

ONE

This time of year, the report from the
~~dust counties of northeastern Montana,~~
 in the northeastern part of the state

customarily has it that Lady Godiva
 could ride through the streets there
 without even the horse seeing her. But
~~even over east~~ this spring's rains are
 said to have thinned the air sufficiently
 to give the steed a glimpse.

--Gros Ventre Weekly Gleaner, June 1

That month of June swam into the Two Medicine country. In my
 life until then I had never seen the sidehills come so green, the
 coulees stay so spongy with run-off. A wet May evidently could
 sweeten the universe. Already my father on his first high patrols
 was encountering cow elk drifting up and across the Continental
 Divide to their calving grounds on the west side. They, and the
 grass and the ~~wild-~~ alfalfa hay meadows and the benchland ~~barley~~, all were a good
 three weeks ahead of season. Which of course accounted for the
 fresh mood everywhere across the Two. ~~It's~~ ^{--as} ~~said~~ ^{always} spring rain in
 range country is as if ~~someone is handing around~~ halves of ten-dollar
~~are being handed around, with the other halves~~
 bills with the remainder promised at shipping time. And so in the
 sheepmen, the cowmen, ~~the Forest Service people,~~ the storekeepers of Gros Ventre,
~~our Forest Service people,~~
 in Gros Ventre, in just everyone that start of June, hope was up and

2
would stay strong as long as the grass did.

Talk could even be heard that maybe Montana at last had seen the bottom of the Depression--a site, Bill Reinking once wrote in the Gleaner, that tends to move around like a mirage. After all, the practitioners of this bottomed-out notion ~~now~~ went around pointing out, last year was a a bit more prosperous, or anyway a bit less desperate, than the year before. A nice near point of measurement which managed to overlook that for the several years before last, the situation of people on the land out here had been ~~pretty damn~~ purely godawful. I suppose I ought not to dwell on dollar matters when actually our family was scraping along better than a good many. Even though during the worst years the Forest Service did lay off some rangers--Hoovered them, the saying went--my father

was never among them. True, his salary was jacked down three times, and Christ only knew if the same wasn't going to start happening again.

But we were getting by. Nothing extra, just getting by. Yet damn anyway, it has always graveled me that stock market players who happened to lose their paper fortunes are the remembered figures of those times. The eastern professors who write as if the Depression set in the day Wall Street tripped over itself in 1929 seem not to know it, but by then Montana already had been on rocky sledding for ten entire years. The winter of 1919--~~some of the~~ men my father's age and older still just called it that sonofabitch of a winter-- was the one that delivered hard times ~~to the stockmen.~~ Wholesale. As Dode Spencer, who had the ranch farthest up the south fork of English Creek, used to tell: I went into that '19 winter with four thousand head of ewes and by spring they'd evaporated to five hundred. Trouble never travels

lonesome, so about that same time livestock and crop prices nosedived because of the end of the war in Europe, and right along with that, drought and grasshoppers showed up to take over the dry-land farming. It began to be just a hell of a situation, my father ^{always} summed up those years when he and my mother were trying to get a start in life. ~~Then~~

Anyplace you looked you saw people who had put ^{twenty} ~~thirty~~ years into this country and all they had to show for it was a pile of old calendars. ~~Then~~

when drought circled back again at the start of the Thirties and joined forces with Herbert Hoover, bad progressed to worse. That is within my own remembering. Rancher after rancher and farmer after farmer, getting in deep ^{er} with the banks. Gang plow and ditcher, work horses and harness, haymow and cream separator: everything on those places was mortgaged except the air. And then foreclosure, and ^{the} ~~an~~ auctioneer's sale. Nor, from what we heard, was the situation here in the Two

~~country~~ ^{hard} as ~~dire~~ as what was going on elsewhere. Autumn upon autumn, to take just one further example from a possible many, the exodus stories kept coming out of the High Line country to the north and east of us, and right down here on the highway which runs through Gros Ventre anybody who looked could see for himself the truth of those tales, the furniture-loaded jitney trucks with farewells to Montana painted across their boxboards in big crooked letters: ~~Goodbye~~ GOODBY OLD DRY and AS FOR HAVRE YOU CAN HAVE 'ER.

So it was time hope showed up.

—

#

Then finally, ~~and~~ the most

^{line of thought}
startling offshoot of all, the sharpness between my father and Alec.

If I'd had to forecast, say

at about the point Alec was announcing marriage intentions, my mother was the natural choice to bring down the house on him. She of course did ^{more than amply} make herself known, but the ~~awful~~ finale of that suppertime was all-male McCaskill: You're done running my life, flung by Alec as he stomped out with Leona in tow, and Nobody's running it, including you, from my father to Alec's departing back.

Put that way--the stark moment of an argument breaking off into silence--it may sound like something concluding itself; a point at which contention has been expended. But the fracture of a family is not a thing that happens clean and sharp, so that you at least know that from here on it will begin to be over with. No, it is like one of those worst bone breaks, a shatter. You can mend the place, peg it and splint it and work to strengthen it, and while the surface maybe can be brought to look much as it did before, it always remains a spot that has to be favored. So if I didn't grasp much, I at least held the realization that last night's rift in our family was nowhere near over.

more?

#

down onto both drainages and their various ranches. Three only,

there on Noon Creek--Dill Egan's, and the Reese family place now

run by my mother's brother Pete, and of course, the Double W ~~h~~ home

ranch to the east of them. But the valley of English Creek, there

we could see ranches ~~continually~~ ^{velvet} one after another like green pouches

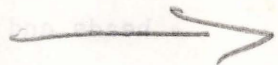
on a long thong. That is to say, we could pick out the ~~green~~ ^{hay} meadows

of each place, for hayfields were splotched ~~all~~ ^{steadily} along English Creek

to the town of Gros Ventre, some ~~of~~ ^{very} them narrow nests of brome grass

which a mowing machine could scarcely maneuver in, others fat sweeping

parcels which took a day or so apiece to cut flat.



Dick
knows
R. says
hay meadows

10 mi
north of
G.V.

"We think it may do well enough for a toast to our first day of journey even so," Melander purred on. "Braaf, would you care to sip first?" the officers' club was the best Braaf could manage under the circumstances." As he spoke Melander's long face was centered with a colossal grin, which now began to repeat itself on Karlsson and even Wennberg. "We think it may do well enough for a toast to our first day of journey even so," Melander purred on. "Braaf, would you care to sip first?"

Melander, like the others, expected Braaf merely to swig and pass along. Instead Braaf stood looking at the jug in his hands and murmured: "Let me remember a moment...Yes, I know..." He lifted his glance to the other three, sent it on above their heads and recited:

"May you live forever and I never die."

Then he drank deep.

weather

1st draft

ch. (Luna), a pick
looking over plains?

A part of the history of the Depression ^{began to} ~~must have brewed~~ here in
 the Two on a day ^g ~~in~~ early May ^{of} 1934. Nobody here could have ^{IdD} ~~known~~
 that it ~~was~~ more than an ordinary wind. Stiff, but that is ~~not~~ news
 in the Two country. As that wind continued east, however, it began
 to work on the plowed fields along the way. An open winter and a dry
 spring had left those fields dry, crumbly. The surface dirt began to
 lift off, be pushed through the air. All across the Dakotas there
 was ^{further} ~~dry dirt~~ ~~waiting~~ waiting to become dust. The brown storm rolled
 into the Twin Cities, and...

