"Rockpicking all summer long? What the hell kind of farming do those Scotties call that--the stone-soup harvest?"

"It's on sod they just plowed up," Mitch defended. "What they want is get the worst rocks off before they plant winter wheat."

"You're putting me on the spot, shavetail. I was counting on you to drive the buckrake now that you're back in one piece."

"You always drive that yourself."

"Nothing good lasts forever." Lyle looked oddly rueful.

"Can't you put"--Mitch was not going to do Fritz any favors, ever--"Joe on it?"

"Ferragamo's not haying this year, Got a higher job at the smelter, the prick." Somehow Lyle seemed both amused and fuming at this desertion from his haying crew.

...

"Oh, then the hell with it. Take their job."

Only then did it dawn on Mitch that he had won, this summer, as surely as he had lost over the daybook.

He knew it didn't amount to a beanhill, in the range of contentions hurled up by little buzzs at the coming in life. But Fritz's days stayed with him, a buzzing question edge of how he got along with his father the rest of that year.

this to keep up w/ his body

That next summer he picked rock as if determined to rid the earth of it. The first day he believed he would die on his feet, the stoneboat a mocking raft in the wake of glaciers. He tossed the underhanded football-sized rocks, carried the larger ones under either end hefted the larger ones w/ his hands as if moving an anvil.

The ground under him was different consistency every day through June... Once he worked even though the field was muddy, the rocks coming up with a sucking sound, his footing slippery...Something to get hold of, to wrestle to a finish even if the result was only a mound of rocks at the edge of a field.

He muscled up, thickened at the chest and thighs. The machine of his body became faster at the rockpicking... There was a rhythm, the huge days and the weight of the rocks, the slow journey of the stoneboat to the end of the field...

felt strong

The rocks were being dumped in a draw, the clatter and crack as he tossed them off the stoneboat, or tipped the largest ones off and let them roll...

The waterjug wrapped in a wet gunnysack, two sandwiches and a cinnamon roll and an apple for lunch,

Lyle: "Quite an amount of women around here, all of a sudden."

Marah: "Rin Tin Tin, I presume?"

Lyle: "Naw, Rin is as far as he ever ~~got~~ learned to spell," said L, obviously one of his favorite lines.

Cyberspace or nowhere, little municipal enums. They were folding everywhere out on the lone prairie, towns that...

M: "Frelinghuysen's pocket change would (take care of the whole town)...

· only thing uncontested is that · old boundaries somehow run through you. You are a Rorer, they all have that hair, & lack a pinch or two of common sense, Lyle's kid. (Even when she was on · scene, no I called you Priscilla's kid.) Been out o: coast, driving a typewriter. Football, you were good at. (But anybody that size...) Touchy to be around, though.

three

Airports, waystations of the glazed and the impatient. A sluice of both was pouring toward Lexa as she waited at the international terminal at SeaTac. There she was. Mariah, announced by her hair.

"It's me," reported ~~Lyle~~ Mitch's voice, as if not quite happy with that fact. "Deep in the heart of Artesia Park. Sharing a phone booth with squashed beer cans, and the wind is blowing in like a sonofabitch. I've spent all day dealing with, trying to deal with, my father. It's about four o'clock, Mountain time--three o'clock, *your* time,right?--and I need

real
"Come on. I'll show you the family landmark.

He drove east and a bit north to the Donstedder Bench. The graveled road climbed it in a long swooping curve, and right at the crest Mitch stopped the car. The coulee leading down to the Soda Creek valley was a jumble ~~the color of skulls and cannonballs~~ of rocks.

"Mmm. Big mama rocks had their nest here, looks like," Lexa said.

"We picked rocks on all these benches that got farmed," Mitch dipped his head to each of the several long landforms arrayed around. "Most truckloads ended up here--some guys didn't want ~~the~~ rockpiles taking up the corners of their fields, but Donsetdder said he didn't care about this coulee, fill it to the brim with rocks as far as he was concerned." Mitch paused, seeming to think back. "Dad had crews out every spring as soon as the fields dried enough to drive a truck on." He let out a bitter half-laugh. "Sometimes barely dry enough. Anyway, out we came...

"I don't know, Lex. If you have to wrestle the country from the rocks every damn year, maybe that ought to tell you something about the country. But it never did Lyle."

And when you come back, the Mitch of now was finding, the sharp edges of the past are there waiting. As if by family He had been driving the highway from Choteau a little too fast, as Roziers always did, and when he braked for the bridge at the Soda Creek curve he wondered if anti-lock brakes...

Above the town were the TWS in white rocks. OO giggled themselves into the notion of moving lugging the rocks out of the middle of the W so the outline would read TITS. He'd had to fight both of them...before he had his real spurt of growth

At first Mitch had thought they were kidding. Guys he had picked rock with. He knew his father would

On the OO at the western edge of towm, the Rozier Bench, the high school's painted white bocks TWS stood out. God, Mitch remembered the trouble over those white rocks, too.

The house was gaunt, the second floor looking vacant even from the outside. Mitch could remember when the red-brick siding was put on,... Not so red now, not much of an imitation of brick either.

By unfortunate comparison,

Whaever had got into the Aronsons, a new bay window ~~looked~~ bulged there like an indignant eye. The paint on their place looked suspiciously fresh astounded too, Maybe their TV is on the blink and they or decided to watch Dad, I don't know. How the hell would I know.

