schoolhouse before you know it."

"Sir," I tried, knowing it came out sickly, "you are speaking of the person of my dreams."

"You're going to have to sleep on the side that doesn't dream, then." Robert Burns Barclay, veteran married man, advises a green

recruit. Rob, Rob, we've come a way since when you were hip-deep
in the matter of Nancy, have we not? But how have I happened to be
the one with a lasting drift of the heart?

"Come along to the mansion on Breed Butte and let Judith put
some food into you," Rob strived on me again. "You'll be disappointed
it's not elk stew, but it'll be worth the eating."

"Thank you up and down, but ^{no."} ~~I'm not fit company just now.~~ Food from a wifely hands was
not what I wanted to be around just now. ~~XXXX~~ "Rob, bless you for
coming over. I'll survive, I'm told on good authority."

"You'll do more than that." Rob stepped to me, put a hand on
each of my shoulders. "You'll be thriving again before you know it."

Adair

Don't
be
a
stranger

--Angus abruptly decides to marry Adair

--possibility: after Angus's drunken night of misery, or perhaps after Rob comes to do his chores and brief section on Angus's unshakeable sense of loss, go abruptly to a wedding vow scene, perhaps the dialogue in italics in his in-the-mind phase, with the woman beside Angus, as she says her ~~vow~~ vow, turning out to be Adair. Tell in flashback through the wedding party scene, maybe in ~~the~~ italic, with Angus addressing her in his mind, how she decided to accept his proposal and not return to Scotland.

As if out of
nowhere, although
it came from everywhere
in my mind, (Angus
proposes to her)

"Dair, tell me a thing," I blurted. The rest, though, ^{would come out only} ~~came~~ with

cloppety boots on: "What would you think about marrying me?"

illustrations, some 120 are Adams' nature compositions, and the classic ones shine anew here--Monolith, The Face of Half Dome; Mount Williamson; Clearing, Winter Storm, Yosemite; Pontiac, Hernandez, New Mexico; and that astounding eye-symphony, Winter Sunrise, with the Sierra peaks whitely sunlit, leashed by cloud tendrils, the dark undulation of leftover night shadowing below them, and below that the famous line of trees and the stark tiny grazing horse which somehow lends magnitude to all else.

"My vision established its own groove," writes Adams, "as I know I have been derivative of myself for fifty years." He indeed seems to have decided early, and I think rightly, that photography's interpreter of the Sierra Nevada's magnificence was plenty to try to be in one lifetime. A recent critic tut-tutted Adams' trademark exactness in portraying nature--"a poet more of light than of personalities." What, are we so far gone down the narcissistic path that the face of Half Dome counts for less than human physiognomy?

(But Audubon, baby, if you ever hope to get the cover of People you're gonna have to lay off the birds and whip out some portraits of, well, you know.) Ansel Adams caused us to perceive what we should have known was there, but didn't know how to see. Early in these pages he recalls an instant from boyhood, on a summer afternoon when he was setting the table for supper: "The persistent fog had lifted and the warm sun streamed into

spoken better for themselves, and thus for him. Of this book's 277 illustrations, some 120 are Adams' nature compositions, and the classic ones shine anew here--Monolith, The Face of Half Dome; Mount Williamson; ~~Clearing Winter Storm, Yosemite; Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico;~~ and that astounding eye-symphony, Winter Sunrise, with the Sierra peaks whitely sunlit, ^{and} teased by cloud tendrils, the dark undulation of leftover night shadowing below them, and below that ^{a spectral} the luminous line of trees and the ^{lone} ~~single~~ tiny grazing horse which somehow lends magnitude to all else.

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"The persistent fog had lifted and the warm sun streamed into

along a
lesser seen
ones his

resounding

17021 Fifth Avenue N.W., Seattle, Washington 98177
(206) 243-6628
15 January 1986

"About Anna. I've heard that, Angus."

"That's the past, Dair."

Adair has made hers,"
"She made her choice, more pity to her. And I've made mine
she said in that lofty way as if outside herself. "You'll recognize
the next mirror
him when you see yourself in."

Dear Louisa:

This is to confirm our conversation for the Olinde Museum in Seattle, in accord with our phone conversation of January 15, 1986.

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--insert hard times, using next 2 insert pp.

--insert quick summary of Angus's 2nd year of teaching, continued
hard times

--insert quick summary of Angus's 2nd year of teaching, continued
hard times

--insert Ninian asking Angus to be "temporary" teacher for 3d year.

"This cream separator," Toussaint wondered. "Is it a Monkey Ward
"This cream separator, who sends it to the Monkey Ward?"

one?"

"The very kind, Toussaint," Rob answered with a straight face.

"Montgomery Ward and everything else in the world is almost at our
"With this railroad now

doorstep, with this railroad now. What a thing it will ^{be} be for this

country," he went on, sounding..."Homesteads

"This cream separator," Tom said, "is it a Monkey Ward
"This cream separator. Who sends it, Monkey Ward?"

"one?"

