

country.

Travel was never easy in this country where the roads turned to mush in the spring and to twisted iron ruts in the summer and simply sank off somewhere out of sight in the white winter.

A storm was building along the mountain horizon. The sky looked bruised.

This was a country proper for dusk. The tan and gray of grass and ridge looked precisely right, the softnesses a day should end with. The gullies would blank into shadow, the ridgelines would fire themselves red with the last sunset embers. But Rob and I were there to raise sheep, not to watch sunsets.

[ A sky of sparks. (stars)

Williamson kinging it over the Two Medicine country with his Double W mob of cowboys and his plague of cattle.

Williamson always had more cattle than country.

Those mountains were the attic of all America, full of the weather of every season.

Any more, every time I looked up a season was changing.

The mountains went up like the first rough edge of the world, the rim where the firmament tore loose from its beginnings.

savvied the land and its livelihood, who honored the earth instead of merely coveting it. It could not be more right that tall Ben English in his black hat amid his green fields, coaxing a head of water to make itself into hay, is the one whose name this creek carries."

She folded her sheet of papers once, then again, stuck them in the pocket of her dress and stepped down from the stump.

Everybody applauded, although a few a lot more luke-warmly than others. Under our tree we were all clapping hard and my father hardest of all, but I also saw him swallow in a large way. And when he realized I was watching him, he canted himself in my direction and murmured so that only I could hear: "That mother of yours."

Then she was back with us, taking compliments briskly. Pete studied her and said: "Decided to give the big boys some particular hell, didn't you?" Even Toussaint told her: "That was good, about the irrigating." But of us all, it was only to my father that she said, in what would have been a demand if there hadn't been the tint of anxiousness in it: "Well? What did you think?"

My father reached and with an extended finger traced back into place a banner of her hair that the creek breeze had lifted and lain across her ear.

"I think," he said, "I think that being married to you is worth all the risk."

X



Any hawk will carry my eyes with him along the summits of  
breeze. I watched this one until my neck muscles complained, then  
went back to the fencework.

MORE TO COME

The full moon, a single button of silver on a sky not yet dark  
<sup>to wear</sup>  
enough ~~for~~ stars.

MORE TO COME

"We ain't been to town to get coffee. But can I offer you a  
dipper of water and some cookies? They're fine cookies, if I do say  
so." It was worse here than I thought. The 00s had reached that  
sad point of keeping a few cookies on hand for guests, to conceal  
how hard up they were for all else.

as anybody else. Just because your father and your brother--

Yet I don't know. What we say isn't always what we can do. In the time after, it was her more than anyone who would return and return her thoughts here to where all four of our lives made their bend. The summer when--she would start in, and as if the three-note signal of a chickadee had been sung, it told me she was turning to some happening of that last English Creek summer. She and I were alike at least in that, the understanding that such a season of life provides more than enough to wonder back at, even for a McCaskill.

JICK! Are you coming, or do the chickens get your share? I know with all certainty too that that call to supper was double, because I was there at the age where I had to be called twice for anything. Anyway, that second summons of hers brought me out of the barn just as the pair of them, Alec and Leona, topped into view at the eastern rise of the county road. That is, I knew my brother as far as I could see him by that head-up way he rode, as if trying to see beyond a ridgeline in front of him. Leona would need to be somewhat nearer before I could verify her by her blouseful, but those days if you saw Alec you were pretty sure to be seeing Leona too.

Although there were few things more certain to hold my eyes than a rider cresting that rise of road, with all the level eastern horizon under him as if he was traveling out of the sky and then the outline of him and his horse in gait down and down and down the steady slow slant toward the forks of English Creek, almost a mile of their combined parading figure approaching, I did my watching of Alec and Leona as

She had a considerable start that I would need to make up. Fellowe wasn't going to like the idea, but spurs are a great persuader. We started off at a fast walk and atop the first benchland north of the Ramsay place I urged Fellowe into a lope. Likely it looked like the first lope either the horse or the rider had ever done, but we gained some distance.

The grass prairie stretched ahead of me until it wrapped off around the edge of the world, only the twin ruts of the wagon trail making a mark on it. I had come into this Two Medicine country on a track of wagon ruts, with Rob and the freighter Herbert, and I was going out of it on the same sort of track.



across the rest of the expanse, as if they had been sent out to be shadebearers. The day was providing just enough breeze into the treetops to rattle them a little and make them shed their cotton wisps out through the air like slow snow.

Through the cottonfall, the spike of tower atop the Sedgwick House stuck up above one big cottonwood among the trees at the far side of the park. As if that tree had on a party hat.

As for people, the park this day was a bunch of islands of them. I literally mean islands. The summer thus far had stayed cool enough that even a just-warm day like this one seemed so unaccustomed that it was putting people into the shade of the various cottonwoods, each gathering of family and friends on their specific piece of dappled shade like those cartoons of castaways on a desert isle with a single palm tree.

I had to traipse around somewhat, helloing people and being helloed, before I spotted my mother and my father, sharing shade and a spread blanket with Pete and Marie Reese and Toussaint Rennie near the back of the park.

Among the greetings, my father's predominated: "Thank goodness you're here. Pete's been looking for somebody to challenge to an ice-cream making contest." So before I even got sat down, I was off on that tangent. "Come on, Jick," Pete said as he reached for their ice cream freezer and I picked up ours, "anybody who cranks gets a double dish."

We took our freezers over near the coffee-and-lemonade table

~~Duff~~  
When Samuel~~enlisted~~, Ninian ~~Duff~~ subscribed to the Great Falls

newspaper and the war news came to us in that, the Argonne offense  
in pages worn from reading as they traveled up the North Fork valley.  
here, the submarines there. As if tribes were fighting in the night,  
and messengers were shouting guesses to us.

00, 00, 00--was all of Montana going into the army? The women weren't, but they were knitting Red Cross socks by the battalion.

MORE TO COME



meet Lucas?

As cher  
an echo?  
I think  
I've heard  
that every  
one at  
some time.

"It's going to be another tight year," Rob said. "Maybe our

tightest yet. What do you say, will we keep the wethers one more

year and pray for the wool price?"

for this summer

..."Promise me one thing, Angus."

"Which?"

some damn sure

life's

"That you won't quote me anything about wethering the storm."

But making the time to evaluate manuscripts is a terrific perplexity for someone who keeps to a day-by-day writing schedule as I do, and who is not a writing teacher of any sort.

I'll take  
them. Judith  
will have kittens  
about it,  
having to manage  
by herself.  
Angus, you're  
lucky to be your  
own boss in life.

There was  
a time  
when you'd  
have  
happily  
eaten  
wilde  
bambi.

Lucas was looking older some days.

3 times in past week one SHM  
sheepman or another had told me. Joke...

A did not want to think o. world, only Anna.

(. world us not mine I wanted to think o.

Yds price of wool & lambs

Highly flattering, to be asked to be a juror for the literary award fellowships. But making the time to evaluate manuscripts is a terrific perplexity for someone who keeps to a day-by-day writing schedule as I do, and who is not a writing teacher of any sort.

"Angus, do you miss Nethermuir?"

It hadn't been at the front of my mind, but with Rob's saying ~~it~~ of it, suddenly I did miss that town, that time. The everlasting look of Nethermuir, its solid roundheaded walls of ~~stone~~ rock and its whinstone streets and the market cross and the cathedral spire, I did indeed. Count a bit further and I could say I missed the talk of Adam Willox. Missed in a way the mornings of opening the wheelwright shop, OO stepping in and saying OO.

"I suppose I do, some."

~~"You're a great one for yesterdays."~~ <sup>used</sup> This time there seemed to be more there than Rob said.

~~"They've brought us to where we are."~~ <sup>used</sup> What's wrong with noticing that?"

I'm not  
one who  
brought matter up  
am I.

used  
c  
Toronto  
"Two  
Med."  
of an  
wager  
side  
name -  
Dair?



At least I was alive enough to dread the next I had to face.

I saw it begin as Scorpion and I topped the rise, a marning when

I was on my way to Rob's place...

In the coulee below the spring were teams of horses hitched to fresnoes;

scraping had already begun. Teamstering the nearest horses to me was

Isaac Reese himself.

I had to stop; it invited too much talk if I did not.

change  
gossip -  
if  
wed.  
he  
over.  
kill  
before  
Cameron  
was  
approaching  
it

There beside Isaac, watching the fresnoes and teams of horses

scrape the creek bank into proper approaches for the <sup>reservoir</sup> ~~bridge~~, I tried <sup>once again</sup>

to imagine the life of this calm horseman, which of course to me was

the life of him and Anna together.

one  
more  
time

on 5?

at Rob's insistence, Dave & I trailed sheep across. never  
to pack it. Isaac advises I do it every spring" (Rob)

9 "I'm waiting to see the color of the man's money, and if it's green  
I'll be much and pleasantly surprised."

...

"Sheep are the way to go. Now if we just had some sheep."

...

General opinion held that Walter Williamson would be improved by the  
judicious use of a 30-30 on him.

...

00 was as ornery as anybody breath was ever put in.

...

So alone that if I shouted there'd be no echo.

*check against ch. 5 use*

...

This is a country where you don't have to mister anyone.

...

Say this for Montana, it was the <sup>meanest</sup> place in the world to work yourself  
to death. <sub>wasn't</sub>

...

00 was meaner than the devil's half-brother.

..

"Charge it to the rain and let the dust settle it."

autumn &  
then winter  
of then  
spring

But through the next months I came nowhere close to thriving.

( Losing Anna came so hard that it startled even me. To all the voices,

Rob's, Lucas's, Judith's, telling me I'd get over it, I added my own

the loudest. And could not make the getting-over happen. I lost

sleep; lost track of time; "lost" seemed to be the word that ~~fit me~~ I wore everywhere.

and  
have  
forecast.

ch. 5 ?

by Ivan Boig

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 a white alabaster. This is green  
serpentine. Black marble, white marble, portadora marble. Over  
there, that's steatite. Gray argillite. Gray alabaster." They  
surround the sculいたon like a playful avalanche, these melodic  
words, needed just to within touch of him, seeming to swirl with  
perfect continuity in the next pronunciation. Waiting in connection  
against the sculpting block is gray alabaster, a piece of  
dark-colored rock about the size and shape of a football waste  
basket.

"This looks to me like a great gray owl," says Tony Angeli.

Messages from rocks have lived out lives for at least the last  
two hundred centuries; in the Lascaux Cave of southern France were



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 in conspicuous squat atop the sculpting block is grey alabaster, a piece of dusk-colored rock about the size and shape of a lopsided waste basket.

*of several sizes*

*of blandness*

"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

#

catchment inserted into a valley built for 1100.

It startled me  
how many seemed  
other proportions  
of life-as-it-  
had-been  
changed

Other proportions ~~had~~ <sup>as well</sup> changed when Rob and I ~~we~~ went our separate

ways. The next spring at lambing time, each of us had to hire a  
shed man during lambing and a bunch herder to keep our bands from mixing.  
Each of us fixed fence alone now, each of us was alone on a haysled when  
the sheep were fed in winter now. Again and again I would catch myself  
thinking of some task Rob and I needed to tackle together, and then  
make myself realize there was no together about it.

"Angus, I married you. Not this homestead and not Montana."

But  
did you,  
↓ wonder.

I wonder, did you. Or did you marry the idea of me--Rob's nearest friend, familiar to the family. Old nearby standby alibi Angus. Walk to the crest of Breed Butte with me enough times and decide, this will do. Henceforth I am in love with this man. Lord of Mercy, how many ways did love happen, if love was what this was all about. Falling on me like thunder from a clear sky, where Anna was concerned. Suggesting itself to me where Dair was concerned. Arguing to Adair you'll do no better than this one, where I was concerned.

But I had to answer this wife of mine now, without making bad worse.

II —  
as I fought myself... to love only her.  
That winter, <sup>then.</sup> Adair and I so new to each other, and the snow-heavy

valley of the North Fork so new to her. Not even Christmas and Hogmanay eased the season as I ~~was~~ was counting on them to do, for in mid-December came word to Adair and Rob that their mother had died. The strangest news there is, death across a distance; the person as alive as ever in in your mind the intervening weeks until you hear, and then the other and final death, the one a funeral is only preliminary ~~to~~ to, confusedly begins. After she wept, Adair said nothing about her mother's passing.

But I knew it was one more layer of that winter on her.

interjection  
Even then, as the year-ending days slowed with cold and I fully realized that Adair's glances out into the winter were a prisoner's automatic eye-escapes toward any window, even then I still could tell myself that with any luck at all she would not have to go through a second Scotch Heaven winter

used?  
used?



and?  
cut or  
change?

"Dair, I can't walk away from the years I've put into this place."

"You won't, is what you mean."

"Can't, won't--whatever it has to be called." ~~call it that.~~

"Angus, this place means more to you than I do. That's the truth, isn't it?"

*is that when sorting is done of all*

[ What was awful, ~~sort~~ the sizes and shapes of truth, ~~and~~ there was one very much like that. ] *in fact*

the dining room through the west-facing windows....The light was unforgettable."

Exactly.

Ivan Doig is the author of "English Creek," first of a trilogy about the American West.

Ch. 4

Angus thinks ~~so~~  
while shoveling coal  
- black nuggets

managed  
to  
hate

Through all this, I never hated Isaac Reese. Not for lack of trying; how many thousand times easier it would have been had I been able to despise the man who was Anna's husband. With him as a target my despair would have had a place to aim. But Isaac was not a man to be despised; calm, solid, entirely himself in the way a mountain is itself. That, and nothing else. Even the rummaged lingo he talked was sheer Isaac, not a shortfall.

As far as my ear could tell, and I listened to every word I ever heard from this man as if trying to hear the mysterious tune of a far-off bell, <sup>managed to make</sup> Anna never a dent in his language. Only gradually did it dawn on me that Isaac's muss of language was not a weakness, but a strength. <sup>something</sup> So ~~was~~ solidly was he centered in this world that he could talk to it as he pleased, not as the rest of us needed. Isaac Reese was primal speaking to primal.

something  
strong

mystery

No, what I

felt when I was around Isaac was a kind of illness, an ache that I was myself instead of him.

who can be

ch. 4 -  
check  
whether  
used

But you stayed hale, except for those winter ills you and your

mother were in and out of, and you sprouted and grew long and knobbly,

like me, and more and more became yourself.



I believe--I hope with all that is in me--that you grew without knowing

the shadow between your mother and me.

like me, and more and more became yourself.

ch 4 - check  
whether  
said

He worried us every winter, coming down with alarming coughs  
it  
as each ill hit him ~~shed them~~ and again be  
and fevers. But ~~is~~ just as rapidly ~~he~~ would ~~be~~ ~~come out of them~~

what he basically was, a tall strong boy.

ch 47

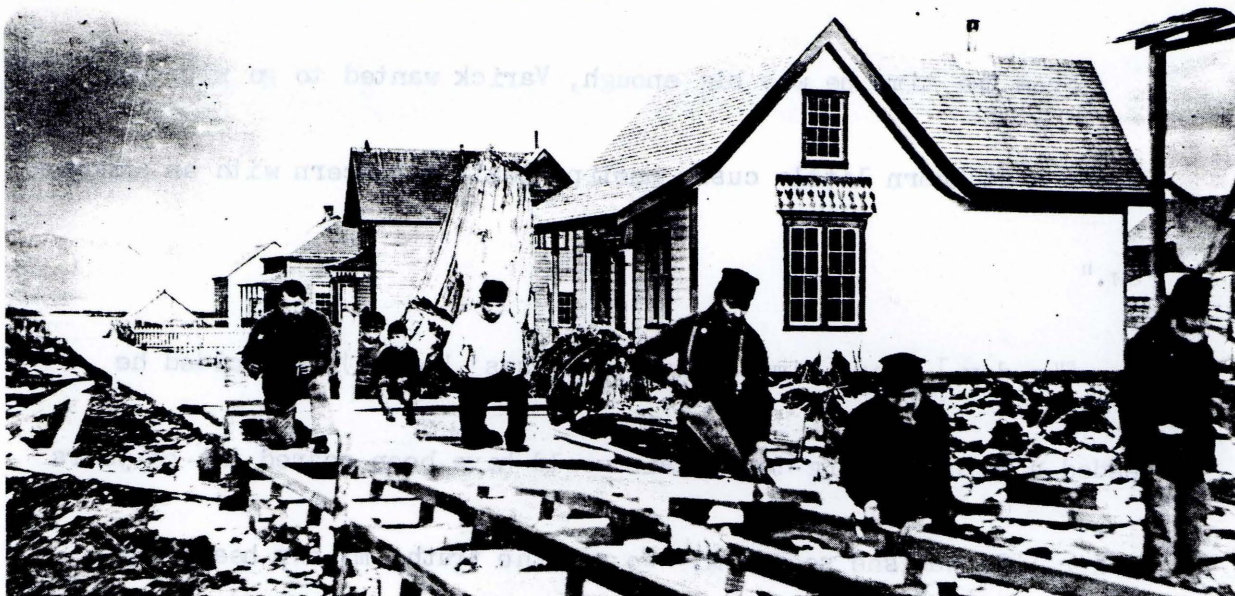
"aw."

pounded  
six  
months  
worth  
before

"Aw," he began.

"You can keep that. Varick, we both know how your mother~~s~~ worries about you.... You're the only one she has. Or can have."





*Sidewalks into the wilderness: Tsimshian Indian tradesmen erect a new Metlakahla on Annette Island, Alaska Territory, in the spring of 1888.*

foursquare Victorian community on the Northwest frontier.

The chronicle of William Duncan and the Indians of Metlakahla begins in England, where Duncan was born on April 3, 1832, near the community of Beverly. At the age of fourteen Duncan went to work for a leather wholesaler, and within a few years he found himself promoted to the position of traveling salesman for several surrounding counties. This reward for his diligence dazzled the working class lad. He later wrote that "I used to feel my heart overflow in gratitude, for God's wonderful love in thus elevating me from the dunghill and raising my head thus in so little time and so graciously and greatly surpassing my every expectation."

In the years when Duncan was growing up, Victorian England echoed to the teachings of reformers attacking the social ills of a newly urban society. Education and Christian living were the values these prophets preached in the mill towns being forged in the hearth of the Industrial Revolution. Meanwhile, the entrepreneurs and managers of that revolution taught other lessons by the examples of their conspicuous success: their precepts were organization and mechanization. Both sets of tenets stayed with William Duncan.

When he was twenty-two the earnest young man who habitually toted up his moral credits and debits in a pocket notebook arrived at a decision. Through his minister in

Beverly, he had come in touch with the Church Missionary Society. He would transfer his salesmanship from the leather trade to Christianity.

Beginning in July 1854, Duncan studied for two and a half years at Highbury College, where the Church Missionary Society thoroughly drilled its novitiates in school management and teaching techniques to take to the far tribes. The Society was an empire for piety, with religious outposts in New Zealand, central Canada, India, China, Palestine, and Africa. It was to Africa, where the Society was extending its missions, that Duncan expected to be assigned.

Instead, late in January 1857, twenty-four-year-old William Duncan was aboard HMS *Satellite*, bound on a six-month voyage to the Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia and trying to keep his mind off seasickness by holding Bible study classes and distributing religious tracts to the crew.

The Tsimshians were a sizeable tribe in the area of Fort Simpson, a Hudson's Bay post near the mouth of the Skeena River in northern British Columbia. Upon his arrival, the young missionary found a triad of customs among the Tsimshians which must have horrified him. The complex Tsimshian social order included slavery of prisoners captured in battle. An indeterminate but apparently small number of tribesmen were cannibals. And the Tsimshians practiced pot-



ch. 4?

My head cleared on the ride home, although the rest of me went on aching for Anna. What was I going to do with myself. Marrying Adair was supposed to cure me of Anna. Why hadn't it? I was not inviting any of this, I had never invited it. The unexpected power I was up against, its hold on me, in its way was as frightening as the Atlantic had ever been. A sick scaredness--and yes, with the tint of thrill there in it, too--such as that I had experienced in the steerage compartment of the Jemmy, down in the iron hole in the water. Except, in that case the worst that could happen was that my life might promptly end that way. Now the worst was that my life might go on and on this way. But can't you somehow, sometime, say to life: Wait now, there's been a misreckon, you've put the wrong man here in love with the wrong woman, I only want to go along the years making life right for the woman I wed? Can't you, somehow, sometime?

know:

I was going to need to try like almighty, wasn't ~~it~~ I.