Lyle Rozier's knickknack drawer was his yard.

The town was short of trees, the minerals in the stunted of the springs tough on trees, but his father had practically ordered the little line of cottonwoods willows out front not to die, dosing them with farm fetrilizer. Mitch judiciously among chores had ~~lugged~~ many ~~x~~ buckets of water ~~from the standpipe~~ to those 00 trees. as a boy had been lugged famishing ~~gasping~~

They were-t respectable items o, grace now.

Not many houses even in Montana towns had bunkhouses

"It's pretty soft."

"A little mud won't hurt you guys," Lyle ordered. The man with a war behind him.

The truck tires cut alarming furrows, but Lyle was right, rock picking was possible. Chilly and dank, with mud built up on their shoes, but they could do it. The boys worked hard to keep warm, which doubtless was in Lyle's calculation too.

About an hour into the day, they saw OO and his hired man moving mother cows and their calves, and Lyle stopped the truck. "Need to ask OO where he wants these rocks dropped," he told the boys. He gave them a wink. "There, didn't I tell you? Any prissypants can work in a dry field."

M was with J. w/ Jeffords. I was in a baseball dream - thock w/ his tong, sound of. but

Mitch saw the rock caught between the dual tires. He crouched under the truck bed to work it loose before mud built up behind it. It was wedged hard, and he dug in his heels, bracing to give it a pull. He heard the truck going into gear, simultaneous with Lyle's call, "OK, ~~let's pick some rock...~~" (OK, rockhounds.) make those rocks fly."

Mitch slipped as he flung himself sideways. The outside tire of the duals ran over his right leg just above the ~~ankle~~ ankle... He saw Jeffords flapping his arms, screaming to Lyle to stop the truck, and in the gouge of pain Mitch hoped the truck was not going to back up...

remaybe hearing

M's scream

So there they were in bed for the onset of summer, Mitch and his

But for the mud, the wheel would have mashed foot and ankle as well. cast-encased broken leg. ~~The mud had saved him from a mashed ankle and foot which would have crippled the leg forever.~~

Jeffords came around a couple of times, tongue-tied with apology,

(Apologies for what, though; being Jeffords?) so morose that Mitch

immediately felt better when Jeffords left.

Mitch read the Tribune for the baseball scores and roundups.

Then, since you can read a sports page only so many times, he began reading everything else in the paper.

"Help me get the Blue Goose ready."

Out they went to the faded Dodge truck and took off the high boxboards used to haul grain. In place of those went a set of 2x10 boards along both sides of the truckbed, enough wall to hold rocks on the truck but low enough to toss over.

...

Four boys at eight or nine hours of rockpicking, $32 or $36 a day; and the same sum for Lyle, sitting there guiding the truck along at a mile an hour.

Lyle considered that teenage boys barely had the brains of sheep; but you could stretch their day's work--nine hours instead of eight if a field could be finished by keeping at it until dark--in ways that would make an older man keel over.

...

Sarpy said, "Here comes a lateral, Roy Mitch." With both hands he lobbed a rock the size of a workshoe toward Roy Mitch.

Mitch watched several fancy flings of rocks before pulling out the throttle a fraction to keep the truck going, then stepped out onto the running board. "Hey, Sarps, and you guys," he yelled while keeping his hand on the steering wheel. "My old man's not going to go for that."

Sarpy and Loper gradually ~~had~~ giggled themselves into the notion of rearranging the middle rocks of the W. Carry them up and make a bar across the top of the right-hand stanchion of the W, and there you had it, a slightly askew but perfectly readable TITS.

"Hey, huh uh," Mitch tried with a forced laugh, already knowing this ~~was going to be bad.~~ could be extreme trouble "The old man will can your asses."

"Won't know for sure, will he. That's why we're letting you in on it."

Mitch gauged the two of them. Then he jumped Sarpy, half-wrestling half-whirling him, getting in a couple of good hits before Sarpy could gather himself. Mitch drove into him in a tackle so perfect it resonated in the field, his right shoulder into Sarpy's midriff and his lowered arms lifting and dumping Sarpy backward. Mitch had known he had to make this good, he likely had to fight Loper next. Sarpy was stunned, no battle left in him.

Panting, Mitch got off him and turned around to Loper. Lope looked at the mess that was Sarpy, swallowed, and put up his hands to fend off Mitch if he came; but offered no fight.

"Come on, Sarps," Mitch gasped. "Let's call it quits on this."

In compound gear, the truck grumbled along at slowest speed, two boys on either side ranging out to pick up rocks at least as big as softballs. All day the field threw itself in their faces, fine dirt blowing off the rocks as they lobbed them aboard the truckbed. Rocks the size of anvils took two boys to carry them, and sometimes Lyle jumping down from the truck cab to help.

They began brighthanded, wearing cheap white cotton workgloves which by the end of the first day would be irredeemably soiled and by the second [or third] day would be worn out. Every farmer they worked for pointed out that leather gloves might cost more but would last longer, and every boy resented laying out his own money and went on buying the cheap ones.

Farmers were not happy to deal with Lyle on rockpicking. They too well knew they could hire the same boys for the same dollar an hour apiece, but it took time from everything else that needed doing. So they scowled and paid Lyle two dollars an hour for every pair of hands (including himself, sitting in the truck cab) and gassed up the truck for him as well.

He heard his father say: "I can tear it up if I have to?"