"The very kind, Tom said," Rob answered with a straight face.
"Montgomery Ward and every thing else in the world is almost at our
"With this railroad now
doorstep, with this railroad now. What a thing it will be for this
country," he went on, sounding... "Homesteads

It was never before, too.

Those Piegans

~~They~~ almost took his horses here.

"It was new to Lewis too. He almost let them take his horses."

~~where Badguk came in.~~

a little. That would have been

Down the river ~~here~~. No more Lewis.

Toussaint spoke as if it all had happened yesterday, so it took

me a bit to realize... "Meriwether Lewis, is it you mean?"

To Toussaint

"That ~~is~~ is him. He came up the Marias, met a band of eight Piegans. Horse

~~Nothing else to do.~~

takers. He smoked the pipe with them. ...These Blackfeet knew how to

fight then. ...BOOM! One Piegan dead. Boom! One more Piegan dead.

They say that one combed Lewis's hair with a bullet first.

Lucky for Lewis he did not try it another time."

--weave their journey to Browning; Angus is traveling with Toussaint's stories in his head, Rob has eyes for the country's prospects.

--Toussaint is herding Angus's sheep at the moment, after helping with lambing?

By Toussaint's observation of it, the Blackfeet Reservation had shrunk so many times that Rob and I were ^{aiming} heading for a moving target.

no 91

~~Toussaint had told me.~~

You can see if the Agency goes for a walk, It does, do you know.

12-
Whites would
they'd
been
scared

Every so often. The Agency was there by Choteau. Then it walked north
to Birch Creek. Then it walked north to Badger Creek. Then it walked
north to where it is. One day maybe it will walk to Canada and see the
Queen.

Toussaint turned to me. "Lucas ^{says} ~~tells~~ me Scotch ^{soldiers} ~~men~~ wear dresses

for fighting. How ^{does} ~~did~~ that work?"

"Mother gave me strict instructions not to fall in love with
a red Indian."

Rob stayed silent, but I felt it needed pointing out: "You
wouldn't be the first."

She looked puzzled. "Oh Lucas, you mean."

use either a
Barclays coming from
rose, or Angus +
Dair in Red
Butte

By my letters, Adair knew more of our coming to America and Montana than anyone except Rob and myself. "That," she pointed, "will be Heart Butte."

"A good guess," Rob teased.

Adair does not
suspect

"Not a guess. That cliff is Roman Reef, and the other is Jericho.

And in front of Roman is Breed Butte?"

more
on
B + B
descript

"And home," averred Rob. "Home for the Barclays of America."

Adair still was searching the line of mountains. "But where is the Chief?"

"Farthest north. You'll see it from the rise in the road, before we come to the North Fork."

just
behind
us

...

SOUTH FORK, NOON CREEK
AND BREED BUTTE

World, it has happened at last! With this inaugural issue Gros Ventre and the Two Medicine country gain their journalistic voice. The Gros Ventre Weekly Gleaner! The name flows easily from the tongue and the news of our prospering community will flow as fluently. Now that the Great Northern Railway links the land of the Two to the rest of humanity, now that the silver woes of 1893 have been burnished into Montana's new copper prosperity, scarce a day goes by without newcomers arriving to enrich this locale with their endeavors, and the Gleaner is more proud than can be put into words, to now join their ranks. Let the future come!--that is our chorus here in God's favored country.

--Gros Ventre Weekly Gleaner, June 4, 1896

April 1897

Ordain me here and now as the Lord High Kafoozalum and I would be no more surprised than I was to be made the South Fork schoolteacher. Not that there was ever any supposition I was the pedagogical genius the world had been seeking since Jesus went upstairs. Rather, what designated me was that it was too near to school's start to find a teacher elsewhere and the only other person

in the vicinity who had stood at the front of a classroom was Mary Findlater, currently a prominent six months into the family way.

"That's hardly my fault," I protested.

"Archie Findlater will be glad to hear ^{so} ~~that~~," observed Ninian.

He and Willy proceeded to argue qualm after qualm out of me--yes, this was temporary for the year and they would find someone

bone

more suitable for next year, yes yes, they would see to it that I had help with my homestead's chronic chores of hauling firewood and fixing fence, yes yes yes, they were certain as anything that a change from living with myself all day long would do me a world of good.

But I know as well as you that the prospect of the teaching job pleased me. I have never pretended I am my own best paymaster, so the wage was welcome to help me climb out of Lucas's wallet. By Jesus, Angus, you're the first swamper the Medicine Lodge ever had that's turned out to be a schoolmarm, was his reaction to my new career. Too, there was that matter of the sheep partnership with Rob and his own set of ideas about how our woolies ought to be conducted, which I was amply ready to let him have some leeway about.

Besides, I had come across the bend of the world looking for new, had I? Schoolchildren are newness with the shine still on it.

That first South Fork morning. The Hahn brothers were the earliest to trudge down the road toward the waitful school and waitful me, dragging with them that invisible Gibraltar of burden of having a father on the school board. The children from the other families of that branch of the creek as well, the Petersons and Roziers and Van Bebbers, all lived near enough to walk to school and soon they were ricocheting around outside in those double-quick

cut?
 After reaction
 → P. 4
 change to
 hard times
 of '93

The railroad was a ruler applied to nature. It ran straight...

muscles of the earth
Putting the earth's muscles, coal and metal, to work. And with the
world as vast as it is, there would ever be more and more muscles.