# —

]

ch. 4?

Montana winter has no known remedy, only whatever balms that you can concoct to nurse yourself through it. My first hope was that Adair would see the cold months as an adventure, the way a traveler tells himself that the strange is worth experiencing for its own sake, and when first snowfall came she indeed seemed to take interest, pausing at any window she passed to gaze out into the new whiteness. Only slowly--too slowly--did I realize that each of those gazes was of resentment. The resentment and the weather joined to force her and our homestead into a crimped life. Any number of times I tried to talk her into bundling up and coming with Rob and me as we fed the sheep. Nothing doing. Adair in winter even became apprehensive--no, not quite right; she was mistrustful--of going horseback or by sleigh to visit Rob and Judith.

Rob & I  
Truly cold  
weather  
had not  
come yet

A mid-morning soon after the start of winter, George Frew, quiet

"It took you long enough."

"I had to wait for you, didn't I."

"And for Rob to bring me over."

Yes. The first  
hand of Rob in  
all this.  
wheeleright

Have  
Rob  
say.

Across that first year of our marriage, I came to see that the exact reason I had chosen my homestead site, its powerful aloneness, its solitary ~~fix~~ niche at the top of the North Fork and under the mountains, was her problem with the place. "Angus, if I could just see to another house..."



"Angus, we're counting on you to take the school again. Just for next year, of course."

I looked away from Ninian, over my hay meadow. "I don't know that I ought to. This place needs work."

"Angus, you'll pardon my saying so---the way Ninian's utterances came out just short of being biblical writ, there was no question of that--"but you're what needs work. Being a hermit is <sup>not</sup> ~~isn't~~ the thing for you. Ay, you have to get back in the swim of life."

Not easily done, Ninian, when a person has never yet been a swimmer. But I And so I taught, or rather half-taught. The school at least did teach, or rather half-teach. gave me motions to go through, a route of life, and while the students must have wonder@d at how often my mind was absent while the rest of me stood in front of them, countries were learned and sums reckoned and history recited.

In the spring of 1897, the worst was not at my homestead and not at the school. It was between, at the crossing of the South Fork, where Isaac Reese was hired to build the bridge over the creek.

move to next ch?

At least I was alive enough to dread what I had to face. I saw the crew and their teams of horses as Scorpion came around the bend from the North Fork. Teamstering the nearest horses to me was Isaac Reese himself.

use later - Adair.  
ch 4?

You see the mountains over this valley, watching, miles of stone stare.

Of all that I had to carry ~~in~~ concealed after losing Anna,  
my emotions at dances were ~~am~~ among the heaviest. The music, the  
throng, played on me strong as ever, but with the sense of loss ever  
stepped right to the brink of not  
there. Besides, having almost stopped being a bachelor, it felt like  
going back to grade school to be ~~an~~ extra at dances again. I listened  
to more talk of lamb prices and hay prospects than I wanted to hear,  
took a frequent enough turn with this wife or that but no more than  
that; Judith, bless her, always steered promptly to me whenever it was  
lady's choice.

My relief, then, to have Adair on hand to squire. Looking on me  
as half a brother to Rob...

And what did Adair have for a husband? A work machine. A mate who went through all the motions. A man deeply afraid, as afraid as I had ever~~xx~~ been on the Atlantic in the iron hole in the water. My fear was for Adair, for the life we were paired in.

ch 5

use as "you" instead  
in Lucas-Angus  
convstn?  
Or c Red-Angus  
in lockstep?

What Rob did is nothing I ever would have done. So then how had  
he? Were people this different in species, that you could know someone  
all your life and never fathom what they ~~might~~ were capable of?  
I didn't know. All I knew was that my life was out of control, that  
everyone I had tried to stretch myself toward had yanked away from me  
now.



add  
Rob-Lucas  
Angus  
can talk

ch 5 add

This seemed a time to go the full ~~a~~ length for one another.

I figured I could hang on, not much more than that, as long as I had the teaching wage. But how Rob was going to support a wife and two daughters--third child ~~in~~ on the way--I did not see.

me elsewhere,

Maybe you remember the New Year's Eve--it may even  
have been the hinge between 1906 and 1907--when I stepped from Rob and  
Judith's doorway just before midnight, then came back in as the first-foot  
and after doing my silent fire-poking duty I,  
and remarked that below on the North Fork where the light of the Duffs'  
house was shining I could all but hear Ninian setting the universe  
straight on the sort of year <sup>that was</sup> ~~he~~ wanted--Oh Lord, we ask you on this  
Hogmanay, give us a year of white bread and none of your gray. You  
giggled at that until you hiccuped.

We dissolved the partnership, Rob buying my and Adair's half of the sheep. Division of other kinds followed. Rob and I did not speak, ~~the~~ ~~one another~~ we tried not even to lay eyes on each other. This was the other side of the mirror of the past twenty-five years. The two of us who had built ourselves into the Two Medicine country now were separate existences.

It was awkward, it was painful, to go through North Fork life at odds with one another.

side by side

It constantly surprised me how many other proportions of life-as-  
it-always-had-been were changed now that Rob and I went our separate

Stanley  
Vanish  
on  
hand  
when  
Stanley  
arrives

I studied his badge. "The trees have elected you sheriff of this country, have they?"

"Not exactly the trees. A gent named Theodore Roosevelt."

*President*  
"What is it you and ~~Teddy~~ have in mind for us?"

"To tell you the plain truth, I'm making up the job as I go along."

meaning  
to  
make up

.....

*necessarily he's got*  
"I wouldn't ~~say he has~~ to like it. If he'd just try get used to the idea, that'd be plenty to suit me."

"Rob Barclay has a mind of his own."

*is some that way*  
"There're others of us ~~like that~~."

made

.....

"We were just speaking of you, Stanley."

"I suppose. What'd you conclude?"

.....

"Doesn't that bother you?"

"Some. But not a hell of a lot."

.....

"Angus, there are so goddamn many ways to be a fool a man can't miss them all."

}



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the air full to capacity with dust and bawling and whinnying. Out front, about half the chute society was already planted in place, tag-ends of their conversations mingling. "That SOB is so tight he wouldn't give ten cents to see Christ ride a bicycle backwards--Oh hell yes, I'll take a quarter horse over a Morgan horse any time. Them Morgans are so damn hot-blooded--With haying coming and one thing and another, I don't see how I'm ever going to catch up with myself--"

I saw my mother and father and Pete and Marie and Toussaint--and Midge Withrow had joined them, though Dode wasn't yet in evidence--settling themselves at the far end of the grandstand, farthest from the dust the bucking horses would kick up.

Other people were streaming by, up into the grandstand or to sit on car fenders or the ground along the outside of the arena fence. I am here to recommend the top of a horse as an advantageous site to view mankind. Everybody below sees mostly the horse, not you.

Definitely I was ready for a recess from attention. From trying to judge whether people going by were nudging each other and whispering sideways, "That's him. That's the one. Got lit up like a ship in a storm, out there with that Stanley Meixell--"

Keen as I could be, I caught nobody at it--at least for sure--and began to relax somewhat. Oh, I did get a couple of looks-over. Lila Sedge drifted past in her moony way, spied Mouse and me, and circled us suspiciously a few times. And the priest Father Morrisseau knew me by sight from my stays with the Heaneys, and bestowed me a salutation. But both those I considered routine inspections, so to speak.

Two Medicine day of shearing. Our site of pens and tents atop the arching grass ridge above the river was like being on the bald brow of the earth, and by rights I ought to have been worried sick about a possible storm onto newly naked and shelterless sheep there. I ought to have been royally miffed at Rob when he did not appear from Scotch Heaven by noon as promised--

change to  
descript  
of  
shearing  
+  
country

I ought to have been dreading each and every of the hard hours of that first day, always greatly the worst of shearing, the patterns of the work needing to be relearned by all the crew, the sheep alarmed and anarchic. But no, none of those disquiets. Instead, the mood I brought when Varick and Davie and I trailed the sheep to the Reservation three weeks before was still in command of me, still the frame of all I saw and thought as the swirling commotion of a thousand ewes was <sup>being</sup> turned into the ritual of wool. This was the deck of the Jemmy again, air and freedom after steerage confinement. Any

more up  
more

use in  
ch. of  
trailer.

next danger would at least be new, would not have the ruts of old fears worn into it.

Not a fester. Not an ill spot. Just there, in me, same and

strong as ever. Toussaint once told me of a Blackfeet who carried in

his ribcage

That was the way

him an arrowhead from a fight with the Crows. The feeling for Anna was

lodged in me. ~~the way~~

*it's a perfect  
outline  
under  
skin*

Ch. 5 - at Egan's?  
- or where Angus  
meets Stanley on trail?

My son had passed his point of saying utterly nothing to me, but he  
said very little, the rare times our paths unavoidably crossed. The  
distance was ever there, not just between himself and myself but between  
what he had thought I was and what he now saw me as. As to Adair, I  
have to say truthfully that she reappeared each June just as if she  
had never been away from me. The homestead simply seemed to take on  
a questioning air when she was there. But otherwise, not knowing where  
we were headed in this adrift marriage of ours, we somehow took care  
not to jostle one another.



in  
or so  
after  
more  
to  
him

made  
anyway  
or the  
originally  
did

Try do  
nothing  
today  
that  
will  
harm  
tomorrow?

Or all the way into the past, to my family's house of storm in

Nethermuir. My brothers Jack and Frank my  
Frank and Jack and Christie, brothers and sister I

never really  
barely knew, killed by the cholera when I was barely at a remembering

age. That epidemic left only  
@ The McC family was a husk after that epidemic and wouldn't

even have been that if I hadn't been my parents' afterthought child.

; my embittered

and embattled parents, and the afterthought child who was me. Thin

as spiderspin, the line of a family's fate can be.

Now abrupt random

And now another time of abrupt random deaths? With everything medicine

could do, ~~it~~ how could all of life be at hazard ~~it~~ in such a way? But

what kind of a damn disease was this influenza, that ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> could simultaneously

find a Davie far and a lonex~~on~~ atop a mountain and an army camp of

thousands at the end of the continent? A modern cholera, was this now?

A Cholera on modern wings?



And now another time of abrupt random deaths? With everything medicine can do, how could all of life be at hazard in such a way?

necessarily  
Alone isn't ~~always~~ lonely. It can be, ~~it~~ often enough is, but  
not ~~always~~ if your head ~~inclinedly enough~~ stays lively. And I seemed  
to have everything to think about in those years. In my house of logs  
I would think back on the schoolday, if it was that season, and what  
and how I should do there tomorrow. Always there was the homestead to  
think about, what I wanted to do--build a sheep shed in the fashion  
Ninian Duff had recently done, plow a ditch to irrigate a hay meadow,  
buy more sheep... Equally there was life to think about. I knew--at  
least I hoped--I was not ~~an unredeemable bachelor~~ <sup>a bachelor beyond redemption.</sup> But a wife  
was the most <sup>your</sup> major of thoughts. Didn't ~~a~~ life become ~~not~~ less your own  
when you married? Oh, more in some ways, yes, I knew that--and some  
of those were monumentally appealing, especially to a bachelor at night.  
Yet, to put life on the table and say, I now add this other to it--  
how could it not change beyond recognition?

more

I figured I would recognize the resolution when it came. If the  
McCaskills before me hadn't, I'd not be here to be pondering it, would I.

74  
were strictly mixed. Naturally I was pulling for Alec to win.

Brotherly blood is at least that thick. Yet a corner of me was shadowed with doubt as to whether victory was really such a good idea for Alec. Did he need any more confirming in his cowboy mode? Especially in this dubious talent of hanging rope necklaces onto slobbering calves?

This first section of the calf roping now proceeded about as I could have foretold, a lot of air fanned with rope but damn few calves collared. One surprise was produced, though: after a last catch Bruno Martin of Augusta missed his tie, the calf kicking free before its required six seconds flat on the ground were up. If words could be seen in the air, some blue dandies accompanied Martin out of the arena.

The other strong roper, Vern Crosby, snagged his calf neatly, suffered a little trouble throwing him down for the tie, but then niftily gathered the calf's legs and wrapped the pigging string around them, as Tollie spelled out for us, "faster than Houdini can tie his shoe laces!"

So when the moment came for Alec to guide the bay roping horse into the break-out area beside the calf chute, the situation was as evident as Tollie's voice bleating from that tin bouquet of 'glory horns:

"Nineteen seconds by Vern Crosby is still the time to beat. It'll take some fancy twirling by this next young buckaroo. One of the hands out at

Scotland  
taught us  
that.

Whitehanded men are the ones who make the money. As long as Rob and I toiled at the homesteads, so long would we be earners only from our own muscles; from crops that depended on the Montana weather, and what a wild shifting footing that was.

MORE TO COME

Perhaps hopes come out of the earth itself, like the vapors of the hot springs Rob and I saw.

Homesteads were believed in like fairy gold. Any honyocker who could afford a sheet of paper and a stub pencil could sit down and promptly prove himself rich three years hence. A person could not help but believe in homesteading. This Montana prairie would become the last great grain garden. If you were reasonably diligent, reward would <sup>rise</sup> ~~come~~ up out of the ground to you on golden stalks. Here was a new thing under the sun, opportunity for common men and women to thrive on the land. The land they themselves owned.

MORE TO COME

Spikes of light through the leaf weave as I fished. The black timber summit of Breed Butte like a chieftain's headdress. The stream itself, this North Fork of ours, curving through the valley as if trying to touch as much earth as possible, lending itself to every possible stem of wild hay.



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quick they wondered about this country. Dust blew through Valier there, plates were turned face-down on the table until you turned them up to eat off of. One tree, the town had. Mrs. Guardipee watered it from her wash tubs."--and the Two Medicine canal he himself had patrolled for almost a quarter century, the ditch rider job he held and held in spite of being not a Blackfeet: "It stops them being jealous of each other. With me in the job, none of them is." The first blats of sheep into this part of Montana were heard by Toussaint. "I think, 1879. People called Lyons, down on the Teton. Other sheepmen came fast. Charlie Scoffin, Charlie McDonald, Oliver Goldsmith Cooper." The first survey crews, he watched make their sightings. "1902, men with telescopes and Jacob's staffs."

--"The first Fourth of July you ever saw here," my father was prompting. "When was that, do you think?"

Toussaint could date it without thinking. "Custer's year. '76. We heard just before the Fourth. All dead at the Little Bighorn. Everybody. Gros Ventre was just Barclay's hotel and saloon. Men took turns, coming out of the saloon to stand sentry. To look north." Here Toussaint leaned toward Pete's wife Marie and said in mock reproach: "For Blackfeet."

All of us echoed his chuckle. The tease to Marie was a standard one from Toussaint. Married to Pete, she of course was my aunt, and if I'd had 1,000 aunts instead of just her she still would have been my favorite. More to the point here, though, Marie was

After we were married in town, the wedding supper was held at Rob and Judith's. I have to say, I watched all this at a little distance from myself--as if it was happening to someone who happened to look identical to me. And there were moments when I could see Adair doing the same, laughing or listening but her mind truly elsewhere. I supposed ~~whatsoever~~ that in my case I had a kind of scar skin, from what had happened with Anna, between myself ~~her~~ and the wedding frivolity. What Adair's was, I had no idea. It was enough for the two of us that when we were alone, we seemed to fit.

occurring

Ahead,  
where  
mine  
was  
or behind

I thought of that first Scotch Heaven winter, Rob and I bachelors in this house. Was this life, then, the expansion of people now filling the house? The comets that had come, one named Anna and this one Adair? The haunt of the marriage that had made me, my deaf father and my bitter mother?

ANGUS

I seldom surprise myself. But I did now.

The craving for Anna was in me like an arrowhead. It had snapped off and would stay there.

Over the years I have drunk a pond of the stuff myself. But 00 swam in whiskey all the time.

So I strove. To somehow maintain a life which didn't fit evenly against any other I saw around me.

Neither of us will go on to sainthood from that episode.

We each did our sums, standing there under the wind.

You think you've been paying fair attention, then one day you see the world has changed while you've been walking around blind in it. Life had made new clothes and put them on without you having noticed there was thread in the needle.

I never yet had any reason to change my mind on that point.

Do I not know those tales. I heard them...

None of them were comfortable thoughts.

These times, it seemed as if the carcass of someone far older was within my skin.



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the ringing unspoken fact of that family ranch swallowed by the

Double W.

"English Creek," she was going on, "thankfully has been spared the Noon Creek history, except once." We knew the next of her litany, it stared us in the face. "The English place. After Ben's death, sold to the Wyngard family who weren't able to make a go of it against the Depression. Foreclosed on, the Wyngards gone from here."

"A little bit ago, Max Vennaman said this is a day for friends and neighbors and families. So it is. And so too we must remember these friends and neighbors and families who are not among us today because they were done in by the times." This said with a skepticism that suggested the times had familiar human faces behind them.

"But an auction hammer can shatter only a household, not the gifts of the earth itself. While it may hurt the heart to see such places as the home of Ben English occupied only by time and the wind, English Creek is still the bloodstream of our valley. It flows its honest way--" the least little pause here; just enough to seed the distinction from those who prosper by the auction hammer--"While we try to find ours."

She looked up now, and out across us, all the islands of people. Either she had this last part by heart or was making it up as she went, because never once did she glance down at her sheaf of pages as she said it.

"There is much wrong with the world, and I suppose I am not known to be especially bashful about my list of those things. But I think it could not be more right that we honor in this valley a man who



MORE TO COME

"See what you're like?" she said.

Adair in my house was like having the sunniest part of Rob always here.

It is the oldest story, the two people closest to each other, with distances yet between them. This near, and this far.

Adair was a samaritan to anything on four legs.

Her voice was lower and stronger than most women's.

*Anna's?*

I found it eminently noticeable that Anna and Isaac were also  
childless. That gave me something to try to conjure with; Anna as  
merely a married old maid, too chilly for the spark of conception.

*every* But I had evidence that she could respond, didn't I. No, whatever was  
going on in that marriage, there was no least sign that it was worse  
more troubled  
than Dair's and mine. The contrary.

~~I cannot~~  
~~You could not say it~~ <sup>has been</sup> ~~was~~ a tidy life. I had to make the ride from

my homestead to the schoolhouse and then back again at night. It

sometimes seemed I saw more of Scorpion than I did of Dair.

"Dad? ~~Why~~ Isn't there country enough for everybody, in all this?"

"You'd think so. But it takes a lot of acres for a sheep or a cow.

And the 'steaders have their own ideas about how much ~~ix~~ land it takes

to grow crops. The last great grain garden of the world. Maybe so,

maybe no.

"I don't like it that Unk and Stanley can't get along with one another."

Sometimes people just get  
"They're not fond of the situation either. People get crosswise

each ~~to each~~ other."  
with one another some times

"You'd have to ask the land. In a way, that's what people are  
doing, by the way they live.

Dad?  
Unk &  
Stanley -  
why do  
they  
just  
each  
other



It seemed to me even the air in a house must be different when two persons are there instead of one. Of course, having someone to share the bed: now there would be a gain. But single-bededness was not insurmountable, trips to town...

You need to ~~sex~~ marry and settle down, I was told. But I already felt settled; marriage sounded to me like a major unsettling of the way my life was. And would that be better? It hadn't been in my parents' case....And to my surprise, Rob who usually had an opinion about what socks I ought to put on each morning, did not preach wedded bliss at me. A bit funny, as Judith was someone I could imagine waking up beside... "There's time yet, Angus. I wouldn't trade my lasses for the world. But..."

Indeed,  
had  
imagined

I suppose it was the mysterious process of patterning the minds, that interested me. How do we get to be the specimens we are?

There were times it would make Gibraltar weep. That tiny box of school, on the universe's ocean. How could we in there hope to know enough to get by on, let alone improve the race at all? Oh, there was the provision in the land system that in each township of surveyed land, one of the 36 square miles was for the benefit of education; the school section, that one. Pattern paying for pattern; I liked the thought of that. Ninian and Willy Hahn and OO, who had taken my place on the school board, strove to... And the state of Montana did what it could to OO a system of schools as scattered as if fistfulls of dice had been thrown across the state. Yet, yet. When all was said and done, and of course more of the former than the latter, the learning drew down to the pupil and me. And I see now, more to the pupil than me. Did I install OO in OO? No, just carpentered around its edges a bit. Was it my doing that OO could never learn OO? Dear St. Peter at the Gate, I hope not. I could bring the lessons to the eyeballs and the earholes. Where it went after that I could never know.