"Lyle, I hate you know how to bitch against the kid's bookkeeping and all, but..."

Mitch swung into the living room on his crutches. "What's going on?"

The ir workhat on the back of their heads, indoors style, the two men looked at him. After a moment his father said:

"Little problem on Fritz's days."

"What problem? When?"

Lyle hesitated. Fritz didn't, saying:

"Back there around the Fourth, ~~Mitch.~~ I had it happen to me before, Mitch, on other jobs. A holiday comes and maybe whoever's keeping the it takes a couple of days days doesn't get back to it right away and something gets overlooked... It's understandable."

Mitch made his way to where he could see onto the daybook page. July 4, 5, 6: Fritz's three-day drunk. "Fritz, that's when you were-- downtown. You remember, Dad. You were all steamed up chewing nails about having to hay with only the buckrake and no bullrake.

"Can't say as I do," Lyle said shortly.

"Funny summer that way," Fritz put in. "Broke down as much as

Don't think I'm
we were. Hard to keep track. I'm not blaming you, Mitch." Just that

a man hates not to get paid for what's coming to him."

"But--I <u>didn't</u> make a mistake. I <u>remember</u> what happened then.

Fritz, you didn't come back to ~~k~~ work until the morning of the seventh?

Mom would remember.
Dad, you remember. You groused about the week being almost over--"

Fz showed up still hungover
he was

"I tied one on, the day of the Fourth, sure. Practically unpatriotic

not to, right, Lyle? But I hauled myself back into the hayfield the next

morning, I'm sure of it."

little ripping
A tearing sound came as Lyle tore up the check. "These things happen,

Mitch. I'm gonna give Fritz that couple of days, that'll settle it."

Or even wanting one.

Lyle:

"I didn't know jackshit about raising a kid. Here I always thought

Pat
~~Paul~~ had it made,

Midge kept Dodson the straight and narrow by means of annual marital fight so scalding that it made them be nice to each other for another year.

Then came another few inches of good soil beneath where the roots of the grass had been, and after that, gravel was much in the majority. It confirmed the country's reputation for being a toupee of grass on a skull of stone.

} used in Sus Scrofa (cranium)

If I hold very tightly to memory, it takes me into realms I came through earlier in ignorance. The flash within life that is purpose is returned to me, fed on a strong new wick.

This matter of siting ourselves may in fact be something like learning a second language: somewhere in the multitude of possibilities there is a possible fluency.

How do I woo the past? What turn of my hand above the keyboard will bring it near?

And why do I work at it? I dream forward, but those are different dreams than those toward the past.

You start to die when you are born, he knew. Death is a lifelong process, the years our doses of reward for going toward the inevitable. Yet there are instants when the last of life appears closer, breathes nearer.

used in SPY

Before, death had made hasty swipes at him. This time it fastened onto his chest and rode him day and night. He could breathe only as if he were trying to stave off dwowning--the deep, clutching grasps at breath, chest swelling, the air blowing through his lips in his haste to draw more in. His life was ending before his existence, and I watched helplessly as he drained away.

We are all murdered by mortality in due time, but sheep behave as if they can't wait. They seek out rendezvous with death which boggle the mind.

It was a land of great mines & mechanic opportunities.

Bob Marshall

· Wise Use writings

The one thing that could be taken away from TSS - so far - was its headings. · Rocky Mtn Front Journal

momentum lost, (00 grounded) entropy. Canterbury Tales memoirs: human clocks spring glazed. droopy-winged travel droop.

Airports, way-stations of the 00. Lexa waited at the international gate at SeaTac, watching for the hair that would announce Mariah.

the human ark go by in a moving stream.

There, ~~she was~~. Announced by her hair, Mariah.

She was starting to look her years, but those were only 43.

there,
"Hey, cowgirl.
"Aren t you the sight." They hugged, arms glad around each other.

...

"Sorry it's over?"

Museum of PE is already ...

"It's not, quite. There's the photo show, I've got a gazillion I have prints to do."

"Whoa. going-and-and world part, it meant.

"Hear anything of Riley?"

"~~Yeah.~~ You bet." Jick laughed. "Got a talk show now. Maybe it's what he's cut out for, huh?" He laughed again. "Him and California getting each other by the ears--I kind of like that picture."

To Mariah, Calif. was another planet. Riley himself was another planet, one M had already tried & cd. exist there.

March: "Gosh. Umm."

"Easy, girl," I ~~said w/ mischief.~~ cocked an eyebrow. "~~Good will get around~~ you'll get a rep in [illegible] on ... existent. that

~~that~~ ... for you to get off."

"Candy dandy, but liquor quicker. Which reminds me."

"Meet anybody?"

"Mate anybody, you of course mean?" "No, nothing lasting." "There was a New Zealander who was interesting.

"You're having some, of course," M invited

"Sure."

"Damn. I was afraid of that.

three

Time zones following them like swampy shadows, the zombied passengers of flight 809 from Prestwick were trickling out of the Customs area at SeaTac toward where Lexa was waiting.

There. Announced by her hair, Mariah.

She was starting to look her years, but those were only forty-three.

"Hey there, cowgirl. Aren't you the sight." They hugged, arms glad around each other.

"So how was the big silver bird?" Lexa asked.