And then to Chicago, where it shut down plane flights and caused
 streetlights to ^{be turned} ~~come~~ on in the middle of the day. I don't understand
 the science of it, but that storm grew and widened and darkened as
 it ^{traveled} ~~went~~, Montana dirt and Dakota dirt and Minnesota dirt in the sky

and eyes of Illinois, ~~and~~ Indiana, ~~and~~ Ohio. And the storm ^{swept} ~~kept on~~ ^{and on}
 rolled to New York City and Washington, D.C. At last, out into the
 Atlantic. Of course ^{partly} ~~there were~~ years of dust, thereafter, in the
 Great Plains; but that was the first big one, the one that told the
 nation that matters were worse than anyone knew, the soil itself was
^{fraying} ~~coming~~ loose and flying away.

met
a weather
front and
Canada

never
set

without
rain

plowed
fields

about dust b.
Empire
St. Mary's
dust on
W. H. Ase

nightmare
storm

written 12-21
revised 2-15-21

Near to what Melander estimated ought to be the mid-point of the channel, waves began to chop more rapidly at the canoe, as if ~~more and more~~ annoyed

~~that anything so frail would dare take this far onto the plateau of water.~~

higher against the side of the craft, could be heard,

A fresh sound, a slapping, ~~even against the canoe,~~ and spray ~~now and again~~

to toss itself over the bow and Karlsson.

, though,

Braaf noticed an absence. The gulls which hung in curiosity

beside them in the island waters and the early distance offshore from

Dall had gone. He discovered too that the air felt different, ~~more~~ ^{more toothy in it,}

~~biting,~~ and that off to the west a ~~certain~~ ^{particular} splotch of weather ~~looked~~ ^{resembled}

neither ~~like~~ fog nor rain.

Braaf turned his head enough to ~~see~~ ^{glance} softly over his shoulder to Melander, as if it were their secret: "Snow."

"Jesu Maria," Melander said back.

The ~~storm~~ ^{squall} hit them first with wind. Gust tagged ^{closely} onto gust, taking

the canoe at an angle from the northwest (?) as if sneaking behind the

corner of the eye designs along the prow. Melander watched the ~~water~~ ^{surface of Kaigani}

intently, and what he dreaded ~~was~~ ^{sprung} to creation: wind streaks on the

water, long ropey crawlers of white. "Neptune's snakes," Melander

if used
have later
ref to
"snaky sea"

early draft

with the
encouragement of what the Depression had done to cattle prices, the
Two Medicine country was home mostly to sheep.

more

month And so sheep in those Depression years were the sustenance, the
bread and butter,
manna, of the Two country. For a month solid at the start of summer,
a band of sheep a day ^{ed} would pass through Gros Ventre on the way north
to the Blackfoot ^{se} Reservation, Tommy Larson and Guy Miller each trailing
several bands from all the way down by Choteau, and the Bartley
brothers and Broadhurst Smith and Ira Perkins and the others bringing
theirs from around Bynum and Pendroy, and even Charlie Farrell from
here on English Creek took his three bands ^{north} to the Reservation instead
of up ^{here} onto the national forest. ^{This} That was a time on the Reservation

Pete
Reese

when you could see a herder's wagon on top of practically every rise: a
fleet of white wagons anchored across the land. And off to the east,

^{beyond}
just out of view ~~over~~ the bench ridges, the big sheep outfits from

~~Wyoming~~ over in Washington were running their tens of thousands, too.

sitting demolishing sandwiches
And of course in here to the west where we were ^{at the moment,} my

father's forest pastured the many English Creek bands.

17021 10th Ave. NW
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Evelyn Halen,

I'm at work on a book about Montana during the homestead era, and I wonder if you'd be game to help me out by providing a few of your memories. My own memory doesn't go back far enough; it was my grandparents who homesteaded south of Helena, and the Depression had wiped out the place by the time I was born. As I've been casting around to find people who have first-hand homestead experience, a friend who grew up in your home area of Montana -- Ken Weydert, whose father once managed the sheep-shearing company in Ingomar -- loaned me a copy of the history written for the Ingomar-Sumatra-Vanada reunion in 1976. I hope you don't mind my getting in touch with you; the only way I can be accurate about what I write is to ask people who know.

You may have heard of my previous Montana book, This House of Sky, which is a memoir of my father and my grandmother and myself when we worked on ranches in the White Sulphur Springs Country, and later ran sheep on the Blackfeet Reservation out from Browning. The book I intend now will be fiction -- which means that names don't matter in any stories you might be willing to share with me -- but I want it to be truthful to homestead life. I'd particularly like to hear from you if you have any details on such topics as these:

-- Living arrangements in a homestead cabin: where everybody slept, what you ate, how you passed the evenings, what games you played with brothers and sisters or neighbor kids.

-- Chores: how old was a homestead child when, say, he or she got the responsibility of gathering the eggs? Filling the woodbox? Milking the cow? Did you help with the farming, and if so, at what age did you start?

-- School: I myself boarded out during most of my school years, but always with some other family -- not at a boarding facility as I read that Ingomar had. I'd like to hear any memories of what it was like to live there. Also, anything that particularly sticks in your mind about school days: a memorable teacher or fellow student, for instance.

-- Finally, I'd appreciate any information on how the homestead life ended for your family. For mine and a lot of others, it simply was done in by weather, lack of money, or the rigors of the work. Those things too are part of the story of where we came from.

Thanks for your time,

IVAN DOIG

By the time Dode declared he had to head down the mountain toward home, I actually was looking forward to the rest of the counting trip again. For I knew that tomorrow's sheep were Les Spencer's, farther up in the mountains, and after that would come the interesting prospect of the new Billy Peak lookout tower. It was on my mind, too, that on our way to that pair of attractions, we would spend tonight at a camping spot along the North Fork which my father and I--and yes, Alec in years past--always referred to as the Fulton Fish Market.

start
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. It seemed to me time to get down to the important matter, so I suggested:

Suppose we ought to give some thought to the menu?

more

cut name?

named
by Bob
Marshall

for heaven-certain, Melander, that we'll find this American fort at--what is it, Asturia?"

"Astoria, named for the rich fur man Astor. It is there. I have known sailors whose ships have called there. Perhaps we will not even have to go that far, if we meet a merchantman or supply ship along the way. English, Spanish, Americans or the devil, it won't matter. So long as they're not Russians."

"And the natives? Kolosh and whatever-the-hell-else they might be?"

"I already said the devil."

Even Wennberg was silenced by that, and Melander now disclosed to them the escape date. Christmas. The Russians would be celebrating and carousing and dancing their boots off.

But Varick McCaskill wasn't being voluntary, he was climbing onto

his horse and readying to go be a ranger. ~~the~~ Asking would be the

necessary cost for any words from him, and right then it was higher

Another necessity had to be paid attention to, first.
than I could exact ^{from} of either of us. We needed this first trail day, the

rhythm or ritual or whatever it was of ~~the~~ beginning a counting trip,

of fitting ourselves to the groove of the task ~~me~~ and the travel and

Of entering another Two summer together, I may as well say. All of that,
the mountains. Questions the size of mine would unbalance all that.

