winnowed for WORK SONG and MISS YOU 14 March '08
JEFF: Jesus, a fuckin' miracle. The card slick's actually gonna tote a bucket a water.

MONTY: (shaking his head in mock sorrow) Jeff, you treat me like a motherless child. And after I stuck up for you the other day, too.

Fellow said you didn't have the brains God give a crowbar. But I told him be was wrong, you sure did.

(Jeff thinks slowly and heavily, glares at Monty, then begins struggling into a stiff pair of brand-new Levi blue jeans as he dresses up for town. John winks at Pete over his coffee cup.)

PETE: (after watching Monty at solitaire) When'd you start playin' cards, Monty? I mean, how old was you?

MONTY: (laughs softly) Can't remember when I wasn't playin'. (He pauses, then continues in a less derisive tone than before.) You heard that song, haven't you, about how a deck a cards is like life itself? (He affects a heavy T Texas Tyler accent to parody the soppy sentiments as he continues to play a winning game of solitaire.) There are 52 cards in a deck, you see, one for every week of the year . . . The four suits, hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades, represent the four seasons of the year. They also represent the seasons of human heart -- love, wealth, war and death. Add up all the spots of all the cards and they come out to 365, one for every day of the year . . . (Monty breaks off his parody with a combination chuckle and snort, and continues playing.)

PETE: But what do you get out of playing cards all the time?

MONTY: They're a game, like anythin' else.
ACT ONE

Scene One

The bunkhouse of a ranch in Montana, in the summer of 1951.

The bunkhouse is a single large room, with raw walls of dark weathered boards and two-by-fours. Even on the brightest day, it would look gloomy and disheveled. Around the room are beds for six men. Monty's is up right, set apart from the others. John's is along the rear wall right center. Bunk beds extend both directions from the corner up left. Jeff has the lower bunk and Rudy the upper in one set. Alex the lower and Pete the upper in the other set.

Each man has only scanty belongings -- a battered suitcase, the bedroll on his bed, perhaps an extra pair of shoes. Some have pictures or pinups on the wall; typically, Monty's pinups are the fleshiest.

A wash stand with a porcelain basin and a galvanized bucket with a dipper in it stands between John's bed and the bunks along the rear wall. A potbellied stove is along the wall down left, with a small pile of chopped wood behind it. A grimy blue porcelain coffee pot sits on the stove. A few scanty shelves are scattered along the walls. A long-unwashed window is behind the wash stand.

A large round table with six assorted and battered chairs is at stage center. The door leading outside is at stage right; down right from it are two bales of hay, with a balehook stuck in the top bale.

The curtain rises to the riffle of cards being shuffled quickly and deftly. Rudy, John and Monty are at the table playing a card game called pitch, with Monty the dealer. Pete is kibitzing over Monty's shoulder. Alex sits on his bunk darning a very worn gray stocking. Occasionally there is the sound of hard rain and the boom of thunder. Monty gives the cards one final brisk shuffle and plops the deck down in front of John:
MONTY: Cut 'em thin an' win, cut 'em thick an' be up shit creek.

(John cuts the deck of cards. Monty slickly deals each player six cards.)

RUDY: I'll bid two.

JOHN: Goddamn the goddamn cards. That the best you can deal, a mess like this? Pass.

MONTY: Three, in them things called ... spades.

(Monty flips down his first card with a flourish as he says "spades", then rapidly sweeps the cards to him and leads out again. John disgustedly throws in his hand on the third trick; Monty takes every trick.)

MONTY: Don't much like them spades, huh? (He turns up the cards which have been played and deftly thumbs out the cards which score for him)

I'll just take high, low, jick, jack and game. (Reaches to the "kitty" -- a box of Diamond wooden kitchen matches -- and takes out five matches while counting loudly:) One, two, three, four, five -- as many as the thumbs on the end of me hand, as the Irish carpenter says to the Dutchman. (He grins sardonically at John and Rudy.) Puts me out again.

JOHN: (to Rudy) Ever see such a sonofabitch for winning every time?

(John gets up from the table, crosses to the stove, looks in the coffee pot. He reaches down a can of MJB coffee from a shelf, spoons three spoonfuls onto the grounds already in the pot, then ladles water into the pot with the dipper from the nearly empty water bucket. He sets the pot near the front of the stove and stands with his back to the stove and his hands clasped behind him. Rudy meanwhile has pushed his chair back from the table and is rolling
a cigarette. Monty has taken out a pack of Lucky Strikes and lit a cigarette.)

MONTY: (shuffling cards) Not givin' up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (He grins the sardonic grin, flashes the deck in mock invitation.)

JOHN: (He shakes his head at the cards.) Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well make some coffee. (John stretches mightily and yawns:) Ohhh, Keerist Katy! (The yawn finished, he clasps his hands behind him again and looks at Alec:) Want a fresh cup of mud, Alec?

ALEC: (He looks up from darning the sock.) No thanks. I gotta go give that orphan calf some hay.

(Monty has given Rudy an inquiring look and gesture with the deck to ask if he wants to play more. Rudy shakes his head. Monty begins playing solitaire quickly and deftly.)

MONTY: (in a mocking tone) Alec, ain't it bad enough we work our guts out in the hayfield without havin' the damn stuff in here, too? Whyn't you keep your damn bales somewheres else? Reminds me of livin' in a cow shed.

ALEC: (bridling) You know this wind and rain raised hell with the barn, and I gotta keep some bales dry somewhere for that calf. Mike asked you all a week ago if it's okay to use that corner. Them bales don't take up much room anyways ... 

MONTY: (cutting him off) Yeah, well ... That green hay makes me ache all over just lookin' at it. I don't begrudge the piling crew all them
green bales to be stacked. (He glances at Alec putting on a yellow slicker coat.) Anyway, I'd sure hate to have to go out in this weather just to play mama for a skim-milk calf. Them raindrops'll grow moss on your back. You watch 'im, Pete. Alec'll come back in here all green and fuzzy, lookin' like half an acre a crick bottom.

(Pete smiles shyly and uncertainly, pleased to be noticed but aware of the jibe in Monty's words about Alec.)

RUDY: Well, I wish to hell it's quit. This settin' around and settin' around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to hayin' or go to town till it quits.

MONTY: Gettin' thirsty, Rudy?

RUDY: (tetchily) I'd rather be puttin' up hay, that's all. Good Godalmighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never saw so goddamn much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.

MONTY: (He pauses with a card in his hand ready to play and looks at Rudy) I thought that's Mike's problem. It's his ranch, his hay. You're startin' to sound like old folks over there in the slicker coat.

(Alec has crossed to the bales of hay, where he takes a balehook from a bale, uses it to lift one bale atop another, and then breaks the twine around the hay by deftly twisting the hook in it. He looks hard at Monty, then with a sweeping motion jabs the balehook into the bale where he found it. Taking about one-fourth of the opened bale in his arms, he goes out the door.)
MONTY: Touchy, ain't he? Goes with bein' a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

JOHN: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin' all this rain in the middle of havin', I suppose.

MONTY: Mm.m. Speakin' of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out of here this morning cussin' a blue streak. Fixin' a fence in the rain don't seem to appeal to old Jeff. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a 1-o-n-g sheet a paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Spiff up your vocabulary somethin' wonderful.

JOHN: (He chuckles.) Jeff's never happy unless he's bitchin' about Mike, but every summer he's back here workin' for him. (He pours a cup of vile black coffee, sips contentedly.) You think Mike was feelin' ornery this mornin', you oughta been around him when he was drinkin'. I worked with him one hayin' time down at Greybull, Wyoming, years ago before he bought this place. Rained a couple a days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howlin' drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ amighty! Then when the boss finally did get him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We was still usin' horses then, and Mike'd been workin' a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He's the only one in the crew could handle 'em. So he gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore wherever he got dressed up, big wide brim on it out to here. (John indicates by holding a hand out about twelve inches from his head.) He puts that on -- still drunk as a lord -- and goes down
to the barn, everybody on 

Pete: (listening with fascination) Did he do it?

John: Well, he starts going through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick — catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sails it plumb across the barn. That horse's hoof didn't miss his head by an inch. Mike, he looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then he yells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch, WHOA! Then you know, that goddamn horse just stood there, and Mike goes right through his hind legs like he said he would. (John pauses, swills the coffee pot a bit and pours more in his cup.) Been you or me or anybody else, that horse would've kicked him into the middle of next week.

Monty: (to Pete) See, I told you the two of 'em are a regular education. Mike'll show you how to get your brains kicked out, and Jeff's livin' proof that you don't need no brains anyhow.

(There is the sound of a person clomping across the wooden porch. The door opens and Jeff comes in, his slicker running with water and his boots heavy with mud.)

Rudy: 'Lo, Jeff. Rainin' just as hard?

Jeff: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

John: Mike comin' in now?

Jeff: Stopped by the cookhouse first t' git the grocery list from the Missus. (Shakes more water off himself) That goddamn sparrowhead of a Mike, makin' a man fix a goddamn fence this kind a goddamn weather.
MONTY: (half-mockingly to Jeff) Game of pitch?

JEFF: (even more grumpy at Monty's invitation) What a goddamn spread. A boss that thinks he's a little Jesus, and a card shark settin' around on his polished ass all day.

(Jeff clomps across to shave and wash, using the last of the water in the bucket.)

JOHN: (to Monty) Who's goin' to town with Mike -- you an' Jeff?

MONTY: (He glances at Rudy, then speaks contentedly) Yup.

Rudy: (He has been watching Jeff begin to get ready for town; now, he clears his throat.) Kinda wish I was goin' in myself. Need a haircut pretty bad.

JEFF: (crushingly) Why doncha set out walkin'? It's only 20 miles of mud up to your ass.

(in mock innocence)

JOHN: Jeff, that what you got in mind, too? Goin' in to get a haircut?

JEFF: Haircut, hell. First thing I'm doin' is hittin' the whorehouse.

PETE: (incredulously) In the afternoon?

(All the men look at Pete, then loudly laugh him into mortification.)

MONTY: Pete, we better git your young mind off of cathouses. How about some pitch? C'mon, you watched enough to know how by now.

(Pete hesitates, flattered to be asked but unsure of himself. He decides to play to cover his embarrassment.)

PETE: Uh, sure, okay.