"Can you believe it? We're flying over the North Pole, there's the ice cap and the sun out on the Arctic Ocean and every iceberg in the world, and the stews want us all to

"And it's about thirteen o'clock and the ~~xhm~~ barometer falling, in your beloved sister." Mariah blinked. "Where was that bedroom?"

"Up in the Ballard penthouse, the dormer room. Come on, I'll carry your suitcase. Last time in your life anybody will do that for you, right?"

"I can pull in on Leona for a while. We can stand each other for, oh, whole
a couple of weeks at a time, by now."

M covers phone w/ his hand, calls to h:

"Just what MT needs, another gouge out of it.

~~difficult~~ hardscrabble

Ah, the hard life of the window westerner. Those gorgeous mountains and the Lyle Roziers of the world in the way. "I'm here to, ~~ahm,~~ see about straightening some things up. Give me a little time, okay?" Catch up on your e-mail or something.* Consult

"I had to mention it."

Woe-oh.

Irritated at changing sides, Mitch...

Then pushed back to arms length of each other, drinking each other in,

the past year, all the years of love and contention....God, there was

nothing like it, these first minutes back together with someone you had virtually known as long as yourself.

highly camera'ed up,

The two of them attacked Mariah's array of baggage and lurched off with a load apiece, Mariah saying, "Brought you stuff,

"You'd better have brought stuff home, else why the hell would I come

to the airport for you?"

Got something for "Mitch, too,-He wears belts, doesn't he, not those half-ass yuppie fireman suspenders? This's python skin,..

Says to tell you hi.

"No Mitch, sorry. He had to He had to go off to Montana to

"Oh, hey, he says to tell you hi. He's herd his dad away from some half-assed wild-hair

"Umm, one of those. Jesus, you look good, squirt. Your own

catering must agree with you."

she explained.

Mariah giggled. Lagos, I rode in a jitney

check all this to
if used in Bucking

Even though the road ran straight as a rail for 00 miles ahead, Mitch(?) never shifted his eyes from it.

...the smudged sky to the west. The horizon there had gradually roughened with hills, breaks, coulees, and now that banked horizon of hills was dimming away...

...Tawny country, flat beside the road and yet not in sum; the bumpy edges of benchlands protruded all around like knees of reclining Gullivers.

Picnic in Artesia Park, the Saturday before haying was done. Wives always came, Marie Tournierre, dark and quiet, and Janine Ferragamo, a peaches-and-cream redhead beside Joe's dark quiet grin. The unmarried men were on their best behavior, handling everything like eggshells; as far as Mitch could remember, even Fritz Mannion stayed heroically sober for the duration of the picnic.

He himself was on crutches by then, at last up and around after his monumental broken leg had kept him in bed virtually all that summer, and he was newly aware of his body, (Cantrell, the football coach, had suggested he squeeze a rubber ball while bed-ridden, improve his arm and hand strength.) its susceptiblity to fate which had snapped his leg in two places, its regenerative power where he could feel himself getting stronger every day. The growth spurt that would change him across --change him so hard he sometimes would ache with it-- the next year, year and a half, was starting to hit.

main collateral asset in

Lyle Rozier's face had been his OO through life, if not his fortune. The worn lines on it made it look better, the way an Anasazi cliff dwelling looks more natural when it's ancient. Not that he was ancient, Mitch reminded himself, there could be ~~was~~ a ~~lot~~ of years of Lyle left to deal with. count's #

He had a knowing way of looking at a person, as if he'd seen you before you put your clothes on this morning and knew just what you were covering up. Mitch figured that Lyle look had brought him those sergeant stripes in the war.

Particularly if he'd gone weird. Weirder.

The total wasn't so much handsome as striking. It stayed with you. In fact, that clinging knowing If act, it followed you, in the OO gaze of Lyle's.

could say/feel his eyes on you

They were even visited by some Forest Service bigwig. Claimed he wasn't inspecting anything but scenery, but Eliason looked as if his diaper was being checked. Luckily the headquarters man was in a hurry, took off down the trail after inhaling lunch with them. After his pack bobbed out of sight below the brow of Phantom Woman and Eliason scooted into the tent to write something down, Lyle grinned sarcastically and wondered how a guy got a job like that, drawing pay for loping around the mountains. Joe had been wondering that too, but in awe.

Eliason uses a manual. Checks it every so of

They were barely off their horses before Paul Eliason was making them go up. Tower & install. lightning rod. When ranger's back was turned, L gazed elaborately around @ clear blue sky & grunted to Joe.

Lyle was saying, "Matt--*Matthew* kind of likes it over here. Nobody's on him to pick stuff up, I guess maybe."

Mitch just about laughed. Of course! His father's shambles of a house was a teenager's hog heaven, accumulation without particular purpose but dangerous proportions.

Mistaking Mitch's expression, Lyle said: "I don't let him hang around a lot, Mitch. He's got parents, they're there for a purpose. Although that father of his is a wet Kleenex if there ever was one."

"You're spreading the word, I take it. About what you've got."

"I am not. I consider that personal."

"It's getting harder to get along with Luke."

Another war with some neighbor. Or the brother of his cyber-gospelist Matthew? Mitch waited, but nothing resembling an explanation seemed to be nearing his father's horizon.

"Make me ask, why don't you. Who's this Luke character?"

Lyle sniffed. Then cocked his head as if he himself was interested to see what he was going to speak out next. And only then said clearly:

riding the avalanche.

Here it all at once was. Mitch's turn at the rudder.