Marcella and I knew each other ever since the first day of first grade at the South Fork school. In fact, the two of us were the first grade at that little school, and then the second and so on until high school ~~years~~ in Gros Ventre, when we were the ~~first~~ only English Creek kids in our class. Possibly that odd circumstance made us more alike than we wanted to admit at the time. My best friends in high school, Ray Hean~~ey~~, was the one who had an eye for Marcella, although he never got around to doing enough about it. Then Marcella was done with college in Missoula by ~~the~~ the time I got back from the war and started there. So there wasn't anything ordained about us that I could ever see. It took a bum marriage apiece--mine to ~~Shirley~~ combustible Shirley, Marcella's to a young dentist in Conrad--to settle us down and take a closer look at each other.

with a  
hell of a  
smile

~~to will it--~~

Brrrk brrrk.

The phone: what if it's Maria? What word had I better give her  
now--that I'd go, or no?



*Christina-goldy  
o resuming  
'cited  
trip*



I helloed and braced.

"Uhhh, Jick, was you going to line me out on haying the Ramsay place, before you take off?"

Kenny's voice, kitchen to kitchen across the hundred feet between the old house and my and Marce's. Time had got away from me. Ordinarily I'd be out and around for a look at the sheep, then be over there by the time Kenny and Darleen were finishing up breakfast. Somewhere that routine had vanished, this morning of all mornings, and I hurriedly told Kenny, "I must've looked at the wrong side of the clock this morning. I'll be right over."

"Darleen's ~~got~~ got the coffee pot on," he assured me as if that was foremost in my mind as well as his, and hung up.

When I got over there, Kenny was walking jerky little circles behind Darleen while she did the dishes, neither of them looking at the other and their conversation going on a mile a minute. I know there's no one style for marriages, but theirs always startled me. While Kenny is forever doing his conversational perambulation or ~~bringing~~ bringing a hand up to rub the back of his neck or swinging his arms or casting a look out the closest window to get his eyes into restlessness with the rest of him, Darleen just slopes along through life. Kenny now had a gingerly

The Sedgwick House is no longer a hotel; the senior citizens club has the ~~room~~ downstairs, and the local historical society has part of the second floor, and the rest of the building just rambles empty, I guess waiting for further groups to be invented. The cafe that was across the street, the Lunchery, has long since vanished--if you can believe the aptness of such a departure, immolated when a deep-fryer full of grease caught fire.

The Medicine Lodge has taken on what might be called a split personality: the vital part, the bar, is where it ever was, but the other half of the building has been turned into a supper club. Most of the traffic is in summer, tourists on their way to Glacier Park.

Coming to Gros Ventre from any direction other than south is only second best, because it is the benchland country south of town that shunts the highway out of view of the mountains or much of anything else until rising ~~and~~ rising some more to the skyline gap between the highest benches and there abruptly dropping you down into the sight of the Rocky Mountain Front and the tree-lined streets of the town and the land opening up for a hundred miles ahead.

"Too bad we don't know what they said that morning a hundred years ago."

*funny thing was, inevitable*  
Actually, I did know. I'd heard it from Toussaint Rennie, who naturally was on hand for that dawn of statehood. The gospel according to Toussaint was that Lila Sedgwick--strange to think of her, a mind-clouded old woman wandering the streets of Gros Ventre when I was a <sup>as</sup> boy, ever having been vital and civic--had officiated. "Way before dawn," Toussaint recited. "Out to the flagpole, everybody. Lila says, 'This is the day of statehood. This is Montana's new day.'" And up went the flag. I doubted that I could improve on Lila Sedge's two sentences, but evidently a commemoration has to be considerably longer than the original.



I took a seat next to Howard Fenske. "Jick, where you been keeping yourself?" he asked, in that way that meant I could answer seriously or not.

I chose not. "Out and around, Howard. How's the committee doing?"

Howard lowered his voice. "Except for <sup>Mabel</sup> ~~Myrtle~~ wanting us all to make the centennial our full-time jobs in life, I guess things are going okay."

Quite a number of us had been through this centennial stuff before, when Gros Ventre celebrated its hundredth year, <sup>negotiable</sup> ~~back in 1975~~ what, ten or a dozen years ago. That occasion made some sense to me, because we used it as a kind of reunion day. People came back from everywhere, and the day was devoted to visiting and eating and drinking and dancing. I don't know, though; can you have that kind of feeling ~~where~~ when any group bigger than a town is involved? <sup>From</sup> ~~For~~ my experience, even a family is more than can be held together. Sometimes you wonder if you can hold just yourself together.

And pleasant as the Gros Ventre centennial had been, it was where Maria and Riley met. She was on the Gleaner then, just starting out

go on  
that day  
it will  
always  
get a  
dark  
mark  
from me  
because

after college. <sup>on his mother's side</sup> Riley's mother's family was originally from Gros

<sup>When showed up at</sup> his mother  
Ventre, so he ~~came~~ to the centennial with her, I suppose just looking

<sup>any under ~~step~~ as those column guys do</sup>  
for something to write about, here was Maria too.

Its thoughts, though, do not go.

As it ever does, the argument from an English Creek supertime clanged like iron against iron in my remembering. "You're done running my life," my brother flinging behind him as he stomped from that vanished house. "Nobody's running it, including you," my father hurling after him. The issue was warm and blond, her name Leona Tracy. She and Alec vowed they were going to get married, they would find a way of existence different from the college and career that my Depression-haunted parents were urging onto Alec, they would show the world what fireproof love looked like. None of it turned out that way. By that autumn of 1939 Alec and Leona were split. Her life found its course far from the Two Medicine country. And Alec's--

Memory. Why should it forever own us the way it does?

changed in 1954  
move some of this  
to before TV  
shows scene?

In these recent years, the Medicine Lodge has taken on what might be called a split personality. The vital part, the bar, is as it ever was, a dark oaken span polished to a celestial shine by generations of elbows, its long mirror and shelves of bottles and glasses a reflective backdrop for contemplation. But the other half of the rambling old room, where there likely were poker tables in the early days and then a generation of maroon booths, very rarely patronized, that outlying half of the enterprise now had been turned into an eating place. Not that the Medicine Lodge could really waylay much eating traffic. These summer months, tourists flocked on through to Glacier Park, and the rest of the year the highway just wasn't busy. And so since Merle always closed the dining side by early in the evening anyway, he'd agreed to let the centennial committee hold its meetings there.

c to my  
own  
memory

colours of  
a a  
divided  
to in or  
empty

change



changed  
in  
Feb. '89 review

The sun just was flattening down behind Roman Reef for the night as the grocery boxes and I arrived to the English Creek valley.

Still wondering to myself what order of fool I was for turning the BB around with goat bait the way I had on the day previous, I'd deposited Mariah and her haywire companion back in Helena at the start of this afternoon and pointed the Bago's nose toward home. My deal with that daughter of mine was that while she and Riley were finishing up their disquisition on female capitalists who had earned their fortune on top of mattresses and then socked it away underneath them, I could

break  
into  
2 sections,  
to alter  
rhythm

RASCAL FAIR--extra material

With Rob and Lucas's two bands as well as mine and Rob's, we were having to ~~some~~ graze higher into the mountains. I took our band, wishing every moment that there were two of me, one to herd the sheep and the other to shepherd Anna.

*I had been  
born  
twins*

*Those high  
weeks,*

I had time to think how it would be. When we brought the sheep <sup>at last 7 Aug,</sup> down (just before school started), I could <sup>Rob had wanted</sup> ~~go~~ to Anna at once, ask her to marry. It could be then, it could be at Christmas, but either case... We could talk, whether she wanted to keep teaching at Noon Creek until our first baby--it wasn't that strong a distance from my homestead, our homestead.

*as fast  
as  
scorpion  
ed foot*

*So much  
was  
possible*

Rob was the one with wife and children; my turn would come. He did most of the weekly campending. The day I took a turn--"Man, from the look of you, you'd better go down for air," Rob urged.--

"Give her a squeeze for me and the rest of mankind"--I honed the

time every way I could to make an hour or so to see Anna. But at

*to see if he knew their whereabouts, but*

the Ramsay homestead, no one. I rode to Isaac Reese's, no one. On

<sup>the ranch</sup> the Wainwrights', deserted too, which began to tell me a gathering of

*Isaac  
either*

some manner was going on. ~~Finally~~ The Wainwrights' choreboy emerged

*at last*

from the OO to tell me bronc-riding was occurring at the Egan ranch,

*horse  
ride*

<sup>who had any sense</sup> everyone was there. I squinted at the sun, low by now, and saw

*a bit of  
sense*

My final summer alone, this. The point ~~at which~~ of life at  
which the trade was to be made, my solitary wonder<sup>ment</sup> at life and  
where it took a person, for becoming half of two. You I think  
need the right partner in this old life, Angus. You spoke true,  
Lucas, and now it was happening.<sup>on the way  
going to do to</sup>

<sup>ever after  
marriage</sup>  
There would be the everlasting astonishment of how Anna and I  
had coincided, from a handful of miles apart in Scotland, where we  
not  
had ~~never~~ met and may well never have, to coming together in this  
far place Montana. And now there would be McCaskills derived of<sup>in fact,</sup>  
Nethermuir and Brechin. I could imagine waking beside Anna every  
morning the rest of our lives and looking at her face and thinking,  
how did this come to be?



Let me tell the day of the wool. When we had done shearing (2 weeks' worth), we brought the woolsacks to Ninian Duff's, the place nearest

the road. There the three wagons waited, hitched end to end, six teams of horses. Dantley himself had come as teamster. This day among all,

ScHm days

by miracle we wanted no rain, and we had none. Into the wagons we rolled the

sacks, 35 or 40 fleeces in each, 400 pounds of wool. Twelve of those

sacks were mine and Dair's, our green M stamped in paint on the butt

of each: a full wagon, those sacks made. Rob had a wagonload, Ninian

another, Erskine and OO shared one...

Our mood was as much as the air could stand. "A <sup>heavy</sup> ~~light~~ one, this must be OO's. Your sheep grow rocks in their wool, do they, OO?" (more

dialogue) By damn, those woolsacks flew onto the wagons. That was a day We could

have ~~almost~~ lifted the wagons and horses, let alone the wool.

Dantley in the lead train of wagons and OO in the second, down

the road to the <sup>creek</sup> crossing they went. It would be 0 days to the railhead

at OO. It all flew in me like bees, Rob and I coming into this country

on a freight wagon, the lambings and the herding and the winters of hay

pitching, the massed ~~long~~ triumph of Scotch Heaven those wagons of wool

represented; by damn, I could even <sup>hear</sup> ~~hear~~ the ~~mill~~ woolen mill, the hum the OO mill had made in Nethermuir,

linen

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who came to Montana in their thousands believed they were seeing a new life uncovered for them.

Yet there's a further portion of those feelings, at least in me. Uneasiness. The uneasy wondering of whether that ripping-plow is honestly the best idea. Smothering a natural crop, grass, to try to nurture an artificial one. Not that I, or probably anyone else with the least hint of a qualm, had any vote in the matter. Both before and after the Depression--which is to say, in times when farmers had money enough to pay wages--kids such as I was in this particular English Creek summer were merely what you might call hired arms; brought in to pick rocks off the newly broken field. And not only the newly broken, for more rocks kept appearing and appearing. In fact in our part of Montana, rock picking was like sorting through a perpetual landslide. Anything bigger than a grapefruit--the heftiest rocks might rival a watermelon--was dropped onto a stoneboat pulled by a team of horses or tractor, and the eventual load was dumped alongside the field. No stone fences built as in New England or over in Ireland or someplace. Just raw heaps, the slag of the plowed prairie.

I cite all this because by my third afternoon shift of digging, I had confirmed for myself the Two country's reputation for being a toupee of grass on a cranium of rock. Gravel, more accurately, there so close to the bed of English Creek, which in its bottom was 100% small stones. We had studied in school that glaciers bulldozed through this part of the world, but until you get to handling the evidence shovelful by shovelful the fact doesn't mean as much to you.

Anna, dearest--Rob and I sat out a thunderstorm. I hope the theory

that thunder and lightning enter the ~~earth~~ ground and grow there into

earthquakes is wrong, because if not, that storm would shake down Heaven...

Dear Angus--(describes the High Line, out of sight of mountains)

another part...  
I wonder how  
many there  
are, in all)



Angus  
builds  
cairns?

use a fish can  
initials

Ch. 3 - Angus in  
mtns & sheep

I suppose sheep have caused more time to be whiled away than any other creatures in the world. On a lot of Montana ridges there can be seen stone cairns about the height of a man. Shepherders' monuments they are called, and what they are monuments to is monotony. Just to be doing something a herder would start piling stones, but because he hated to admit he was out there hefting rocks for no real reason, he'd stack up a shape that he could tell himself would serve as a landmark. I will bet that most of those cairns were worked on before noon, before lunch could be eaten and the sheep were lazing at a waterhole, because after noon a day of sheep at least was on its downslope.

Point I.  
morning,  
- though,



Braaf wanted to know what all the jibber-jabber at the front and back of the canoe was.

Bow and stern, Melander quickly advised him before Karlsson got touched off again, and the painted designs, boxy patterns of red and white which flowed deftly in and out of one another, were Kolosh symbols to ward off evil.

Evil whats, demanded Braaf.

Evil minnows that would leap from the sea and piss in Braaf's ear, Melander said in exasperation, how the hell did he know what evil whats the Kolosh were spooked by? Now: the three of them were agreed on the canoe, was there anything more--

Paddles, Karlsson announced, and went on to insist on Clyoquot paddles, a broad-headed type carved by a tribe far south along the coast and occasionally bartered north as prized items of trade.

Braaf frowned. He had full reason. It took him all of the next week to accumulate a trio of Clyoquot paddles from the natives along the harbor.

"Three?" said Karlsson when they met again. "What if we lose one over the side?"

Braaf cursed in his sweet voice, and went off to start the thief's siege of watching and waiting which would glean a fourth paddle.

Ch. 3- Angus  
in mtns &  
sheep

had to  
think

You thought to yourself, this is lovely--the sun mothering the  
green grass, the ewes butting and nuzzling their lambs in an epidemic  
of affection. Then the next minute, reality when a shadow spooked  
the rearmost sheep, they raced into the others~~at~~ and before you could  
say goddamn more than a <sup>best</sup> dozen times the tail-end of your <sup>band</sup> ~~sheep~~ was  
wrapped around its lead.

*Wingo*  
 it; Rango had another new "niece"--I tried to watch Rob without showing that I was. And in turn Rob was trying not to look at Nancy. Meanwhile Lucas was as bold as the sun, asking questions, commenting. Evidently he felt he had taken care of the Nancy situation by getting Rob from under his roof, and so far as I could see, he had.

Lucas paused at a rear corner of the house, to study the way Rob's axwork made the logs notch together as snug as lovers holding hands. While Lucas examined, I remembered <sup>e</sup> him in the woodyard in Nethermuir, choosing the beech wort<sup>h</sup> for an axle, ash for shafts, heart of oak for the wagon frame. I could not help but wonder what lasts at the boundaries of such loss. At his empty arm ends, did Lucas yet have memory of the feel of each wood? Were the routes of his fingers still there, known paths held in the air like the flyways of birds? When he looked enough at Rob's logcraft, Lucas nodded and said nothing, which was purest praise.

"And the woolies," Lucas asked as he and Nancy returned to the wagon. "How are the woolies?"

That was the pregnant question, right enough. The sheep seemed to be thriving as much as sheep ever thrive. But that wan't to say that tomorrow they might manage to drown themselves en masse. Ninian Duff had <sup>warned</sup> ~~wanned~~ us of coyotes and bears, so we were grazing the sheep within sight of us all the time. Keeping them within sight meant walking, walking, walking. I would not say sheep are footloose; they are more like mindloose, absently following their noses as they nibble grass. If there is a thought inside those wool

*more dialogue*

*inquired*

*was not*

Ch 3 - 1915  
Angus on mtns & sheep

two summer

I took the sheep myself the next summer. The forest allotment opened on the first of June, and at dawn of that day young 00 and I and a dog apiece began pushing the herd up the foothills beneath Roman Reef. By late afternoon we were on the summer range, I let young 00 go, and the mountainside and the three months ahead belonged to the thousand sheep, their thousand lambs, and myself.

Not since Rob and I were beginning our homesteads had I done any real herding, but after a nervous week or so I began to settle into it.

Rob's range was next to mine on the north and I avoided his herder, 00, not wanting to chance whatever Rob had told him about me. To my south, though, 00 had the Withrow band and he and I traded visits once a week, eating a meal with each other while the sheep were shaded up.

About every ten days the ranger Stanley Meixell made an appearance, to cast a casual look over the grass and the wear of the bedgrounds and the salt lick. 00 (to the south) bridled about Meixell's close eye, and I suppose I was not a true herder in that I did not mind inspection. But I had come to believe that mankind was capable of using up the earth at an astonishing rate, and prudence to preserve the range never bothered me. Two points further in favor of Stanley Meixell's appearances; his being around kept the Double W cattle off our allotments, and through him I had at least a secondhand account of Varick.



Grant Rob and myself our due credit, we at least were diligently learning our ignorance about sheep.)

We had been prepared for the fact that sheep are footloose. What

we were not prepared for was how mindloose they were, absently following

their noses as they nibble grass. If

there is a thought inside those wool heads, it is about more grass.

Time upon time--indeed, <sup>on such as this,</sup> ~~some~~ days quite a number of times--Rob and I remarked to each other that trying to control sheep was like trying to herd water. Oh, the theory of sheep is the world's best:

you cd be prepared for fact... What there was  
possible  
no preparation for was...



ch. 37

use ~~the~~ e  
197 sheep  
outlook?  
or Angus' summer?

To me, the mark that we were occupying Scotch Heaven was these sheep. Somehow our houses and fences, enduring and solid, did not speak as much change as the slow clouds of sheep on the ridges. The woollies sheep were the difference between unattained land and attained. As is said, you do not raise sheep, you live with them.

--move King's Remembrancer scene to here somewhere?

--a summary, with considerable dialogue, of Angus and Anna as the school year ends, they each are laying plans for the summer: Angus to be in the mtns with the sheep, Anna to be with her mother and father as they (all three) work for Isaac Reese when he contracts hay; living and cooking in tents on flats near what will be Valier?

(When they reunite in ~~her~~ her schoolhouse, Angus might ask her how was life in a tent--she begins to write her answer in the air--leading to their kissing scene?)

"Are you homesick any?"

"Not so much that. Nethermuir isn't so grand a place I can't stand to be away from it for a bit. As you and Rob know. Do you think you two might ever come back? To live, I mean."

"Dair, the chance of that is none. What would we do, go back to clerking and wheelwrighting? We thought that was too narrow when we left, and it'd be worse now."

Wide and windy. Does the wind ever stop?  
"Here is wide, you do have to say that for it." She studied  
Here, girl, get in the lee of it. I'm an A Number One windbreak, if I say so myself.  
down into the valley, the houses and fences. "You've built all that."

I don't see how you could do it."

"Main strength and ignorance."

"Barclay and McCaskill..."

"McCaskill and Barclay, but otherwise you're dead right."

It's just so different here.

Isn't work, did you dam sell

You & Rob



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.

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."



*A wondered...*

"So, now. Is our Montana anything close to what you dreamed it'd be?"

"It's bigger than I could ever dream," she decided, "everything about it is. And it has more wind."

I had to agree ruefully there. "If somebody ~~woke~~<sup>improve</sup> you up every morning of your life to tell you ~~to expect~~ to expect wind here, a person still would be surprised by noon. What you have to do, girl, is learn to get in the lee of it." I moved in front of her. "I ~~have every~~<sup>make</sup> talent needed to be an A Number One windbreak, if I say so myself."

*A noticed her flinching*

"It helps," Adair said. "Thank you." She cast a look around at the sheep shed, ~~at~~ at my house and outbuildings up the creek. "You and Rob have built all this, here and at Breed Butte."

*intrins  
recital  
no way of how,  
as if  
proud  
in/o to  
herself.*

"And the others ~~there~~<sup>their</sup> own places, Ninian there and Donald and Archie." I thought to carefully add, "And the Frew boys. But yes, we had to build ourselves. This Montana is where work is."