Tonight in ^{there,}camp: that would have to be early enough. Or at least

was as early as I could muster the asking.

—

cut from ch. 1
Aug. 29, '53

would angle us through Walter's field and one of Merle Torrance's to where we would rejoin the North Fork road and my father. Up here above the North Fork coulee the outlook roughened, the mountains now in full rumpled view and the foothills bumping up below them. On this part of the route the land steadily grew more beautiful, which in Montana also meant more hostile to settlement. The English Creek valley was considered to be the western edge of the Two's habitable country, and that being so, the people of the North Fork had sited themselves up on the lip of the edge. Merle Torrance, who had the place farthest in under the mountains, original homestead land which butted right against the national forest line, faced almost combat conditions. In winter the wind slammed through there and snow drifted up and up and up until it covered Merle's fence-posts and left him guessing its depth beyond that. About this time of

year, though, came Merle's turn to retaliate against nature, on three fronts. His summer days he spent ransacking the ranch for hay, mowing every coulee that showed enough grass to fill a sheep's belly. Then each dusk he went over to the North Fork with his shotgun and sat sentry for beaver. His contention with beaver about the North Fork--Merle of course wanting water for his hay coulees, the beaver insisting they deserved it for their dams and lodges--was never-ending. Mink have got all the reputation, but these buggers outbreed them all to hell, Merle claimed in half-admiration. His third chosen foe made the beaver battle look like a washcloth fight. Bears. Merle was a burly man with a big low jaw which his neck sort of bagged up into, in a way that always reminded me of a pelican. The notion of him out after a bear was strange enough to be entertaining; that pelican jaw in pursuit of, say, a half-ton grizzly. I suppose the bears never saw any amusement in the situation, though, for Merle trapped them with no remorse. More than once my father veered off from some little stand of timber where Merle had laid poles to keep livestock out and nailed up a sign saying WATCH OUT BEAR TRAP to warn humans. In there would be a can of bacon grease dangling over a huge steel trap, or if the pole pen showed disturbance, in there would be the bacon grease bait and the trap and a damned perturbed bear. No man's land, my father called Merle's neighborhood of the Two, and gave it the widest berth he could.

I just now was passing in view of the one other ranch on this Breed Butte side of the North Fork. Up a draw a little north and west of where I was riding, George and Aggie Emrich ran a shirt-tail

*Trim just
to bears*

outfit, a few cattle and a little hay and a broken-backed barn for the benefit of both. I can't tell you a whole lot about the Emrichs because they lived on terms no one else could penetrate, let alone savvy. About 99 99/100ths of the talking for the two of them was done by Aggie, and none of that could really be called definitive. Anything that might have been going on in George's head got translated by her. They could be standing side by side in front of you and Aggie would declare in her near-baritone George figured this time we'd ought to try two-inch lumber on that shed roof that keeps blowing off as if George was years dead and his wisdom was being recalled. Which may, in fact, just have been habit with Aggie, for she'd been a widow when she married George, and her first husband, Tom Felton, she always referred to as the other one.

The general opinion was that the isolation up here under the mountains had bent the North Fork people, as a prevailing wind will hunch a tree. Rumor liked to carry around the news, for instance, that Walter Kyle would have nothing to do with banks. The theory ran that whatever money he had was planted around his place in Mason jars. (Although, as my father pointed out, who's to say Walt's not just a helluva lot smarter about banks than the rest of us.) And Merle's beaver and bear fixations, George and Aggie's one-tongued conversation: they too could be spoofed at, and were. But generally by persons who had no idea what it took to survive in the very shadow of the Two's mountains. Why wouldn't anybody's mind need to put up a few shields between it and the power of that horizon of the summits of the continent?

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

*original
version*

father always summed up those years when he and my mother were trying to get a start in life. Anyplace you looked you saw people who had put twenty years into this country and all they had to show for it was a pile of old calendars. Then when drought circled back again at the start of the Thirties and joined forces with Herbert Hoover, had progressed to worse. That is within my own remembering. Rancher after rancher and farmer after farmer getting in deeper with the banks. Gang plow and ditcher, work horses and harness, haymow and cream separator: everything on those places was mortgaged except the air. And then foreclosure, and the auctioneer's hammer. At those "hammer sales" we saw men weep, women as stricken as if they were looking on death, and their children bewildered.

Nor, from what we heard, was the situation here in the Two as hard as what was going on elsewhere. Autumn upon autumn, [to take just one further example from a possible many,] the exodus stories kept coming out of the High Line grain country to the north and east of us, and right down here on the highway which runs through Gros Ventre anybody who looked could see for himself the truth of those tales, the furniture-loaded jitney trucks with farewells to Montana painted across their boxboards in big crooked letters: GOODBY OLD DRY and AS FOR HAVRE YOU CAN HAVE 'ER.

So it was time hope showed up.

*Cattle
Those
dry
latter
years**move
on out
and change*

Now Swan I hardly need say was not a man to record himself as whole D or any other degree of it. But that he was tussling with the temptation of the bottle is plain enough in his own diary even so.

Joined the Dashaway Club of Port Townsend--a group who took a pledge of abstinence and whom one unsympathetic editor dubbed a clique of "high-toned drunkards."

Cut my lip with a brush hook this evening in Gerrishes store in
a scuffle with Maj. Van Bokkelin--Van Bokkelin one of Swan's closest friends ^{in Port Townsend}
and a pillar of community respect, and a scuffle hardly thinkable of a

father always summed up those years when he and my mother were trying to get a start in life. Anyplace you looked you saw people who had put twenty years into this country and all they had to show for it was a pile of old calendars. Then when drought circled back again at the start of the Thirties and joined forces with Herbert Hoover, had progressed to worse. That is within my own remembering, those dry bitter years. Rancher after rancher and

farmer after farmer getting in deeper with the banks. Gang plow and ditcher, work horses and harness, haymow and cream separator: everything on those places was mortgaged except the air. And then foreclosure, and the auctioneer's hammer. At those "hammer sales" we saw men weep, women as stricken as if they were looking on death, and their children bewildered.

So it was time hope showed up.

Jick! Set your mouth for it!

Supper, and my mother. It is indelible in me that all this began there right at the very outset of June, because I was out working over my saddle and lengthening the stirrups to account for how much I had grown in the past year, for the ride up with my father on the counting trip

out of that?

Finally my father offered: "Want some peaches? A few in here we
haven't stabbed ^{dead} yet."

"Naw, thanks." I got to head on up the mountain or I'll have
sheepherders after my hide. Yet Stanley did not quite go into motion;
seemed, somehow, to be storing up one ~~final~~ ^{Last} impression of the pair
of us.

My father fished out another peach slice and handed me the can
to finish. Along with it came his casual question, "What was it you
did to your hand?"

94
~~42A~~

more?
~~at~~ ^{or ten} nine years since we had last seen him I couldn't have told you
 anything whatsoever. So it was odd how much immediately arrived ^{back} to
 mind about this unexpected man.