(Pete sits at the table, Monty deals in his swift style, talking as he does.)

MONTY: That's the stuff. Make a pitch player out a you yet. Now if there's anything you don't savvy, see, you just ask as we go along.
PETE: (trying to seem to know more than he does) Ah ... when you count up the tricks ... what's the jick again?

MONTY: (chants to Pete as a sort of recital) What's the jick. The jack of the same color as trump. Say spades is trump, jack of clubs counts as jick. It's higher than the ten a trump, but lower than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick, jack takes jick. Whatta you bid, there, Pete?

PETE: (carefully spreads his cards in both hands, looks at them for a long moment) One.

MONTY: ONE? Christawmighty, that's no kirrla bid. Lemme see your hand. (He reaches across the table and peers at Pete's cards.) Hell, you can make two or maybe three on a hand like that. Go on an' bid.

PETE: (gratefully) Two!

MONTY: Three.

(Pete is dismayed at the brusque doublecross as Monty relentlessly leads his trump cards and wipes Pete out.)

MONTY: Le's see, I got high, jick, jack and the game, and you got low. Four to one so far. (He divvies out matches from the "kitty". Pete has leaned back from the table with an exasperated sigh.) What, you ain't quittin', aye?

PETE: I better study up on this game some more.

(Monty shrugs, goes back to playing solitaire. Alec comes back in, takes off his slicker, and goes to the water bucket.)

ALEC: Bucket's empty. I filled it last time.

MONTY: I'll take care of it.
Same to you, Marie.

"We'll give her a helluva fight try.

Will you shut the hell up? They'll lock you away in Deer Lodge until you rot.

Write mine out, too, Mike. I didn't hire out for this. I never hired out
These times are not them times, Mike.

Last line of play, John to Monty: Will you shut the hell up?
instead of hay in bunkhouse, make it mower sickles for Alex to sharpen.
Act 2 - lengthen 3 fast scene - men come in 1 by 1?

John joins Marie
- lengthen Mike-Marie scene; change locale to when he returns up town.
- move lean story to Act 2, Scene 1?

John to Pete: Alice moves 1st last trial device

begin Act 2. Let J & R come home - Monty reads a novel P's book

John writing Letter 2 to his daughter

空调

Monty & Marie to Act 2?

More between Mike & Monty

Lavish or a raft?

"One's enough plenty."

"Lemme ask u 1 thing."

Stirs up. brains

More about Rudy

switch Rudy & Jim lines in opening card scene

Scene 5. Lawmen or 6 of us? Behind John & Pete?

- talk to Mike

add

(length 7 scene between Monty & Marie)

lengthen scene 2, Act 2, between Mike & Marie

"Central"

1 Hung 10

strang then a bit?"
J:  Nope, I gotta write a letter.

Jef:  A letter? Who to?

J:  No, to my daughter.

P:  I didn’t know you had kids, John.

J:  Just like I am. She lives to Altoona with her mother. Not much younger than me, Pete, he’s a damn sight prettier. (gently) I haven’t seen her for 2-3 yrs now, so I try write her every so often.

Monty: Write her to come up here, I’ll set her up with Pete.

J:  Yeah, well, she’d do worse.

P:  I’d, lemme ask us somethin’
scissorbill ... raining like cow pissing on flat rock.

Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table, lights come up on 3 card players. Winner shuffles, cards are cut; deals, 1st man bids 2, next passes, dealer bids 3; takes all tricks, "High, Low, and game; puts me out." Reaches, adds 3 matches to his pile. "And man to 1st bidder: "Did you ever see such a sonofabitch for winning every time?"
Walking thru horse's legs with big hat on; "horse kicked the hell out of him; put him in the hospital for 3 weeks."

brothel joke: "in the afternoon?"

go to town to get a haircut

song: When it's springtime in the Rockies, I'll be coming back to you...

kid's surprising: Oh, to hell with it...

Review of Alan Bennett TV play, where rich girl on horse waited in vain to meet crippled boy on road: things that don't happen.

malcontent & coarse wife: puts hands on her hips. When he leaves ranch, says pointedly to her, "do us give her away - just any I raise second. husband can believe or believe as he pleases.

get shortened

scissors? Ill turn like a rock. Opens with song of garage tear-stripping

what radios say (all weather)

p.22 Jeff's Bill come in - rain in like some

make do along

you ever see such a sonofapitch for winning

every fight?"

see, I told you Jeff's a regular enemy.

me: Still, he's a good ranch hand. Never saw a harder worker.

M: not-nose kid
rain is a character — a force.

Hungover Rudy at breakfast; jokes at his getting haircut — "left it kind of long so..."

Reason 4 Mike 2 go to town; try 4 more help.

Dad clucked tongue while thinking.

bunkhouse jokes?

"eyer" "My dad us hungover farmer."

Monty disparages Alec: "Listen to old folks.

S'wade saw...

get myself an education

It's only 30 min of mud up 2 your ass

hellawa good ranch hand, though
Mike's drunk - bales b trunkhouse
give house story to Mike, make him reformed drunk?
Mike comes back from tv, bumps sitting b cookhouse,
wife thinks he's drunk - "Mike, don't drink"
Mike, he's not. He / passed out - "What?"
Monty wonders, & thought Mike was drunk
"No, it's just a game"
"Wife: is it rainin'?" "No, it's clearing up"

Rudy getting haircut & drunk as often drunk, cloth
and him. Sumi asks: That we got a haircut before?

Mike b all b drunk, he asks why Monty is
sumi song in ok his, Mike was perturbed,
Monty then came b do.

"No, we won't a contract of pile, cause bales.
We've contracted nothing."
"No, what nothin' means; we'll never get a
job in this valley again."

Monty to Monty as bale pile stands. "We gonna go to him?
O no, next, phone to him for him b pilot."
"Earlier, Monty bales out, going 2 tv, tells Mike
to take Rudy b his place, which Mike plein want to do.
Notes on Willie Rough:

Foreman Jake Adams and agitator Sam McGrath both start out as unsympathetic characters, both develop into likables; adds greatly to strength of play.

Leaving an offstage happening to audience's imagination: wife's rent strike seemed all the stronger for not being seen on stage.

Power of unexpected: Hughie, after great anguish, dies quietly with soft final lines.

Scots argot: wains for children, bairn for boy, windies for windows.

Good lines: bartender asks hanger-on Hughie, "Do ye want a drink?" They look at each other, then together chorus "aye" and bar-tender smoothly pours.

Very believable bar scenes, good sense of Hughie hanging around all the time.

Good minor touch: apprentice shooed away from men having lunch.
Act I

Scene 1 - bunk house: herd men

Scene 2 - cook house: Mike & Marie

Jesus, Mike, Lammas. I tried on to arrive a hay rake, not pile bales.

sense of I hand a ominous rain

Crow's scarce because of Korean war

He ain't got brains good gueze a crowbar.

Finisgan

"You're like fellas..."

"Pat & Mike"

Monty & Pete play - Monty explains jive
rising tension in crew, emptying a ball piling
Monty has guesswell, feeds hunt.
book keeping. like book these bills, a full time as
near story unfolds: Figure bay footage?
Mike: I can't pay them any more.

in spring,
weather too dry than a much rain. "Something
muddled and b nude."

Dutchman: "he did the middle."

Title: pick

clear
not worth a hook in hell

Grand Canyon: Scottie man lost dunce clown go for bale

Marie: It left us once (for another man as well as drink)
Mike: I remember.

stage end & trunk & cooks limited. make it
caller to get Monte & Marie together.

Mike: (figuring dance wages) Monty hasn't drawn any $.

scene should be over after supper.
Alec: hell of a sorry

Mary: Be careful, won't u?
Mike: Don't take a drink, I mean.

Mike: gonna won't give us any. It already

Mary: u tried? when?
Mike: a cup a who age. When I went 2 tm
4 women part 4. Baylor

Mike to Mary: You tell me.

Dive like other people
Mary wants him 2 get a job in tm. Woman's
loneliness. Story 2 her & mother going mad a
wind 2 homestead cabin. Take it any better.
Mike: it's hard country.

Bucky banks roof, 12 ccm?
Monty to Jeff: Game of Pitch?
Jeff: Sure. What a goddam place.
A boss man thinks he's sum kind of
little Jesus, a card shark rotten
around a his ass all day. Place is a
goddamn Monte Carlo. Las Vegas (grumps of/ to Shave)
(cases last water in bucket)

John to Jeff: Fettin myself pretty far from

Sharpen sickles. Mike: No, we're not cutting
any more. We're gonna pile what we got o' good.

Treat me like a motherless child

Been in or me of anybody else, that horse would
trache him into stuff of next week.

Mike catches Monty near hairs: Monty says with grin,
"Fillin' bucket." Mike: gettin' in a
(regular water boy, an')

Carol or reading 1st draft of 1st scene: and e
't card playin', let some of action. Me: add hint of

Dete; juggling cards: "I'd better study up some."
Monty comes to kitchen to fill water bucket. Scene c him & Marie. Mike comes in, Monty says Rudy going to tm b his place. Next, alt next bunch scenes of bean story & Mike-Marie.

Possible stage design: bunkhouse walls, wallpapered c newspaper or magazine pages. I character read on wall?

When Mike says Monty has drawn no $, Marie has thought, considering going c him.

Marie's "I left you once" should come soon after scene c Monty, as implicit threat.

Monty didn't tell you yet, huh? I'm gonna have this crew do it. "What choice we got?"
not till after I get some words from those back

Rudy sneaks bottle back up in; Blake takes
it away, is tempted: takes mouthful, spits it out

What if I bottle dry toasting outside?
ACT ONE/5

Monty: Pete, how about you? C'mon, you watched enough to know how.

(Pete hesitates, flattered to be asked but unsure of himself.)

Pete: Sure.

(Moves to the table; Monty deals. Monty talks as he deals.)

Monty: That's the spirit. Make a pitch player out of you yet. Now if there's anything you don't savvy, ask as we go along.

Pete (trying to seem to know more than he does): What's the trick? Ah ... when you count up the tricks ... what's the jick again?

Monty: (repeats Pete as a sort of recital)

What's the jick. The jick of the same color as trump. Say spades is trump, jack of clubs counts as jick. It's higher than the ten of trump, but lower than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick, jack takes jick. Whatta you bid?