He had known the moment would come. But the when of it, that was always the ambush. Bingford had buried his famous father in Aspen earlier this year. Ingvaldson's daughter the Unitarian minister had popped back from Duluth to frown over his kidney stone episode last month. Like the flyways of rattled birds, America's concourses were constantly crisscrossed with Baby Boomers trying to nerve up for the bedside consultation, the nursing home decision, the funeral. Mitch believed he could generally pick them out at airports, the trim businesswoman biting her lip, the pony-tailed guy, himself gray, with the ten-thousand-yard stare.

And the curly-haired man who was himself sitting in his father's badger den of a kitchen.

Mitch wanted to pick the old reprobate up by his ears and then start doing him serious damage.

"You knew you had this the last time I was here and didn't say anything?" *Which meant you were saying "Aw, you're too busy to shed a tear for your leukemia-ridden father.*

"You got your own life," Lyle said. From him, it didn't sound generous.

L abt M's bookkeeping:

(Jick did diary for Mac) "You'd have liked him."

I'll throw in The Springs

"Trade you, sight unseen. Lyle for Jick."

Fritz fell, the bazooka under him.

The others swore at him in chorus, then Lyle asked if he was okay.

"The bazooka's bent," Fritz said. Lyle didn't even bother to cuss him out. They jammed the bazooka between two trees and straightened it.

Scrambling on the mangrove roots was slow going.

...

"We've seen it," Lyle said. "Let's fall back."

They were still on the ridge when something rustled in the foliage. Lyle popped his head over a bush to take a look. An equally surprised Japanese looked up at him, the curved top of his cartridge clip. He thought the squatting figure was Ferragamo taking a crap, until he saw open to

for a split second

Ferragamo was firing, the BAR cutting a strip across the Jap's crush cut shoulders and throat.

Lyle felt blood on his face and hands, couldn't believe it: the Jap hadn't had a chance to fire. Then he realized the wind had blown the Jap's blood on him.

"He had a pocket trench dug," Fritz said.
"Lyle, there's more." Fritz and Ferragamo were standing

ninety-day
about what they expected, another candy-ass
The lieutenant was a self-important candy-ass

enlisted men was Hannibal
wonder. The last good officer that the dogfaces knew of...

to be known as
Candless, militarily doomed for his name's proximity to candy-ass.

About any of the fine points of military life, Fritz could be

let him get a caveman
stupider than snot. But when he had his mind set on something he was

cleverness took over.
undeterrable. Fritz had grasped that the bazooka was...

route to advancement
There had been no ~~way to rise~~ in the CCC; it had meant to build

character, and Lyle had not been displeased with his, to start with.

opportunities
vacuums
The Army, though, had these...alleys. Lyle rapidly learned to keep a

an about-to-wink expression
straight face around officers, and ~~a knowing look~~ among the men.

~~"He's riz, he's riz, he's the sargiest sergant there is."~~ The Montanans

liked having one of their own...

hotel unless you had a taste for
New Guinea was a crazy place to fight a war, ~~full of~~ vines,

sopping diseases severe enough to make your bones rattle,
snakes, ~~wet~~ horse-blanket heat, and the ~~possibility~~ of Japanese up
likelihood

every gum stump.

It reminded Ferragamo too much of slum life. He hunched up and

soldiered, but...

All's I want is to
"~~I'd like to~~ get my butt out in one piece."

"Come on, Joe, it's already got a crack in it.

The combination of war and the jungle and the guys and his rank propelled Lyle. He'd known something of this sort back when he was in the CCC camp, that he ~~liked~~ could put up with better things when he was running them. It didn't have to be everything, he didn't have to be MacArthur. But a piece of things, some orders to give, a ~~patrol~~ patrol to lead: this he liked. And could do .

The war combination ~~seized~~ intrigued Lyle, warmed him inside, a number of times a day.

Lyle in cubicle:

He felt as if he was watching himself in a mirror sha ~~through a window~~ Part of him wd show up, then a little farther off. Close up to himself.

...

He was fond of groups, he somehow believed he'd be able to keep them from harm.

· waitress delivered Lexa's OO. "Here you go," she advised M, tch, "Yours will be a while."

... "Wait a minute. ~~I got here 1st, & we came in by a gal 10 m~~ (We both ordered @ same time, same thing, special. ~~(ended up) ordering same thing.~~ Who is mine?"

· waitress bit her lip & ~~glanced~~ peered nervously toward · kitchen. "Cookie is on a kind of a slowdown."

M & L swiveled their heads to join · waitress's perusal of · kitchen & were met w/ a glare.

"She's mad @ · boss," · waitress explained "so she's only doing one order at a time." An angry flick of · (order slip.) "There, she's starting on yours now."

↑ "Murph?" inquired Lexa

"Right, how'd you know?"

to be

..."Mitch, I thought Seattle was getting too much for you."

"What, you think Lyle isn't wouldn't be too much for me?

"How long can he last.

"Number his days, huh? He's already had more lives than...

"You do want him dead."

"Who ever wants that? You can't wish that on people, no matter how much grief they've given you."

...

...

"This isn't as overrun with people."

"No, but it's overrun with a lot else." They walked to the back of the property, where there was a view of the mountains. "He'd rather make a killing than a living. That's always been his story. Always been a promoter. We were going to get rich on OO, once. Now it's branding irons."

"It's huh?"