Here at Willow Creek, Browning-to-be, you could go by train to either
ocean.

Rob and I had come by railroad...but this was our first view of

the future.

naked track, filament of America's lords.

we headed for

Rob clucked to the team, and to the depot ~~we went.~~

We're in
good time,
train

skin

myself. Maybe by someone at either of the homesteads along the
creek, but no one was in view. Who knew, probably these
seven-league mountains were capable of giving back at me.

human sign was anywhere around, except for the tiny pair of homesteads just above the mouth of the North Fork, one of them undoubtedly that of the old Bible-banger, Whoojamadinger whom Lucas mentioned to me. Other than those, wherever I looked was pure planet. There from the knob I could see eastward down the creek to where Gros Ventre was tucked away; for that matter, I could see all the way to the Sweetgrass Hills, what, seventy-five miles distant, that Herbert had pointed out to Rob and me. By the holy, this was as if stepping up onto the hill above the Greenock dock and being able to look across Scotland to Edinburgh. North, the benchland and the landmark butte that met it were my broad boundaries of study. Southward, a throng of big ridges shouldering between this creek branch and the South Fork.

West. West, the mountains as steady as a sea wall. They were my guide now, even the wind fell from mind in their favor. Seeing them carving their canyons of stone into the sky edge, scarps and peaks ~~deep~~^{deep} up into the blue, a person could have no doubt where he was. The poor old rest of the earth could hold to whatever habit of axis it wished, but this Two Medicine country answered to a West Pole, its own magnetic worldtop here along its wildest horizon.

Someway, in the midst of all my gawking I began to feel watched myself. Maybe by someone at either of the homesteads along the creek, but no one was in view. Who knew, probably these seven-league mountains were capable of gazing back at me.

--summary of railroad: of all that was different since he and Rob came into the country, this was the mightiest difference. Our lambs and wool would go (by way of branch line?), settlers would come, the goods of the world such as Rob had come for were at hand...

What had been a twin track of path when Rob and I came into the Two Medicine country was a semblance of a road now. We no longer had to hop off and walk up the hills, although Adair had to cling to the nearest thing--me--~~on the~~ when the route was its most sidling.

Change

We knew dark would catch us, and so chose a coulee bottom where a trickle of creek ran ~~thru~~ through.

At sunset, the mountains stood out like silver-blue shards of rare stone. The western half of the sky was filled with puffy clouds the same shade as the mountains, but with their bottoms ember-lit by the setting sun.

"We ordered that up special for you," Rob and I ^{were quick to} assure Adair.

4 "You're an old pair of profligates," ^{then} she ~~gave us back~~ retorted, gazing at the emberglow sky and ~~the~~ the miles of mountains.

We rapidly had a fire of our own, for ~~there~~ Montana has a chill in its night air even in summer.

"Mother gave me strict instructions not to fall in love with
a red Indian."

Rob stayed silent, but I felt it needed pointing out: "You
wouldn't be the first."

She looked puzzled. "Oh Lucas, you mean."

use either a
Barclays coming from
182, or Angus +
Dair ~~on~~ on Bad
Butte

By my letters, Adair knew more of our coming to America and Montana

than anyone except Rob and myself. "That," she pointed, "will be Heart
Butte."

"A good guess," Rob teased.

"Adair
does not
guess"

"Not a guess. That cliff is Roman Reef, and the other is Jericho.

And in front of Roman is Breed Butte?"

more
on
B & B
descript

"And home," averred Rob. "Home for the Barclays of America."

Adair still was searching the line of mountains. "But where is
the Chief?"

"Farthest north. You'll see it from the rise in the road, before
we come to the North Fork."

behind
us

Dair dancing was what music had been made for. She floated
on the floor, if swift grace can float....And she looked at me, only
half-seeing me. She was ^{deep} into herself, taken over by the music.

159

I am dead sure this happened on the third afternoon, a Wednesday, because that was the day of the month the English Creek ladies' club met. There were enough wives along the creek to play two tables of cards, and so have a rare enough chance to visit, and club day always found my mother in a fresh dress right after lunch, ready to go. This day, Alice Van Bebber stopped by to pick her up. "My, Jick, you're growing like a weed," Alice crooned out the car window to me as my mother got in the other side. Alice always was flighty as a chicken looking in a mirror--living with Ed likely would do it to anybody--and away the car zoomed, up the South Fork road toward Withrows', as it was Midge's turn to be hostess.

I know too that when I went out for my comfort station shift, I began by doing some work with a pick. Now, I didn't absolutely have to swing a pick on this project. With a little effort the gravel and the dirt mixed with it were shovelable enough. But I simply liked to do occasional pick work. Liked the different feel and rhythm of that tool, operating overhand as it does rather than the perpetual reach-down and-heave of shoveling. Muscles too need some variety in life, I have always thought.