Pete: One.

Monty: One? Christ, that's no kind of bid. Let's see your hand. (peers at Pete's cards)

Hell, you can make two or maybe three on that. Go on and bid.

Pete (gratefully): Two.

Monty: Three. (Pete is dismayed at brusque doublecross as Monty deftly plays his cards and wipes Pete out.)

Monty: Let's see, I got High, jick, jack and the game, and you got low. (Pete has leaned back from table with exasperated sigh.)
What, you quittin'?

PETE: That's enough for now.  
(Monty shrugs, goes back to playing solitaire.)

PETE: When'd you start playin' cards, Monty? 
I mean how old were you?

MONTY: Can't remember when I wasn't playin'. You heard that song, haven't you, about how a deck of cards is like life itself? (mock solemn tones as parody of soppy song, as he continues to play winning game of solitaire.) There are 52 cards in a deck, one for every week of the year ... The four suits, hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades, represent the four seasons of the year ... Add up the spots and they come out to 365, one for every day of the year ... 

PETE: But what do you get out of playing cards all the time?

MONTY: They're a game, like anything else.
(Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table between shuffles. Lights come up on 5 men in bunkhouse: John, Rudy, and Monty playing cards, Alec mending bridle, Pete watching the cards. Monty shuffles, gives deck final hard rap, plunks it in front of John.)

MONTY: Cut?

(John cuts, Monty slickly deals each six cards)

RUDY: I'll say two.


MONTY: Three, in... spades.

(Plays first card with flourish as he says "spades". Monty quickly leads out his cards. John disgustedly throws in his hand on third trick. Monty takes every trick.)

MONTY: High low, jick, jack, and the game. (Reaches to kitty; adds 5 matches to pile in front of him. Grins at John and Rudy.)

Puts me out again.

JOHN (to Rudy): Ever see such a sonofabitch for winnin' every time?

(John gets up, walks to stove, checks coffee-pot. Takes down can of MJ, dumps in 3 spoons on old grounds, ladles water into pot with dipper from nearly empty bucket. Sets pot near front of stove. Stands by stove. Rudy meanwhile has pushed his chair back from table and is rolling a cigarette.)

MONTY: (shuffling cards) Not givin' up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (Grins, flashes deck in mock invitation.)
John: (shakes head at cards) No. Can't make hay, so might as well make coffee. Want a cup of mud, Alec?

Alec: (looks up from mending) No thanks. I've gotta go put some longer rivets in this.

Monty (has given Rudy an inquiring look and gesture with deck to ask if he wants to play more; Rudy shakes his head; Monty has started playing solitaire quickly and deftly): I'd hate to have to go put in weather like this. Grows moss on your back. You watch, Pete. Alec'll come back in here green and fuzzy.

(Pete smiles shyly and uncertainly, pleased to be addressed but aware of jibe in Monty's words about Alec.)

Rudy: Well, I wish to hell it'd stop. This settin' around and settin' around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to having or go to town till it quits.

Monty: Gettin' thirsty, Rudy?

Rudy (tetchy): I'd rather be puttin' up hay, that's all. Good Godalmighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never saw so goddam much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.

Monty: (pauses with card in hand, looks at Rudy) I thought that's Mike's problem.

Alec: (moves toward door, stops): You sure you ain't ordered up this rain? You seem pretty happy to be settin' around listenin' to the pitty-pat. (Goes out in slicker with bridle.)
MONTY: Touchy, aint' he? Goes with bein' a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

JOHN: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bother's him to see Mike havin' all this rain, I suppose.

MONTY: Mmm. Speakin' of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out of here this morning cussin' a blue streak. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a long sheet of paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Improve your vocabulary.

JOHN (laughs): Jeff ain't happy unless he's bitchin' about Mike, but he comes back every summer and works for him. (pours cup of vile black coffee, sips contentedly). You think Mike was touchy this morning, you oughta been around him when he was drinkin. I worked with him one haying time down at Greybull, Wyoming, years ago before he bought this place. Rained a couple of days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howlin' drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, and next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ a mighty! Then when the boss got him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We were still usin' horses then, and Mike'd been working a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore when he got dressed up, big wide brim on it. He puts that on -- still drunk as a lord -- and goes down to the barn, and he's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that
horse's hind legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that horse.

PETE (fascinated) Did he do it?

JOHN: Well, he starts goin' through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sails it plumb across the barn. Horse's hoof didn't miss his head by an inch. Mike looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then he yells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch, WHOA! Then you know, that goddamn horse just stood there, and Mike went right through his hind legs like he said he would. (pauses, swills the coffee pot a bit and pours more in his cup.) Been you or me or anybody else, that horse woulda kicked him into the middle of next week.

MONTY (to Pete): See, I told you the two of them are a regular education. You can learn from Mike how to get your brains kicked out, and from Jeff that you don't need any brains anyway.

(Sound of person climbing wooden porch, then door opens and Jeff comes in, with slicker wet and muddy boots.)

RUDY: 'Lo, Jeff. Rainin' just as hard?

JEFF: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

JOHN: Mike comin' in?

JEFF: Stopped by the cookhouse. The goddamn sparrowhead.

MONTY (half-mocking to Jeff): Game of pitch?

JEFF: (grumpy) What a goddamn place. A boss that thinks he's a little Jesus, and a card shark settin' around on his ass all day. (clumps over to shave and wash, using last water in the bucket)
Marie: Mike would take your head off.  It wasn't only my idea.
Monty: Could be. Could be he might think I'm not the only one involved.
Marie: Why do you keep movin' around?
Monty: I like movin'.
(Kitchen of the cookhouse. Long table with linoleum cloth, cupboards, wood-burning range, sink where Marie is finishing noon dishes. She empties dishpan, wipes her hands on towel, lights a cigarette. Mike enters from outside)

Marie: Is it raining as hard?

Mike (shedding wet slicker): Like a cow ... (catches himself) Yeah, hard as ever. What's the radio say?

Marie: (trying to be light about it, stresses "con" in "continued")

Continued rain. Suppose I'd better sew us some water wings in my spare time?

Mike: Too dry in the spring, then it rains all summer. Something middling would be nice for a change. Any news from Korea?

Marie: Peace talks have started, but there's still fighting. (she tries again to lighten the conversation.) What kind of humor was Jeff in this afternoon?

Mike: (small rueful grin) You know Jeff is an even-tempered man -- madder than hornet all the time. Ah, we got along okay. Jeff's not happy unless he's griping. (pause) You got a grocery list ready?

Marie: I'll write it out now. Who's going in with you?

Mike: Monty's asked to go, and Jeff. Only room for three of us in the pickup, so that'll give an excuse not to take Rudy. His tongue's starting to hang out pretty bad. (pause) You're sure you don't wanna come.

Marie: No. The road'll be so bad you should have the men with you. I'll go in when it stops raining, if it ever does. Are you gonna see about a bale piling crew?

Mike: (shortly, uneasily) Yeah, I'll see.

Marie: How long do you think it'll take the hay to dry when it quits raining?

Mike: Couple a good hot days. The hell of it is, all those bales are gonna have to be turned over so the bottoms will dry before they're piled.
Marie: (tentatively, but determined to say it) Mike, what are you going to do? If the rain doesn't quit...

Mike: (impatiently) If, if. If there was pie in the sky, we'd all need real long forks.

Marie: Mike! Damn it! (pause, then in a lower tone) What are you going to do?

Mike: Well... (still reluctant) You know we're in up to our necks at the bank. If we don't get this hay crop in, we're through. There isn't any money to buy any, and the price of cattle isn't worth a damn right now. (pause, continues almost musingly) Hell of a note, ain't it? We bought this place because it's the best hay ranch in the country, and now we can't get the hay in.

Marie: And if we lose this place?

Mike: If we lose this place, I guess we throw up our tail and try it again somewhere else. Hire on somewhere for a while till we get some money ahead again.

Marie: Mike, we agreed there wouldn't be any more of that.

Mike: Jesus, Marie, I don't want it any more than you do. You think I wanna go back to being somebody else's foreman? I worked for other people from the time I was 13 years old. Living in bunkhouses until hell wouldn't have it. Trying to keep stewbums on the job, to raise somebody else's cattle and put up somebody else's hay. Always somebody else's.

Marie: (intensely) And while you were doing that, I've been cooking for those crews. For a lot more years than I can stand to think about. (Mike makes gesture of pain and mollification, and she subsides.) Can't you try the bank for one more loan?
MARIE: I guess you're going to try hire a hay piling crew?

Mike: Didn't tell you yet, huh? I'm gonna have this crew pile 'em.

Mike (quietly): I'm gonna have the crew pile the bales. (Marie looks stunned)

Marie: This... Mike, a crew like this can't pile bales. They won't do it.

Mike: I've been running crews for 20 years; I've got them to do plenty of things they didn't want to.

Marie: But these men are drifters. Drifters and whores and God knows what all. We've both seen whole crews quit a walk of jobs over a lot of.

It's gonna be close no matter how we do it. We're out $4, if I'll have to sell some hay pronto to pay 4.00 baling.
MIKE: I already tried.
Marie: You tried? When?
Mike: A couple weeks ago, when I went to town for parts for the baler.
Marie: Mike, we agreed we wouldn't go back to ranch work.
Mike: Well, what then? You tell me.
Marie: Get a job in town. Go to work at the sawmill.
Mike: We been through that before. No town, no sawmill.
Marie: Other people do.
Mike: We ain't goddam other people.
Marie: We could try. You could try. (no response from Mike) My mother told me once about her mother. She raised five children in an homestead cabin the size of this kitchen. My mother said one summer they noticed my grandmother would stand in the middle of the cabin for a long time and just listen. Just listen to the wind. They she'd go to one of the windows where the dust was blowing in, and she'd take her hand like this, and pinch and brush away the dust. And the dust would blow in again right away. She died in the asylum. The wind drove her crazy. When something like this happens, I wonder if I'll end up like her.
Mike: It's hard country. (pausё) Maybe things'll be all right. The rain quits, and a day or two of sunshine, and we'll get back to putting up hay.
Marie: (shakes her head) I'm tired of waiting for the rain to quit. I left you once, Mike.
Mike: (gives her a long hard look) I don't need any reminding.
(he goes out on chore. Marie has minute or two of business in kitchen, then Monte comes in.)
MONTY: Think the rain'll hurt the rhubarb?

