

Saletan, Rebecca

From: Saletan, Rebecca
Sent: Sunday, January 25, 2015 9:27 PM
To: 'carol doig'
Subject: catalogue extra
Attachments: Last Bus Catalog Extra with RS input 012515.docx

OK, here it is (attached and pasted below) with a couple of very minor word changes to all but the last graph, where I wrote some and also borrowed some bits from one of your responses to catalogue copy. Feel free to re-tweak:

Two for the Road

by Ivan Doig

When I was eleven going on twelve, our family was raggedly sewn together with medical catgut. My dad, a feisty Montana ranch hand, had raised me by himself since my mother's death, but an operation that cost him most of his stomach forced him to enlist his mother-in-law to help with the matter of me. That summer of 1951, Dad had barely convalesced enough to return to work when my grandmother faced an operation for something mysteriously called "female trouble." The question of what to do with a rambunctious kid during this crisis was resolved by packing me off to my hitherto unknown great-aunt and uncle in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, by Greyhound bus. And so we end up with the real-life parallel to my fictional version, right?

Not nearly. Memory and imagination see to that. First of all, my actual relatives were not within shooting distance of my made-up characters: my Aunt Marguerite was a squat salty old hausfrau quite the opposite of Donal's Aunt Kate and her sniffy ways, and silent brooding Uncle Herman resembled Herman the German of the book only in a smoggy passion for cigars. More vitally – and if you are among those who put your hand up at readings to ask where the writer gets his/her ideas, here comes one answer – my journey to and from Wisconsin must have gone without incident, because I have virtually no recall of it.

Which, in a novelist's funhouse head, is not bad news at all. It cleared the way to imagine a bus trip where the route of a green young passenger traveling halfway across the country and back again could intersect with any number of wonders, natural and otherwise —a spectacular tribal gathering, a wild and woolly rodeo, an unforgettable hobo haven. It allowed Donny to encounter specimens across the range of humanity, from a sheriff with a Napoleon complex to a waitress with a heart of gold--and to absorb all the life lessons such an assemblage could toss his way. And it let me double the fun by pairing Donny with the ever-surprising Herman the German as an inseparable two for the road. Spectator that I am to this livewire kid who bears my shadow but not much else, I like it that he's a talespinner, a playful storer within the story. I wonder where he got that from?

Rebecca Saletan
Editorial Director
Riverhead Books
Penguin USA

by ways 7. sent

of results

staying notion

static

landscape

Elizabeth

crossed fingers

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by Ivan Doig

When I was eleven going on twelve, our family was raggedly sewn together with medical catgut. My dad, a feisty Montana ranch hand, had raised me by himself since my mother's death, but an operation which cost him most of his stomach forced him to enlist his mother-in-law to help with the matter of me. That summer of 1951, Dad had barely convalesced enough to return to a ranch job when my grandmother faced an operation for something mysteriously called "female trouble." The question of what to do with a rambunctious kid during this surgical crisis was resolved by packing me off to my hitherto unknown great-aunt and -uncle in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, by Greyhound bus. And so we end up with the real-life parallel to my fictional version, right?

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Thus we have Donny, self-described dippy kid although "bright enough to read by at night," doing his damndest to deal with a world new to him--mammoth Greyhound depots, payphones, a suspicious sheriff, and most of all, the disparate cast of characters I have devilishly ticketed into the bus seats with him. In a way, every story is an adventure story, with the breath of imagination carrying the characters through the hazards waiting in the pages, and I the storier look back both sadly and happily--storiers can do that--at the wordlife I have given them.

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brought alive on the page
by the breath of imagination.

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More vitally--and if you are among those who put your hand up at readings to ask where the writer gets his/her ideas, here comes one answer--my journey to and from Wisconsin must have gone without incident, because I remember very little of it. Which, in a novelist's funhouse head, turns imagination instead of memory loose to conjure up a bus trip where any number of calamities can happen to the green young passenger from the West.