~~For you it~~  
"It must be like being born a second time, is it? Coming into the world again, but already grown."

*Something  
like, I  
suppose.*

Adair in her clothes of Scotland and her mudlark smallness

looked like someone set down unexpectedly on the banks of the Congo.

Throughout our fixing of supper and then its eating, I pondered her

situation in life. How many times has that ancient story repeated itself:

the last child to be at home, staying at home as her parents grew old,

and when they were gone, there she ~~was~~ would be--the spinster,

the maiden aunt. The one about whom the neighbors would cluck, it's

too bad about poor Adair, she's better than she's bonny...

With Anna~~xx~~ so near in my own future now I was tuned to matrimonial

stanzas these day, and I hoped Rob knew what he was doing in bringing

Adair here.

I was bursting to tell her about Anna, but each time I looked at  
this plain OO Adair I thought better of it. Hearing someone else's

good fortune in love was not what she needed this first night in...

I told myself there wasn't anything either way I could do  
about it. The Barclays were going to be the Barclays, and the rest of  
the race could only stand back.

a shame  
name  
dim-sighted  
had ed  
have

indeed  
just to  
have  
chance  
to  
say  
sounded  
into  
air

18 March '86

Dear Bob--

A very nifty job in your WAL review of English Creek. I think it's the first time I've had a review there that looked at the book for itself, and savvied it, rather than dragging in a backdrop of theory to pin it up against. I'm particularly glad to have the humor duly noted; people keep missing how goddamn funny Westerners can be--the same people, I guess, who don't see how hilarious Faulkner and Conrad sometimes were

65

and silent expanse all around us, Herbert and Rob and I and the freight wagon and ~~six~~<sup>eight</sup> horses had dropped here out of the sky along with the night's storm.

The snow had stopped falling, which was the sole hope I saw anywhere around. But was the sky empty by now? Or was more snow teetering up there where this came from?

"She sure beats everything, Montana weather," Herbert acknowledged. "Men, I got to ask you to do a thing."

Rob and I took turns at it, one walking ahead of the wagon and scuffing aside the snow to find the trail ruts while the other rode the seat beside Herbert and tried to wish the weather into improvement.

dreaming  
I know I was ~~thinking~~ ahead. Adair and I had kissed, practice  
that was promising, but the rest of it... Odd to think that I knew  
less of her body than ~~we~~ I did of--

armful

*I was praying two directions at once*  
I looked around for Anna. My ~~the~~ prayer went both directions, that  
she and Isaac would come and that would be the end of it, that they  
wouldn't come. Wouldn't was the case, *prevailing* so far.

For all that we had just vowed to spend the rest of our lives together,  
her trend of thought was.  
I wondered what was in her mind ~~now~~ just now.

The  
not  
knowing.  
never  
knowing.  
I hoped  
not.



diagram  
shearing  
not up?

Shearing was ~~introducing~~ as if the bunch of us had been gathered, dropped on Crusoe's island, and told to start a town by midmorning. Main street was the blind chute, just wide enough for a sheep but long enough to hold a couple of dozen. <sup>Four</sup> ~~Five~~ cutting gates were spaced evenly along the chute, each opening into a shearer's catch pen--the supply room he went to for each sheep, so to say. To start the day, six sheep in each pen; when only one was left, as bait to the others hesitant at the cutting gate, a batch of <sup>mole</sup> ~~five~~ was wrangled in. <sup>our gate man</sup> Ninian was ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> cutter, operating the gates and whooping the sheep along to the catch pens; the wranglers behind him held the band...

Sheep and shearer met in the catch pen, the man grabbing the animal and hauling her ~~it~~ through the woolsack curtain to his shearing station. Then the clipwork... Besides the <sup>four</sup> ~~five~~ men shearing, the crew on this side of the woolsack curtain was the tier, who gathered each fleece and tied it loosely into a fluffy ball; the wool tromper, within the long woolsack; ~~and~~ the paint boy, who daubed ~~x~~ the <sup>owner's</sup> ~~sheepman's~~ brand onto the ewe's newly naked back; and the doctor, usually a boy--Davie Erskine had just enough concentration to manage it--who ~~was~~ did the <sup>quoting</sup> ~~quoting~~ from a ~~pot~~ of disinfectant whenever a sheep was nicked by the blades.

Cecilia  
it and later  
rallyman  
Donald  
was  
traveller

"Is it anything close to what you dreamed?" (Angus to Dair, abt Montana)

"It's bigger. And there's more wind."

"If somebody told you every day of your life how much wind to expect here, a person would still be surprised."

... "You've built this. You and Rob."

"And the others their own places. This Montana is where ~~your~~ work is."

"It's like being born a second time. Coming into the world again, but already grown."

"Grown, you call yourself?"

She turned toward me, as if it was accidental that the full top of her dress came with that turn. "I thought I'd grown enough. Do you think I should be as wide as Flora Duff?"

"No, you'll do as is." My mind was looking all this over, not the ells and cubits of just ~~Dair~~ but the idea of Dair. We had been in this adventure before, mind and I, with Anna. By every signal, I could start into love again, here with Dair; indeed, a check of myself might reveal that I'd already started. But what if this didn't take, <sup>either</sup> what if I or Adair eventually decided no, we were not for each other. The Barclay brigade was to be contended with; Lucas would be for me, Rob would be disappointed but in the end never break with me...

must be like it

I lightly laid fingertips to the bay's foreshoulder. The feel of a horse is one of the best touches I know. "You missed the creek picnic. Mom spoke a speech."

Alec frowned at his rope. "Yeah. I had to put the sides on Cal's pickup and haul this horse in here. A speech? What about? How to sleep with a college book under your pillow and let it run uphill into your ear?"

"No. About Ben English."

"Ancient history, huh? Dad must have converted her." Alec looked like he intended to say more, but didn't.

There wasn't any logical reason why this should have been on my mind just then, but I asked: "Did you know he had a horse with the same name as himself?"

"Who? Had a what?"

"Ben English. Our granddad would say, T'ank Godt vun of t'em years a-- "

"Look, Jicker, I got to walk this horse loose. How about you doing me a big hairy favor?"

Something told me to be a little leery. "Ray's going to be waiting for me over on the --"

"Only take a couple minutes of your valuable time. All it is,

I want you to go visit Leona for me while I get this horse ready."

"Leona? Where is she?"

"Down toward the end of the arena there, by her folks' car."

As indeed she was, when I turned to see. About a hundred feet

"What did you think of the ocean?"

~~She swung to me.~~ "That it was bigger than anything has a right  
*she was prompt with.*  
to be." And that it was as odd for us to be on it as for fish to be  
on land."

Well, here was the first Barclay yet who traveled in my frame  
of mind.



How many times has that story repeated itself. Adair was the last at home. ~~as her parents~~ She would stay the last at home as her parents grew old, and when they were gone, there she would be--the spinster, the maiden aunt. People would cluck, it's too bad about Adair now, she's better than she's bonny.

With Anna so near in my future I was attentive to matrimonial odds these days.

You ask was I afraid, Alexander the Second? My father's voice became a strange sad thunder when he told of his grandfather's reply to him. Every hour of those three years, and most of the minutes. I saw Jimmy Scott drown, when the boat next to ours went over. He was eighteen years old. I was afraid enough, yes. But the job was there at Bell Rock. It was to be done.

The past. The past past, so to speak, back there beyond myself. What can we ever truly know of it, how can we account for what it passes to us, what it withholds? For all I knew, my great-grandfather was also afraid of the dark or whimpered at the sight of a spider, but any such perturbances were whited out by time. Only his brave Bell Rock accomplishment was left to sight. And here I lay, sweating steerage sweat, with a dread of water that had no immediate logic, no personal beginning, and evidently no end. It simply was there, like life's underground river of blood. The least little thing could startle me with its hidden hazards already in us? The night of the great, the better



*Re - Ellen:  
quit at end  
of previous  
page.*

TO COME:

A fairly fast-paced section which gets everyone through the summer, by way of such events as:

- a shearing contest which Angus and Rob participate in;
- Adair not hitting it off with Montana and the local beaus; when Angus, down from herding in the mountains to get supplies, has a conversation with her he finds she's homesick, but will tough out the summer to keep Rob's wife Judith company. Angus had hoped Adair would make a match with the other most eligible bachelor in Scotch Heaven, Allan Frew, but Adair tells him, "Angus, you know as well as I do that Allan Frew is stupid as a toad." Angus feels sorry for her situation but sees nothing to be done about it, concluding it'll be better all around when she writes off this Montana trip of hers as one of Rob's follies and returns to Scotland.
- Which brings the story to the point where Angus, when he and Rob have trailed their sheep down from the mountains, fat lambs and big profit wherever they look, hears that Anna is back from her railroad summer with her parents. He heads at once for Noon Creek.



But that was waiting some hundreds of days to come, Davie's time, mou?  
and memory still had everything to make between here and there. It  
began to do so at the end of this same spring afternoon, when my story-  
filled pupils had gone their homeward way and I was just readying to go  
mine, but into the schoolroom appeared Ninian Duff.

"Angus, I've been by to see Archie and Willy and we have made  
our decision on next year's school teacher."

"Have you now?" I'd been more and more aware that my time at  
the South Fork was drawing to a close, but it made me swallow to  
hear the fact. "I hope you've found a right one."

"Ay, we do too," he delivered right back. "It is you again.  
Temporary, of course, just for another year."

# —



ch 3

possible use: Rob building  
furniture, let winter; saying  
"No time to work, I don't not  
hurry"

something about

Say this for us, we knew how to contrive. The tool didn't  
exist that Rob was <sup>not</sup> ~~un~~handy with, and although as a carpenter I am  
best called a wood butcher, <sup>my knack was to</sup> ~~I~~ could see what needed done and the  
best order of doing it. Between us we were a builder.

I squinted at the warm June sun. "But how soon can we count on them getting cold and hungry?"

"All right, all right, you've said the  
~~"There's the big question."~~ big question. But we've  
~~got~~ to hang on until prices turn around. There's one thing we can  
try."

"And that is?"

"Keep the wethers one more year and pray for the wool price to come up. What would you say to that, Angus?"

"The first thing is, how do we handle that many sheep this summer?"

"Herd them ~~wethers~~ ourselves," said Rob. "I'll take all the wethers in one band if you'll take the ewes and lambs. Judith will have kittens about my doing it, she'll have to manage everything else by herself. But she'll just have to, she married Breed Butte when she married me. Angus, I'll tell you now, you're lucky to be your own boss in life."

Herd them  
ourselves.  
handlers'  
pay.

Rob was enumerating to her the prices of wool and lambs and the general rewards of the sheep business, and when he ran out of that and

You had to wonder, with the wives of Scotch Heaven as fruitful as they were, was there a permanent pregnancy that simply circled ~~xxx~~ around among them?

I had a sudden image of this woman beside me as the goddess of geography, fixing the boundaries of this careless world as unerringly as Job's prosecutor or even the General Land Office.

used  
C-7-  
check

and silent expanse all around us, Herbert and Rob and I and the freight wagon and six horses had dropped here out of the sky along with the night's storm.

The snow had stopped falling, which was the sole hope I saw anywhere around. But was the sky empty by now? Or was more snow teetering up there where this came from?

"She sure beats everything, Montana weather," Herbert acknowledged. "Men, I got to ask you to do a thing."

Rob and I took turns at it, one walking ahead of the wagon and scuffing aside the snow to find the trail ruts while the other rode the seat beside Herbert and tried to wish the weather into improvement.

"When do you suppose spring comes to this country?" Rob muttered as he passed me during one of our walking-riding swaps.

"Maybe by the end of summer," I muttered back.

Later: "You remember what the old spinster of Ecclefechan said, when somebody asked her why she'd never wed?"

"Tell me, I'm panting to know."

"'I wouldn't have the walkers, and the riders went by.' Out here, she'd have her choice of us."



Being married to you is

"~~It's~~ still like a dream," from Adair next to me in the new  
bed big enough for two.

horse of.

"At least you're not saying nightmare."

"Adair knows the difference," she announced. "She has experienced  
something of the world, after all." She kissed my ear. "Scotland and  
Montana, at least. Surely there can't be much more than that, can there?"  
*is that the word. an entire whole*  
"Experienced, ~~are you.~~ A week of marriage and you know it all,  
do you."

"I know something, anyway."

"What's that, now."

"I know what you and Lucas were <sup>laughing</sup> ~~talking~~ about, that day about the nieces. Judith explained it to me."

"Now there's why Lucas and I couldn't--we knew it took Judith to do a proper job of explaining."

*Use a  
Concise  
instead  
of  
obvious?*

"Hngk!" I exclaimed as she pinched me lightly in a very unexpected place. "You men don't get away with as much as you think you do. Am I right?" with another pinch implied.

~~she said to me~~  
"Absolutely," I hastily assured her.

ch. 37  
And while maybe you could see around the world and back again ~~this side~~ from

this place of Rob's, my ~~own~~ homestead was by no means blinkered: the

ridgelines above the North Fork, 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.

work  
back again  
Rob's  
site, mine

"Three days, that's only another seventy-two hours we have together. We'd better make the best of them," and I kissed her.

"You may come on Sunday," she said, "for dinner. For goodbye."

"That sounds formal," I said. "(more)"

look. New York will come right out and meet us now. I know you've grown attached to them, but the time is come to part with your mattresses. If you'll kindly all make a chain here, like, and pass them along one to the next to the stairway... "Up to deck and overboard our straw beds proceeded, to float off behind us like a flotilla of rafts. A person would think that mine ought to have stood out freshest among them, so little of the sleep in it had been used.

New York was the portal to confusion and Castle Garden was its keyhole. The entire world of us seemed to be trying to squeeze into America through there. Volleys of questions were asked of us, our health and morals were appraised, our pounds and shillings slid through the money exchange window and came back out as dollars and cents.

Then the railroad and the westward journey, oceanic again in its own way, with islands of towns and farms across the American prairie. Colors on a map in no way convey the distances of this earth. What would the place Montana be like? Up after ship after



"Twenty-four hours a day, because America is a country so big it takes the sun all night to go down."

Then came the day.

"Mates," the steward pronounced, "we're about to pass old Sandy Hook. New York will come right out and meet us now. I know you've grown attached to them, but the time is come to part with your mattresses. If you'll kindly all make a chain here, like, and pass them along one to the next to the stairway..." Up to deck and overboard our straw beds proceeded, to float off behind us like a flotilla of rafts. A person would think that mine ought to have stood out freshest among them, so little of the sleep in it had been used.

New York was the portal to confusion and Castle Garden was its keyhole. The entire world of us seemed to be trying to squeeze into America through there. Volleys of questions were asked of us, our health and morals were appraised, our pounds and shillings slid through the money exchange wicket and came back out as dollars and cents.

Then the railroad and the westward journey, oceanic again in its own way, with islands of towns and farms across the American prairie. Colors on a map in no way convey the distances of this earth. What would the place Montana be like? Alp after alp after

My pupils, my minnow school of new Montana. It was like having tailor's samples, swatches, of Scotch Heaven's families all around you daylong. Susan Duff had bones longer than they knew what to do with themselves, in the manner of Ninian, so that her elbows stuck over the aisle the way his poked wide when he cut his meat. The Findlaters all were marvels at arithmetic. The Hahn boys had cherubic lispy voices like Willy's, you would never suspect that one or more likely both of them had just been in a blazing fistfight during recess. Yet I always needed to watch out not to peg a child according to his parents or older brothers and sisters. Along came small Karen, of the cog-at-a-time Petersons, and she had a mind like a magic needle. It penetrated every book I managed to find for her, and of my bunch in that schoolroom Karen was the one spellbound, as I had been at her age, by those word rainbows called poems.

I doubt seriously that, when that year's fractions of knowledge gain are added up, any of my South Fork pupils learned nearly as much as I did. There I stood, newly minted teacher of such topics as the history of the United States of America--with my Scottish schooling which had instructed me thoroughly in the principal events from Robert the Bruce to the Union of the Crowns. My daily margin of American history over my various grades' was the pages I'd

P. 8 -  
has this been  
moved?

ch 3 -  
check

cut

"What a style to live," Rob said.

[ Rob winked and I hoped Toussaint hadn't seen it.

437

You've had pleasure of ~~Angus~~ before, but  
up here

It was new  
before, too.

"This is new country to me, Toussaint." (Rob)  
Those Piegans

~~They~~ almost took his horses here.

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

where Badg Creek comes 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. Two of ad

"That 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."

...Monkey Ward?

Montgomery Ward...

"The very one, Toussaint. With this railroad now...

instructive -  
stream faced  
land  
together

I thought back over the country Rob and I had traveled that day.

Plains...grass...the OO of mountains. Riders of the OO spread.

Monars  
in  
m the

Meriwether Lewis may have felt...



foot loose

out from  
with

The Ramsay homestead all but touched the mountains. As if  
jigging now that it was free from canyon and cliff, Noon Creek would  
and curved here, pockets of ~~hay~~ meadow with willow walls between.

one by  
another  
than  
other

Until humans learned to hang onto the side of a mountain with one hand  
and tend sheep with the other, this Ramsay <sup>place</sup> ~~homestead~~ was as far as  
homesteading could go.

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Doc Spence forged his way through, and I managed to see in past the arms and legs of all the men around him and Dode. And saw happen what I so desperately wanted to. When Doc held something under Dode's nose, Dode's head twitched.

Before long I heard Dode give a long mmmm, as if he was terrifically tired. After that his eyes came open and he showed that he was able to move, in fact would have sat up if Doc Spence hadn't stopped him. By now Midge and the Withrow girls had scurried out and Midge was down beside Dode demanding, "You ninny, are you all right?"

Dode fastened his look on her and made an mmmm again. Then burst out loud and clear, "Goddamn that stirrup anyway," which lightened the mood of all of us around him, even Midge looking less warpath-like after that. I could just hear the razzing Dode was going to take from his herder Pat Hoy about this forced landing of his: "Didn't know I was working for an apprentice bronc stomper, Dode. Want me to saddle up one of these big ewes, so's you can practice staying on?"

Relief was all over my father as he went over to the grandstand fence to report to my mother and Marie and Toussaint. Ray and I tagged along, so we heard it as quick as anybody. "Doc thinks he's okay," my father relayed. "But he's got to take him to Conrad for an X-ray just to make sure."

My mother at once called out to Midge an offer to ride with her to Conrad. Midge though shook her head. "No, I'll be all right. The girls'll be with me, no sense in you coming."

Then I noticed. Toussaint was paying no attention to any of this

I calculated all Rob had said. ~~which means was implying~~ I was fairly sure I could survive another year, with my teaching wage and just myself to support. But I intended life to include not just myself; if I was to marry Anna, keep the homestead, start ~~a~~ our family,

ch. 3-  
wether  
decision?

ch 37

must  
bring depot?

had been

At least it ~~was~~ an instructive ride. You could ~~not~~ not help but see

how these creeks laced the land together, tying it into the snow bounty  
of the Rockies.

connect  
to  
two Med  
site &  
of cog.



By the holy, the steam for living these Barclays had in them.

Here was Adair, after the journey across the Atlantic and most of

America, bright as a bangle.)

now

Of course I knew in my mind that Adair had grown from the scrap

of a girl she was when Rob and I left Nethermuir. She was, what, twelve

then. But knowing that was different from understanding, as my eyes

were having me do,

now ~~being~~ do, that she now had reached ~~eighteen~~ <sup>twenty</sup> and was considerably

more than a girl in every way that I could see.

more  
to  
color-

were  
having  
me  
do

Adair  
flat - chested

The three of us fired out volleys of talk, the benchlands had  
~~their ears full~~  
~~an earful~~ that day.

more?

By the holy, the steam for living these Barclays had in them.

Here was Adair, after the journey across the Atlantic and most of

more  
to  
color?

America, bright as a bangle. She had three questions a minute about

the land, the grass, the occasional homesteads we were passing. ~~Coming~~

~~over the little rise and down into Gros Ventre, she was silent for a~~

~~breath and a half, then demanded to know which building was the Medicine~~

~~Lodge.~~

*improve*

"All of us of Scotch Heaven are hanging on by our fingernails  
this summer."

"Yes, I've heard. Almost everyone along Noon Creek is doing the  
same." Including this Ramsay household under the unsure hand of that  
dabster father of hers, I had no doubt.