So I was loosening the gravelly earth at the bottom of the hole with swings of the pick, and on the basis of Alice Van Bebber's blab was wondering to myself why a grownup never seemed to say anything to me that I wanted to hear, and after some minutes of this, stopped for breath. And in looking up, saw just starting down the rise of the county road a string of three horses.

Come stand here in my bones. Feel what it is to be Angus

*Come put
on me,
like
borrowed
clothes.*

McCaskill.

Come stand here under my skin and find what ^{this} ~~it~~ is like. Take
my bones against yours, let our hearts pump in tune, our eyes sight
together... ~~you~~ come put on Angus McCaskill like borrowed clothes

They were booklets with "My Montana Book" and the student's name on the cover; more than that, the booklets were scissored into the shape of Montana--twice as wide as high and the entire left side that profile of ~~of~~ a long-nosed bearded face looking down. (Looking

Tapes as border decor
its more of dots

and a hand-drawn map of....
down on Idaho) Products of Montana, Area and Population of Montana, and

a map showing Butte, Helena etc. and the 00 county seats. Mountains of Montana and a map showing the western 00 of them, the Bearpaws and Little Rockies etc. outposting the east. Drainages of Montana--

"The Continental Divide separates the Atlantic and the Pacific slopes."

Railroads of Montana. Minerals of Montana. # A gloom came on me.

Anna Reese's fifth-graders
~~Mary 00~~ probably knew more about Montana than I did. Could you have

purple

come into our two classrooms, Adam Willox, I have no doubt whom you would have seen to be the better teacher.

poking out she inevitably was a figure of fun, although the one and only time I said something smart about her my mother's frown closed down in a hurry.

"Lila Sedge is not to be laughed at," she said, not in her whetstoned voice but just sort of instructively. "The clouds have settled on her mind."

I don't know where my mother got that, but always after when I would see Lila Sedge, creeping along this street for the third time in an hour or gandering up at a cottonwood tree as if she's never encountered one before, I would wonder about how it was to have a clouded mind. Somewhere in there, I supposed, a bruise-colored thunderhead that was Sedge's death. Maybe mare's tails high away in the past where she was a girl. Fluffs which carried faces--aunts, uncles, schoolmates, any of us she happened to meet on the street--in and out of her recognition. Until my mother's words about Lila Sedge I had never thought of ^{the} weather of the brain, but more and more I have come to believe in it.

But enough on that. The Sedgwicks and their namesake hotel provided Gros Ventre its one titanic building and its roving human landmark. The pair of enterprises side by side south across the street from the Sedgwick House ministered to the town internally.

Since families hardly ever ate out in those days there were only two feeding places in Gros Ventre, and the other one besides the dining room of the Sedgwick House was the Lunchery run by Mae Sennett. For any eater more interested in quantity than quality, the Lunchery was your place. Although this was before my time, I have heard from different

This two sentences confused me

dance at Angus's schoolhouse

Angus courting Anna

--Sunday dinner with the Ramsays; Angus and Anna talk afterward

Angus in Medicine Lodge, talking life over with Lucas

--changes in Gros Ventre

Angus comes to propose; Anna tells him she's marrying Isaac.

I ~~had~~ once heard Adam Willox say, If it wasn't for the Irish, the Scotch
would be the most pixied nation on earth. You could see here what he
meant. Ninian Duff, biblically-boned Ninian who would put fear in the
devil on a moonless night, stepped out and began the fling.

Save
for
Lucas?

bone of
Behovah

The word chalked on the blackboard today was concentrate. I was trying
to, Miss Ramsay.

Glad as I was to see this northern reach of the Two Medicine

country, I also was impatient for this journey to be over.

"When do you suppose spring comes to this country?" Rob

Susan said, glower from her to him. "Until it comes along again and

puts the toilet back up, chivalry will have to be in force. Who'll

tell me the spelling of chivalry? Daniel, crack at it, please."

The smirk went and confusion came. "Ungg, ah, is it

S-H-O-V-U-I-R-Y?"

"Closer than you might think," I granted. "Susan, enlighten

Daniel as to chivalry, please." Which she did as fast as she

letters could prance out her mouth.

"Thank you, Susan. Now the definition, at least in this case.

The boys will yield their toilet to the girls."

Little Freddie Finlister, a lad with a nervous kidney, had his

hand up in an instant. "Where will the boys go, then?"

I directed attention to the willow thickets along the creek.

"Like Xena on Mount Olympus, Freddie, all of outdoors is your

throne." Looks were cast toward Daniel Koster, but the boys sat

firm, so to speak, on their outhouse position.

Montana weather being Montana weather, I didn't have to wait

long for the day I needed. Squalls were getting up speed in the

mountains as I started for my camp.

It was a relief to find the boys still sitting on their

Two mornings later, the girls' outhouse was horizontal again.

By then I knew Daniel Rozier was the sort you could punish until he was jelly and he'd still behave the same. Instead, I opened school that day with the observation: "A freak of nature seems to have struck the girls' outhouse." Smirk from Daniel to Susan Duff, glower from her to him. "Until it comes along again and puts the toilet back up, chivalry will have to be in force. Who'll tell me the spelling of chivalry? Daniel, crack at it, please."