MARIE: (smiles a bit uneasily, looks away, deliberately busy)

MONTY: (watching Marie put away dishes) How many dishes you suppose you washed in your life? Do you see 'em in your dreams at night instead of countin' sheep?

MARIE: No, I sleep sound. At least the rain is good for that.

MONTY: A sound sleeper. Must have a clear conscience, huh?

MARIE (steadily) Clear enough. (He still stands, she attempts to make conversation) Where do you go next if we ever get this hay put up?

MONTY: I go south. Los Angeles or Phoenix, haven't decided which. Maybe Mexico one of these winters.

MARIE: What do you work at, in the winter?

MONTY: Work at livin', what else? Lots of fellows waitin' to hand their money across a card table. You'd be surprised how many? Fellows who don't know enough to play a hand for all it's worth. (Moves closer to her) I kind of vacation among folks who don't savvy the spots on cards any too well. It's nice. Goes a person good to get out of bunkhouses and cookshacks. (He stands close behind her, lightly puts hands on her hips. They stand, Marie tense, Monty gauging. At last she moves away, but slightly, inconclusively.)

(Mike comes in from bunkhouse, looks at them. Monty casually reaches

MIKE: You're gettin' to be a regular water boy.

MONTY: (turns as leaving slowly): Say, changed my mind about goin' to town. I got nothin really to go for, so Marie can go in my place. Says he wants to get a haircut pretty bad.
Marie: If he'd seen that, Mike would take your head off.

Monty: *Mmmhmm* Could be. Could be he might think it wasn't all my idea, too. (pause, considers here) Then again, maybe he wouldn't even notice at all. Got a lot on his mind these days, tryin' to make the rain stop. Takes quite a fellow to manage that.

Marie: How about being a bunkhouse lawyer? What does that take?

Monty: (mock wince) Mmmhh. I sure wouldn't know about that. I have heard fellows called that now and then. But about all it means usually is that they've got a smidgin of brains somebody else doesn't.

Marie: I thought it meant a troublemaker.

Monty: No, I'd say a troublemaker is somebody who makes trouble for himself. Gets himself over his head, you know. Like playin' cards, you wanna know have a good idea how many tricks you can take before you bid. Anybody who doesn't know that doesn't last long. Now you take Mike. Looks to me like he's showin' signs of win in over his head.

I've seen foremen trying to make it on their own before. All of a sudden, it's their own responsibility. Buying cows, ...., the payroll. Most of 'em start without much, and it takes money to make money.

Marie: Why do you keep movin' around?

Monty: I like movin'. Keeps the O0 circulating.

Marie: One thing you don't like is straight answers, do you?

Monty: Didn't know there was such a thing. And what about you? What kind of answers do you like?

Marie: *Any kind*. Just answers.
Marie: You ready to go?

KE: Take a few minutes yet. I got to figure the time for Jeff and Rudy.

Marie: Never saw a daybook with so many rainy days. Well, let's seem how much wages the gold dust takes got cinnamon to them.

Marie (looks at him, then away): You want a cup of coffee before you start?

KE: Sure.

Marie: You ready to go?
John: My, you're lookin' slick, Jeff. What's that your usin' on your hair, bear grease?

Alec: *mutters* If it was, Jeff'd smell even riper than he does. 'Skinned bear' got a helluva smell to him?

Pete: You ever skin one, Alec?

Alec: Lots of 'em. One almost skinned me in return, too.

Pete: What did you mean? What happened?

Alec: It was when I was a lot younger. *(has been self-deprecating. Glances at Pete, sees he is eager to hear. Begins the story.)*
It was about 40, 45 years ago now. Jobs was scarce in those days.

You had to take anything you could get. I was herdin' sheep, livin' with my wife at an old homestead near Copperopolis Creek. This bear got to comin' in there nights, killin' sheep. Boy, he'd kill em right and left. He'd always wait until after the moon went down, till it got good and dark. Then he'd prowl in and kill 5 or 6 sheep.

All the neighbors, there'd be some of 'em there pretty near every night with me, to try get that bear. First we was gonna trap him.

These sheep he'd kill, he'd just leave em lay. That's the way a bear does, they kill somethin' they'll cover it with limbs or somethin' to keep the other predators from gettin' it. There was an old brush roof shed there. It was pretty well fallen down and he'd drag some of this brush and put over his sheep. So we put some traps up there one night. We got 3 or 4 big coyote traps up there, we was gonna catch him. Got up the next mornin' -- I had a nice big black and tan dog, oh he was a dandy -- bear tracks all around there, and we had the dog in the trap. We could see where the bear had sure been there, it's a wonder he didn't eat that dog up.

So next thing, we're gonna lay for him at night. The neighbor from the next ranch was a crack shot; he was down there. The two of us went up in a old log barn there, the loft end of it was open. We'd got one of the first sheep the bear had killed, and drug it down under the loft, to entice him down there. Well, we both swore we never slept a wink, but that bear ate that whole sheep within 30 feet of us, and we never knew it.
Marie (bringing his coffee): How's the arithmetic lesson?

MIKE: I'll see if they're satisfied with drawin $35 each. That ought to be enough for 'em to get a snootful. (looks over daybook) Everybody's drawn some wages but Monte. Gonna have a full summer's pay comin'. Wonder what he's saving it for, poker games this winter?
MARIE: And you? How do you think we're gonna come out?

MIKE: Guess we'll either win or lose. I never have seen much in between.

Marie: Your soundin' like Monty.

MIKE: You're pretty quiet. Not lettin' all this get you down, are you?

MARIE: No more than I can help it.

MIKE: Yeah.

The bear was about 60 feet from me. I cut down on him with that old rifle and he went WOOF.

MIKE: You're pretty quiet. Not lettin' all this get you down, are you?

MARIE: No more than I can help it.

MIKE: Yeah.

I don't know if I hit him or not, but I changed his mind anyhow. Well, he either had to come toward me or go right back through the middle of the sheep, so here he comes toward me. He got oh, about 30 feet from me when I cut down on him again, and I know I hit him that time. He let another WOOF out of him, and he was mad now. Here he comes. He had his old head turned sideways. I could have counted his teeth there in the moonlight.
The bear got up pretty close, I'd say about the distance from me to you, Pete. I was tryin to shoot him between the eyes. He had his head turned a little bit, and I got him right -- you know how a bear's head is, his ears are up towards the top of his head -- I got him right the side of the ear there. The bullet went down through his neck and all the way into his lungs. That took the WOOF out of him. Set him back on his haunches, and he made a pass at me, and I ducked him as he come around he'd ripped me in four pieces. I jammed the Pump rifle again his ribs, right behind his shoulder there, and pulled the trigger. WOOF, he says, and down he went. I'm right next to him now, I could reach out and touch him he's so close. I put the rifle up to him again and pull the trigger. Nothin happens. That was the last shell I had in the rifle when I put it again his shoulder there, I'm standin there by that bear with my rifle empty. I remember it was so quiet then I could hear the radio, still playin in the front room. The bear keeps laying there, right at my feet. He was dead.

Funny thing, I didn't get scared while it was happenin. Never gave it a thought to run when that bear was coming at me in the dark. But I shook all night afterwards, after it was all over.
scene 3

(Monty comes into cookhouse, looks around, sits at table and shuffles cards. The riffle brings Marie into the room.)

Monty: You're not such a sound sleeper after all.
(It is dark in the bunkhouse. The sound of the pickup returning from
town is heard. Pickup doors slam, there is drunken cursing. Rudy's voice
draws nearer, drunkenly singing in bad imitation of Gene Autry: "...I'm
back in the saddle again/Out where a friend is a friend/Where the longhorn
cattle feed/On the lonely Jimson weed/I'm back in the saddle agin..."
Pete, startled from sleep, sits bolt upright in bed. The rest of the
bunkhouse awakes as Rudy and Jeff clatter in and flick on the lights:

JEFF: Goddamn scissorbill Mike anyway.

JOHN: Oh, Jesus, the choirboys are back. Turn off those lights and get
to bed.

RUDY: Gotta go back to th' ranch, he says. Hell with that. Can't hay
anyway. Can we, John? Huh? Can't hay anyway? Huh? [EXCLAM Why can' we
stay in town? Have a li'l fun?

(All are awake by now, Monty watching bemused, John exasperatedly trying
to dig under covers, Alec sleepy but benign, Pete wide-eyed with interest.)

RUDY (spotting Monty) Hey, Monty, le's play pitch. Huh? Git out your
cards. (singsong) Highlow, jickjack. C'mon, git out the cards, an' I'll
cut 'em thin an'win.

JOHN: Cards, hell. Point your ass towards that bed and get in.

MONTY (leaning on one elbow casually, says to Jeff) How was the cathouse,
Romeo? The afternoon sun didn't get in your eyes and bother you or anything,
did it?

[EXCLAM (Jeff glowers for a moment, then begins to giggle, harder and harder.
He sits down heavily on John's bed, to John's outrage.)}
Rooy: Oh yeah, I know what I's gonna ask.

Rudy: Oh, good. Let me see what you need.

Rooy: I want to make sure we're on the same page. We need to coordinate our efforts better.

Rudy: I understand. I've been working on some new ideas that could really help us.

Rooy: That's great. I think we can really make some progress if we work together.

Rudy: I agree. I've also been looking into some new technologies that could improve our operations.

Rooy: That's interesting. I think we should look into those.

Rudy: I've also been working on some new policies that could help us streamline our processes.

Rooy: That sounds like a good idea. I think we should implement those as soon as possible.

Rudy: I'm really excited about this. I think we can really make some significant improvements in our business.
RUDY (singing) ...but the squaws along the Yukon/are good enough for me....

Hey, lemme ask you all a question.

JOHN: This ain't no schoolhouse. Goddam go to bed!

RUDY (laughs uproariously) This ain't no schoolhouse! Ain't that the truth! (laughs more, then:) But lemme ask you all a question. I ...

uh ... I ... (stops, puzzled; has completely lost what he meant to ask.)

JEFF (unsteady on his feet but glowering, sees Pete looking at him openmouthed) What the goddam hell you lookin' at? (Pete hurriedly turnin' in. looks away, stutters "Nothin'.") I'm goin' to bed. (Clomps to his bed, falls full length on it.)