*Mother will mend*

"I'll see little of you ~~the~~ these next weeks." But as much as  
I can, that also said.

"I'll miss our time<sup>s</sup> together. We schoolkeepers are a race of  
our own, I once heard someone say."

*Anna,*

Time to test the water. "I hope we can make up ~~for it~~ in  
the future." *any time we lose to now.*

*improve*

"The future has a way of telling us when it wants to, and no sooner,  
Angus."

*for now?*

~~to take with me through  
for the summer~~

That wasn't yes. But it wasn't no, either. Amply good enough,  
on the journey of the OO terrain that was Anna Ramsay.

insert a version of this  
into Angus' sleepless  
nights. ch. 4 -  
adair &  
Scotland?

The Barclays. The way they could deliver themselves into their  
dreams. They seemed to know doorways in life I didn't: whish, I think  
I'll be this, and away a Barclay went. While lumps named McCaskill  
sat blinking, wondering.

& thinking.



703

was vacant--an empty mixed-drink glass testified that its occupant had traveled on--so I straddled the seat and amended: "Actually I would take a bottle of orange, though."

Stanley indicated his empty beer bottle to Tom Harry, the nearest of the three bartenders trying to cope with the crowd's liquid wants. "When you get time, professor. And a sunjuice for my nurse, here."

Tom Harry studied me. "He with you?" he asked Stanley.

"Closer than kin, him and me," Stanley solemnly vouched to the barman. "We have rode millions of miles together."

"None of it aged him that much," Tom Harry observed, nonetheless setting up a bottle of orange in front of me and a fresh beer for Stanley.

"Stanley," I started again. He was pushing coins out of a little pile, to pay for the latest round. Fishing up a five-cent piece, he held it toward me between his thumb and forefinger. "Know what this is?"

"Sure, a nickel."

"Naw, it's a dollar a Scotchman's been squeezing." The fresh beer got a gulp of attention. For the sake of the conversation I intended I'd like to have known how many predecessors that bottle had had, but of course Tom Harry's style of bartending was to swoop empties out of sight so no such incriminating count could be taken.

I didn't have long to dwell on Stanley's possible intake, for some out-of-town guy wearing a panama hat zigged when he meant to zag on his way toward the door and lurched into the pair of us. Abruptly the

<sup>would</sup>  
It ensued like green spring following white winter. I would come for Sunday dinner at Rob and Judith's, the Duffs or Erskines or Findlaters or some other family might be there, ten or a dozen of us in all, but no matter how many of us at the meal Dair and I always ended up across the table from one another. Afterward there would be the wait, somehow quietly delicious in itself, as she helped Judith and the girls finish the dishes, before she and I would stroll up to the brow of the butte.

tasty

After their fourth daughter, Ellen, Rob commented: "I didn't intend coming to Montana to start a convent, but I seem to have."

"Man, think of all the husky son-in-laws ahead. You'll have them wholesale."

"In-laws aren't the real item though, are they," he said in a lamenting way that wrote off any future Barclay-by-proxy. I was opening my mouth to point out that he and I were real enough brother-in-laws when he went on: "You just don't know how lucky you are, Angus, having Varick."

"Oh, maybe I have some idea of it."

# —  
"Dair, marry me."

We were at the brow of the butte, after another of those Sunday  
dinner<sup>bang like that.</sup>s, when I came out with it, ~~I have ever wondered if Adair had~~  
Adair managed to look surprised, but

I have ~~ever~~ ever wondered if that might not have been because I was  
fitting to some schedule so perfectly.

"Do I have time to change my dress first?" she laughed. "Angus,  
are you serious?"

"I'm downright solemn."

"Sudden, aren't you?"

shouted the question into  
"I wouldn't say so, If I had ~~asked you in~~ the train station there  
in Choteau, that might've been sudden. <sup>then</sup> But where would I be if you had  
turned out to be the station agent<sup>, I ask you?"</sup>

"You're an asking man, all right. But this time you're going  
to get a final answer." She hugged me and looked up. "Yes, I'll marry  
you any number of times<sup>over</sup>."

"We can start with once."

Here  
Angus Adair  
before  
Tuesday  
my drive



Ch. 41 - section  
showing how people  
adjust to. north  
west. (occupying  
army)

It was a snug item--I sheltered there once, in a thunderstorm during

campending--but for all the good it did Rob as a base to contend with

Stanley Meixell for grass, Rob might as well have saved his axe strokes.

Stanley ranged broad as the dew--or should I say rangered. You never

would  
knew when he sift out of the trees to have a look at your grazing behavior,

except that it would be when you didn't expect him.

ch. 1 extra material

There is an odd thing about the wood of the ash tree. When the sawyers were working on an ash timber, in would come a smell almost like burning. A 'wright shop is always thick with shavings, so to be certain against fire John Barclay would say to me, "See to its hear, Angus." Out to the saw pit I go, to see if the ash proved to be black-hearted: had a streak like an ink stain along its core (Sturt Skilled excrpt,324) What that odor was none of us knew, but...

*check against  
ch. 4 1910  
summer*

Where my habit of speaking to people in my mind comes from, I don't know. My father lived within himself, but of course that was due to deafness. From my mother, you heard promptly enough whatever she was thinking.

It was Lucas's generosity that made Rob know we could walk in on him and be welcome. I had spent all my life around Barclays and knew that is how they were, right enough. Shipwreck a Barclay on Crusoe's island, then shipwreck another Barclay there ten years later, and the first would only say to the second, What kept you from visiting this long while?

The Jemmy drove on. Three days from New York, a Mrs. OO from Brechin gave birth to a boy. The ocean child was a matter of cheer to us all; the pride we took, you'd have thought us all its fathers and mothers.

I studied my son. Varick wasn't yet as tall as I am, but any minute now he would be. I much wanted him along in trailing the sheep to the Reservation. But there was the homestead, there was our own band to go onto the national forest allotment, there was Adair--"Son, I don't see any~~way~~ way around it. Somebody has to be on hand here at home. It seems to spell y-o-u."

"If I've got to." It had replaced aw.

use a Two Med sheep drive  
ch. 47

*enclosed*  
The skitter of numbers, lamb arithmetic at play. This I liked.

beyond  
measure.

I ought to have stood clear of Rob's land locating. Yet I did it  
for Adair.

For  
Vardick's  
his future



Time upon time, I wondered if I was in love with the idea of Anna; with the linger of having falled <sup>m</sup> in love with... But then I would see her and no idea had anything <sup>whatsoever</sup> to do with it, it was pure her that transfixed me.

like.  
idea  
of  
America,  
Montana.  
words  
the  
sends  
open

whether it was like the fascination Rob and I had for America and Montana even before we came, the words themselves magic for us. Love as a country, love as a state; but if it was a state, no booklet such as Anna's pupils made of Montana could begin to describe it.

there.

I saw the situation, I would be taking on in-laws of doubtful  
calibre.

angus  
o  
Ramsays

Oh,  
Add. help but.

use a fish line  
at night from  
the lake?

The ewes and lambs browsing, always browsing, their endless nibbles

of grass firming them...

*best*  
~~the armies of all history have known him as well,~~ the scrounger,  
 the dog-robber; now, in Braaf's specific instance, the gleaner who  
 drifted through New Archangel like steam freed from the bathhouse.

By the end of July, Braaf's cache for the plotters held a compass, two tins of gunpowder, one of the three-pound boxes of tea the Russians used to trade with the natives, several fishing lines and hooks, and a coil of rope.

*ch* — During August he added to it a gaff hook, three excellent *diggers* Kolosh ~~knives~~, a couple of hatchets, and a fire flint apiece.

*#* — September's gleanings *comprised* ~~were~~ a second compass--Melander wanted to be *doubly* ~~as~~ certain ~~as possible~~ about navigation--a small iron kettle, a spyglass, another box of tea and a water cask.

*11* — Early in October, New Archangel's month of curtaining rain, the plotters convened about the matter of a canoe.

*afforded* Karlsson had eyed out a candidate, *a twenty-foot* ~~an eighteen-foot~~ shell with a prow which angled up into a high sharp needle of nose. ~~The craft~~ If a sizable cedar tree had decided to transform into a sharp swimming petrel, this craft of alert grace would have been the result. The canoe lay amid the beached fleet of a dozen nearest the stockade gate, convenient, and Karlsson had watched to insure that its possessor was scrupulous. On New Archangel's rare warm days, the native sloshed water over the cedar interior to prevent its drying out and cracking; in normal damp weather, heaped woven mats over the craft for shelter. A canoe of fit and style, endorsed Karlsson.



Findlaters, Susan Duff aboard her blood bay and Jimmy Spedderson on his black pony with the blaze face, Davie Erskine urging his roan with Rachel tight behind him. It was Davie I was seeing most of all. Seeing older Davies, although their names were Rob and Angus, hearing their own tunes of a far place.

A late afternoon near the end of the school year, Ninian Duff appeared in the schoolroom as I was readying to go home..

"Angus, I've been by to see Archie and Willy and we have made our decision on next year's school teacher."

"Have you now?" I'd been more and more aware that my time at the South Fork was drawing to a close, but it made me swallow to hear the fact. "I hope you've found a right one."

"Ay, we do too," he delivered right back. "It is you again. Temporary, of course, just for another year."

I thought the beard was going to drop off Ninian when he heard my stipulation for staying on as teacher.

"Draw ahead on your wages! Angus, who in this world ever heard of a thing like that?"

"You have, just now."

"I'm standing here thoroughly wishing I had not." Ninian in fact was striding back and forth in front of my desk like a scarecrow in a cyclone. "Times are hard, Angus, hard," as if that news of another year of sunken prices and hopes needed any reiteration. "I would need to talk anything of the sort over with

ch. 3?  
moving  
to  
religion  
in  
school  
dispute

Willy and Archie, of course. How much is it that you want to draw ahead?"

"I don't know yet."

Ninian halted. "Angus, what has got into--"

"I don't know yet how much the horse will cost."

"Horse? Where does a horse enter into this?"

"The new horse I intend to buy, Ninian, so that I'll at last be riding something better than my pupils do."

The rest of that, I will let tell itself. A Saturday. As usual, the wind put its breath in my ear as soon as I rode up onto Breed Butte. But not as usual, instead of reining toward's Rob's place or Gros Ventre I pointed Patch across the divide of the butte and down, north, to Noon Creek. Her plodding pace <sup>now</sup> reinforced my conviction that buying another horse from Dantley's stable would be <sup>in Gros Ventre</sup> like throwing the money in the stove, so I was on my way to do something about that.

"I can only hope you're saving up your pennies to use it on this horse  
containing it all"

Linda--

"No you know this means you're going to die!"

Possible editors to try your book of poems on:

"Only by night."

(into as that, here was the

use in yrs  
of 1937  
ch. 37

The next time I looked up from the homestead and the sheep, another

year had gone.

discovered wall paintings done by our ancestors around 18,000  
B.C.--"long-necked reindeer, majestic bulls, flowing robes, great  
humped horses," as the writer Guy Laverport described Lascaux's  
stone-held ancient nature art, "in lilies and herbs, flowing in long  
ribbons down some run of time through the silence of the mountain's  
hollow." Think too of fossils. Of arrowheads. Medieval castles.  
medieval cathedrals. Fertilized wood. The Great Wall of China. The  
Grand Canyon. The stone world's eloquence of what was, what lasts,  
what changes, is even with us down our own run of time.

But when what is within rock has not quite yet made itself  
known--when it is still in native stone dialect, so to speak--we  
then need the interpreter, the sculptor. For, explains Tony Vogel,  
Michigan Renaissance sculptor for 1986, "each rock definitely has a  
particular spirit, a personality. One stone is stubborn, another is  
responsive. One is adventuresome, another is comparatively dull.  
The rock is telling me what it would like to be."

Actually sending out signals of the eventual sculpted  
form it prefers, does he mean?  
"Yes. The shape the rock already has suggests what I  
ultimately will do with it. A cube or block, now--that doesn't  
suggest anything to me, other than a cube or a block. So I like to  
have the rock already shaped, headed in the right direction. To  
let the rock lead me, rather than me leading the rock. To let the  
rock take me away with it."

Twelve new sculptures by Angel and 50 retrospective works will  
be featured, together with paintings by Richard Schmid, May 3



discovered wall paintings done by our ancestors around 18,000 B.C.--"long-necked reindeer, majestic bulls, lowing cows, great humped bison," as the writer Guy Davenport described Lascaux's stone-held ancient nature art, "in files and herds, flowing in long strides down some run of time through the silence of the mountain's hollow." Think too of fossils. Of arrowheads. Feudal castles, medieval cathedrals. Petrified wood. The Great Wall of China. The Grand Canyon. The stone world's eloquence of what was, what lasts, what changes, is ever with us down our own run of time.

But when what is within rock has not quite yet made itself known--when it is still in native stone dialect, so to speak--we then need the interpreter, the sculptor. For, explains Tony Angell, Gilcrease Rendezvous sculptor for 1986, "each rock definitely has a particular spirit, a personality. One stone is stubborn, another is responsive. One is adventuresome, another is comparatively dull. The rock is telling me what it would like to be."

Really? Actually sending out signals of the eventual sculpted form it prefers, does he mean?

"Yes. The shape the rock already has suggests what I ultimately will do with it. A cube or block, now--that doesn't suggest anything to me, other than a cube or a block. So I like to have the rock already shaped, headed in the right direction. To let the rock lead me, rather than me leading the rock. To let the rock take me away with it."

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ch 3 - Angus - Adair  
flirtation?

Of all that I had to carry ~~in~~ concealed after losing Anna,

my emotions at dances were ~~in~~ among the heaviest. The music, the

throng, played on me strong as ever, but with the sense of loss ever

stepped right to the brink of not  
there. Besides, having almost stopped being a bachelor, it felt like

going back to grade school to be ~~in~~ extra at dances again. I listened

to more talk of lamb prices and hay prospects than I wanted to hear,

took a frequent enough turn with this wife or that but no more than

that; Judith, bless her, always steered promptly to me whenever it was

lady's choice.

My relief, then, to have Adair on hand to squire. Looking on me

as half a brother to Rob...

sincerely,

Ivan Doig

(name and title)

(date)

# Ivan Doig

(206) 542-6658

Tulsa, Oklahoma 74127

This is to confirm our agreement that I'll research and write for the Gilcrease Museum magazine an article of approximately 2,000 words about Tony Angell, in accord with our phone conversation of January 15, 1986.

For my part, it's understood that for the fee of \$1,000.00, payable to me within one week after you receive the manuscript, I'll provide you the article no later than March 5, 1986 (barring illness or similar circumstance beyond my control). Your magazine will be entitled to first North American publication rights for the article.

In turn, you agree to include with the article my copyright line (Copyright c 1986 by Ivan Doig); to provide me proofs of the article sufficiently in advance of publication to permit correction of errors; and to provide me 15 gratis copies of that issue of the magazine.

I look forward to working with you and the Gilcrease, Louisa. Please confirm our mutual understanding by signing one copy of this agreement and returning it to me.

sincerely,

Ivan Doig

(name and title)

( date )

There was the agitated water, the splintered ice. Scorpion came partway up, eyes, ~~nostrils~~, nostrils, ~~ears~~ ears back, could not find footing, could not get upright to swim, could not...

The water depth was at my breastbone when I realized Scorpion was not coming up this time. I made myself take in breath, thrust my head ~~up~~ under the water. All was murk, mud of their struggle. I pulled myself backward, ~~up~~ fighting the panic of the water taking me, up

the rise of the reservoir until the water was at my knees. Shuddering with cold now. Knowing now the hole in the water had ~~them~~ Rob and the horse of us both.

(insert earlier, during Rob's drowning: hole in the water...you try not to...fall all the way into

hammering  
in my chest  
gasped

skid  
of my  
feeling  
on my  
bottom

Angels!  
You can't!



I concentrated on the hemp in my hands. What if Varick stumbled at its ~~the~~ end, ~~erik~~ jerking the rope out of my hands. I wrapped an end around my left wrist, holding it tight with my right hand. If Varick fell I would fall too, but nothing would make me let go that rope. My heart thundered in me, as if the enormity of clothing was enwrapping it.

Tugs on the rope, like the feel of a fish on a line. "Varick!" I shouted. The tugs continued. I swallowed, held firm. I resisted the impulse to try look over my shoulder for Rob; if he was a safe distance the distance back to him and the haysleds was the same as it had been, ~~there~~ only the snow was in motion. That and my son at the invisible end of this rope, the tugs continuing but in a rhythm I hoped had to be--

Varick coming hand over hand now, materializing out of the whirl. He saved his breath until he was back to me.

"It's there," he said. "The fenceline. It comes out of the drift about there"--pointing ~~to~~ an angle to our left, although everything in me would have guessed to ~~four~~ right. "The haysleds are actually on the other side of the sonofabitch, we about went too far."

We fought snow with our feet until we were back beside Rob. Then Varick turned his team to the left--they were glad enough to, suffering in the wind as they had been--

Wind  
thru my words

I imagine  
as well  
have  
been  
shouting  
into  
a hole  
often.

more

gaped

dialogue

Seven days  
...drowning

A week now since Rob's death. Thaw has come, the reservoir has only edges of ice. The first lambs were born the night before last.

What sheep we have left, I will handle; Judith has ~~asked~~ asked me to run them through the summer, sell them all this fall. She asked too

that I write the Gleaner article about Rob. Now that I have thought

through, words ought to come. With Rob gone, Anna gone, Lucas too,

I have a great sense that we are in the after, Adair and I. That

whatever comes now will come of us, and of Varick and his Beth and

their September child, rather than those others. Yet whatever comes

began somehow with them. Anna, your life beside mine, the divide of

Breed Butte between our lives. Lucas, handless Lucas, who touched

my life time upon time. Rob. Friend and enemy. The person I knew

When is the after over, where do your lives stop touching the one best, and barely fathomed at all....Tell me, tell ~~that~~ me that, whoever that is mine?

can.

Have no divided heart. But how is that ever done?

What of me is you?

Thirty years of facts since you and I stepped from Greenock to Montana and even they do not make full truth.

all - truth

But which ones, to make all truth, of course, But there is so much of that also

requested too  
memoranda

interference quoted line from them?

to do it. Just  
"Dair, I think you ought to be the one. By yourself, I ~~mean~~ mean."

any ~~of that sort~~  
"And why do you think ~~some~~ thing like that?"

To say truth,

"I'm not sure I can do it. There's so much--" my voice breaking;

I stopped to fight my throat's tendency to clog, my eyes to tear--"so  
much I remember, here."

"Then do your remembering. But make a place for what's happening  
now, too. ... It isn't any old day when a McCaskill gets married."

I studied her, and then looked across the room at Varick and his  
Beth. George Frew was tuning his fiddle, stolidly watching us. And  
so I went with Adair over to George, and if my voice was unsteady, at  
least it was with Adair's as we sang the necessary.

do this in  
Adair's mind.

waiting

for our  
son &  
da-in-law



have come

haven't we,

We had come a way from the time when Rob was <sup>hip</sup>~~high~~-deep in infatuation

had we not.

with Nancy, ~~hadn't we~~. His ~~mind~~ drift of the heart wasn't lasting.

I believed mine was. There and then, hungover and trying to take in

Rob's advice--anybody's advice--I believed I was never going to get over

Anna.

"Come along to the mansion on Breed Butte and Rob strived on me again. ~~"Stop in the ~~mansion~~ mansion here and we'll~~

You'll be disappointed it's put some food into you. ~~It won't be elk stew, but~~ not elk stew, but

it'll be worth the eating."

~~"Now~~ "Thank you but." Food from ~~a~~ wifely hands was not what I

wanted to be around just now. "I'll stay on here. Rob, bless you for

coming over. But I'll be <sup>survive</sup>~~all~~ right."

"You'll be better than that." Rob came over to me, put a hand

on each of my shoulders. "What can I do for you?"

"There's nothing," I forced something I hoped was similar to a

smile, "that ~~in~~ you need to bother about. <sup>great</sup> An authority on trouble tells me I'll mend I'll mend myself. Work will

help."

more than  
that  
I can't  
believe  
again.

hearts  
&  
hands  
convinced

change to  
John?



them.

"Up here you see how the country looked  
before they put buildings on it."