The smirk went and confusion came. "Unngg, ah, is it S-H-O-V-U-L-R-Y?"

"Closer than you might think," I granted. "Susan, enlighten Daniel as to chivalry, please." Which she did as fast as the letters could prance out her mouth.

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Little Freddie Findlater, a lad with a nervous kidney, had his hand up in an instant. "Where will the boys go, then?"

I directed attention to the willow thicket along the creek. "Like Zeus on Mount Olympus, Freddie, all of outdoors is your throne." Looks were cast toward Daniel Rozier, but the boys sat firm, so to speak, on their outhouse position.

Montana weather being Montana weather, I didn't have to wait long for the day I needed. Squalls were getting up speed in the mountains as I reached into my cupboard that morning, and by noon a blizzard of sleet shot against the schoolhouse windows.

--insert some resonance of Rob and Angus's freight wagon journey with
Herbert, Angus thinking about the difference between then and now?
(himself on brink of life with Anna?)

"The buffalo," said Toussaint. "They were here. All in through here, this Two Medicine country."

"What, Toussaint, were they like these cattle herds?" I was trying to imagine, for the sake of telling my pupils, what ~~the~~ sight the buffalo herds made. "Some here and there, wherever you looked?"

"The buffalo were more. As many as you can see at one time, Angus."

2

ch. 1 extra material

Rob was restless after the first few days of shipboard life, gathering and trading stories.

"Step out here and show us how they do it in Ayrshire."

"I hate to put you to shame, but since you've asked

"Did you hear about the Highlander who wondered why angels don't borrow bagpipes instead of playing trumpets?"

"I trust it was pointed out to him the Devil asked for them first."

My father remembered the teasing from old Alexander, And where would you be, Alexander the Second, if old Bell Rock had drowned me? Where, if? It was a question up there with Shakespeare's best. MWhere would I be right now if my father had not been the smith for John and Lucas Barclay's wheelwright shop? Where, if the McCaskills and Barclays had not been braided together that way we were and Rob and I had not grown up side by side, where--

Those years of the wheelwright shop, those years that brought the pair of us aboard this ship. The same set that had been my father, it sometimes seemed, for Rob's father John Barclay at least once a week told me To see you is to lay eyes on him again, Angus. John Barclay and I equally knew that was nowhere near true.

usual

that land

Across the next year I was not a stranger to Breed Butte and Judith and Rob, not in the least. After all, they owned half of every one of those sheep with the McCaskill-Barclay green X on them.

But persuade to his considerable utmost, Rob could not talk me into taking on more sheep with him and Lucas. And with me not in the picture,

Lucas would agree to only five hundred more head rather than a thousand,

~~to Rob's disgust~~ I'm not made of money, Robbie

Block on block as we made our way, the trees more than ever looked like the most thriving things around. Gros Ventre of those Depression years looked--I don't know how else to say it but roadworn. That I can remember this state of appearance in itself says something of the attraction of Gros Ventre, for I am not naturally a person who cares a lot about towns. I suppose the case is, though, that if any town stays with you it will be the one from your high school years; for good or ill, the details from then last and last, piled up in your memory by your growing capacity at the time to take them in, to realize that you yourself are lengthening out into a member of the community rather than being merely a waist-high tourist in it. Whatever accounts for it, the look of Gros Ventre then is vivid in me yet. Not a decrepit community, for the neighborhoods had been quite substantially built in the first place: a lot of dignified dormers and tidy picket fences and inviting porches. Nor even really lackadaisical. Although Gros Ventrians, I suppose like people anywhere, had had to pull back from the earlier boom mood that anybody could come to Montana and take up a homestead and prosper as a farmer, or slap together four walls and thrive as a merchant (I have always subscribed to the observation Bill Reinking once wrote in the Gleaner, that the one benefit of hard times is that they make you do some things the sensible way you ought to have been doing them all along anyway), I recall no falling off of energy during the Depression. If anything, many people were working harder than they ever had, contriving like hell to try to make ends meet. I knew without looking, for instance, that behind each house Mouse and I were passing was a vegetable garden,

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

Just, as I say, a roadworn town. Weathered by all ^Tif had been through in those Depression years.

sources that in its early days the Lunchery, or whatever name it was under at the moment, had a sign on the wall reading:

Meals 50¢

Big feed 75¢

Hell of a gorge \$1

In short, the Lunchery's main claim to fame was that it made the Sedgwick House menu look dainty and delectable by comparison. Yet its pedigree as a going business went most of the distance back to Gros Ventre's origins; the building had begun as the stagecoach station. Toussaint Rennie perhaps was the only person old enough to still call the place the Way Stop. Guys of the next generation had the habit of calling it the Fargo House, and my father and his generation mostly referred to it as the Doozy, from when a man named Deuce Harrison ran it. To me, though, it was the Lunchery, and Lunchery lore was a kind of seasoning, an attention-getting spice, in the history of Gros Ventre. The most famous tale was that once when somebody asked an old sheepherder when he was going back out among the woolies, he said he was washed up at that, too creaky to tramp the mountains, but he figured he could always get a job herding flies at the Lunchery. I think that exaggerates. The occasional times when I would be with my father when he was on Forest Service meal money, traveling back late from Great Falls or someplace, his suggestion of "Let's go try the Doozy" never did us any real culinary harm, that I know of.