"Don't ask. I'll show you the Rozier Not right now treasure vault of Rocker Ds and Quarter Circle P's tomorrow."

"I want him to have been something else than he was. Goddamned guy who's always out to make a killing instead of a living, then can't figure out why he ends up on a rockpile like this—how much smarts do you need, after about fifty years of that, to know that isn't going to pay off?"

"He's old now."

"That's the latest thing he's trying to get away with. Time for sympathy for Lyle."

"And the worst part is, you're feeling some."

"YES!"... "Damn right, I don't want to."

...

"I know it sounds cruel."

It sounded near-criminal, she thought.

"Do you want him dead? Is that it?"

"He pretty much was dead, as far as I was concerned. It's more like he's popped back to life."

"And you have to deal with him .

~~(illegible)~~
A suppo
A do.

L: "You 2 go ~~on~~ ahead. I'm kind of on a outs w/ OO." Murp

"We cd eat someplace else... ~~if~~ ahem, if there is

anyplace else?"

L: "Naw, that's OK, I'm not hungry anyway. get yrselves on down to Murph's.

Want to go out & have a look @ a bench.

"See you later, then."

...

M: "Drive, will you." he shed him over in concern.

he: "Want, to ~~go~~ fool ~~by~~ me swing high school?"

"I do not. All I want is supper."

The kitchen was better, but only because of a two-foot-high pack of paper plates. Plainly Lyle had dispensed with doing dishes and ate picnic-style.

He was hoping Lexa would take charge. But she cast one look around the OO kitchen and said, "Let's eat out."

Lyle looked wistful. "Been a while since there was any coupling, sorry, couple in this house."

"Just here to help out a little while," Lexa emphasized.

"Nice of you, anyway."

...

"Mitch and I will make out fine."

"How you doing, Lyle?"

He just grinned.

"Make yourself at home," Mitch said, gesturing toward a chair he'd taken a pile off of. She looked around the room, analytical but not surprised. Everybody's clutter was different from everybody else's. A OO caught her eye.

Stick of dynamite, like on a logjam...

All right, Mariah, you had the Roziers pegged. Together, the resemblance of Mitch and Lyle rhymed. The wavy hair, still nearly a a full head of it on Lyle, Mitch's black with wisps of gray around the ears.

...

"I thought I'd go for a walk." She looked west... "Okay to trespass on the Rozier Bench?"

"Sure, sure," Lyle said. help yourself "Just remember you're walking on money

"How's the Lexa?" Lyle said without inflection enough...

inquired, leaving her to decide whether or not it was a greeting.

"For somebody dying, he's pretty lively."

Mitch looked ahead bleakly, to where the mountains stood. "You don't know the half of it yet."

...

"How's, uhm, business been?"

"Weddings up the wazoo," she said cheerfully.

"Really." He looked around the cafe. "You might have to cater supper here, the rate nothing's happening."

... still is wearing them

"I know the faces. But maybe not which generation they belong to."

add p. 182?
" p. 193,
Repeat Mitch?

adds to computer ms:
start w/ highest p. #,
otherwise additions
will repaginate everything
from lowest p. # on &
make it hard to find

Now it was country she wanted to keep at arm's length. The McCaskills had come and put in their century--homesteading, ranching, holding to the land. She had hoped for a repeat of that in Alaska. No kids, Travis was shooting blanks. The only crop she felt at home with was the fishing, and that had its problems too, of booming and waning. Otherwise, in her experience Alaska was cut-something-down or drill-something-up, and she grew damned sick of it. She knew Seattle life, the coast, was a kind of retreat. But the land there mended itself. Tundra didn't, desert didn't. People were going to live in places such as Seattle in multitudes, that was a given. (Until physics, in the form of earthquake or volcano, leveled the place, Mitch would have pointed out.) She had to search a little for elbow room there, but so far she had found it.

add p. 171?

I'M saw in mind's eye...

Much was adding up. Lyle propped against the pickup, those pauses for disquisition on this or that (cd include watching Rin w/ magpie)--

saw

Mitch now knew that his father had been parceling himself out, saving exertion whenever he could. Slow motion was the only motion left in his father.

add p. 148?

Mitch looked at the town again. Cyberspace or nowhere, little municipal chums.

add to mtns descpn, p. 44&+ ?

If he'd stayed--no, come back after college. "Married local," as they said in this town. The school principal's daughter. Versions of Jocelyn and Laurits. He had the feeling they'd still be sailing through the streets of San Francisco and the lingual bypaths tongue paths of Jakarta.

And worked at what? Become his father's partner in seasonal muscle? You bet, divvy a job that barely supported one person.

All the outdoors you could eat.

add p. 148+>

anymore,
Mitch felt o as authic here as Flynn, world's
projecting
nicest roadrunner, spurting himself into Nepal.
jogging · ridgelines of

add p. 1497

Even in Montana towns not many places had bunkhouses.

"Mitch, I thought you were big on history. If
history, what's wind, artifacts—
history
there aren't," I clarified. "It ain't. Oh—"I
~~don't guess I~~ don't know
what is."

Probably don't use — too much like film scene — condense, M managing & blapping thru channels...

"Oh, hey, let me show you something." Lyle picked up a remote control, studied the buttons and finally pressed one. A soap opera voice and countenance came on, saying "But I thought she was a friend of yours" to one saying "Not any more. Not after this." Lyle blapped that channel, hit another button, and the video channel came on.