RUDY (alarmed) Hey, Jeff! Don't go yet, we're gonna play cards! Hey! (He stands looking at Jeff, becomes more and more vacant. Softly:) Heeyy... (Keels over heavily in middle of floor)

JOHN: Oh, goddam. Let the sonofabitch sleep it off there. Turn out those lights, will ya, Pete?

(Pete, in BVDs and undershirt, uncertainly gets out of bed. He takes a step toward the light switch, then stops, uncertain whether Rudy should be left in the middle of the floor.)

Pete: Ahh, should I put a blanket on him?

ALEC (quietly, getting out of bed): Here, I got something to fix him up.

(ALEC stands straddling Rudy's body, facing his feet. He lifts Rudy's left leg, tucks it under his arm, and begins pounding Rudy's heel hard with the palm of his hand. Rudy's head jars with each impact. Each pounding produces an agonized "uhh" until Rudy says: "Hey, goddam it. Back of my head..." He sits up, hands tenderly on the back of his head. Groggily gets up, weaves to his bed and clumsily gets in. Alec watches quietly, turns back to bed, pauses:)

ALEC (to Monty) Old folks' trick.

JOHN (sinking back gratefully) Get those lights, will ya, Pete? (Pete does)
(Darkened cookhouse. Mike comes through door carrying box of groceries, stumbles into chair with loud racket. He stops, still in dark. From doorway, Marie's voice: "Mike?" He remains in same position. Sound of Marie coming to doorway. She flips on lights, again apprehensively says "Mike?" They look at each other for long pause, then Mike moves surely to put down box and pick up chair, and it becomes plain he isn't drunk.)

MIKE: Worried about me?

MARIE: I ... didn't know what to think. Can I fix you anything to eat?

(Mike shakes his head, still looking at her.)

MARIE: Did you get Jeff and Rudy to come home all right? (Sits at table. Mike sits too, facing her.)

MIKE: Yeah. Had to persuade 'em a little bit. Rudy's determined he's gonna stay in town overnight and hire somebody to bring him out in the morning. Like hell he would.
Breakfast table:

Marie: More hotcakes, anybody?
John: Nice to see that sunshine
Murmurs of "nope", "got all I can handle". Rudy comes in.
Monty: Well, you're lookin a bit peaked this mornin, Rudy? Feelin all right?
John: That barber left it a little long behind the ears, didn't he?
Rudy mumbles "ahh", shakily drinks coffee.
John: Well, what's one for today, Mike? Want me to sharpen some sickles so
the mower'll be ready to start cuttin tomorrow?
Mike: No, we got too much hay on the ground as it is. We're gonna let
the standing stuff go until the bales get piled.
Silence among the crew.
John: You got a bale piling crew comin out?
Mike: No, I'm gonna have to ask you fellas to do some piling. Hate to, but
there's just no bale pilers to be had. I figure about ten days, maybe a week,
we can clean it up and go back to thummm cuttin. We'll get two crews going;
I'll take Pete and Jeff, and John can take Monty and Rudy. First thing we
gotta do is turn those bales on their sides so the bottoms won't mold.

(More silence. Monty eyes the others.)
Jeff: Didn't know I was signin' on to be a bale stiff.
John: Yeah, Mike, that's kind of tough. Some of us are gettin' along in
years to be muckin bales. Kinda more than we bargained for, you know?
Mike: Feel that way myself. Thought my days of bale-humpin were behind me.
all the young bucks
But men are hard to find nowadays, with everybody bein drafted for Korea.
Like I say, it'll only be a week or so.
Monty: (sarcastically) Well, that's somethin.
Mike: Well, we'll give the ground a little time to start dryin. I'll round up some bale hooks and come by the bunkhouse. How many hooks we gonna need? I like one in each hand. How about you, John?

John: I just use one.

Pete: Two, I guess. Mike: Here's 1, & I'll get you another. Jeff: I don't give a damn. Either one.

Rudy: One.

Monty: One's plenty.

Mike: Okay, I'll be along to the bunkhouse, and we'll start making hay. The men file out.

Marie: Do you think they'll do it?

Mike: I dunno. The only thing I know for sure about a hayin crew is not to count on what they are or aren't gonna do. I'll try hang on to enough of them to get this hay in.

Marie: How many do you need?

Mike: In a pinch, you can drive one tractor and Alec the other, so I can get by with four of them. Three on each piling crew and an extra man on the bale stack. But if we can't keep two crews going, we're goners. That hay'll not go to hell.
bunkhouse:

John: Well, you never know what's gonna happen when you get up in the mornin', do you? (digging out leather gloves from his soogan)

Jeff: Specially on this haywire outfit. Shoulda stayed at the cathouse.

Pete: I never piled bales before. (asks question)

John: Ah, it'll burn some of the lard off our butts. How you feelin', Rudy? You're lookin' like death warmed over.

Rudy: That's how I feel.

(Monty starts bunkhouse lawyering, finally countered by Alec)
RUDY: I feel worse 'n that.

JEFF: Them bales will straighten you out. God damn, two weeks of green bales.

MONTY: Nobody's makin you stay. Nobody's making any of us stay. So I'm leaving.

(all stop and look at him as he starts to pack his soogan.)

John: You quittin'?

Monty: your damn betcha. Any of you got anything in your heads, you'll quit too. Mike's playin' us for a fool.

(silence. Finally, Pete) How do you mean, Monty?

Monty: Did you hire on to pile bales? I didn't. Mike's tryin' to save his ass by workin' ours off. Well, I ain't piled bales for 15 years, and I sure as hell ain't now, especially at these wages.

Alec: Mike's payin' the best he can.

Monty: then it ain't enough. If I'm gonna break my butt, I might as well do it in better climate. (glances at Pete) Know a fella in Denver who

Rudy: Denver. I always wanted to go to Denver.

Monty: Chances are always there for the fellow that takes them.

Pete: What kind of work?

Monty: (describes it, entices more)
John: Walkin' off the job when a man's in a bind is bad business.

Make it hard to get any kind of a job in this valley.

Monty: This ain't much of a valley, and it ain't the only valley.

Rudy: By god, he's right. I'm going.

Mike: (has come in door behind him) How you feelin'?

Rudy: Better. Lots better.

Mike: Wonder why that is? Didn't happen to bring a bottle back with you, did you?

Rudy: Huh? No, no.

Mike: Sweeps overshoes from under Rudy's bed with his foot, reaches down and picks up pint.)

Mike: You want to leave that stuff in town, Rudy.

Monty: Rudy's got something to tell you, Mike. He ain't in no mood for pilin' bales. Neither am I, and there might be some others around here.

Mike: Goddam it, you know the fix I'm in.

Monty: [wearing a hat] Yes, I do. But that's not the only thing. I got a lot of money in my pocket, and I ain't gonna leave it here.

Monty: [puts hand on Mike's shoulder] You got any room in your pocket for a little extra money?

Mike: [hesitates] Oh, I don't know. I guess I got a couple of dollars.

Monty: [looks at Mike] That's enough. Now, let's go.
Mike: Christ, I'm not askin you to rebuild the world. It's only about a week's worth of pilin bales.

Monty: That's some "unly". If we wanted to pile bales, don't you think we'd hire out as bale pilers?

Mike: Look, there ain't a piling crew anywhere, and we've only got a few days to get that hay off the ground before it molds.

Monty: That ain't our problem.

Mike: I said I'd give you pilers' wages, didn't I?

Monty: We ain't so sure you got the money anyway. Story goin' around that you might be busted before this summer's over.

Mike: Goddam, I never shorted a man on his wages. I'll have the money.

Monty: First time for everything, as the tall lady says to the midget. No, Mike, I don't think you do have the money. Or maybe you do right now. But what if it starts rainin' again? What if it takes an extra week or two to get these bales piled? Or what if a bunch of em rot in the field? That's like money drizzlin' out of your poocket. You're askin us to gamble on the weather and you both. I like my odds better than that.

Mike: Then get your goddamn bedroll together. I'll have you in town so fast it'll make your head swim.

Monty: Maybe you oughta ask around, see if I got any xid company for that ride to town. (pause; mockingly) I mean among my fellow bale pilers, of course.
Mike: D'you want me to recite it all? That I'm an alky -- a drunk? That when I took the cure they told me just one drink would set me off again? How much of my own puke do you want me to swallow?

bunkhouse debate:

Mike to Rudy: You've stuck it out this long.

Rudy: That's all I can, Mike. Take me to town.

Mike to Rudy: Pete?

Monty: We can make us a stake together in 00.

Pete: I ain't very good at pitch yet. I'll stay.

All look at Jeff.

Jeff: Staying. (sees surprise all around; louder) STAYING!

Mike (with satisfaction): I'll go write out the money for you two.

John: Write mine out too, Mike. I don't like bein in the middle. I know you got a ranch you're tryin to save. But I got rights not to be ...

Monty: Looks to me like you're a little shorthanded.

Mike stares at him, takes two hooks from his belt, tosses one on the table by Monty.

Mike: You son of a bitch. (starts for Monty)
Marie hears commotion, comes into bunkhouse. Alec stops fight after Mike wings Monty in the hand. Marie goes from Mike to check Monty's hand, wraps wash towel around it.

Mike: You're so concerned about him, maybe you ought to leave with him.

Marie: Maybe I will.

Mike: I'll write out the checks and take you to town.

Monty: What about that. Wanna head south?

Marie: I'm used to snow by now.

(she leaves bunkhouse, goes to cookhouse, enters door Mike has left open. He has Rudy's bottle on table, staring at it. Rips off cap, drinks -- pauses, spews it out of his mouth, throws bottle into corner of room, or onto stove. Or empties in into sink? Sees Marie.)

Mike: Marie: That's the best thing that's happened around here all summer.

Mike: You goin' with him?

Marie: No.
PROBLEMS WITH SCRIPT SO FAR:

—Marie: she is afraid and upset at Mike's decision to make crew pile bales, but what are his choices? What can account for her upset? Portray her as fraying away under ranch life? How make her a whole character? She must be fearful of Mike's decision; want him to move to town if they lose the ranch; and toy with idea of going with Monty.

—Mike: Make him sympathetic, have more dimensions. Lines about having been a drunk, perhaps. Lines which show he is shrewd, but in over his head.