Of course, that may have had something to do with the fact that

move to
before dance?

Ed Heaney always had a couple of boiled eggs, onto which he would

slab big slices of butter. The explanation he liked to recite was:

If ~~you~~ your eggs are too thin, thicken them up with butter. Or if

they're too thick, thin them down with butter.

onion dome and carrot spire of the comely little Russian Orthodox cathedral. (The morning after Braaf joined the escape plan, Karlsson emerges from around a corner of the cathedral, on his way from the workmen's barracks a short span to its north, and walks the brief dirt street between God's domain and the Governor's. Karlsson has been delegated to work this day at the shipyard, so deft with an ax that he often is lent to help with the shaping of a mainmast. Before reaching the shipyard just beyond Baranov's Castle, however, he veers west toward the stockade gate and the Kolosh village beyond, steps outside and along the wall, undoes his wool britches, and urinates. As he does so, Karlsson studies the Kolosh camels lined like sleeping serpents on the white sand of the beach.) All of New Archangel, cathedral and Castle and the fifty or so squared-log buildings painted a pale yellow as though they were seaside cottages, sat dwarfed by the thronging Alaskan mountains. Virtually atop the town as the spire and dome crowned the cathedral, the peaks were precisely those a child would draw. Sharp tall pyramids of forest, occasionally a lesser summit round as a cannonball for comparison's sake. (As Karlsson begins hewing pine at the shipyard, Braaf materializes at the partially-wooded rise of land just north of the settlement and stockade. When Braaf arrived to New Archangel and it rapidly became evident that he was not, as listed on one manifest, a shipwright, nor, as supposed on another item of record, a

It would make a pleasant story to view shepherders as self-elected

exiles. Noble fellows fallen on hard times for one reason or another--

loss of a fortune, perfidy of a wife--and living out their sentences

among the fleecy flocks. Rascals in paradise. But such wasn't the

case with the herders of the Two. They were a ragged end of society...

With a fairly well-known which to any onlooker would seem as if
he had been beckoned over to consult with the pair, Melander arrived.
His dark jacket and Wempeberg's slouchy hat like a cloud against a cliff-
face. For a long moment, there the three of them stood centered in the

long rectangle of parade ground between Baranov's Castle and the
stockade gate as if time had stopped to a stop within their
little radius, while around them the morning
life of the quartermasters and overseers and shipwrights and
caulkers and brassworkers and sailors and Kolosh and Castle
officers, humanity in its state-of-day seeps and spurts of

motion.
"Well, Melander," Wempeberg said, "Bral and I were just
speaking of how much heavier the weather has gotten this year. It
seems a man can hardly hold a pool of them in his arms these

wide sideburn-framed face beside him. ~~The~~ recognition unfroze his mind...one of the blacksmiths...vain bastard he is...Wennstrom,

Wennblad: "Wennberg? What..."

"No, don't walk away and don't put them down." Not suggestion happens." now: orders. "We'll have a visit until we see which ~~interesting~~ thing happens first."

no # Wennberg moved himself in front of Braaf as companionably as if he had every matter in the universe to discuss with him.

"Whether you spill that load in front of these Russians, or your friend Melander ~~trots~~ ^{lopes} himself over here."

With a lanky swiftness which to any onlooker would seem as if he had been beckoned over to consult with the pair, Melander arrived. His dark look met Wennberg's blandness like a cloud against a cliff-face. For a long moment, there the three of them stood centered in the

long rectangle of parade ground between Baranov's Castle and the stockage gate as if time had snagged to a stop within their little radius, ~~while~~ ^{eddy} around them ~~all~~ ^{eddy} New Archangel's morning life ~~eddyed~~ ^{eddyed} quartermasters and overseers and shipwrights and caulkers and brassworkers and sailors and Kolosh and Castle New Archangel, all officers, humanity in its start-of-day seeps and spurts of motion.

broke their silence.

^{So} "Well, Melander," Wennberg said. "Braaf and I were just ~~skins've~~ ^{skins've} skins've gotten this year. It seems a man can hardly hold a pood of them in his arms these

In October of 1908, he was named supervisor of the new Custer National Forest, in southeastern Montana. It was western yellow pine country and grazing land; Stanley arrived to find a sawmill operating under proper permit and the grazing being carried on under no control at all. "It was no small deal to change that." Some 200 ranchers had been running cattle on the territory that was now the Custer. Stanley rode the forest all that fall and through the winter and by spring divvied permits for 24,000 head of cattle and horses. The ranchers tried him out, scanting their counts in that first spring drive. Stanley promptly slapped the Big Three Circle outfit with a bill for \$2650 for excess cattle on their allotment, and the try^{ing -}out slowed up.

It quenched entirely the next spring, when word got around that Stanley had brought in two boxcar loads of No. 00 barbed wire. By the Fourth of July, a 38-mile strip of fence stood as the southern boundary of the Custer.