"Jick," I clarified. "Lo, Stanley."

It was my father's turn to pick up the conversation. "Heard you
 were ^{going to} ~~gonna~~ be campjack for the Busby boys."

"Yeah." Stanley's yeah was that Missourian slowed-down kind,

change
 →

from 181

Make a picture in your mind of the cedar canoe atop a sharp white ridge of ocean. Carried up and up by the water's determined sweep at the sky, the high-nosed craft, poised and buoyant as a seabird, at last sleds across the curled crest of wave and begins to glide the surf toward the dark frame of your scene, a shore of black spruce forest. Aristazabal Island, this particular landfall is inscribed on modern charts of the long, crumbled coastline south from the Gulf of Alaska, but three of the four voyagers bobbing to its shore here in late January of the year 1853 know nothing of this name, nor would it matter to them if they did.

Now the canoeman as they alight. Karlsson and Melander and Wennberg and Braaf. Nineteen days they have been together in the slender canoe, dodging from one of this coast's constant humps of forest-and-rock to the next. Each man of them has been afraid many times in those days, brave almost as often. Here at Aristazabal they land wetly, heft their slim but laden ark across the gravel beach into hiding within the salal and salmonberry, then turn away to the abrupt timber. As the trees sieve them from sight, another white wave replaces

REVISSED

In the summer of '16 one of the large sheep outfits of eastern Washington shipped in five thousand ewes and lambs to graze the extreme north end of the Two. I'd spent the night in Browning, in a goddamn flea palace there, so as to get out to the pens early for the count on those Washingtonians' band. But even before the count out of the Browning railroad pens was done, it was being altered. Hungry from 18 hours in the stock cars, the sheep had been allowed to fan out and graze, and drifted onto a flat blooming with deathcamas and lupine. By the time it dawned on the herders, animals were dying by hundreds.

make singular?

subtraction was in order.

Stanley sent men to roust out the druggist not only in Browning but those in Cut Bank and Conrad and Gros Ventre, emptying those pharmacies of all possible pinanginated potash and sulfate of aluminum. We mixed the stuff in wash tubs, and ^{throughout that} ~~all day long~~ ^{Washington} Stanley and the ~~sheep man's~~ herders and helpers scrabbled ~~crew and helpers~~ from town dosed stricken sheep. Most of the dosed ones pulled through, ~~but~~ It was too late though for about a thousand of them ~~these~~ others. At last Stanley put part of his crew to dragging carcasses together and part to fetching dry dead brush from the nearest stream, and all that night brush and sheep burned on the prairie.

somewhere, like all else." He watched Wennberg's eyes. The plead

yet hazed them, still needed the cold airing. "A wintering ~~would be~~

would be a wait on death, Wennberg. Braaf says

truth, with spring the Kolosh will swim solid along here. And the

first canoe of them ^{the next} will have us with Melander."

"But. . ." Wennberg pulled a face, as if he already could ^{Smell} taste

the gall being brewed for him by Queen Charlotte Sound. "This weather,

all the bedammed miles. . . if we'd just wait. . ."

"The miles ^{if} still be there," Braaf murmured.

Karlsson dug for more voice. "Waiting we've already tasted," he

said with decision. "We spat it out at New Archangel,"

In May of 1906 Stanley took the forest ranger's examination. What

^{must have}
~~probably~~ had something to do with my interest in the Forest Service was the

fires of that December of my first year in Kalispell. They burned along the

mountains from Big Fork to Bad Rock Canyon and even further north than that

and I remember how people used to go out on the hills east of Kalispell at

night to see the fire running wild on the mountains. Green kid I was, I

asked why somebody didn't do something about it, ^Aand was told that was public

domain and belonged to the government, not anybody around here. ^{Damn it to hell, though, Jick,} When I saw

that timber being burned up, it just never seemed right to me."

✓
Rangering was like nothing Stanley had ever done or heard of.

One day it was his responsibility to hire ~~X~~ wolfer, the next morning to telegraph off to the Missoula Business College for a secretary.

The wolfer presented himself first, and half-drunk, leading a bony

roan he called ~~Tarantula~~^{Scorpion}. Stanley studied the horse. He don't look

as bad as his name, I said. The wolfer said, Naw, I call him that

for his brand. On the roan's left hip was the Mankato Cattle Company's

fancified M--~~ML~~--which the cowboys of eastern Montana and the Dakotas

had nicknamed for its legs and tail. Stanley decided against asking

how a Mankato horse had got this far from home, made sure his new

employee's rifle was empty, shoved four boxes of 30.06 ammunition so

deep amid the packsack of wolf traps that it would take some degree of

sobriety to find them, and sent the wolfer and ~~Tarantula~~^{Scorpion} off into the

hills. In a few days the secretary, a pale young man in a high collar,

climbed off the stage wanting to know where he could take a bath.

Stanley pointed. There's English Creek, sixty miles of her, you can

pick your choice.

Stanley was into his repertoire again, this time warbling about somebody who was wild and wooly and full of fleas and never'd been curried above her knees. But my mind was on the summer, the situation of it so far and what might be coming in the time ahead. None of it was easy thinking. First off, I had to try to realize that the English Creek station somehow was a different place this summer, or we McCaskills somehow seemed to be different people under its roof than we had been. I tried to track how any of this had happened. Went back through that supper the night before my father and I rode up on the country trip. Godamighty, that wasn't even a week ago. One notion did seep through to me, about what I had asked that night. Instead of "How come?" what I intended maybe was what my parents really were asking of Alec, too: something like "Already?" What was the rush? How could marriage and all be happening so soon? My mother and father I suppose were looking at Alec's announcement as the loss of a son-- although moony as Alec had been most of this year of Leona, I personally couldn't see that he was all that much loss. As for me, though, what I felt, ^{at least} or sensed and was trying to ^{draw} ~~bring~~ into focus, was the unsettling suggestion that Alec's ^{recent} dippy course of behavior in some way

✓
was foreshadowing my own. It was like looking through the Toggery

window at a fancy suit of clothes and saying, by the christ, they'll

never catch me dead in those, but at the same time noticing that they

seem to be your fit.

exact

early draft, done during
Sept '83 revision

Yet when I weighed the past couple of
contributions
days out, what did my apprenticing ~~handiwork~~ amount to? Not too
much at all, at all. I'd skinned some sheep, delivered grub to a
shepherd, contended with a pack horse, drunk a libation or two, or
come right down to it, three. Nothing I could properly call any great
total of accomplishment. I mean, just any sad sonofabitch could come
along and do those.

~~So~~ So, "No," I had answered Stanley shortly and gone on over to
do my cinching. "No, it's all been an education."

survived
lightning

What's a
person to
say?

Stanley

My mind, though, was on a thing ~~he~~ had said as we were saddling the horses. In no way was it what I intended to think about, for I knew fully that I was heading back into the McCaskill family situation, the blowup between my parents and Alec. Godamighty, the supper that produced all that wasn't much more than half a week ago. ^{And there was} But against the matter of explaining my intentions, to my mother why the tops of my boots gaped ^{legs} out like funnels and my pants looked like I'd jumped into a mountainside with them and ~~where~~ what happened to the tail of my extra shirt. A dwell on. sufficiency to think about.