--Carol Doig, noon, July 4, 1977

At the end of one of those summers I glanced away toward college and career, and when I looked again I was twenty years older, although the mountains didn't seem to be. Someday had arrived and was already going as my wife Carol and I climbed the trail out of my remembered mountains. Our backpack trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness had been gloriously solitary; only sun, frost, wind, wildflowers and us. We had dined on trout caught in Strawberry Creek. We had not been dined on by grizzlies. Now after four hiking days and thirty miles at the knees and laps of the mountains, we abruptly were riding on a shoulder. Behind us, below us, lay the Continental Divide. Ahead, our exit--a colossal bowl of steep rock-and-timber slopes, and beyond through a cracklike notch, the northern Montana plains patterned into the chocolate and gold of strip farming. Suddenly I recognized this exact peak we were on. Hadn't I gazed at it entire summers from those fields? A squall came, dove on us. Yes, this was the familiar behavior of my mountains.

"It's clearing. So where does the map  
say we are?"

--Carol Doig, 12:30 p.m., July 4, 1977

"On a place named Family Peak."

--Ivan Doig, 12:30:10 p.m., July 4, 1977

There is the saying ~~xxx~~ that God made the country, man made the

city, and the devil made the small town. Whether it be Nethermuir

or Gros Ventre, if you were the target of the town's gossip you

undoubtedly would subscribe to that saying.

with him, given last night's family explosion. Where we stood as a family. Divided for all time or yet the unit of four we had always been? Ask and ask and ask; the impulse rose in me as if coming to percolation.

My father was onto his feet, had pulled out his pocket watch and was kidding me that my stomach was about half an hour fast as usual, it was only now noon, and I got up too and went with him to our horses. But still felt the asking everywhere in me.

No, I put that wrong. About the ask, ask, ask. I did not want to put to my father those infinite questions about my brother. What I wanted, in the way that a person sometimes feels hungry, half-starved, but doesn't know exactly what it is that he'd like to eat, was for my father to be answering them. Volunteering, saying I see how to bring Alec out of it, or It'll pass, give him a couple of weeks and he'll cool off about Leona and then...

But Varick McCaskill wasn't being voluntary, he was climbing onto his horse and readying to go be a ranger. Why I kept my silence is a puzzle I have thought about a lot. In a sense, I have thought about it all the years since that June lunchtime above the Noon Creek-English Creek divide. My conclusion, such as it is, is that asking would have been the necessary cost for any illumination from my father right then; and right then I could not exact such a cost from either of us. Another necessity had to be paid attention to, first. We needed that trail day, the rhythm or ritual or whatever it was, of beginning a counting trip, of again fitting ourselves to the groove of the task

"Have a guess."

"00?"

"Another."



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

"Angus, we're counting on you to take the school again. Just for next year, of course."

I looked away from Ninian, over my hay meadow. "I don't know that I ought to. This place needs work."

"Angus, you'll pardon my saying so--the way Ninian's utterances came out just short of being biblical writ, there was no question of that--"but you're what needs work. Being a hermit is <sup>not</sup> ~~isn't~~ the thing for you. Ay, you have to get back in the swim of life."

Not easily done, Ninian, when a person has never yet been a swimmer. But I And so I taught, or rather half-taught. The school at least did teach, or rather half-teach. gave me motions to go through, a route of life, and while the students must have wonder@d at how often my mind was absent while the rest of me stood in front of them, countries were learned and sums reckoned and history recited.

In the spring of 1897, the worst was not at my homestead and not at the school. It was between, at the crossing of the South Fork, where Isaac Reese was hired to build the bridge over the creek.

At least I was alive enough to dread what I had to face. I saw the crew and their teams of horses as Scorpion came around the bend from the North Fork. Teamstering the nearest horses to me was Isaac Reese himself.

"That's what you hear, is it. I suppose even the damned 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."

no." Food from a wifely hands was  
"Thank you up and down, but I'm not fit company just now."  
not what I wanted to be around just now. ~~And~~ "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."

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 <sup>black</sup> 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 in conspicuous squat atop the sculpting block is grey alabaster, a piece of dusk-colored rock about the size and shape and blandness of a lopsided waste basket.

"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

I would go to Canada. In a year Scotch Heaven and Noon Creek would forget me.

But when I rode home the next morning, feeling as if Scorpion's hooves were going atop my head instead of the road, Rob was crossing my yard to feed my chickens.

"Her Highness gave you a wave of ~~h~~ her handkerchief, I hear."

"That's what you hear, is it. I suppose even the fenceposts are saying it."

Rob shrugged and tried a <sup>smile</sup> ~~glimpse~~ on me. "Not unless Anna spreads the story. (Lucas sent boy with message to Rob.) My bet is she'll not even tell Isaac." <sup>though where they get it from I can't see.</sup> Angus, those Ramsays think they're God's first cousins, She's not the only woman in the <sup>in</sup> world, You'll find somebody else and be populating your own schoolhouse before you know it."

"Sir," I tried, and ~~I~~ <sup>ing</sup> know it came out sickly, "you are speaking of the <sup>person</sup> ~~woman~~ of my dreams."

"Sleep on your other side." Robert Burns ~~Mr~~ Barclay, ~~an~~ veteran married man, advises a green recruit.

might of  
some  
at  
Mr Lodge

I'll  
stay (secret)  
between  
us  
They'll  
find  
out  
in  
time  
I  
thought  
you'd  
have a  
week  
of  
symptoms  
looks.

imprisoning poles and free the renegade pony of chute six, but in the meantime there was nothing to do but let Tollie wax forth. Even

at normal, Tollie's voice sounded as if his adenoids had gotten

twined with his vocal cords. With the boost from the address system, his steady drone now was a real ear-cleaner. "Well you see

this little boy kept telling the other kids in

the family that he had it all fixed up with Santa

Claus. Santa Claus was going to bring him a pony

certain sure. So when Christmas Eve came they all of

them hung their stockings by the fireplace there."

"If I hang up a woolsack alongside my stove," somebody in front of the chutes pined, "suppose I'd get Velma Simms in it?"

"And the other kids thought they'd teach this little boy a lesson. So after everybody had gone to bed they got back up again and went on out to the barn

and got some ladies, excuse my language horse manure."

"Quick, mark that down," somebody advised up to Bill Reinking.

"That's the first time Tollie's ever apologized for spouting horse shit."

"--and filled his stocking with it. So the next morning they're all gathered to look and see what Santa Claus left

each one of them. Little Susie says 'Look, he left me a

dollie here in MY stocking.' And little Tommy says 'And

look he left me apples and oranges in MINE.' And they

turned to the little boy and asked 'Well, Johnny what



ch. 1 extra material

Somewhere there on the Atlantic rests a line, invisible but valid, like Greenwich's meridian or the equator.

East of there, Robert Burns Barclay and Angus Alexander McCaskill were leavers of Scotland; young men on the way from a life. West across that division, older by maybe only a minute, we knew ourselves to be heading to a life. Call it my bridling of the fact that I would sink like a statue if the Jemmy wrecked, that nobody could outswim the old Atlantic anyway and so why nettle myself over it; better a standing fact, I figured, than the crawling fear I had known the first nights in my berth. Call it Rob's avidness for all that awaited us in Montana, land of our own and a fresh world to make our way in and the reunion with Lucas. Call it the penstrokes of change from emigrant to immigrant, call it whatever. But that line through our lives did exist, definite as an incision.

I slept no better. But you can plunder yourself endlessly when you are nineteen. And during the days--which for me meant from before dawn on--we did our best to occupy ourselves. We very nearly did walk the distance to America, around and around the Jemmy's deck. Rob and I talked incessantly about Montana, we seemed to catch if from each other. He would page through Crofutt, asking me how true I thought this or that could be. We studied and restudied the map of America's railroads, our route across two-thirds of America. Some of it might have been in retaliation against the brags of Manitoba and Alberta our compartment was full of, but...

ch. 1 extra material

"To the West, to the West, to the land of the free,  
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea;  
Where a man is a man even though he must toil  
And the poorest may gather the fruits of the soil.

"Pretty smooth, I call that."

"You'd give your ears for a look from her."

"You know, Rob, you can be a hard man without half trying."

"Done, and twice."

"Don't be overgreedy."

"You have a heart of gold and oak."

"My belief is God put the men of the Highlands into kilts in the hope they'd be as strong as the women."

I have seen it happen any number of times. Rob will crack out a remark that draws dubious looks. Then a second, which starts a smile or two. Then he turns the conversation earnest, and by the time all is done, his hearers are ready to make him Lord Mayor. The Barclays all had a sauce to them. Even Rob's young sister Adair, if you teased her with "Hello, you" right back came "Hello yourself."

ch. 1 extra material

Resemblance and the ticket of leave saying so and his name in the middle of my own were all I had of that old storied man. Those and the capacity to withstand ocean if we had to.

Rob, a hundred times I wanted to call down to him that first seagoing night, Rob, I can't do this. I can't. Can not.

But did. At least for one night, I had voyaged. If distress were to be the price for going to America, I would lie there and pay it. Now, after Queenstown and with ocean the sole choice, I was determined that while this second night might rob me of sleep again, it would not see me cringe. I lay there saying any lines of poetry I knew; over and over performed the several verses of the rascal fair tune; did multiplication and geography. I want to think that the chorus in me now had become I can do this. Barely, but I can.

Strangely, it was the morning directly after the gale that I began to feel at ease on the ocean. You can say it was nothing profound, for me to come up on deck that morning feeling that the absence of seasickness was the peak of health. More than my stomach had mended, though. Too, I suppose by then I had time to become interested in myself as an ocean traveler; sought to live up to the size of this journey across the world's water.

Where the storm had hidden during that day of Irish sun, I do not know. But sometime past midnight, after we had left the last of Ireland's coastline behind, that weather came and found us.

Those old ones; what do we bring of them? What--



## ch. 1 extra material

"Angus, I wake up in the morning and your berth is grave cold, you've already been up on deck so long. I tell you, habit is an inconvenient thing."

"You know where I learned it."

"Do I not. I bless the day you began opening the 'wright shop. Better you than me, as one ram said to the other. Those years taught me to sleep in when I can. Such as now."

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. When you saw my father you were viewing the keenest of workmen; the master in that part of Scotland at 00ing a wagon wheel. Skill will ask its price, though; the years of anvil din took nearly all of my father's hearing, and to attract his attention as he stood there working a piece of iron you had to toss a wood chip against his shirt. At home my father lived--how best to say this?--he lived alongside my mother and me rather than with us. Sealed into himself, like someone of another country who happened to be traveling beside us. I was their child who lived. Of their three, the only one left to my parents after the 00 had done with Nethermuir. If a friend of my mother, a widow whose children were grown and gone, had not taken me to her cottage away from River Street, I too would have become a patch of earth there with 00 and 00. Oh, there was war about



5- in the morning. (Hense)

3+9-<sup>15</sup> unit party?

OK- detersans-(sp)?

28- off steel of ?

29 unit

41- typos

~~24- = of them~~

Ch 2

25- deliberate "d" ?

40 ✓

48- typo

"We have an honest pair of hands apiece

"What's doing

"Not all that much

"Are we close to America yet?"

"No, you'll see a change in the color of the water. You watch and see, New York Harbor will be full of cider

"And the streets will blaze with diamonds as big as chestnuts, will they?"

"Twenty-four hours a day, because America is a country so big it takes the sun all night to go down."

"To the West, to the West, to the land of the free,  
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea;  
Where a man is a man even though he must toil  
And the poorest may gather the fruits of the soil.

"Pretty smooth, I call that."

"These ocean nights are dark as the inside of a cow, aren't they?"

"At least, at least."

"You'd give your ears for a look from her."

"You know, Rob, you can be a hard man without half trying."

"Done, and twice."

"Don't be overgreedy."

"You have a heart of gold and oak."

"My belief is God put the men of the Highlands into kilts in the hope they'd be as strong as the women."

The Jemmy drove on. Three days from New York, a Mrs. Oo from Brechin gave birth to a boy. The ocean child was a matter of cheer to us all; the pride we took, you'd have thought us all its fathers and mothers.

"Too bad they're not bumboats. I could eat a leg of mutton about now." September it may have been back in Scotland, but there off Newfoundland the wind was hinting winter, and Rob and I put on most of the clothes we had to stay up and watch the fishing fleet of the Newfoundland bank.

"And an Irish smile, Rob, what about. Those sisters you were eyeing at Queenstown, they'd be one apiece for us if my arithmetic is near right."

"Angus, I don't know what I'm going to do with you. I only hope for your sake that they have women in America, too."

"There's a chance, do you think?"

Then came the day. "Mates," the steward pronounced, "we're about to pass old Oo. I know you've grown attached to them, but it's time to part with your mattresses. Now if you'll kindly all for a chain, like, and pass them along one to the next to the stairway..." Up to deck and overboard our straw beds proceeded, to float behind us like a flotilla of rafts. A person would think that mine would have looked freshest among them, so little of the sleep in it had been used, but that wasn't the case.



all. Bold is one thing and reckless is another, yes?

"This Continental Divide that old Crofutt goes on about, Angus. What is that exactly?"

"It's like, say, the roof peak of America. The rivers on this side of it flow here to the Atlantic, on the other they go to the Pacific."

"Are you telling me we're already on water from Montana, out here?"

"So to say."

"Angus, Angus. Learning teaches a soul some impossible things, is what I say."

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."

Helena and of his mining endeavor there, but nobody who knew Lucas expected him to spend time over paper and pen. After his letters quit, a more characteristic Lucas message continued to arrive, each Christmas since. A hundred-dollar bill, alone in its envelope. The Montana money, Rob's family called it. Lucas is still Lucas, they said with affection and rue; as freehanded a man as God ever set loose. It was Lucas's <sup>generous nature</sup> generosity that made Rob know we could walk in on him and be welcome. I had spent all my life around Barclays and <sup>seen</sup> knew that is how they were, right enough. Shipwreck a Barclay on Crusoe's island, then shipwreck another Barclay there ten years later, and the first would only say to the second, What kept you from visiting this long while?

"See now, Angus, I almost wish we'd been in America as long as Lucas."

"Envy never filled the oatmeal bowl."

Can I make you know what it meant to Rob and me to have this uncle of his as our forerunner? As our American edition of Croft, waiting and willing to instruct? Oh, I won't deny that we found it sufficiently impressive that money was sent as Christmas cards in America. But the true trove over there, we considered, was Lucas himself. Put yourself where we were, young and stepping off to a new world, and now tell me whether or not you want to have a Lucas Barclay ahead, knowing where the best land beckons, what a fair price is for anything, whether they do so-and-so in Montana just as we are used to in Scotland, whethery they ever do thus-and -such at

"See now, Angus, I almost wish we'd been in America as long as Lucas."

"Envy never filled the oatmeal bowl."

Can I make you know what it meant to Rob and me to have this uncle of his as our forerunner? As our American edition of Crofutt, waiting and willing to instruct? Oh, I won't deny that we found it sufficiently impressive that money was sent as Christmas cards in America. But the true trove over there, we considered, was Lucas himself. Put yourself where we were, young and stepping off to a new world, and now tell me whether or not you want to have a Lucas Barclay ahead, knowing where the best land beckons, what a fair price is for anything, whether they do so-and-so in Montana just as we are used to in Scotland, whether they ever do thus-and -such at all. Bold is one thing and reckless is another, yes?

We walked up by the firebell tower. The mountains stood high all around, up in the morning light which had not yet found Helena.



Yet we did not. Our second week of search was equally empty. The middle of that week, we went by train to try Butte. That mining city seemed to be a factory for turning the planet inside out. Slag was making new mountains, while the mountains around stood with dying timber on their slopes. The very air was raw with smelter fumes and smoke. No Butte, thank you, for either Rob or me, and we came away somehow convinced it was not the place Lucas Barclay would choose either.

We began to question stagecoach drivers, asking if they had heard of Lucas at their destination towns, White Sulphur Springs and Boulder and Diamond City. No and no and no. Meanwhile, we were hearing almost daily of some new El Dorado where a miner might have been drawn to. Castle. Philipsburg. Neihart. We began to see that tracking Lucas to a mine, if he was still in that business of Great Maybes, would be like trying to find out where a gypsy had taken up residence.

Sunday morning, our second sabbath as dwellers of Helena, I woke before the day did, and my getting out of bed roused Rob. "Where're you off to?" he asked as I dressed.

"A walk. Up to see how the day looks."

He yawned mightily. "Angus, the wheelwright shop is all the way back in Scotland and you're still getting <sup>+</sup>ouy of bed to open it." More yawn. "Wait. I'll come along. Just let me figure which end my shoes fit on."

Scotland was  
not a rival.  
Montana

possible ending:

"Do it like a man, with no divided heart."

Lucas

Rob. Anna. Dair. No, I would do it again, even if my heart  
again divided [the three ways.]

ever  
He's angry help me  
but I will  
do it again  
parted  
I'll go  
"We'll do it  
by well enough,  
Dair." "We  
always  
have,  
no per."

Wouldn't you?

gonna regret charity when he sees the goddamn chore we got for ourselves up here.

What would that be, Dan?

About fifteen head of goddamn dead ones, that's what. They got onto some deathcamas, maybe three days back. Poisoned ~~themselves~~ <sup>themselves</sup> before you ~~could~~ <sup>can</sup> say sic 'em. Canada Dan reported all this as if he was an accidental passerby instead of being responsible for these animals. Former animals, they were now.

That's a bunch of casualties, Stanley agreed. I didn't happen to notice the pelts anywhere there at the wag--

Happened right up over here, Canada Dan went on as if he hadn't heard, gesturing to the ridge close behind him. Just glommed onto that deathcamas like it was goddamn candy. C'mon here, I'll show you. The herder shrugged out of his coat, tossed it down on the grass, pointed to it and instructed his dog: Stay, Rags. The dog came and lay on the coat, facing the sheep, and Canada Dan trudged up the ridge without ever glancing back at the dog or us.

I began to dread the way this was trending.

The place Canada Dan led us to was a pocket meadow of bunch grass interspersed with pretty white blossoms and with gray mounds here and there on it. The blossoms were deathcamas, and the mounds were the dead ewes. Even as cool as the weather had been they were bloated almost to bursting.

That's them, the herder identified for our benefit. It's sure convenient of you fellows to show up. All that goddamn skinning, I



"I hadn't, but it's not a surprise." Inside myself, I brightened even more. Teaching would occupy my mind, help me through this time of learning to be alone again. The school was a remedy I hadn't managed to think of, and here Ninian was handing it to me. "Luck to the happy couple. I'm losing track of how many times now I've taken the school after canoodling got started."

"Yes, that's what I'm here about," Ninian confirmed. "Angus, the school board wanted to tell you. We've decided to advertise for a teacher."

...

"And if I answer that advertisement myself? 'Years and years of experience at the South Fork school, never a complaint, offered salary accepted without question. Children like your own will vouch for me.'"

You know the future of that. We'll turn you down flat. Angus, don't make matters publicly worse. We've nothing against your teaching, nothing against you. But it just would never look right. You in charge of the school while you and Adair are living apart, whatever it is that's driven the wedge between you. I have trouble believing that about your sheep and Rob's, myself." He stopped there, his silence the door ajar for me fling open with explanation.

When I said nothing, Ninian shook his head one time, the beard swiping at the air as if erasing. "We are praying for you and Adair."



He didn't say how come it, some trouble c. boss  
But said he'd like to borrow a nice fat saddle horse.

job  
hole

The Zebra Dun was

Old Dunny was a rocky outlaw mo had grown so awful wild  
That he cd paw. white out of. moon every jump for a mile

When. stranger hit. saddle, old Dunny quit. earth  
of traveled right it up for all that he was worth

a. Pitching & a-squealing, a-having wall-eyed fits  
His ~~had~~ hind ft perpendicular, his front ones in. bits

with  
bits

We cd see. tops of mtns under Dunny every jump  
It o. stranger he us growed the just like. camel's hump

He thumped him b. shoulders & spurd him when he whirled  
To show those plummy punches mo he us. wolf of. world

' boss who us standing round watching of. show  
Walked right up to. stranger & told ~~me~~ him he needn't go.