Thus we have Donny, self-described dippy kid although "bright enough to read by at night," doing his damndest to deal with a world new to him--mammoth Greyhound depots, payphones, a suspicious sheriff, and most of all, the disparate cast of characters I have devilishly ticketed into the bus seats with him. When he and that ever-surprising uncle, Herman the German, become an inseparable two for the road. And spectator that I am to this livewire kid who bears my shadow but not much else, I like it that he is a talespinner, a playful storiier within the story. I wonder where he got that from?

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Becky

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- so that about a head like
- frames idea
- lot couple of sentence
- presenting a wide thing

world becomes bigger
concealed @ home,
summer theater of life.

From: "Saletan, Rebecca" <rsaletan@penguinrandomhouse.com>
Subject: RE: catalog essay
Date: January 21, 2015 9:03:59 AM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Cc: "Koufopoulos, Michelle M" <mkoufopoulos@penguinrandomhouse.com>

Got it, Ivan, and thanks for all - the postcards came through clearly enough that it gives a clue what to look for. And thanks for the contact info for the photo researcher too. Hope to have something more to show you soon. First half to go out tomorrow to reach you Friday, second half to go out at latest Monday, for Tuesday, but I'm aiming for Friday for Saturday or Saturday for Monday.

-----Original Message-----

From: carol doig [mailto:cddoig@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 11:11 AM
To: Saletan, Rebecca
Cc: Koufopoulos, Michelle M
Subject: catalog essay

Just checking--did you get the catalog essay I faxed late yesterday to the 366-2922 number OK?

Heart-melting pic of redheaded lad wil be on its way by priority mail this morn, along with a pic of fancy-dancing moccasins like Donny's, just in case they inspire a fantastic cover.

Just logistically asking: when is the 1st half of the ms supposed to reach me?

Ivan

From: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: **Re: catalog essay**
Date: January 21, 2015 9:37:47 AM PST
To: "Saletan, Rebecca" <rsaletan@penguinrandomhouse.com>



My first reaction is "Huh?" My second is that I guess that I can try to conjure something--this first version felt very natural as it went together, and I gotta say what you're after feels like a bit of smoke and mirrors--am I right that you'd dump Donny and Herman from that graf?

Ivan

On Jan 21, 2015, at 9:06 AM, Saletan, Rebecca wrote:

Regarding the extra, I'd love to make it a tiny bit more free-standing at the end. Possible to shift the last graph so it's a bit less descriptive of the book and more about what it is that you wanted to evoke in this novel that you hadn't written about before - in other words, a kind of illustration of the way memory works on a fiction writer, or at least THIS fiction writer, not as a supplier of events to be neatly transposed but as providing an opening to new turf, new theme.

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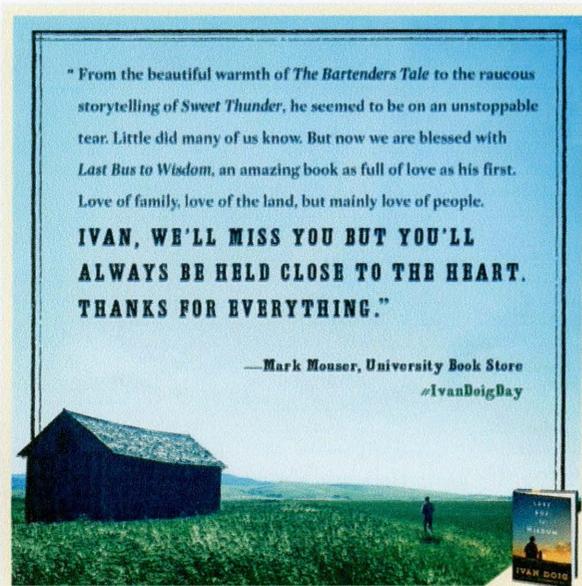
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riverheadbooks We're counting down to *LAST BUS TO WISDOM* (8/18) by sharing some of the fond memories that booksellers, writers and fans have of Ivan Doig. If you have a favorite Ivan Doig

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