Stanley had said as we were saddling the horses that he hoped

I didn't mind too much ^{about} missing the rest of the trip with my father,

to the Billy Peak lookout and all. I hope you don't feel hard done

by. Which of course was exactly how I did feel. Yet when I weighed

it all out, what did my apprenticing days with Stanley amount to?

I had skinned some sheep, delivered grub to a sheepherder, contended

with a pack horse: I couldn't call it any great total of accomplishment.

I mean, just any sad sonofabitch could come along and do that much.

'No,'

So I answered Stanley shortly: No, no. It's all been an education.

civilization's portions of maps now that the injunction ought be linked, Here be monsters. Melander's firelit maps represent an instant of balance in humankind's relationship with the North Pacific: an era after sea serpents were discounted, and before ports and their tentacles of shipping lanes proliferated. To cast a glance onto these functional maps is like seeing suddenly beneath the fog-and-cloud skin of this shore, down to the truth of bone and muscle and ligament. The frame of this shoulder of the Pacific is what Melander avidly needs to know, and the Tebenkov maps peel it into sight for him.

The first map, that of New Archangel and Sitka Sound, Melander particularly gazes at again and again. The detail here is most phenomenal of all: the exact black speck, slightly longer than wide, which was their barracks is shown just above the cross-within-a-cross indicating the church of St. Michael. (Melander had unrolled for Karlsson this map for his opinion about the best route through the Sound's covey of islands and been gratified by Karlsson's blink of surprise. "You can see everything but the flea in the governor's ear, aye?") Melander worked much with maps in his sea-time, but to be able to trace from the very dwelling where you packed your sea-bag, well, now, this is a new thing of the world.

The coastscape at hand just now is not Sitka Sound, however, but the geography enwrapped in the third of Melander's furl of maps. Here these 0 dozen miles south from Sitka, the map begins to report a lingual stew, islands left as Heceta and Noyes, Baker and Suemez, Dall

revised, Sept. '83

to look ahead to could not be asked for. Our ride led up the north fork of English Creek, which actually angles mostly west and northwest to thread in between Roman Reef and **Phantom** Woman Mountain to its source, and where the coulee of the North Fork opened ahead of us the backdrop of the mountains filled the vee like a towering ancient dam. Lift your eyes just atop that, and there the first summits of the Rockies sat on the horizon like stupendous sharp boulders. Only when our first hour or so

improve
with
descrip

Despite what the calendar indicates, autumn was the onset ~~of~~
~~threshold you could say,~~ ^{Varick} of a McCaskill year. The Two Medicine National
Forest got reworked by my father each autumn almost as if making sure
to himself that he still had all of that zone of geography. Of course
every ranger is supposed to inspect the conditions of his forest at
the end of the grazing season. My father all but X-rayed the Two.
South Fork and North Fork, up under the reefs, in beyond Heart Butte,
day after day he delved the Two. And somehow too when the bands of
sheep trailed down and streamed toward the railroad chutes at
Blackfoot or Pendroy, he was on hand there to look them over, talk
with the herders, the ranchers, the lamb buyers, join in the jackpot
bets about how much the lambs would weigh. I suppose it was the time
of year when he could assess his job, see right there on the hoof the
results of his rangership. In a man who sometimes seemed doubtful
whether his life totted up to what it should, that must have been a
necessary inventory season, autumn.

move
in cut

Thinking about all this since then and trying to go over in my mind how a person happens into the time he does, I have come to see that my father was of a particularly unmoored generation. The ones who are first-born in a new land. I believe it will be the same when there are births out on the planets or the moon: those first-born ~~will~~ always, always will live in a straddle between the ancestral way of life and their own future. In my father's case the old country, Scotland, was as distant and blank as the North Pole, and the fresh one, America, still was making itself. Especially a ^{rough-edged} part of America such as the Montana he was born into and began growing up in.

path
route into

In truth, fen country, trying to decide whether to remain marsh or to danken into bayou. Tide, stream, current, seep, all were steadily at work on the decision, sometimes almost within splash of each other. During the sleep of Karlsson and Wennberg, this bay's rivers ~~had been~~ were flowing into themselves, turned backwards by the tide advancing between their banks; for some hundreds of yards at each mouth, the Willapa, the Querquelin, the Palux, the Naselle slowly ^{creeping} ~~crept~~ back toward their origins, like bolts of olive-drab cloth surreptitiously trying to roll themselves up. Meanwhile, ^{out of} ~~at~~ high clay cliffs ~~across them~~, jets of water big around as a Wennberg arm, the bay's version of a trickle, were diving into the rivers.



distance
to
Astoria
map
has
W.
coast

27

early draft

ch. 2

successive

This will mark the 15th ~~consecutive~~ ^{successive} ~~Fourth~~ ^{in a row} of July that Gros Ventre has ~~creek~~ ^{community} mustered a picnic, rodeo and dance.

Regarding those events, ye editor's wife inquires whether somebody still has her big yellow potato-salad bowl from last year; the rodeo will feature \$285 ¹⁸⁰ in prize money; and the dance music will be by ~~Nola~~ ^{Jim} Atkins, piano, and ~~Jim~~ ^{Jim} Swan, fiddle.

--Gros Ventre Weekly Gleaner, June 29

I have to honestly say that the next few weeks were ^{somewhat} pale in comparison with my Stanley episode.

Yet memory, at least this one of mine, refuses ^{ever} to famish itself.

Its tricks of recall find one morsel, then another, then something other than that, ~~until~~ aggregating moments from this next stint of time until I scarcely know where to start on making sense of them all.

I suppose simply ^{begin} with the main unexpected development, which was that for one of those weeks I was elevated into being the man of the house.

Before anything sniff out? more

for very long

It makes best sense looking at it + Oct. 27th 78

4 Weather brought this about, as it did so much else that summer. The

cool wet mood of June ^{continued} ~~kept on and on~~, and ^{about} ~~just after~~ the middle of the month ~~in~~ our part of Montana had a truly solid rain, a toad-drowner

that settled in around noon and poured ^{and on} ~~on~~ into the night. That storm

delivered snow ^{into} ~~in~~ the mountains--in the Big Belts south beyond Sun

River several inches fell, and here in the Two along the high sharp

parts of all the peaks that next morning a white skift shined, fresh-

looking as a sugar sprinkle. You could bet, though, there were a bunch

of perturbed and uneasy sheepherders up there looking out their wagon

doors at it and not thinking sugar. Anyway, since that ^{storm} ~~rain~~ was a ^{straight forward} ~~plain~~

douser without any lightning and left the forests so sopping that

there was no fire danger, the big thinkers at Two headquarters saw

~~it~~ ^{this} as a chance for detached duty by a couple of its rangers.