—Monty: most interesting character so far. Ever the gambler, seeing how far he can go.

John: Make him right in his decision not to stay, as Mike is right in his attempt to make them stay. He should be a good man, interesting, but unwilling to be in the middle, to field hard decisions.

JEFF: developing okay; should be mean and gruff, but come down on Mike's side, even though he'd never admit to helping a man out in a pinch.

ALEC: wise head but aging, devoted to Mike, would have done whatever Mike asked if he were a younger man.

PETE: use his youth as comic foil, but have him mature a bit by staying. Give him more lines, or no?

RUDY: A man beaten by drink, and knows it. Make him tragic.

Themes of the play: a fragile community falls apart, not because of right or wrong but because purposes are different. Mike tries to pull off his greatest job yet as a handler of men -- and fails because of John, not Monty. Monty gambles to break Mike and win Marie -- and narrowly misses. Marie looks at the chance to shed the ranch and cookhouse life -- and passes it up.

Put as much humor and detail in as possible: the balehooks, for instance.

Shifts of action:

ACT ONE
bunkhouse crew
Mike and Marie
Marie and Monty
bunkhouse story/
Mike and Marie

ACT TWO
all in kitchen
Mike and Marie
Bunkhouse crew
Mike and crew
Fight; Marie to bunkhouse
Mike
Mike and Marie

Mike, best tale: raised their pay.
More between Marie & Mike
(Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table between shuffles. Lights come up on 5 men in bunkhouse: John, Rudy, and Monty playing cards; Pete watching the card game; Alec "Kermit" Kraft. Monty is shuffling. He gives the deck a final hard rap on the table, plunks it in front of John.)

MONTY: Cut?

(John cuts; Monty slickly deals each six cards.)

RUDY: I'll bid two.


MONTY: Three, in . . . spades.

(Monty plays first card with flourish as he says "spades". He quickly leads out his cards. John disgustedly throws in his hand on the third trick. Monty takes every trick.)

MONTY: Don't much like them spades, huh? I'll just take high, low, jick, jack and game. (He reaches to the kitty -- a box of Diamond kitchen matches -- and takes out five matches while counting loudly:) One, two, three, four, five -- as many as the thumbs to the end of me hand, as the Irish carpenter says seed to the bricklayern. (He grins at John and Rudy) Puts me out again.

JOHN: (to Rudy) Ever see such a sonofabitch for winning every time?

(John gets up, walks to stove, checks coffee pot. Takes down can of MJB, dumps 3 spoonfuls on old grounds, ladles water into pot with dipper from nearly empty bucket. Sets pot near front of stove. Stands by stove. Rudy meanwhile has pushed his chair back from table and is rolling a cigarette.)

MONTY: (shuffling cards) Not givin' up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (Grins, flashes deck in mock invitation.)

HHHHJOHN: (shakes head at cards) Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well make coffee. Want a cup of mud, Alec?

ALEC: (looks up from darning sock) No thanks. I gotta go give that orphan calf some hay.

(Monty has given Rudy an inquiring look and gesture with deck to ask if he wants to play more. Rudy shakes his head. Monty has started playing solitaire quickly and deftly.)
(in mocking tone)
MONTY: Ain't it bad enough we work our guts out in the hayfield without havin' the damn stuff in here too, Alec? Why'n't you keep your damn bales somewheres else? Reminds me of livin' in a cow shed.

ALEC: You know this wind and rain tore holes in the roof of the barn, and I gotta keep some bales dry somewhere for that calf. Mike asked you all a week ago if it's okay to use that corner. Them bales don't take up much room anyway.

MONTY: Yeah, well ... That green hay makes me ache all over just lookin' at it. I don't envy the piling crew all them bales to be stacked. (He glances at Alec putting on slicker.) Anyway, I'd sure hate to have to go out in weather like this. Grows moss on your back. You watch 'im, Pete. Alec'll come back in here all green and fuzzy.

(Pete smiles shyly and uncertainly, pleased to be addressed but aware of jibe in Monty's words about Alec.)

RUDY: Well, I wish to hell it'd quit. This settin' around and settin' around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to haying or go to town till it quits.

MONTY: Gettin' thirsty, Rudy?

RUDY: (tetchily) I'd rather be puttin' up hay, that's all. Good Godalmighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground. I never saw so goddamn much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.

MONTY! (Pauses with card in hand ready to play, looks at Rudy) I thought that's Mike's problem. It's his ranch, his hay.

You're startin' to sound like old folks over there in the corner.

ALEC: (moves toward door, stops) You sure you ain't ordered up this rain?

You seem pretty content to be settin' around listenin' to the pitty-pat.

(He exits takes 1/4 bale of hay in his arms, exits.)
MONTY: Touchy, ain't he? Goes with bein' a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

JOHN: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin' all this rain in the middle of haying season, I suppose.

MONTY: Mmm. Speakin' of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out of here this morning cussin' a blue streak. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a l-o-n-g sheet of paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Improve your vocabulary.

JOHN: (chuckles) Jeff ain't happy unless he's bitching about Mike, but he comes back every summer and works for him. (Pours cup of vile black coffee, sips contentedly.) You think Mike was touchy this morning, you oughta been around him when he was drinking. I worked with him one haying time down at Greybull, Wyoming, years ago before he bought this place. Rained a couple of days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howling drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, and next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ a mighty!

Then when the boss finally got him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We were still using horses then, and Mike'd been working a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He's the only one in the crew could handle them. He gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore whenever he got dressed up, out to here (holds hand a foot from his head) big wide brim on it. He puts that on -- still drunk as a lord -- and goes down to the barn, everybody on the place following him. He's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that horse's hind legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that horse.

PETE: (listening with fascination) Did he do it?
JOHN: Well, he starts going through there on his knees when the horse
gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sails
it plumb across the barn. That horse's hoof didn't miss his head by an
inch. Mike looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then he yells:
Whoo, you big pink sonofabitch, WHOA! Then you know, that goddamn horse
just stood there, and Mike went right through his hind legs like he said
he would. (John pauses, swills the coffee pot a bit and pours more in
his cup.) Been you or me or anybody else, that horse would have kicked
him into the middle of next week.

MONTY: (to Pete) See, I told you the two of them are a regular education.

You can learn from Mike how to get your brains kicked out, and from Jeff's
that you don't need any brains anyhow.

(Sound of person climbing the wooden porch; door opens and Jeff comes in,
with slicker wet and muddy boots.)

RUDY: 'Lo, Jeff. Rainin' just as hard?

JEFF: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

JOHN: Mike coming in now?

JEFF: Stopped by the cookhouse first. The goddamn sparrowhead, makin' a
man work in this kind of weather.

MONTY: (half-mockingly to Jeff) Game of pitch?

JEFF: (even more grumpy now) What a goddamn place. A boss that thinks he's
a little Jesus, and a card shark settin' around on his ass all day.

(Jeff clomps over to slave and wash, using last water in the bucket.)

JOHN: (to Monty) Who's going to town with Mike? You and Jeff?

MONTY: (glances at Rudy, says contentedly:) Yup.
RUDY: (He has been watching Jeff get ready for town; clears his throat.)

Kinda wish I was goin' in myself. Need a haircut pretty bad.

JEFF: (crushingly) Why doncha set out walkin'? It's only 20 miles of
mud up to your ass.

JOHN: Jess, that what you got in mind, too? Going in to get a haircut?

JEFF: Haircut, hell. First place I'm goin' is the whorehouse.

PETE: (blurs incredulously) In the afternoon?!

(They all stare and laugh Pete into mortification.)

MONTY: Pete, how about some pitch? C'mon, you watched enough to know how now.

(Pete hesitates, flattered to be asked but unsure of himself. Decides to go
ahead to cover his embarrassment.)

PETE: Sure, okay.

(Pete moves to the table. Monty deals, talking as he does.)

MONTY: That's the spirit. Make a pitch player out of you yet. Now if
there's anything you don't savvy, you just ask as we go along.

PETE: (trying to seem to know more than he does) Ah ... when you count up
the tricks ... what's the jick again?

MONTY: (Repeats Pete as a sort of recital.) What's the jick.

The jack of the same color as trump. Say spades is trump, jack of
clubs counts as jick. It's higher than the ten of trump, but lower
than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember.

On any trick, jack takes jick. Whatta you bid?

PETE: One.

MONTY: ONE? Christawmighty, that's no kind of bid. Let's see your hand.

(He peers at Pete's cards.) Hell, you can make two or maybe three on
that. Go on and bid.

PETE (gratefully) Two!
MONTY: Three. (Pete is dismayed at brusque doublecross as Monty deftly plays his cards and wipes Pete out.)

MONTY: Let's see, I got high, jick, jack and the game, and you got low. Four to one so far. (Monty divvies out matches from the kitty. Pete has leaned back from table with exasperated sigh.) What, you quittin'?

PETE: I better study up on this game some more.

(Monty shrugs, goes back to playing solitaire. Alec comes back in, takes off slicker, goes to water bucket.)

ALEC: Bucket's empty. I filled it last time.

MONTY: I'll take care of it.

JEFF: Jesus, a miracle. The card slick's gonna tote a bucket of water.

MONTY: (shakes head in mock sorrow) Jeff, you treat me like a motherless child. And after I stuck up for you the other day, too. Fellow said you didn't have the brains God give a crowbar. But I told him he was wrong, you sure did.

(Jeff pauses, glowers at Monty, begins struggling into brand-new pair of blue jeans as he dresses up for town.)

PETE: (watching him at solitaire) When'd you start playin' cards, Monty? I mean, how old was you?

MONTY: Can't remember when I wasn't playin'. You heard that song, haven't you, about how a deck of cards is like life itself? (Mock solemn tones to parody the soppy song, as he continues to play winning game of solitaire.) There are 52 cards in a deck, one for every week of the year... The four suits, hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades, represent the four seasons of the year... Add up the spots and they come out to 365, one for every day of the year...

(Pete laughs and keeps playing)

PETE: But what do you get out of playing cards all the time?

MONTY: They're a game, like anything else.
Monty: I had bad hands before.

Final scene: Monty takes drink from Rudy's bottle; holds it in mouth for second, spurs it out & looks bottle.

When Marie comes in, she picks up broken bottle neck.