The night's storm had thinned to showers by the time it worked down from the mountains to English Creek and Noon Creek, and so the hayfields were going to need the day to dry. I was excused from

endeavor at Pete's, but before we were even done eating breakfast the phone rang [with the next candidate.]

The caller was Dale Copenhaver, the county agent, asking my father if he had any extra manpower that could go into the grasshopper campaign.

Dale, I do, my father answered and turned to look at me. ~~A gang of two of~~
us are on our way. Sorry it's not
twenty men, but it is two McCaskills.

It was
shortest
vacation
on record,
however,
but

40 min -
2 McCas
a couple

can't be

OK
and summits ruling the western half of the world in such ~~clear~~ crisp act

~~beauty,~~ English Creek and its hay meadows like a green winding path

I was following toward them. Maybe a 14-year-old on a morning like
horizons,
that only ever notices ~~growth,~~ promise, an earth that seems eternal.

Whatever was occupying me, ^{there} Mouse and I were, in the last little
way of our ride out from Gros Ventre, before the absence of ~~the~~ my
father's pickup registered on me. And even when I realized it wasn't
parked in its place beside the ranger station, although ^{he'd said this} ~~I knew this~~
was a day he'd have to hole up and tackle paperwork; even then it took
me a minute more, dumb, fat, and happy as I was, to turn
toward the creek crossing north of the station and there see the
vehicle and my parents standing in the creek washing it.

structure

Christamighty. ~~Even~~ ^{instant} sitting here telling this, all the distance
of years between that ~~moment~~ and now, I can feel again the prickling
that came across the backs of my hands, the sweat of dismay on its
way up through my skin there. Grant me three moments which could be
erased from my life, and that creek scene would be one.

choose 3
three as

In 1933, the chief of the Forest Service, Bob Stuart, went
out his seventh-storey window in Washington.

Went

Will cross

graduated Washington

Went to

Karlson waited

What sort of place is that?

What'd you do there?

at the

Ten

Karlson eyed the busy man. He seemed steady, composed.

off your mind, have you?

"I'm not," Karlson replied. He gave a description

of the

"It looked like a place, more like."

"If stone were hardened, Sweden'd be heaven's bakery."

Went

"Yes. And the family of us, living at each other's elbows.

left the farthest when I was thirteen, m."

A time, Karlsson and Wennberg tried a palisade of silence between them. From daybreak on, no word out of either, all conversation the ocean's: low grumble of surf against beach and cliff, gossip of current past the canoe and their paddles.

banner?

Not until after evening meal did the ~~dam~~ ^{wall crack} break.
~~"Smaland"~~ ventured Wennberg.

Karlsson waited.

~~"Smaland"~~ ^{What I mean,} "What sort of place ^{is} ~~is~~ that?"

"What'd you do there?"

Karlsson eyed the burly man. ^{Tonight} He seemed steady, composed, ^{a bit scornful...} "Come off your ^{tall} high horse, have you?..."

"Farmed, my family did." ~~Karlsson recalled~~ Melander's description ^{arrived to mind.} of farming. "Tickled rocks with a plow, more like."

"If stone were hardbread, Sweden'd be heaven's bakery,"

Wennberg quoted.

"Yes. And the family of us, living at each other's elbows.

Left the farmstead when I was thirteen, me."

That's something the telephone has put into our lives, the instant
apprehension when the ring comes at an odd hour. Nobody calls up
in the middle of the night with good news.

"And are trampled by the Russians."

"Aye, well. The answer to that is not to fall, nor to let each other fall."

"I need to know one matter about you, Melander. Why didn't you stay on with the schooner?"

"Yes, I can see that might be a matter to know. Promise me not to laugh. But I stayed for a pretty sight. A pretty face, you might understand better. But it was this. What took my eyes was the Nicholas, these islands and mountains and the northern ocean. I could see myself on that steam-whale, going places of the world here I could never have dreamed of." Melander's eyes tightened above the reed mask. "What I forgot to look at was the wormy souls of these Russians, aye?"

"And wasn't that a fall, of a sort?"

"A stumble, my friend, a stumble. The strides we will take together along this coast shall make up for it."

"A stumble, that's nothing," said a third voice. "Unless a noose is around your neck at the time."

The steam thinned as the opened doorway sucked it away, and brought into view Braaf. With his clothes off, he looked more than ever like an outsize boy rather than a man. Both Melander and Karlsson noticed that Braaf did not even pause to accustom himself to the cumulus of heat before crossing the room to them, nor bother to put the steam-sieving mask to his mouth until he was seated, a little way from the other two. Braaf seemed never to let the world get a fix on him, always easing, eluding,

Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow/Round and round the seasons go. Never

truer than in that high valley of ours, where the North Fork was the

earliest of the water that touched to the Atlantic. It may be too

much to say and as if feeling

the oceanic tides the creek water reported the seasons. Winter's

white silence, broken by ax whacks. The surge of spring, the steady

ripple of summer, the quietening flow of autumn. Every time I looked

up a season seemed to be changing.