^{Two headquarters} Refresher courses were a favorite theme of ~~Region One~~ at the time,

and both my father and OO of the Blacktail Gulch station down on Sun

River had been so assiduous about ^{evading} ~~avoiding~~ them that the finger of

selection now did not need to waver ^{whatever} ~~at all~~: it pointed OO and my father

to Missoula for a week of fire school.

longed to
be
stayed as
of was
nearly
in love
c. Two

Cliff/Bowen
has been
given course

To ship
to Missoula
for a
refresher
course.

early
draft

checked. look
as if it was
final stroke
it o'clock
needed to complete

You could hang your hat on Ed Heaney's habits. He locked the
door of the lumber yard office at six, and if he wasn't walking in
the kitchen door ^{at} five minutes later, ^{after it} Genevieve Heaney started ^{peering} looking
out the ^{kitchen} window for him. As soon as supper was over he OO, and then

- if somebody spent
up the break had
come on he still
and how he listened

^{at seven} done he would go in the living room, plant himself in his rocking chair
^{click on} and ^{He listened straight through} listen to the radio until 10 o'clock, when he would go to bed.

^{Then} Everything done in the Heaney household in the evening was done against
the backdrop of Ed's big Philco, and Mrs. Heaney and Ray and Mary Ellen
had got so used to tuning out OO that you often had to say something
to make it register on them.
to them a couple of times, before it registered with them.

Rayed mimic
Eddie Carver
& W Wendell
any of those

early draft

Our laughing multiplied with each atrocity on Arlee, until the

bed was shaking and we tried to tone it down before Ray's folks woke

and ~~up~~ wondered what was going on. But every time we got almost

under control, one or the other of us erupted again, and on and on

we laughed until we were almost sick, and then we ~~laughed~~ laughed at the

ridiculousness of that. Nor, when Ray finally played out and dropped

to sleep, did that laughing fever entirely leave me. I would doze

for awhile and then be aware I was grinning into the darkness about

one or another moments of that Fourth, my mother giving her ^{Ban English} speech and

and Dode at the top of that leap by Coffee Nerves, my father calling out the Dude and Belle and my brother one-punching

Earl Zane and Ray pitching in on Arlee and, yes, Stanley collecting

Velma Simms, they clicked and whirred into place in me, every one of

perfect ~~perfect~~ them a piece of the day and now of the night. It may have

been the last night of my life when things were uncomplicated enough

that I would wake up chuckling, give the dark a Chessy cat grin, and

drop off until I had to laugh again.

#

memory
out of his

my own
laugh's
wrote
me
again

as he poked at the char of Wennberg's victuals. Braaf himself, it went

without saying, could not be entirely relied upon to prevent food from

finding its way into his mouth before it could arrive at the others' plates. By the fifth day, then, the cooking chore had chosen Karlsson.

He was no chef de cuisine, but his output at least stilled the nightly grumbling that one had might as well go off into the forest and graze.

Wennberg's particular tithe turned out to be his paddling. He

was not built best for it, much too much ham at his shoulders and upper

arms, but his impatience made him take on the water like a windmill in a high breeze. Always exerting toward Karlsson's example of deftness,

Wennberg stroked at half again the pace Melander could manage, twice

as great as the inconstant Braaf. Day on day, the canoe pulled itself through the water primarily on the forward paddles of Karlsson and

Wennberg. Melander would have preferred more balance to the propulsion, yet it worked.

To his own surprise as much as anyone's, Braaf proved the best of them at reading the weather. Long before even Melander, the one

seasoned sailor among them, Braaf would know a change was coming onto the ocean, as if along with his naive robin face he had a bird's hollow bones in which to feel the atmosphere's shift.

And Melander, Melander provided the edge strength to hold them all into place. Navigating, finding water for the cask, fetching firewood, mothering the canoe and its stowage, detail was Melander's personal orbit. Yet this ability to hover usefully was less notable

There of course was more to the rodeo after that. Tollie

inevitably thought to proclaim: Well, folks--the show--goes on.

But the only way ^{for} it ^{to} could go after that performance by Coffee Nerves

and Dode was downhill, and Ray and I only stayed through the ^{next} last

^{section} ~~go-round~~ of calf roping to see whether Alec's ^{17½ seconds} ~~second-place time~~

would hold up. Contestant after contestant rampaged out, flailed

the air with a lariat, and came nowhere close to ^{Alec's} the time of either

~~or on Alec.~~

It had been a rodeo. English Creek had won both the saddle bronc riding and the calf roping.

early draft ✓

From a mile or so outside of town, Gros Ventre looked like a green cloudbank--cottonwood trees billowing so thick that it took ^{inspection} some ~~gazing~~, at first, to find traces of houses among them. My own hunch is that ~~somebody~~ ^{cottonwood} the example was taken from Choteau, where trees were spaced along all the streets early on so that restful tunnels of shade developed with the town. ^{Myself, I} (I have never liked a town that makes a person squint. Pay a visit to Conrad on an August day and see what I mean. The downtown there is perfectly fine otherwise, but on a hot day it is like being in a concrete desert--the sun ~~just~~ pouring down onto sidewalk and pavement and brick, and the heat all bouncing back up ^{in your face} at you, not to mention the glare off windshields and store windows. Trees would make all the difference. At least in Choteau and Gros Ventre they did.) If that theory is correct, ^{it surely follows} ~~a consequent certainty~~ is that the early civic thinkers of Gros Ventre decided they could damn well do twice what Choteau ^{ever} could, for ^{when} they ~~then~~ ^{Gros Ventre's} went along ~~the~~ neighborhood streets ^{they} and planted double. A line of trees along the front yards, then another between sidewalk and street. Then the same ~~line~~ colonnade again on the other side of the street. All this of course had been done fifty or more years before, ^a ~~and since that~~ period of time ^{that} will grow you a hell of a cottonwood; ^{by} now every Gros Ventre block where houses stood was dominated by these twin ^{files} ~~lines~~ of big gray trunks, so wrinkled and gullied they looked as if rivulets of rain had been running down them ever since the

employed as a stronghold, and Baranov seized the commanding site for his own thicklogged bastion.

In this summer of 1852, the estimable Baranov three decades dead, a huge double-storied governor's house still called Baranov's Castle squatted there in the air at one extent of New Archangel's single street. At the opposite end rose the

cut

Some writer or another put down that in the history of Montana,

the only definitely ~~known~~ example of civic uplift was when the Virginia

City vigilantes hung the Henry Plummer gang. ~~in 1892. That a bit overstates.~~
I think that overstates, a bit.

~~You~~ You can come into some of the scruffiest of Montana towns and delve

around a few minutes and most likely find two extremely nice features,

the cemetery and the park. In Gros Ventre's case, the cemetery is in

fact on the best site in town, the little rise which overlooks...

The park, though, had its own pleasantness: a half-circle area fronting

on English Creek, just west of main street and the highway bridge.

WPA crews had cleared the willows which were taking over the creek

bank, and ~~put~~ ^{built} some riprap in to keep the spring runoff out of the park.

It now even had a name--Maria Wood Park, although nobody bothered to

call it that, and some people ^{still} wouldn't employ that name if you had paid

them. The naming had been done by a committee, ~~a few years ago~~ ^{before}, to go

along with the WPA work, and ~~the~~ the objectors thought Bill Reinking of

the Gleaner, who was chairman, swayed the other members too far, into

that choice of dubbing the park for Meriwether Lewis's cousin: the same

one Lewis named the Marias River after. The grounds maybe were a little

tenuous; that English Creek is a tributary to the Marias. But be that

early draft
~~1/25/54~~
sample?