↑ mo tickled all. boys to death, they laughed away dn to the sleeves  
"We will lend you a horse just as fresh and fat as you please."

person is so seldom sheltered from the everlasting damn wind. I mean, having the wind **forever** trying to blow harmonica tunes through your rib cage just naturally wears on the nerves. Someone like Ed Van Bebbber, whose ranch lay next up the south fork of English Creek from the ranger station, couldn't even be said hello to until he positioned himself with a building between him and the wind, and then he would cuss about how much of it was following him around the corner. Of course not everybody was that highstrung. I like to think that I'm not, quite. But I do believe it is incontestable that if that wind <sup>off the Rockies,</sup> could be done away with, the Two would be a hundred percent more comfortable place of the world.

This hat chase comes to mind because as I was swinging back onto Pony I glanced ahead and saw that Mouse and my father were halted, and my father was gandering back to see what had become of me. <sup>#</sup> I rode on up and found that we had arrived to where a set of rutted tracks--in flattery, it could have been called almost a road--left the North Fork roadbed and crossed the coulee and creek and traced on up the side of Breed Butte to where a few log buildings could be seen.

Normally I would have been met with some joke from my father about keeping my hat on my head lest the wind blow my hair off instead. But this day he was looking businesslike, which was the way he looked only when he couldn't find any better mood. How about you taking a look at Walter's place? he proposed. You can cut around the butte and meet me at the road into the Hebner tribe.

"One more sun," sighed the king at evening, <sup>now</sup> and another darkness.

This has to stop. The days fly past us as if they were racing pigeons.

We may as well be pebbles, for all the notice life takes of us or we

of it. No one holds in mind the blind harper when he is gone. No one

commemorates the girl who grains the geese. None of the deeds of our

people leave the least tiny mark upon time. Where's the sense in running

a kingdom if it all just piffles off into air? Tell me that, whoever can."

"If you will recall, sire--"

"Why is it that the moon keeps better track of itself than we manage to? And the seasons put us to shame, they always know which they are, who's been, whose turn now, who comes next, all that sort of thing. Why can't we have memories as nimble as those? Tell me that, whoever can."

"If you will recall--"

"Oblivion has been the rule too long. What this kingdom needs is <sup>some</sup> some blivion. There, that's it, we need to become a blivious people. Enough of this forgettery. But how to do it, it will take some doing. What's to be done? Tell me that, whoever can."

"If you will recall, sire, this morning you named a remembrancer."

"Eh? I did? I mean, I did. And what a good idea it was, too. For a change things are going to be fixed into mind around here. Send me this remembering fellow."

"Bring forth the king's remembrancer!"

*4 closed. bk of stories ...*





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selves they could damn well do twice what Choteau ever could; for when they went along Gros Ventre's neighborhood streets they proceeded to plant double. A line of trees along the front yards, then another between sidewalk and street. Then the same colonnade again on the other side of the street. All this of course had been done fifty or more years before, a period of time that will grow you a hell of a big cottonwood. By now every street of Gros Ventre was lorded over by these twin files of fat gray trunks, so wrinkled and gullied they looked as if rivulets of rain had been running down them ever since the deluge floated Noah. Nor did this tree domination stop there. Together with the original cottonwoods that already rose old and tall along English Creek before Gros Ventre was ever thought of, the streetside plantation produced almost a roof over the town. This cottonwood canopy was particularly wonderful just before a rain, when the leaves began to shiver, rattle in their papery way. The whole town seemed to tingle then, and the sound picked up when a gust of wind from the west ushered in the rain, and next the air was filled with the seethe of water onto all that foliage. In Gros Ventre, even a dust-settler sounded like a real weather event.

The English Creek road entered town past the high school--one of those tan-brick two-story crates that seemed to be the only way they knew how to build high schools in those days--and I nudged Mouse into an even quicker pace so as not to dwell on that topic any longer than necessary. We were aiming ourselves across town, to the northeast end where the Heaneys' house stood.

When Rob broached the matter of saddlehorses, Lucas snorted.

"Buy horses from Dantley? Robbie, you might as well throw <sup>the</sup> ~~your~~ money in that stove there."

So it sounded as if we ~~would~~ <sup>were to</sup> go on tramping after the sheep. But there are times when it takes a Barclay to hear into a Barclay. Rob without daunt asked Lucas: "Who had we better buy them from, then?"

Lucas ~~severely~~ <sup>se</sup> polished a spotless span of bar. "Up on Noon Creek <sup>see</sup> there's a man Reese raising horses now. Let's have a ~~look~~ at his nags."

right  
back

210

"Looks like it could kind of use a prop, all right," Stanley observed to a bib-overalled idler leaning against one of the porch posts. Who turned out to be the exact wrong person to make that joke to: C.E. Sedgwick himself.

"If my enterprise don't suit you," Sedge huffed, "you can always bunk down there in the diamond willows," indicating the brush at the bend of English Creek.

"How about," Stanley offered, "me being a little more careful with my mouth, and you giving me a second chance as a customer?"

Sedge hung his thumbs into his bib straps and considered. Then decided: "Go entirely mute and I might adopt you into the family. Bring your gear on in."

The Northern burned in the dry summer of 1910. Although according to old-timers, "burned" doesn't begin to say it. Incinerated, maybe, or conflagrated. For the Northern blaze took the rest of the block with it and threatened that whole end of town; if there had been a whisper of wind, half of Gros Ventre would have become ash and a memory. Sedge being Sedge, people weren't surprised when he decided to rebuild. After all, he went around in those overalls because what he really liked about being a hotelier was the opportunity to be his own maintenance man. But what Sedge erected still sat, this Fourth when I was atop Mouse, across the end of Main Street as a kind of civic astonishment--a three-story fandango in stone, quarried from the gray cliffs near where English Creek joins the Two Medicine River; half a block square, this reborn Sedgwick hostelry, with round towers at each corner and a swooping pointed ornament

"Somebody else maybe knows, too."

"Who?"

"Lucas maybe knows."

"You've seen the ringtailed rifle....Anything against Gros Ventre,  
Lucas will fight. Rustlers are not good for Gros Ventre."

"Angus, I did not say... But I did say maybe."



~~top of the Catholic steeple there amid the Gros Ventre grove, but realistically that was mostly imagination.~~

↙ ~~I and my horses went up and up~~ toward the angle of slope beneath the center of <sup>Roman</sup> the reef. Eventually a considerable sidehill of timber took the trail from sight, and before Pony and Bubbles and I entered the stand of trees, I whoaed us for a last gaze along all the mountains above and around. They were the sort of thing you would have if every cathedral in the world were lined up along the horizon.

Not much ensued for the first minutes of the forested trail, just a sharpening climb and the route beginning to kink into a series of switchbacks. Sunbeams were threaded down through the pine branches and with that dappled light I didn't even mind being in out of the view for the next little while.

A forest's look of being everlasting is an illusion. Trees too are mortal and they come down. I was about to face one such. In the middle of <sup>a</sup> ~~one of the~~ straight tilt of trail between switchbacks, there lay a fresh downed ponderosa poking out over my route, just above the height of a horse. <sup>9</sup> On one of my father's doctrines of mountain travel I had a light little cruising ax along with me. But the steep hillside made an awkward place to try any chopping and <sup>what I didn't have was</sup> ~~I did not have a~~ saw of any sort. Besides, I was in no real mood to do trail maintenance for my father and the United States Forest Service. <sup>#</sup> I studied the toppled

p. 124A follows

"Smo seems a lonesome life"  
"Sometimes."

cut?  
or  
incorporate?

point  
Smo up  
somewhere -  
it's pride  
of possession  
or?

"I was in Deadwood, what, ten, twelve years ago when the whole  
damn town got to be a freight jam. Outfits in every street and  
backed up out of town a mile or so in some directions. Teams from  
Pierre and Bismarck coming in one way, and some from Sidney another  
way, and ones from Cheyenne another way. / I just wish you men could've  
seen it. There was teams of all descriptions. ~~Mule-trains~~ Sixty-four

mules and sixteen wagons makes a mule train, and there was dozens of  
those. Ox teams. Dozens of little ~~outfits~~ <sup>wagon-teams,</sup> with two horses or four

Christ, you name it and it was in Deadwood right then.  
horses. ~~and the whole~~ And nobody in the whole works could go forward  
budge

or backward. / It got so bad that eight or ten of us talked it over

what we needed was  
and said ~~we had to have~~ a captain. We picked out the biggest, meanest-

looking guy in our bunch. He swelled up even bigger and said, 'Boys,

if you want me to, I'll take charge.' We said, 'We want you to take

charge ~~and~~ and we'll back you.' / He borrowed a six-shooter apiece from

a couple of us and stuck them in his belt and started along that main

street, us right behind him. 'We might as well start right here,' he

said, and he started moving the little teams into sidestreets and alleys

by hand. This was maybe ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, and by

God it took us until ten the next day to break that jam. But we broke her."



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back from returning Toussaint to the Two Medicine and dancing hard the past hour or so to make up for time lost. All of them but me probably had done the Dude and Belle 500 times in their lives, but it's a basic enough dance that I knew the ropes. You begin with everybody joining hands--my mother's firm feel at the end of one of my arms, Arleta's small cool hand at my other extreme--and circling left, a wheel of eight of us spinning to the music. Now to my father's call of "you've done the track, now circle back" the round chain of us goes into reverse, prancing back to where we started. Swing your partner, my mother's cornflower frock a blue whirlwind around the pair of us. Now the lady on the left, which in my instance meant hooking arms with Arleta, another first in my life. Now return to partner, all couples do some sashaying right and left, and the "gent" of this round steps forth and begins swinging the ladies in turn until he's back to his own partner. And with all gusto, swings her as the Belle of the Ballroom.

"Third gent, swing the lady in blue--"

What I would give to have seen all this through my father's eyes. Presiding up there on the platform, pumping rhythm with his heel and feeling it multiplied back to him by the 48 feet traveling the dance floor. Probably if you climbed the helmet-spike of the Sedgwick House, the rhythm of those six squares of dancers would have come quivering up to you like spasms through a tuning fork. Figure within figure within figure, from my father's outlook over us, the kaleidoscope of six simultaneous dance patterns and inside each the hinged couple

Who is Toussaint?

"Toussaint is a bit like a coyote--you've seen those, have you?"

In fact, many days on the freight wagon  
We had seen several in our journey with Herbert, creatures

"Toussaint is that way.  
loping the ridgelines, stopping to study us, then gone. "He's here

he's seen anything that's ever ~~happ~~ happened,  
and he's there, he does this job and that job, and all you ever know

Rennie  
of him is that he'll manage for himself. Toussaint will come out right."

Knows more than we want to admit.

Goes home long enough to father another child. Then he's out again,  
working for Joe Kipp or Flowerree or the Agency.



direction of the distant reef: Walter, how the hell do people get so crosswise with one another? For last night's rumpus continued to bedevil

me from whatever angle I could find to view it. The slant at which

Alec and my parents suddenly were diverging from each other, <sup>for one</sup> In cold

light of hindsight it may not

seem such an earthquake of an issue, whether Alec was going to choose college or the wedding band/riding job combination. But hindsight is always through bifocals, it peers specifically instead of seeing whole.

And the actuality here was that my father and mother believed that a lot of their hopes rested on my brother, especially given all that they and the Two country and even the nation had endured in the years just past.

That Alec seemed not to want to step

up in life, <sup>now that</sup> ~~when~~ the chance at last was ~~here~~, went against my

parents' thinking as much as if he'd declared he ~~going~~ was going to go

out on the prairie and dig a hole and live a gopher's existence.

cut or  
move

# ~~sieved through the fence again~~  
When I closed the gate and went ~~to climb back onto Pony, she~~  
over to Pony to put my foot in the

stirrup and climb back on, she absent-mindedly took a step, reaching

for one last mouthful of green grass. I backed off in time and gave

her a sharp tug with the reins, to get her mind back on business.

She stayed motionless then as I swung into the saddle.

That spooked  
me a little but  
being out there  
alone is all.

no 41

Horses you did have to be careful of, all the time. There was

a few years before Spencer

the instance of the ~~20~~ boy, George, who <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ about my age. Evidently

he dismounted to open a gate, and at the exact moment he was putting

his left foot into the stirrup to swing back aboard, something spooked

his horse. George's foot slipped on through the stirrup. In a hung-up

case like that, if your boot didn't come off, the horse might drag you

and drag you. We never knew just how battered George <sup>Spencer</sup> ~~20~~ was by the

dragging and the kicking hooves; but it was sufficient that his funeral

had to be a closed-coffin one.

A little more aware of Pony than I had been, and likewise her of

me, we went now along the flank of Breed Butte, which would angle us

Summer it may have been back in Scotland, but this was a March  
wind here off Newfoundland.

Now we were seeing fishing boats of the Newfoundland bank.

"The Arbroath fleet, is it?" Rob joked. "Have we gone in a circle?"



She saw that didn't register with me.

"Calling out hello to the workhorses in the various teams," she explained. "He hadn't seen them for awhile, after all. 'Hello, Woodrow!' 'Hello, Sneezer!' Methusaleh. Runt. Copenhagen.

mo # Mother let him go on with it until he came to a big gray mare called Second Wife. She never thought the name of that one was as funny as Father did."

There is this about history, you never know which particular ember of it is going to glow to life. As she told this, I could all but hear Pete helloing those horses, his dry voice making a chant which sang across that road camp. And the look on my mother told me she could, too.

Not to be too obvious, I braided a moment more. Then decided to try the other part of that St. Mary's scene. "Your own mother. What was she like?"

"That father of yours has been heard to say I'm a second serving of her."

Well, this at least informed me that old Isaac Reese hadn't gotten away with nearly as much in life as I'd originally thought. But now, how to keep this line of talk going--

"Was she a leaper too?"

"No," my mother outright laughed. "No, I seem to be the only one of that variety."

Probably our best single piece of family lore was that my mother leaped in with the century. The 29th of February of 1900, she was born on. Which of course meant that except when each leap year showed



Toussaint maintained that the name was the doing of the first saloonkeeper, Louis DeSalis. In Toussaint's version, De Salis grew interested in the Indian legends and would try to coax them from any Indians passing through. What a lone Gros Ventre was doing here ~~in~~ 150 miles from the Milk River is not clear. But Toussaint claimed one did wander through, horse-trading or some such, and DeSalis drew from him a Gros Ventre legend of a boy raised by seven buffalo bulls.

Quite possibly the Gros Ventre recognized in De Salis a man who, since he was listening anyway, preferred to hear plenty. Be that as it may, in Toussaint's recounting the legend went every which way, on and on, but basically the tale was that the seven old bulls found the Gros Ventre boy abandoned, decided to raise him, instructed him in how to make a bow and arrows and to hunt, and he grew up as their son. "When he found feathers, he tied them into the long hair of their mares," Toussaint said solemnly. "Decorating~~k~~ his seven fathers."

The tale continued to the point that eventually

the boy and the seven <sup>old</sup> ~~x~~ bulls came up against an extremely strong young <sup>buffalo</sup> ~~x~~ bull, who threatened them all: "Now is the time for you to be killed."

The boy said back, "I do not think you will kill me. Maybe you will

We didn't happen to have any of those along with us, but just before leaving home we'd gone to the old haystack bottom near the barn and dug ourselves each a tobacco can of angleworms. Why in holy hell anyone thinks a fish would prefer a dab of hair to something as plump as a stack-bottom worm, I never have understood the reasoning of.

The fish in fact began to prove that, right then. I do make the concession to sportsmanship that I'll fish a riffle once in a while, even though it demands some attention to casting instead of just plunking into the stream, and so it pleased me a little that in the next half hour or so I pulled my ten fish out of bumpy water, while at the pool he'd chosen to work over my father took some minutes longer to complete his catch.


Those little brookies, Eastern brook trout about eight inches long, are among the best eating there can be. You begin to taste them as quick as they hit the frying pan and go into their curl. Brown them up and take them in your fingers and eat them like corn on the cob, and you wish you had capacity for a hundred of them.

When we'd devoured five or so brookies apiece, we slowed down enough to share out a can of pork and beans, then resumed on the last half of our fish fry.

That hold you? my father asked when we were out of trout.

I bobbed that I guessed it would, and while he went to the creek to scour the frying pan with gravel, and rinse off our plates, I set to work composing his day's diary entry.

kill me. But I do not think so." And stepped to one side of the young  
bull and shot an arrow through him, then stepped to the other side and  
shot another arrow through. The seven old bulls were saved, and told  
the boy, "Now you are a man. Now join your own people, the brave Gros

 Ventre people."

our favorite in the entire Two.

By just before dusk the two of us were there, and Mouse and Pony and Homer were unsaddled and tethered on good grass, and camp was established.

You know where supper is, my father advised. By which ~~he~~ meant that it was in the creek, waiting to be caught.

This far up the North Fork, English Creek didn't amount to much. Most places you could cross it in a running jump. But the stream was headed down out of the mountains in a hurry and so had some pretty riffles and every now and again a pool like a big wide stairstep of glass. If fish weren't in one of those waters, they were in the other.

Each of us took our hat off and unwound the fishline and hook wrapped around the hatband. On our way up, before the willows gave out we'd cut a pair of decent length, and now notched them about an inch from the small end, tied each fishline snug into each notch so it couldn't pull off, and were ready to talk business with those fish.

Hide behind a tree to bait your hook, my father warned with an almost straight face, or they'll swarm right out of the water after you.

My father still had a reputation in the Forest Service from the time some regional headquarters muckymuck who was quite a dry-fly fisherman asked him what these English Creek trout took best. Those guys of course have a whole catechism of hackles and muddlers and goofus bugs and stone flies and nymphs and midges. Chicken guts, my father informed him.



1896-97

Scotch Heaven

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

Land Office at Helena, Mont.,

May 21, 1896

Notice is hereby given that the following named settlers have filed notice of the intention to make final proof in support of their claims, and that the said proofs will be made before U.S. commissioner at Gros Ventre, Mont., on July 2, 1896, viz.:

Robert B. Barclay, for H.E. No. 0000, for the w2 sw4 and s2 nw4, sec. 31, tp 28 n, r 8 w.

Angus A. McCaskill, for H.E. No. 0000, for the s2 sw4 and w2 nw4, sec. 36, tp 28 n, r 9 w.

They name the following witnesses to prove their continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, vis.: Isaac Reese, Ian Findlater, George Frew and Ninian Duff, all of Gros Ventre, Mont.

George D. Greene, Register

--Gros Ventre Weekly Gleaner,

So for the next long while I was delving in ewe carcasses. Manhandling <sup>each</sup> the rain-soaked corpse onto its back, steadying it there, then starting in with that big incision along the belly which, if your jackknife slipped just a little bit, ~~would~~ bring the guts pouring out all over your project. Slice along the insides of the legs, then trim the ~~the~~ pelt off the pale dead flesh. It grudges me even now to say it, but Stanley was accurate, it did have to be done, because the



## South Fork

In our family there are six of us, Father, Mother, Gramma, Rebecca that is just little yet, Rachel and I. I and Rachel go to the South Fork school. I ride Roanie and Rachel holds on behind. Excepting for horses like Roanie and milk cows the animal everybody raises is sheep. Everybody has chores including children. Rachels' chore is to gather the eggs. Mine is to get in wood and empty the slop bucket. The food we eat is mostly deer, elk, fish, and fowl.

Essay by Davie Erskine, September, 1892

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 <sup>so</sup> 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

original  
version -  
changed

*original  
version -  
changed*

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.

*(His reaction  
...? By J)*

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



a cellar  
cross  
of

An evening of early June, Rob poked his head in on me. Two months had passed since the wedding of Anna and Isaac, three since she turned me down; I supposed Rob's visit was a periodic inspection, the way you (check on sauerkraut every so often?)...

~~Rob poked his head in on me. (a June evening?)~~ "Angus, I need your company. I've to go to the railroad tomorrow, Judith's new cream separator came in by train. Ride along with me in the wagon."

## 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

Riding home the morning after <sup>my</sup> ~~that~~ 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."

Rob  
An evening of early June, ~~Angus~~ poked his head in on me. "Angus,  
I need your company. I've to go up to the railroad, Judith's new  
cream separator came in by train. Ride along with me in the wagon,  
why not."

Rob was expansive these days. While I was low, commerce had  
decided to climb. Prices of wool and lambs had sprung back to what  
they were before all the buckets fell in the well of 1893. With their  
abundance of wethers to be shorn Rob and Lucas had a real payday ahead,  
and my lamb crop would get me back to comfort; to where I'd intended  
for Anna and I to begin our married life. I shook off that last  
thought, and Rob's invitation as well.

There and back was a journey of two days, maybe three. "Why don't you have the next freight wagon bring it?"