"Dad? There are many winding wires. Teton County isn't that big...

"Well, sure, there's elsewhere in here, too. Put in etc, Scout around records a Co, it's about empty, & Garfield. & I was able to Quite a bunch up around GV (WCW?) buy up quite a bunch...

"& you used what for money?"

"Oh, I see what you're getting @," I said in what indeed like admiration. "financing. Took out a mortgage o place. Y property, of course. See, though, that's beauty of selling Bench. Pay off mortgage & still come out ahead."

"It's a little complicated..." after tentacle

I did start feel tentacles [of complication] wrapping around his knees. Lawyer, banker, [crazy] man, grief.

Mitch went on into the house. (describe) He unabashedly marveled.

He heard tires crunching in the driveway. His father's latest pickup...

Lyle stepped down. He propped himself proprietorially against the fender long enough to light a cigarette, take a deep drag, then

Mitch realized his father was going to wait for him to come out. came toward the house. He was moving more stiffly with the years, Lyle saw, and...

Choosing the ground to fight on already, old sergeant?

"How's the Mitch?" Lyle greeted.

... "Present & accted for," M said duly. Shake hands. "Appreciate that you came. hated to impose

Lyle cleared his throat. "Kind of keep your voice down, okay? Not just everybody knows about this gravel deal."

Mitch pitched a murmur..."Like, say, Donald Priddy?"

"You already met the improvement to the neighborhood, did you."

Lyle tossed down his cigarette and ground it into the driveway gravel with his foot. always It also surprised Mitch to see the workshoes on his father. Lyle seemed like the type built for tooled snake? calfskin cowboy-boots. Must

"Oh, hey. Before we go in, let me show you something."

There was always a large gray canker a few feet from the front step where we threw wash water and ashes, I think even emptied the slop pail. The chickens pecked away the slops, but the lye of the soap and ashes had killed the ground for good.

cut from ch. 1
Aug. 29, '83

has. The Quality Stogie Store, ~~Freda's~~ Sheba's place, he makes his headquarters, and for the first week he drinks whiskey and his women are pretty good lookers. The next week or so he's mostly on beer and his women are getting a little shabby. Then for about two weeks after that he's on straight wine and squaws. Generally it took Dode three or four trips to Great Falls to fish Pat out of a spree. I'll get there to the Quality and track him down and sober him up a little and have him all lined out to bring home, and he'll say, "Oh hell, I about forgot, I gotta have ten dollars to go pay a fellow." Then he takes off with that ten and that's the last I see of him. I wish to hell I had a nickel for every hour I've spent leaning up against the cigar counter in that joint, trying to wait that bugger out. Jesus, one time I never will forget, I drove down there just bound and determined to get him back on the job, and I went into the Quality, and no Pat. Freda told me, "He's around here somewhere, Withrow, you just wait, he'll blow in here." So I waited. And waited. Leaning a hole into that goddamn counter. The bar was full of guys, it'd been railroad payday, and Freda's whores were working the crowd, Big Tit Lou and Bouncing Betty and Nora Buffalo and some others. Bouncing Betty had the first table, right in front of me, and she'd smile like a million dollars at everybody who came in. And all the time those gandy dancers were getting more and more boozed up. The place sounded like Hell changing shifts. So I stood there and stood there and stood there. Taking it all in, passing the time by thinking to myself what a sap I was. Finally Bouncing Betty got up and came over to me and said, "Withrow, I think you need some fun. On the house. We'll make it up out of Pat's next wages." I thought about how I'd been leaning there two-thirds of the night watching all this disgusting stuff, and I thought to myself, "By God, she is about a hundred percent right. I think Withrow DOES need some fun." Right then, wouldn't you just know, in the door comes goddamn Pat. "You looking

cut?

Nowadays you have ranchers who always swore they'd die before giving up the saddle, and they're out romping across the range aboard Japanese cutting horses--4-wheel-drive Toyotas and Hondas.

(use with power buckrake, as evolving technology)

2-11-81

Wennberg pointed southwest, where a dim bulk rose on the horizon.

"You've sighted Cape Flyaway," Melander said. "Clouds. Sometimes they sit down on the water like brood hens and you'd swear they're land, couldn't be anything but. That Finn skipper spent half of one morning searching our charts for a thunderhead he thought was a piece of Hawaii. We need to take care, this coast'd gladly stand us on our ears. Read the map, read the compass, read the landmarks, and not go chasing clouds. That'll fetch us to Astoria. Aye?"

"What'll it be like?" This was Braaf, who took the chance to stop his paddle while asking. "Another wet woodpile like New Archangel?"

"The sailors' buzz I've heard is that it's a proper port but small. Sits on a fat river with hell's own sandbars at its mouth. The Americans--paddle, Braaf, a scissor of a lad like you is sharp enough to move your mouth and arms at the same time, aye?--the Americans, recent years, have taken it back from the British and they boast it as tomorrow's town of this coast. But all we care is whether ships touch at the place, and touch they do."

They carried in their heads

~~It~~ The one piece of luck they had was that theirs was a ghetto not marked off by ~~their~~ religion, or the shape of ~~their~~ noses or the shade of ~~their~~ skin. The Scots, who lived OO in their homeland, had the right sense of drift for America's west.