Monty invites two other crew; Mike comes in; argument & note: stay - Jeff; also, note G - Monty, Rudy, Joe.

Monty & Mike fight c bottles: Mike forces him into it.

Mike has taken bottle eg Rudy?

Marie's role: show she turns in chance 1/2 go c Monty

Rudy sneaks drink.

"Mike to Rudy: how you feeling?"

R: Better.

M: Wonder y me in? Did'nt happen 2 bring a bottle back up in, did u?

R: Huh?

M: No, no.

Mike finds it inside boat.

Also about WW

Monty always seeing how far he can go.

Somebody to Monty 4 wind hand: She up on deck for awhile.

Monty's final line: Here's somebody wind up a 1-handed man c a cigarette.

Monty in backbone debate score Alex, thing like "good for only tellin bedtime stories"
MARIE: Mike, we agreed we wouldn't go back to ranch work.

MIKE: Well, what then? You tell me.

MARIE: Get a job in town. Go to work at the sawmill.

MIKE: We been through that before. No town, no sawmill.

MARIE: Other People do.

MIKE: We ain't other people.

MARIE: We could try. You could try. (no response from Mike) My mother told me once about her mother. She raised five children in a homestead cabin the size of this kitchen. My mother said one summer they noticed my grandmother would stand in the middle of the cabin for a long time and just listen. Just listen to the wind. Then she'd go to one of the windows where the dust was blowing in, and she'd take her hand like this, and pinch and brush away the dust. And the dust would blow in again right away. She died in the asylum. The wind drove her crazy. When something like this happens, I wonder if I'll end up like her.

MIKE: It's hard country. (pause) Maybe it'll be all right.
MIKE: If we lose this place, I guess we throw up our tail and try it again somewhere else... hire on somewhere.

MARIE: We agreed there wouldn't be any more of that.

MIKE: Jesus, Marie, I don't want it any more than you do. You think I wanna go back to being somebody else's foreman? I worked for other people from the time I was 13 years old. Livin' in bunkhouses until hell wouldn't have it. Tryin' to keep stewbums on the job, to raise somebody else's cattle and put up somebody else's hay. Always somebody else's.

MARIE: Can't you try the bank for another loan?

MIKE: I already tried.

MARIE: You tried? When?

MIKE: A couple weeks ago, when I went to town for parts for the baler.
It was about 40, 45 years ago now. Jobs was scarce in those days. You had to take anything you could get, so I was herdin' sheep. My wife was alive then. We was livin' at an old homestead over near Copperopolis Creek. This bear goin' to comin' in there nights, killin' sheep. Boy, he'd kill em right and left. He'd always wait until after the moon went down, till it got good and dark. Then he'd prowl in and kill another 5 or 6 sheep.

All the neighbors, there'd be some of em there pretty near every night with me, to try get that bear. But we never could. We'd generally see his eyes gleamin' as he'd take off into the dark, but we could never get him, never even get a shot at him. And every night he'd come in and kill those sheep.

This one evening we're alone there. My wife and I are sittin' there in the front room of the house, the radio playin'. All of a sudden I heard the sheep bells ringin' and I looked out the window and here comes the whole ban of sheep, right towards the house. I grabbed the rifle and went back through the dining room, through the kitchen and sneaked out the back door. There's a bunkhouse there and I got behind it. There's a creek there with heavy willows, I was gonna get on the edge of them and sneak around behind that bear. I thought I'd sure fix that boy this time. I got about halfway to the brush and I looked up and I see these eyes gleamin', watchin' my every step....
(Dark in bunkhouse. Sound of pickup returning. Pete sits up sleeping in bed, noise gets louder and louder. Racket as Jeff and Rudy stagger in. Pete watches astonished. Lights flick on as rest of bunkhouse wakes.)

JEFF: Goddam scissorbill Mike anyway.

JOHN: Oh, Jesus. Turn off those lights and get to bed.

RUDY: Gotta go back to 'uh ranch, he says. Hell with that. Can't hay anyway. Can we, John? Huh? Can't hay anyway? Huh?

(All are awake, Monty watching bemused, John exasperated trying to dig under covers, Alec sleepy but benign, Pete with boyish interest)

RUDY (spots Monty): Heym, Monty, le's play pitch. Huh? Git out your cards.

JEFF (unsteady on feet but growling, sees Pete looking at him) What are you lookin' at? (Pete hurriedly looks away) I'm goin' to bed. (Clomps to his bed, falls full-length on it.)

RUDY (alarmed): Hey, Jeff! Don't go yet, we're gonna play cards! Hey! (stands looking at Jeff, becomes more and more vacant, softly heeyy... (Keels over heavily in middle of floor)

JOHN: Oh, goddam. Let the sonofabitch sleep it off there. Turn out those lights, will you, Pete?

(Pete uncertain, doesn't want to leave Rudy there)
ALEC (quitely, getting out of bed) Here, I got something to fix him up.

(Alec pounds Rudy's heel hard, Rudy's head jarring with impact. Each pounding produces agonized "uhh" until Rudy says: "Hey, goddam it. Back of my head...." Sits up, hands tenderly on back of head. Groggily gets up, weaves to bed. George watches quietly, turns back to bed.)

GEORGE (to Monty) Old folks' trick.

JOHN (sinking back after watching): Get those lights, will you, Pete?
MARIE: Is it raining as hard?

MIKE: like a cow ... (catches himself) Yeah, hard as ever. You got the grocery list ready?

MARIE: I'll write it out now. Who's going in with you?

MIKE: Monty's asked to go in, and Jeff. Only room for three of us in the pickup, so that'll give an excuse not to take Rudy. His tongue's startin' to hang out pretty bad. (pause) You're sure you don't wanna come.

MARIE: No. The road'll be so bad you should have the men with you. Are you gonna see about a bale piling crew?

MIKE (uneasily) Yeah, I'll see.

MARIE: How long do you think it'll take the hay to dry when it quits raining?

MIKE: Couple a good hot days. The hell of it is, all those bales are gonna have to be turned over so the bottoms will dry before they're piled.

MARIE: Mike, what are you going to do? If the rain doesn't quit...

MIKE: If, if. If there was pie in the sky, we'd all need real long forks.

MARIE: Mike! Damn it! (pause) What are you going to DO?

MIKE: Well...You know we're in up to our necks at the bank. If we don't get this hay in, we're through. There isn't any money to buy any, and the price of cattle isn't worth a damn right now. (pause)

MARIE: And if we lose this place?
If there was pie in the sky, we'd all need guts out liftin' them?

Old days crew would have done it.

John: George (motions toward your door, stops): You're a good man, you see, don't you? 

George: (moves toward your door, goes out rear side of room, lifts bale, lugs it on knee down.)

Mm-m. Speakin' of givin' a piece of advice: I've been workin' a kind of all my life. Done a lot of givin' advice. If you want to know the way to import a piece of advice, you don't say, 'I've been workin' a kind of all my life.' You say, 'I've been workin' a kind of all my life."

John: You think he's green, he's a greenhorn.

George: (going to door) I was going to say, you see, don't you?

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George: (going to door) I was going to say, you see, don't you?
(sock): No thanks. I gotta go give that

inquiring look and gesture with deck to ask if

Mystery shakes his head; Monty has started playing

(everyday): Aint it bad enough we work our guts out
too

win' the damn stuff in here as well? Whyn't

somewhere else? It's like livin' in a cow shed.

rain tore holes in the roof of the barn, and

 somewhere for that calf. Mike asked you all

use that corner. Them bales don't take up much

ances at Alec putting on slicker) Anyway, I'd'

in weather like this. Grows moss on your

Alec'll come back in here all green and

may makes me ache all over just lookin at it.

all them bales to be stacked.

(ready for town) clears throat) Wouldn't mind
I'm going to the whorehouse.

Jeff: Hell, I'm gone to the whorehouse.

He says, "Get a haircut too, Jeff?"

Jeff: High.

Jeff: Seems to slide likelickly.

I'm going to the whorehouse.

Jeff: I'm going to the whorehouse.

Jeff: Get anything else.

Jeff: I come out to 665, one for every day of the year... represent the four seasons and the... in a deck, one for every week of the year... is like life itself? (mockingly) The reader... in that sense, haven't you, about how a

I'm going to the whorehouse.

Jeff: I'm going to the whorehouse.

Jeff: Get anything else.

Jeff: I come out to 665, one for every day of the year... represent the four seasons and the... in a deck, one for every week of the year... is like life itself? (mockingly) The reader... in that sense, haven't you, about how a
balehook —
Alice uses it 1st scene.
Monty grabs later
ACT ONE

Opens in bunkhouse, five hired men onstage; Jeff comes in later. Sketch characters: Monty bunkhouse lawyer, Pete the Kid, George the loyal chorehand, Rudy a drinker, John equable, Jeff surly. Mounting discontent. Monty asks Jeff where Mike is, reply that he's stopped at cookhouse, will be in shortly. Shift to Mike and Marie in cookhouse, talk about losing ranch and his plan to have crew pile bales. He goes on chore with one of crew, Monty goes to cookhouse to fill water bucket. Scene with Monty and Marie. Shift to bunkhouse, where Mike and hand come back in. Monty returns from cookhouse. Mike says he's going to town, Monty gives Rudy his place. Mike returns to cookhouse. Scene alternates between George telling bear story and tension between Mike and Marie, perhaps four scenes apiece. Act ends with end of bear story.

ACT TWO

Scene 1, night. Bunkhouse, where Jeff and Rudy come back from town. Next, cookhouse, Mike back from town, tension with Marie.

Scene 2, morning. Cookhouse, crew at breakfast; Mike tells them about bale piling.

(Opens with sound of cards fast shuffled and rapped on table between shuffles. Lights come up on 5 men in bunkhouse — 3 card players, Alec mending bridle, & Pete watching the cards. Monty shuffles, gives deck final hard rap, plunks it in front of John.)

Monty: Cut? (John cuts, Monty slickly deals each six cards.)

Rudy: I'll say two.


Monty: Three, in . . . spades. (Triumphantly plays first card as he says "spades").

(Monty quickly plays out cards; John disgustedly throws in hand on third trick; Monty takes every trick.)

Monty: High, low, jack and the game. (Reaches to kitty, adds 4 matches to pile in front of him. Beams at other two.)