I was determined to do this thing right; to craft the shape

~~I wanted to make the shape~~ of that life. If it could not be

done here, on new land on a new continent, myself in the strength

of youth, where could it ever be done.

The Flock in the Rock:

Tony Angell and the Art of Nature

by Ivan Doig

A stone's way of saying is not with words, and so the large-armed man in the midst of these dozen hunks and chunks speaks out their names for them. "Here's white alabaster. This is green serpentine. Black marble, white marble, portadora marble. Over there, that's steatite. Grey argilite. Grey alabaster." They surround the sculptor like a playful avalanche, these melodious rocks, nestled just to within touch of him, seeming to await with patient curiosity his next pronouncement. Waiting atop the sculpting block is gray alabaster, a ~~squatty~~ ^{7mmed} dusk-colored piece of rock about the size and shape of a lopsided waste basket.

in conspicuously

"This looks to me like a great grey owl," says Tony Angell.

Messages from rocks have firmed our lives for at least the last two hundred centuries; in the Lascaux Cave of southern France were discovered [the entrancing] wall paintings of nature done by our ancestors around 18,000 B.C.--as ^{writer} Guy Davenport said of that ~~discovered~~ ^{Lascaux's}

Donald Erskine was a fretful man, who changed his mind so often he went around half-dizzy. Yet Donald would leap a mile to your aid, letting his own work stand while he pitched in on yours. Ninian Duff on the other hand would think three times before offering to lend you the sleeves of his vest, but there was no one more sound in advice God's solemn brother than Ninian. Their wives, Flora and Jenny, were equally broad women, grown wide as wagons in child-bearing; at current count there were three young Duffs and two Erskines, and another of each on the way.

portion more. Each day the sheep needed to be fed their hay, and a waterhole chopped for them through the ice of the creek. Firewood was another stint of chopping, Rob and I taking turns day by day. Rob was building furniture; when he was at that, he had the patience of a three-legged turtle. Whenever I had the chance I would go down to my homestead and work on the house; I had walls, roof, door, windows and stove, but beyond those, ^{Y+} evering was to be done. And you might not think it, but we saw more of the neighbors than ever. People visited to escape cabin fever, and every few weeks Scotch Heaven would have a dance which brought everyone, for even the Duffs and Erskines were not so skintight they could resist waving a foot to a tune. To watch Ninian on the dance floor was like seeing God giggle.

The balance sheet of men and women was close to even in Scotch Heaven that winter, with Judith Findlater and the teacher Mavis Milgrim now on hand. Neither of them was that much to look at, and Miss Milgrim always had a starch to her that she thought a schoolma'am had to have, but they helped the situation of the sexes,

Could I have voted on the others of Scotch Heaven I would have kept most of them, and I like to think the majority of them would have retained me. Dabs of improvement of course were possible on anyone you looked at, ~~The newcomer John Spedderon~~ including the one in the mirror.

There was a thing more I wanted done, but I needed to be the doer. I went to the freshly washed blackboard and in my best hand, which was an urchin's scrawl compared to Anna Ramsay's, wrote large:

Dancing at the rascal fair,
try it only if you dare,
hoof and shoe, stag and mare,
dancing at the rascal fair.

By last light of Saturday, the sun behind the peak called Phantom Woman and dusk graying the valley, people came. Rob and Judith. The Duffs and Erskines. I scattered oatmeal on the floor to help the moonbeams with our gliding. George Frew as ever was our fiddler, and the night began with the high beautiful tune of Green Glens of Strathspay. I took a diplomatic first turn with George's Mavis toward convincing her that while I might never run a school the way she did, my dancing made up for it.

The first time we stopped to blow, Rob glanced over his shoulder to be sure Mavis Frew nee Milgrim was nowhere in hearing and declared, "This place definitely dances better since you're the schoolkeeper, Angus. What, have you put bed springs under the floor?"

I was gazing around fondly, awaiting what--who--I knew would come. Must come. "Owe it to George, not me. He fiddles better as a married man."

Judith put in, "There's a lesson there for you, Angus."

moonbeams in on a dance, or people's feet will stick to the floor.

Did you not know moonbeams are slick as soap, Davie?"

Davie gaped at me as if I already was askate on moonbeams, but he did the windows fine. Next I had him wash the blackboard, then fill our bucket with fresh drinking water from the creek. I swept and hummed, dusted and hummed, I even straightened the pictures of George and Abraham and gave them each a hum of joy, they always looked as if they needed cheer.

"Do you know this old tune, Davie?" I asked, for it seemed to me an impossibly dim prospect that anyone should go through this wonderful thing, life, knowing only songs of Texans and horses.

"You don't? That's odd, for it seems to be addressed to you."

"Me?"

"Surely. Listen to it.

Dance, dance, Davie lad
and whistle, Willie Young!
There's sheep's head in our pot
and you'll get the tongue!

Davie whipped through the last of his tasks as if afraid my lunacy might be catching. "Is there anything more, Mr. McCaskill?"

"You've more than earned supper, Davie. And thank you the world, for your help here." I fished in my pocket and handed him a coin. From the size of Davie's eyes it was more of a coin than I'd intended, but no matter.