My father and mother and ~~Pete~~ and ~~Midge~~ ~~Les~~ and Marie were heading into the grandstand.

I told my father Ray and I had agreed to meet on the fence alongside the bucking chutes, concluding in the style I had lately developed of half-asking, half-saying: all right...?

stipulated
So long as you stay on the fence, ^{stipulated.} ~~he said.~~ I don't want to see

you down in there with the chute society. Every rodeo, a clump of

hangers-on clustered around the bucking chute gates, gossiping and

looking generally ~~in~~ important, and just as regularly they were cleared

out two or three times every rodeo afternoon by rampaging broncs...

I suppose the crowd of them offended my father's sense of efficiency.

Anyway, during the housecleanings when a horse sent them all scrambling

for the fence, it was my father's habit to cheer loudly for the bronc.

I nodded agreement--you could see a lot more from up on the fence

than down in the arena anyway--and went off. ~~Ray arrived just before I~~

~~did, and was saving me a seat...~~

K stared them

--And past Sidney Inlet, and Clayaquot Sound.

"Karlsson, are ^{not} we about done with this fucking island? The
damned place's longer than perdition."

"About, Wennberg. About."

. . . One way or other, about done, yes. . .

¶ --And looped them at last,

past Barkley Sound, where the ^{canoeing,} ~~the~~ Clyoquot tribe read weather from the

behavior of frogs and mice and had concluded this ^{-to be} ~~was~~ a wet, gusty

moon of winter
~~time~~, a time to sit snug in longhouses, yet a while.

Since Cape Scott, the peg of Braaf's calendar had advanced half

a month.

Jicker! he greeted me. What do you know for sure? The words

were about what they ever would have been, yet there was ^{that} sort of

absent-mindedness behind them. I wanted to write it off to the fact

that ~~he~~ ^{this bro of mine} had calf-roping on his mind just then, but ~~now~~ I wasn't quite

convinced that was all there was to it.
sure...

Where'd you get the horse?

Cal Petrie
~~Carol Mitchell~~ ~~lended~~ lent him to me. Cal Petrie
~~Carol Mitchell~~ was foreman

of the Double W. Alec had evidently attracted some attention with

his roping.

I lightly touched the bay's foreshoulder. The feel of a horse

is one of the best touches I know. You missed the picnic. Mom

spoke a speech.

Alec frowned at his rope. Yeah. I had to put the sides on the

pickup and haul this horse in here. A speech? What about? How to

sleep with a college book under your ~~pillow~~ pillow and let it run uphill

into your ear?

No. About Ben English. There wasn't any real reason why this should

have been on my mind just then,



by learning to lead brigades of trappers and traders, keep the native tribes cowed or in collaboration, deliver a reliable 15 per cent profit season upon season to London and, not incidentally, to hold those far spans of map not only in the name of their corporate employers but for the British crown which underlay the company's charter terms like an ornate watermark. Finlayson, McLoughlin, Simpson, Mackenzie, Fraser, others: Caledonians who whittled system into the wilderness, names we know even yet as this continent's northern roster of men of enterprise and empire. But maybe is only maybe, and the facts enough are that on the broad map of midnineteenth-century empires Alaska lies apart from the

alley of this coast, ~~we won't have that~~ either. If it stays sand

beach, ~~won't matter~~. But rocks. Rocks we'll face when they face us. . .

'need to'

"Karlsson, if I hear out of you one more time," ~~he roared~~

"You'll be that much closer to Astoria each time you hear it.

Off your bottom now. This's as close a tide as we'll likely get."

^{of them} They both were panting and stumbling by the time they pushed

the canoe across the sand to the tideline. The most wobbly launch of the entire journey, this one, the canoe nearly broaching into a wave before Karlsson steered it safe.

^{to ocean} They paddled straight out, until Wennberg quit stroking and

asked: "Where to Hell're you taking us? Shore's almost out of sight."

"We need to stay out from those surf waves, or your belly will

some
Paul Revere
among - chute
society and.

some Paul Revere among the chute society cried /
Wup wup wup, here she comes, boys. Just starting up the stairs.

~~Among the chute society,~~ heads swiveled like weathervanes hit by a

~~And yes~~
tornado. I may as well admit, Ray and I also sent our eyes over to
the little flight of steps into the grandstand and the hypnotizing
progress up them of Velma Simms.

like - paper file
- wall

--tighter than last year, I swear to God, someone below us was
contending. And another, But I still want to know, ^{the hell} how does she get
into them? Velma Simms came of eastern money--plumbing equipment I

crooked

believe was its source--and in a community and era which considered
divorce more grievous than manslaughter, she had been through three
husbands. Only the first had been local, the lawyer Paul Simms...

Bogart

rapid as a man can walk. Small wonder that at the eastern reach of this mariners' thicket, islands are bunched like galleons seeking a lee anchorage.

Not a whit of this showed from that calm space between shorelines on Melander's map.

Thirty or forty hillocks of water later, again the heart-skip in the rhythm of the boat.

"Wennberg!" Melander's tone crackled now. "You're dabbling at it again."

The broad man held his paddle just above the wave surface, as though trying to recall whether water or air was the element in which it operated. He swiveled the upper part of his body enough to find Melander. Wennberg's face hung open in a look of surprise. His mouth made motions but no sound. Then, with effort: "I'm. Getting. Sick."

"If you don't paddle you'll get dead, and us with you. Have a

Les lay out there with the toes of his boots pointing up, but
by now Doc Spence was on hand and ~~when Doc held something under his nose~~

~~xxxxxx~~ I did see Les's head move when Doc held something under his nose.

I wanted to be out there, but knew better. Exactly what was not needed
was anybody else in the way. But Ray and I did head for the arena gate...

(town hearse used as ambulance)

"Whyn't you tell us?" Braaf, the question soft. "Melander would've."

"Because I'm not ^{twin to} him, Braaf. ^{Can't be.} And what was the good ⁱⁿ of telling? To have Wennberg here ^{every hour} declaring us dead, might as well have climbed

in the grave with Melander? To have you give up, too, maybe?

Take ^{sharp} a look at telling, Braaf. Melander ^{held off from telling} did, when he couldn't ~~put~~ lay hand to all the maps."

"Melander, double-damn Melander!" Wennberg ^{had sidestepped, was} ~~took a step,~~ clear of the fire ^{now} instead of across it from Karlsson. "Melander was so fucking clever he jiggged his way in front of a bullet. And you're I'll finish you, you fucking fox of a Smalander. . ." the whelp of him.

Wennberg rushed.

Karlsson had an instant to fling up a forearm against the blacksmith's throat, then they were locked. Wennberg's arms around Karlsson, seeking to crush: Karlsson's forearm in pry against the front of Wennberg's neck. The both, grunting: staggering: Karlsson bending like a sapling to stay upright, Wennberg tipping him, tipping him: desperately a Karlsson hand exerted to a Wennberg ear, maybe twist will slow. . .

At its target the hand came against

early draft

more
'strong
horn'

One of our friends--and neighbors--Dode is, Tollie's voice came
bleating from that tin bouquet of 'glory horns. Rode many--a bad one--
in his time. He'll be coming out--on this big sorrel--in just one
minute.