I try to think myself back into that other boyhood, to feel from the skin inward what it would have been like to grow up within the far mountain basin, in a large fatherless family, with winter holding the country five months of a year and bankers in wait for it most of the rest of the time. My growing up had its own odd skews, but my father's boyhood crooked off ~~at some~~ along angles almost beyond my imagining.

Anam. word

Mariah's

On impulse I reached over to her camera bag and traced a finger along one of the brands incised into the leather. Marcella and I had the bag made for her by the leathersmith up at Browning, and he'd done a nice job of freehanding the old ranch brands, which were those of the great roundup of 1882 in the Two Medicine country. His guide had been A chuckbox with all the olden brands on it had come down through my family--somebody must have done that decorating in an idle moment after supper scorching in the cookfire at the chuckwagon, gathering the branding irons and heating them and then searing the brands into the wood one by one--which the leathersmith D-S, the famous Davis-Houser-Stuart outfit. Billy Ulm's TL. The Floweree outfit's Dan Floweree's big lone solitary F. My finger thoug

Neither those nor

Of the dozen brands cavorting at angles on the sides of the camera bag, though, my finger had alit

Marcella and I had (the camera bag) made for her by the leathersmith at up in Browning, and he'd done a nice job freehanding the ~~[illegible]~~ old ranch brands--(inc. Isaac's horse brand)

--copied from chuck box on the roundup of 0000 (told in Eng Crk)

Alec and I made the trip to Great Falls with my father when the first CCC contingent unloaded atk the depot there. The camp was to be in the Old Agency district out from Choteau rather than in my father's, but they would be building fire trails and so on at English Creek as well, and so he was naturally curious to see what was showing up.

The eastern boys surged off the train as if being let loose from a dungeon. Most of them gawked at the buttes which rim Great Falls, or chattered to one another. Accents which I had only heard on the crackling radio came out of actual mouths: Hey, Ace, see enny cawboys ennywheh? ~~Ace, enny cawboys ennywheh?~~ Nah, it's cawgirls I'm looken fah. But also a startling number of fistfights broke out. I realize now that these must have been grudges which were promises to be settled as soon as the train stopped. At the time, though, it seemed to me a band of savages had alit. Or, more baffling yet, a band of would-be savages, for the fistfights tended to be roundhouse knockdowns, which went against the western style of staying on your feet at all costs.

So my lasting impression of the arrival of the CCCs to Montana was those sloppy brawls, and the calls back and forth in New York and Illinois and Kentucky voices. My father, taking it all in, said

to Alec and me: Glad these 'rangutangs will be living on somebody else's district instead of mine. But he half-grinned as he said it, and I believe he actually was relieved to see the eastern youngsters arrive full of vim and sass, rather than being the trainload of pale rabbits that had been expected.

use in beaver dam scene?

Now I was being perfectly polite with Shaun because even if he was the TriGram guy, I'd known his family and him from when he was a pup. Even I had to admit, there was a trend here.

Maybe it'd have made things simpler if there was a ~~real~~ genuine money reason for them to want my place. Oh, there were some annoyances involved, first for the Double W and now for the TriGramites, in having an independently owned ranch where mine was. The boundary of the Two national forest adjoined my place on the west, so my land was a kind of obstacle there at ~~the~~ TriGram's western pastures; cows had to be shoved around my place. And I suppose it was bothersome to have me up there above them on Noon Creek, with some water rights, even though a little hayfield irrigating was all the use that my ranch could make of that water. Nor were mineral rights a real issue; geologists and seismologists gave that whole area under the Rocky Mountain Front a thorough working-over, and my ranch showed nothing worth digging or drilling. No, I'll tell you what I think has always bothered the big bugs about my ranch: the splotch it makes on the~~ir~~ map of their world. They roll out the paper and every inch from hell to breakfast is shown to be theirs, except for ~~the~~ that one chunk which for ~~70~~ 65 years ~~has~~ said Reese on it and for the past 35 has said McCaskill.

"He's in court, as usual."

#

She spied the roof of the Winnebago in the lot behind the Park County courthouse.

Decals of AZ?

...

"Psst."

"Lexa!" he whispered. "Hi, petunia. What brings you?"

"Wanted a cup ~~of~~ so-called coffee with my father."

"Got some turning to tar right now, out in the Bago."

"Lexa, I would have to ride with hobbled stirrups."

...

"You go ahead. Morgan's got a pretty good appaloosa you might like. I'll vouch for you."

"Morgan's seen me ride. We kicked MSU's butt in the nationals my junior year, remember? I remember him ~~flying~~ sailing off a bareback ~~who~~ that sunfished."

"You might do well not to bring that up. Anyway, go ride. ~~I've done my riding.~~ Have your

...

"This country breaks your heart," Jick said. "About all you can do is to fuse the thing back together until the next time."

...

"Leona's out politicking. Conference of county chairpersons, over in Kalispell. They're trying to figure out ~~how to~~ whether to ~~ixxx~~ let stand back and Gingrich talk himself to death or finally help him ~~xxxx~~ on his way."

"Manslaughter has taught himself how to catch magpies. Damnedest thing. He lays out there by his dish and a magpie gets to strutting in and taking the food, Manslaughter just dozing there. Then all of a sudden he plops out a paw, on that long tail of the magpie. That's all she wrote, for the magpie. Manslaughter has dessert bird for dinner."

Jick looked at the dozy dog. "He was a pup when I pulled in here. Didn't know sic 'em."