"That'd be weeks yet, and I want this ~~to be~~ to be a surprise for Judith. I'm telling her you and I are going up to talk sheep with the Agency people."

Jaunting for jaunt's sake was nothing I was in the mood for. Not that I was in the mood for anything else either. But wherever ~~anywhere~~ I looked on the homestead there was something waiting to be

done. I regarded Rob instead. He was rosier than ever and had ~~a~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~full-time~~ presiding attitude <sup>full-time</sup> these days, as if married life and prosperity had been ~~invented~~ <sup>put in the world solely</sup> for his benefit.

Maybe they had. Maybe that was the difference between a Barclay and a McCaskill.

"Don't look at me as though I'm proposing highway robbery, man," Rob said. (more) # "What is this, ~~is~~ a case of taking the invalid for an outing?"

"Now there's just the sort of attitude <sup>proves</sup> ~~Don't be so spiky, man. That just shows you need a change of scene.~~ Come along, <sup>my</sup> it'll be the ride of your life." Rob grinned. "Well, <sup>maybe</sup> not quite. Men," He pulled his chin into his neck and ~~did~~ the croaking tone of the freighter Herbert <sup>six years</sup> ~~our first night out from before~~ Helona, "there's no hotel like a wagon. Warm nights your room is on the wagon--"

That'd be weeks

not that I was in mood for anything else either.

were maybe

well had maybe no up. diff. a B.C. R.M.C.

put in world



"You know that Nancy," said Toussaint in making the introduction of his wife Mary Rides Proud to Rob. "This is another one."

I am sure as anything I saw a flick of curiosity as Mary looked at Rob. About a heartbeat's worth. Then she

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-bo-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.

your hay  
"I been keeping ~~it~~ cool for you out ~~here~~ in the icebox," said

the depot agent. When the three of us showed no hint of a smile, he  
<sup>swiftly</sup> sobered and said: "I'll show you the boxcar, I expect you want to get  
loaded and head for home."

The agent broke ice from the boxcar door with a 00 hammer, then  
used a pinch bar to pry the door open. "All yours," he said and  
hustled back inside the depot.

Rob put his hands into the end of a bale: brown crackly swampgrass.  
"Awful stuff," he said.

"The woollies won't think it's as awful as starving," I told him.

"Let's load and go," the weather ever over our shoulder...

put  
a  
good  
solder  
an amput

change  
John  
out

The summer was so dry you could feel it in your lips, in your nose,

along the backs of your hands, the distressed air taking what little

moisture it could find anywhere. I looked so often at the North Fork

that it ought to have filled up with my glances, but no, ~~it~~ the creek

usual  
always was half the flow.

"We're going to be scratching for grass if this keeps up."

It kept up.



Dear Mark--

Corinne McBeth!

Wife of Mike McBeth!?

Montlake neighbors of the Wymans?? Mike in grad school with us???

There. I told her I'd of course impeccably remember to mention running into her--at an east-of-Lake-Washington AAUW group I did a reading to (for? at?)--and if I've plucked the right name out of the scribbles in my notebook, I duly have. And if I remember right, she said Mike's now a banker or some such. She remembered the Wymans once having them and the Doigs for a social evening, and when she said so I could recall it having happened but couldn't recall Mike for the life of me. Ah, but you will. Now you have to.

Just when I finally find a week that the writing starts going easier, that April weather Puget Sound style is getting noticeably less cruel, that my allergies simmer down, what happens but that the Rooshians irradiate the universe. The only good I see in the world's current trends is that Carol's classes benefit the more, the worse the world gets. The space shuttle disintegrating, Marcos disintegrating, Chernobyl disintegrating, it is all media grist, and I know something has happened in the world when she comes home and asks, "Have you had the news on?"

The world aside, which is where I usually try to put it, we're doing okay. I do seem to be over the hump on the homesteader novel, even though I still have a hellacious total of pages to write before New Year's Eve. Have hit the point in the plot where I can look ahead and see where everything (well, almost) fits, and given my magpie style of composition I can now make the day's quota of pages wherever the dickens I want, as long as it's in that plot ahead. As Carol said this morning when I may have actually whistled in the kitchen, "There stands a happy man, able to write anywhere in the book he pleases."

Been kind of a slog getting here, though. We've recently been through a bathroom re-do and Carol's case of flu, neither of which we want to repeat in the next 30 years. When she went down with the flu toward the end of winter quarter she even stayed home from work a day, which is always a gauge that she feels pretty truly crummy. Guess it begins in grade school, huh, that any educational group of more than one person starts handing around pestilence; certainly year after year, flu rampages through Carol's students and then the faculty. Or do germs behave better than that in the Midwest?

Here on my front, I've been to Montana, briefly: in February my uncle Wally, my mother's youngest brother, died of cancer. Of three kinds of it, in fact, at 61. When I was a kid growing up Wally and I were close--I boarded out with him and his family a number of times in my ricocheting grade school career--but drifted considerably apart since my grandmother died; one of those strange funeral-aftermath things, in which I thought I was doing Wally a favor by splitting Grandma's funeral costs with him and he evidently thought, perhaps on the basis that I have enough money to live in Seattle and therefore can afford about anything, that I should pay it all. I was more hurt than miffed (though a little of that, too,

Here winter plies his craft/soldering the years with ice...

~~The~~ Yes, and history can say the seam between 1919 and 1920 was about

triple thickness. The weather was startling, constantly startling;

a person ~~xxx~~ just could not get used to so great a quantity of snow

and cold.

*hot crunt of the*  
The ~~summer~~ first to feel the ~~unrelenting~~ summer were the 'steads.

With no rain, their dry-land grain ~~withered~~ withered day by day. The

last year's  
prices of war were gone now too--\$2-a-bushel wheat suddenly was \$1-a-

bushel or less. By the first of August, the wagons were beginning to

come out of the south benchlands. The Keevers, family and furniture.

Billy Reinking rode down to return the copy of (RLS) I had ~~lent~~ lent him and

reported that ~~his~~ his family was moving into Gros Ventre, his father

was taking a job as printer at the Gleaner Office. The Thorkelsons and

00s and 00s stayed, and to my surprise, the Hebners; there was so little *but then*

evidence of how they made a living that hard times barely applied to them

Hebners.

I watched, their wheeltracks undoing the wheeltracks ~~and~~ when I marked

off their homestead claims. And I watched Rob, for any sign he regretted

the land-locating we had done. I saw none in him, but by now I knew

*glimpse*  
you do not ~~see~~ so readily into a person. *Who knew.*

The Two country felt oddly stopped; as if you were striding along

and suddenly your feet would not lift from the ground. ~~Elsewhere~~ Elsewhere in

Montana the summer was at least as bad, drought and grasshoppers.



Does Beth forgive me for having loved her mother? No, I think that

cannot be said. She has relented toward me for Varick's sake, but

Probably  
forgive is too major. <sup>Probably</sup> More than anyone except Anna and ~~me~~ myself, Beth

knows what ~~my~~ turmoil my passion caused in her mother. The scene at

Badger Creek would always rule her attitude toward me.

Hard, but fair enough. For twenty-~~five~~<sup>one</sup> years I endured not having

Anna as my wife. For however long is left to me, I will face Beth's

silent opinion of me.

...

The sake of others. Where does theirs stop and our own begin.

can I live my own life  
Tell me, anyone: how ~~do we live our~~ without marring someone

else's. (any other)

...

Come stand  
here under  
my skin

was  
forgiving

1918  
1897  
21



standpoint of my own health, climb back on Mouse and retreat to my original side of the arena.

For information's sake, I leaned around Leona and peered over the hood of the car. And was met by startled stares from Ted and Thelma Tracy--Leona's parents--and another couple with whom they were seated on a blanket and carrying on a conversation.

"Your folks are looking real good," I mumbled as I pulled my head back to normal. "Nice to see them so."

Leona, though, had shifted attention from me to the specimen of horseflesh at the other end of the reins I was holding. "Riding in style, aren't you?" she admired.

"His name is Mouse," I confided. "Though if he was mine, I'd call him, uh, Chief Joseph."

Leona slowly revolved her look from the horse to me, the way the beam of a lighthouse makes its sweep. Then asked: "Why not Crazy Horse?"

From Leona that was tiptop humor, and I yukked about six times as much as I ordinarily would have. And...

ch 7 - dry spring.  
combined  
Tom H. H. H. H. H.  
of  
the  
letter  
to  
be?

Spring is the most uneven season of ~~this country~~ Montana, which is  
saying a lot. You can never be sure when spring is going to arrive;  
and then if it happens to, whether it's going to stay beyond the next  
twenty minutes. More than a few times I have known mid-May snowfalls  
to fill this valley above our shoe tops. That these damp heavy bread-  
dough snows are perilous to lambs and calves but also are wonderful  
bringers of grass are a perplexity, but if you dwell in Scotch Heaven  
you have been perplexed before.

207

Doc Spence's office. Across the empty lot from Doc's, the office of the lawyer, Eli Kinder. Who, strange to say, was a regular figure in the sheep traffic through this street. Eli was a before-dawn riser and often would arrive downtown just as a band of sheep did. It was odd to see him, in his suit and tie, helping shove those woolies along Main Street, but Eli had been raised on a ranch down in the Highwood Mountains and knew what he was doing.

The sidestreet businesses, Tracy's creamery and Ed Heaney's lumber yard and Adam Kerz's coal and trucking enterprise.

The set of bank buildings, marking what might be called the down of downtown: the First National Bank of Gros Ventre in tan brick, and cater-corner from it the red brick of what had been the English Creek Valley Stockmen's Bank. The Valley Stockmen's went under in the early 1920s when half of all the banks in Montana failed, and the site now was inhabited, if not exactly occupied, by Sandy Stott's one-chair barber shop. The style in banks in those times was to have a fancy doorway set into the corner nearest the street intersection--Gros Ventre's pair of bank buildings stared down each other's throats in exactly this fashion--and when Sandy took over the Valley Stockmen's building he simply painted barber-pole stripes on one of the fat granite pillars supporting the doorway.

What have I missed? Of course; also there on the Valley Stockmen's block, the newspaper office with its name proclaiming on a plate-glass window in the same typeface as its masthead: Gleaner. Next to that a more recent enterprise, Pauline Shaw's Moderne Beauty Shoppe. The story



--At last a chinook arrives, about the second week in March. As it goes on for a few days there is melt and slop everywhere, and already the slope of Breed Butte that had the least snow (because it blew off, down into Scotch Heaven, all winter) is showing bare patches and scruffy last year's grass. But the chinook doesn't brighten Rob's winterlong dark mood; he resents that it's come too late, in terms of them salvaging any real profit from the sheep. Also, the warm wind seems to fray his nerves, as a chinook ~~xx~~ can do; the change in the air is so sudden and eerie, the atmosphere is so charged, it can be unHINGING. In this circumstance, Angus sets out to meet Rob to feed the sheep, knowing that because of the melt the winterlong feedground is too messy to use any more and they ought to begin feeding the sheep up on the baring slope of Breed Butte.



Silently we shoveled hay, what there was of it, and silently I went

home to Adair and he to Breed Butte.

Daily now, the calculations sat over me, always different but never good. If we saved two-thirds of the sheep; if the lamb crop was 00; if wool prices came back up to 00; but if lamb prices didn't... The sheepman's curse, that there are as many ways to worry as ~~there~~ there are numbers.

--the weather worsens steadily as they go, the mountains blanking out with what they have to hope is only fog or cloud, not storm. But the wind picks up, telling them they're in for it. By the time they reach the Double W fenceline halfway between Valier and Gros Ventre, Varick halts the procession for a conference. He tells Rob and Angus he thinks they'd better not try follow the tracks of the route they came, because if the weather becomes a true blizzard those tracks will disappear and they'll begin circling on the featureless prairie. He proposes instead that they stick with the Double W fenceline, a longer but surer way to Gros Ventre, following it south to where it meets the creek and they then can follow the creek west to town and safety. Angus presses the fenceline idea to Rob, who is reluctant to take the longer route:



"Then we'll do this," I stipulated. "I'll go out with you, for

*however*  
~~as~~ far ~~as~~ Rob can *still* see me. Then you go out beyond me, on the rope."

"That sounds as good as any,"

~~"Well, we got to do something,"~~ Varick agreed. Rob only shook

his head yes.

Varick and I set out, the snow to our knees in a fresh drift.

How many layers were there. This wasn't a winter, it was geologic ages  
of snow. It was--

I stopped, and reaching a hand to Varick's shoulder made him stop  
to. We looked back. Nothingness. Our tracks going into the whirling  
snow we had come out of.

The bastard. The utter betraying triple-slippery *unforgiving* ~~conniving~~ bastard  
had let us go too far. *letting the snow...* He was ~~going to~~ *ting* let us vanish.

*a sound besides wind*

Then ~~it~~ came. "Far enough." The blizzard swirled in a new way

and the wraith figure of Rob was there, ~~shaking~~ waving both arms over  
his head. "Far enough. Far enough."

Varick's heavy breathing was close to mine. "He always <sup>was</sup> one to  
press the luck," my son said. "Particularly when it's somebody ~~else's~~ else's."

We breathed together, squinting for sign of the fenceline ahead, none.

"You ready to go fishing?" *asked* ~~said~~ Varick, and away he went, the rope around  
his waist and in my mittened hands.

Varick halted us. What now? One more time I waved Rob up to us as Varick trudged back to me.

"This don't feel right to me," Varick reported. "I haven't found that fenceline yet ~~and~~ and we ought've been back to it by now."

"We must not have come far enough to hit it yet, is all," Rob spoke what was in my mind too.

Varick shook his head. "We've come pretty damn far. <sup>No</sup> That fence ought to be here by now, but it isn't."

"Then where to Christ is it?" demanded Rob. Our faces said that each of the three of us was morally certain we had come the right way after veering around the coulee, that we ought to have come to the fence again by now. Yet what did we know, against tricks of a blizzard. *MS of logic*  
~~Confusion confounded, ours as we huddled there.~~

"The sonofabitch might be under us," Varick suggested. <sup>#</sup> With his overshoe he scuffed aside the day's freshfall to show us the old hardened snow beneath. If we were <sup>huddled there</sup> on a big drift where the snow had built itself onto the brow of the coulee all winter, fenceposts and barbed wire buried below could be ~~seen~~ <sup>seen</sup> ~~foot~~ <sup>seen</sup> under us, right enough. And if we were overshooting

*stayed in  
giant  
& anything  
else  
has been  
steep*



each  
If the worst came, we would have to kill a horse, gut it, and get  
inside the carcass for the warmth of its body. Whether Rob and I  
could last through a situation like that, I did not know. But I was  
sure Varick could. My Montanan son could last.

had to  
believe

My new situation brought friendships down to their foundations, or lack of. The 00s and 00s would have nothing whatsoever to do with me. 00 would greet me heartily, then poormouth me to the next person he met. I longed for Lucas, who braved opinion all those years with Nancy and persisted over it. I was determined to persist, too. But the doing of it was another matter.

Only Toussaint Rennie seemed not merely to accept my parting from Dair, but to approve. "These in-laws, Angus. They are a wrong idea. The best wife is an orphan."

The major day of my new summer alone came when Ninian Duff rode up.

"Angus," he greeted me in his declaring way.

I was gladdened to see him, this first face of Scotch Heaven.

"Come down and come in. I'll put coffee on."

If this had been any other man than Ninian, I'd say he hesitated. But with Ninian it was a weighing, a moment of judgment about procedure, and after that instant he swung down from his horse like a king descending.

"Let's save your coffee, I have to be back in time for dinner. Angus, what I've come about is the school. You may have heard Miss 00 is marrying young 00?"

use  
out of  
everywhere

Maybe you remember the New Year's Eve--it <sup>even</sup> may have been the hinge between

Of those years of Varick's growing, and of Blair and me in our 1906 and 1907--when I stepped from Rob and Judith's door, and back in marriage, there are fondly <sup>below on - KZ</sup> as the first-foot, and remarked that down ~~at~~ where the light of the

Duffs' house was shining I could all but hear Ninian setting the universe straight on the sort of year he wanted--Oh Lord, we ask you on this

Hogmanay, give us a year of white bread and none of your gray. You

giggled at that until you hiccuped.

always  
myself  
N.F.

410  
↓ 50  
Rob to  
teach  
you  
to  
swim,  
in  
beaver  
ponds

country  
child





*Missionary Duncan and his Tsimshian elders diplomatically laid out their new town with every house occupying a corner lot, thus avoiding intratribal disputes over choice properties.*

latch, the custom of giving away all of one's goods to earn increased respect and status.

Duncan, however, was accustomed to apportioning life along the lines of a balance sheet. On the plus side for his missionary work were the industrious nature of the Tsimshians and their skill in trading and building. The tribe was notably clever, Duncan remarked in his journal, in woodcarving and the construction of immense longhouses.

His first months at Fort Simpson were spent in learning enough of the Tsimshian language to preach it. (Duncan was, in fact, the first white man to master the intricacies of this native tongue.) In June 1858 he began holding religious meetings in the Indian camp. The stocky missionary would be the subject of both admiration and criticism during his sixty-one years among the natives, but no one ever disparaged his leadership powers. He preached and he impressed. The Tsimshians had been in contact with white men for about three generations, but most of the whites were traders who were unconcerned with Indian souls or with their material and physical well-being. The patient little white man was a new phenomenon for the Tsimshians, and his dogged certitude awed many of them into trying the religion which he spoke from a book.

At the end of Duncan's first year on the frontier, he summed up: the Tsimshian converts had learned the consequences of

both good and bad conduct, and "they can sing hymns and learning 'God Save the Queen!'"

By the spring of 1862, the missionary was secure enough in his relations with the Tsimshians to lead several hundred of his followers away from Fort Simpson to establish the village of Metlakatla, seventeen miles to the south. Duncan had in mind a self-sustaining community of Christian Indians, isolated from the moral taints the white frontier inflicted upon tribal life. The tenets from his youth in Yorkshire—educated Christian living, organization, mechanization—would undergird his frontier utopia.

In a continental history crisscrossed by Spanish friars, French Jesuits, Orthodox priests, horseback Methodists, and countless other Christianizers of North America's native peoples, Duncan's plan for the salvation of the Tsimshians perhaps was not unique. But the thrust of Indian policy across North America in the last half of the nineteenth century, beyond simply clearing the natives from any land desired by whites, was to try to convert the Indians into farmers. William Duncan viewed this customary agricultural approach as nonsense. He undertook to tutor his Indian followers in the Industrial Revolution.

"You cannot make all of them farmers any more than I can make all white men farmers," he insisted. "Have a



"Men think they know every inch of life."

"You've met every man there is in the world, have you?"

"A reasonable sample, I'd say."

"There's your problem then ~~there's~~ hanging about with the  
reasonable ones. They're notoriously short on imagination. Show  
a reasonable man a mermaid and he'll notice the half that's fish."

✓ ✓  
Somewhere in him lingered the boy who had helloed all the horses  
that long-ago morning at the road camp at St. Mary's. Somewhere in

me waited an eventual man along the general lines of Pete. The phases  
of ourselves are as incredible as the way snakes shed their skins.

It sometimes  
seems to me  
that

2-11-81  
edited, 2-18-81

anchored in Sitka Sound and the Russians are in their beds with their thumbs up their butts." Melander was in high humor from their progress thus far.

"But <sup>pain</sup> What about you other <sup>panting</sup> two, what's your guess? Are the Russians after as Brother Wennberg thinks, us like hounds onto hards <sup>eye</sup>?"

"No," Karlsson ~~was~~ offered. "They think we can't survive."

<sup>"What makes</sup> ~~"Why do~~ you think we can?" retorted Wennberg.

"Because we're alive to this moment, and closer to Astoria with each stroke of the paddle."

"Your prediction, Braaf?"

"They're not after us. They don't think of us at all by now."

Wennberg snorted. <sup>dance</sup> "We ~~sashay~~ out of New Archangel practically under their noses and they don't even think about us? Braaf, your head is mud."

"They have to forget us, or we'll mean too much to them. You learn that fast in the streets. The ones who rule never bother their minds with the likes of us. The provisions I took from the Russians, they regret. That they're ~~are~~ short of four faces at work-call, they <sup>Maybe</sup> regret. They ~~may~~ even regret the Kolosh canoe. But us ourselves, we're wisps ~~wisps~~ to them by now."