Puts me out.

John (to Rudy): Ever see such a sonofabitch for winnin' every time?

(John gets up, walks to stove, checks coffee pot. Takes down can of MJB, dumps in 3 spoons on old grounds, ladles water into pot with dipper from nearly empty bucket. Sets pot near front of stove. Stands by stove.)

Monty (shuffling cards): Not givin up, are you? Can't make hay in this kind of weather. (Grins, flashes deck in mock invitation.)

John (shakes head at cards): Nope. Can't make hay, so might as well make coffee. Want some, Alec?

Alec (looks up from mending): No thanks. I've gotta go put some longer rivets in this.

Monty (playing solitaire quickly and deftly): I'd hate to have to go out in weather like this. Grows moss on your back. You watch, Pete. Alec'll come back in here green and fuzzy.

(Pete smiles uncertainly)

Rudy: Well, I wish to hell it'd stop. This sittin around and sittin around all week. I wish to hell we'd either get back to haying or go to town till it quits.

Monty: Gettin thirsty, Rudy? You don't get paid in town, but you're drawing bunkhouse money here as long as this rain lasts. Can't beat that.

Rudy: I'd rather be puttin up hay. Good God almighty, there's a half a crop of alfalfa out there on the ground, I never saw so goddam much rain. That alfalfa's gonna rot sure as hell if this keeps on.
Monty (paused with card in hand, looks at Rudy): That's Mike's problem, isn't it? That ain't my alfalfa out there, and I don't remember it's yours either.

Alec (moves toward door, stops): You sure that ain't your rain out there? You seem pretty happy to be gettin paid for doin nothin. (goes out in slicker with bridle)

Monty: Touchy, ain't he? Goes with bein a choreboy. You gotta have a disposition like a poisoned pup to be a choreboy.

John: Alec's been with Mike a long time. Bothers him to see Mike havin all this rain, I suppose.

Monty: Mmmm. Speakin of dispositions, Mike and Jeff both went out here this morning cussin a blue streak. You wanna get yourself a pencil and a long sheet of paper, Pete, and follow that pair around a couple a days. Improve your vocabulary.

John: You think Mike was touchy this morning, you oughta been around him when he was drinkin. I worked with him one time having time down at Greybull, Wyoming. Rained for a couple of days about like this, so the boss took us to town. Mike got howlin drunk for a week. They'd put him in jail to sober him up, and next day he'd be back at it again. Drink and cuss, Christ amight! Then when the boss finally got him back out to the ranch, he was still drunk. We were still usin horses then, and Mike'd been working a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He gets it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy hat he wore when he got dressed up, with a big wide brim. He puts that on -- still drunk -- and goes down to the barn, and he's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that horse's back legs with his big hat on; show us how tame he's got that horse.

Pete: Did he do it?

John. Yeah. Horse woulda kicked the hell out of anybody else, but Mike did it.

Monty (to Pete): See, I told you the two of them are a regular education. You can learn from Mike how to get your brains kicked out, and from Jeff that you don't need any brains anyway.
A.GT}

· Raipin just as hard?

Rudy: Still raining as hard?

Jeff: Like a cow pissin' on a flat rock.

Monty: Where's Mike? comin in?

Jeff: He stopped by the cookhouse.

Mike: Like a cow ... yeah, just as hard. You got the grocery list ready?

Marie: Still raining as hard?

Marie: Just a minute (begins working on list)

Mike: Monty's asked to go in, and Jeff: Only room for three of us in the pickup, so that'll give an excuse not to take Rudy. (pause) You're sure you don't wanna come.

Marie: No.

Mike: If we lose the place, we throw up our tail and try it again somewhere else.

Marie: You told me there wouldn't be any more of that.

Mike: Jesus, Marie, I don't want it any more than you do. You think I wanna go back to being somebody else's foreman? I worked for other people from the time I was 13 years old. Livin in bunkhouses till hell wouldn't have it. Tryin to keep stewsbums on the job, to raise somebody else's cattle and put up somebody else's hay. Always somebody else's.

We're in up to our necks at the bank. If we don't get this hay in, we're through. There isn't any money to buy any, and the price of cattle isn't worth a damn right now.

Marie: Mike, I won't do that again. I'm through cooking.
rider. Noon Creek is the next drainage north of English Creek, swale country without as much cottonwood and willow along the stream banks.

Cattle not needing as much shelter as sheep to winter through, Noon Creek was cow territory.
John (to Pete, half-joshing): You and Jeff finish makin those corral panels yesterday?

John: Well, he starts walkin along on his knees.

Well, he starts goin' through there on his knees when the horse gives a big kick -- catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off his head. Didn't miss his head by an inch. Mike looked surprised as hell for a little bit, then heyells: Whoa, you big pink sonofabitch! The horse just stood there, and Mike walked through his legs like he said he would.

Monty to Pete:

Christ, that's no kind of bid.

Monty: ONE? Let's see your hand. Hell, you can make two or maybe three on that. Go on and bid.

Pete: Two.

Monty: Three (plays card simultaneously, wipes Pete out.)

Pete: what's the jick?

Monty: The jack of the same color as trump. If spades is trump, jack of clubs is jick. It's higher than the ten, but lower than the jack. Jack always takes the jick. All you gotta remember. On any trick,

\[
\text{jack is } \cdot \text{mustard jack} \cdot \text{odd card out.}
\]
It was along about 1931...

Jobs was scarce in those days. You had to take anything you could get.
...a darn bear got to comin in there nights, killin sheep. Boy, he'd
dill it got good and dark. All the neighbors, there'd be some of em there
almost every night with me, to try get that bear....

Her oldest boy, he was down there. The two of us was sleepin in a old
log barn there, the loft end of it was open. He'd just kill his sheep
and leave em lay, that's the way a bear does. They don't like fresh meat.
They like it after it decays, gets spoiled. So we got one of the first
ones he'd killed, up on the hill, and drug it down there, to entice him
down there, you know... We both never slept a wink, but that bear ate that
whole sheep within 30 feet of us ... an we never knew it.

Anyhow, we'd generally see his eyes, as he'd take off in the dark there.
So this evening we's alone there. Didn't have a very good gun either, had
two old broken-down rifles. I had em both loaded and sittin there in the
house.... We's sittin there in the front room of the house. It had big
windows, and the house sat up on a knoll. The sheep was just bedded in
down below, and there's a lot of old buildings down there. We didn't corral
em, we didn't dare; that bear'd get into em and pile em up, and kill half
of em. So I heard the sheep bells a ringing and I looked out the window
and here comes the whole band, right towards the house. I grabbed the
rifle and went back through the dining room -- it was a big house , my
uncle's house there -- through the kitchen and sneaked out the back door.
There's a bunkhouse there and I got behind it...There's a creek there
with heavy willows, I was gonna get on the edge of them and sneak around
behind him. I thought I'd sure fix that boy this time. I got about halfway to the brush there and I looked up and here he had a sheep cut out... right again the house wall. There's a pole fence come up and nailed right onto the corner of the house, and that sheep was tryin to dodge him to get away from him, and he was tryin to catch her there. The radio was 'gain, and Berneta and Mrs. Christiansen were standing there in the window just like that, awatchin...

I cut down on him with that old rifle and he went WOOF. I don't know if I hit him or not, but I charged his mind anyhow. Well, he either had to come toward me or go right back through the middle of the sheep, so here he comes toward me. He got oh, about 60 feet from me, and he was gonna cut around the edge of the sheep then. I cut down on him again, and I know I hit him that time. He let another WOOF out of him, and he was MAD now. Here he comes. He had his old head turned sideways. I could have counted his teeth there in the moonlight. We measured his steps, the boss and I, the next day, and he was jumpin 22 feet at a jump comin at me there.

I never give it a thought to run. Anyhow, he got up, oh, pretty close, to I'd say about from here from that window (6 feet? 6 or 7 feet). It's tryin to shoot him between the eyes. He had his head turned a little bit, and I got him right -- you know how a bear's head is, his ears are up towards the top of his head -- I got him right the side of the ear there. It went down through his neck and all the way into his lungs. That took the WOOF out of him. Set him back on his hannahs, and he made a pass at me., and I ducked him as he come around or he'd ripped me in four pieces. Just as he went by I jammed the gun again his ribs,
right behind his shoulder there, and pulled her off. WOOF, he says, and away he went. That took the fight out of him. He had to go about 30 feet there till he hit a brand-new four-wire fence, cedar posts. He tore out about a hundred yards of that fence when he hit it.

He went across the creek into the brush, and oh boy, he was cuttin up in there, groanin and growlin and tearin up the brush. I looked up and here's Mrs. Christiansen and Berneta standing right on the bank above me. They were right there all the time while I was shootin at him. And one of em had a lantern. I don't know what they were gonna do with that....

(562 -- skipping Mrs. Christiansen and the other gun)

Mrs. Christiansen had this other gun that was in the house. She says, you got any shells left? I says, yeah, I got some in my pocket. That was the last shell I had in the gun when I put it again him there. I loaded this old 30-30 up out of the shells I had in my pocket. Well, she says, Mrs. Christiansen says, let's go in and get him. You can go after him, I said, I've had enough of him.

So we waited a little bit. It was all quieted down in there and I knew he's either dead or gone. So we went down the creek a little ways, there's a bridge there, and come up where the brush wasn't so thick. He's layin there, he was dead....

(570 -- skipping the cat Pete Olsen)

I didn't get scared; never gave it a thought to run when that bear was comin at me. I shook all night afterwards, after it was all over.

(585 -- more about efforts to trap him)
We was gonna trap him, too. We had some traps set out. Some of these sheep he'd killed before, he'd kill 5 or 6 every night and he'd just leave em lay or he'd... There was an old brush roof shed there. It was pretty well fallen down and he'd drag some of this brush and put over his sheep. That's the way a bear does, they kill a cow or a steer out in the timber they'll cover it with limbs or somethin to keep the other predators from gettin it. He'd cover them sheep up with the old brush off the top of that shed. So we put some traps up there one night.... We got 3 or 4 big coyote traps up there, we's gonna catch him. Got up the next mornin, I had a nice big black and tan dog, oh he was a dandy... Tracks all around there, and we had the dog in the trap. We could see where the bear had sure been there, it's a wonder he didn't eat that dog up...