It actually occurred ~~about three seconds~~ ^{no more than a few} from then. Dode had
his grip on the bucking rope and his left hand in the air and said
in that same simple tone, Open.

The gate swung, and Coffee Nerves flew into the arena ~~before Tollie~~

I saw Dode suck in a fast breath, then heard it go out of him
in a huhhh as the horse lit and brought the surprise of its force up
through the stirrups to him. Dode's hat left him and bounced once
on Coffee Nerve's ~~brown~~ rump and then toppled into the dust of the
arena. Maybe imagine that you have just jumped from a porch roof

to the ground and you'll have some idea of the impact ~~was~~ ^{Dode} absorbing.

But he didn't shake loose at all, still sat deep in the saddle. Then

Coffee Nerves launched into ~~his~~ his second jump toward the moon and

Dode raked the horse's shoulders with his spurs, both those actions

^{in rhythm}
beginning at once as if animal and man were reacting to the same signal,

cloud-clearing

No, just one canoe, they couldn't be. Seal hunters or some
such, out for a few days. Cabbageheads."

"You already called them that, and they're still here."

"Aye, well. Can we get our canoe to the water and slide away
without them seeing us?"

"No."

"No." Melander grimaced as if his echo-word had hurt his ears,
then looked back toward camp. "You greet Braaf, I'll do Wennberg."

Again fingers of silence awoke lips. Again Karlsson told the
situation. When his words had sunk into Wennberg and Braaf, Melander
sent Braaf, the most accomplished slinker among them, to keep watch
on the beach. Then Melander glanced at Karlsson, and Karlsson,
after hesitation, nodded. "Yes, it has to be him."

Trying to yawn the last of sleep from himself, Karlsson eased
out through the trees toward the island's edge. As usual, he was
the first awake and the earliest to wonder about weather. This

morning he found that the Pacific lay gray with cold, but no storm
wake braaf enough to tell him, will you, so he and Wennberg won't

think we've gone yachting off without them."

People didn't eat out in those days, so there were only two

feeding places in town. One was The Lunchery. ~~Dale White~~ evidently

~~got the name idea from The Toggery~~ which mostly was frequented by

sheepherders on a bender. I ~~can't vouch that~~ ~~don't know whether~~ this happened, but the

story is that once when somebody asked ~~an old sheepherder~~ when he was going back out

~~among the woolies,~~ ~~herding~~ he said he was washed up, too ~~old~~ ^{creaky} to tramp the hills, ~~all that~~ but he

~~figured he could always~~ ~~was left for him now was to~~ get a job herding flies at The Lunchery.

~~In short,~~

~~So~~ the Lunchery's main claim to fame was that it made the Sedgwick

House cafe look good by comparison.

The other
one
besides
House

more

1st draft

Inasmuch as the Medicine Lodge saloon stood side by side with the Lunchery, Gros Ventre got its "skid road" part of town over with in a hurry. Actually, as with any pleasure emporium, the wickedest thing about the Medicine Lodge was its reputation. ~~Only on a Saturday night did behavior even come close~~ ^{more than one} Stories were told of innocent the bartender, Tom Harry, leaning visitors being startled by a ~~voice~~ ^{fall} toward them and rumbling "Shoot you one?" ~~but~~ ^{the} all he was asking, was whether the ~~customer~~ ^{customer} wanted ~~him to draw a draft beer drawn~~ ^{a glass of tap} from the tap.

Tom Harry had not owned the Medicine Lodge all that long. ~~running a bar, and some said a taxi dance hall as~~ He had come over from Fort Peck. Supposedly all he ~~well, a~~ brought with him was a wad of money and the picture of Franklin Delano Roosevelt which had hung in his Fort Peck enterprise. ^{to step in,} But you never would have known the Medicine Lodge hadn't been in business ~~every day~~ ^{for} for the last few hundred years, Somewhere ~~he~~ TH had come up with stuffed animal heads, several deer and an antelope and a bobcat, ^{a six-point} and ~~an~~ elk head which set off arguments every hunting season about the weight of its absent body. Then in the midst of all this, one tiny sign of life, so to speak: one of those tiny top woodpeckers which dips its head into a glass of water all the time. ^{bobs beak}

minor
a manuscript

behind
bar
want to
cash
register

Thinking back on it, I believe Tom Harry simply couldn't put up with more than the Pastime and Spenger's bartenders were accustomed to ~~xxx~~ ^{even} who in Gros Ventre could come close to the behavior of those Fort Peck dam workers ~~and~~ ^{were noted for} and the ^{ML's} hand-drinking reputation derived from that.

Save
→
cut

But the ~~place~~ ^{held} constant Medicine Lodge also had a legion of the living, more or less. The setters, as my father called the ^{separ} guys who sat around in there--he was not above stepping in for a beer once in a while, and if nobody official-looking was on hand Tom Harry didn't mind my being with him--always occupied ^{stood} the far end of the bar, so that they would and ~~any~~ everybody who entered got long gazes from them as if they were cataloguing the human race. ⁴ I realize decapitated animals and owlish geezers don't sound like much of a motif, but the Medicine Lodge did three times as much business as Spenger's or the Pastime. It just happens that way; people ^{gravitate} ~~pick a~~ place to do their drinking and logic will never veer them.

On a Saturday night the Medicine Lodge howled. Hay hands ~~Besides the men who were washing away~~ who had come in for a bath and haircut at 008s but decided instead to wash down the inside of themselves, a sheep-herder inaugurating a two-week spree, the customary setters who had been building up the calluses on their elbows all week just for this--^{always} a sufficient cast of characters for loud dialogues, occasional shoving matches, and eventual passings-out.

~~It might~~
One night
a war
started in
and it
was like
an earthquake
there.

1st draft

The effect was just remarkable. I can see it as if all this were happening again right now. Earl now in full light, doubled down as Alec stepping around him to collect Leona, he was, and the crowd coming out of the Sedgwick House stopping and staring.

but it was doing him any

between Ray and me beside me, pushing through and "GodDAMN!" exploded ~~from Arlee~~ Arlee combining that with the start of a swing targeted on Alec's passing ~~hand~~ jaw.

Targeted, but ~~never~~ ^{then} delivered. Ray ~~reached~~ reached up, almost casually latched onto it seemed, and ~~caught~~ Arlee's wrist. The intended swing went nowhere after that, Ray hanging onto Arlee as if he'd just caught him with his hand in the cookie jar, and by the time Arlee began to tussle ^{in earnest} with

Ray--thank God for the creeping quality of the Zane brain--I had given

^{Arlee} him a shove from my side to worry him further.

How far ~~where~~ the ruckus might have progressed beyond that I have often ^{speculated} ~~wondered~~. But by then my father was on hand, and somebody was fetching ^{delivered us both some} ~~fetching~~ ^{pounding}

^{2 or 3 other men} Tollie Zane out of the Medicine Lodge, and ~~another~~ man or two came out of the crowd to help sort us into order. "Tick, that's enough," my ^{instructed} father said. "Turn him loose, Ray. It's over."

This too I am clear ~~now~~ about. Those sentences to Ray and me were the full sum of what was said there in that aftermath. ^{what need from} To Alec, my