

"Rockpicking all summer long? What the hell kind of farming do those Scotties call that--the stone-soup ^{crap} 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, Get 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.

those
Mitch

growing
making
a hand-
sawp.

with
means
along w/
it.
as if
means
much

hayfield

He's either
hardly ever
swore.
(more)

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.

tried to keep up
w/ his body

rid
That next summer he picked rock as if determined to unload 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. ~~out~~ underhanded He tossed the
under either end
hefted the larger ones w/ his hands as if moving an anvil.
football-sized rocks, carried the larger ones ~~like a carrying~~

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...

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,

felt
strong

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

Marah: "Rin Tin Tin, A presume?"

Lydi: "Naw, Rin is as far as he ^{ever learned to spell} ~~ever~~ got," said

h, obviously one of his favorite lines.

Cyberspace or nowhere, little municipal sums.

They were folding everywhere out on the lone
prairie, towns that...

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

· only thing uncontested is that · old boundaries
somehow run through you. You are a Rover,
they all have that hair, & lack ^{a pinch a touch 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 ^{Mitch} Lyle'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

Time zones
tangled behind
them like oo,
away

long scene -
Lexa &
Mariah
catching up
with each
other; phone
machine
voice -

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 ^{of rocks.} ~~the color of skulls and cannonballs~~

^{lots of} "Mmm. Big mama rocks had their nest here, looks ^g 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."

on these
dry-land
pans

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
moving
into the notion of 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
spurt of
he had his real growth

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

On the 00 at the western edge of town, the Rozier Bench, the
high school's painted white rocks 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,

Whoever had got into the Aronsons, a new bay window ~~looked~~ bulged

astounded The paint on their place looked suspiciously fresh
there like an indignant eye. Maybe their TV is on the blink and they too,
or

decided to watch Dad, I don't know. How the hell would I know.

Lyle Rozier's knickknack drawer was his yard.

stunted of the springs tough
The town was short of trees, the minerals in the

on trees, but his father had practically ordered the little line of

cottonwoods

judiciously *among*
willows out front not to die, dosing them with farm fertilizer. Mitch *chose*

as a boy had been

lugged *famishing*
had ~~lugged~~ many ~~x~~ buckets of water from the standpipe to those ~~00~~ trees. *gasping*

They were + respectable items a place now.

Not many houses even in Montana towns had bunkhouses

"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."

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...

"It's pretty soft."

Mitch was using w/ Jeffords. I was in a baseball dream - took w/ in long, sound of. but

remembering

Mitch'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
cast-encased broken leg. ~~The mud had saved him from a mashed ankle and~~
and ankle as well.

~~foot which would have crippled the leg forever~~

Jeffords came around a couple of time^s, tongue-tied with apology,

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

immediately felt better when Jeffords left.

imprinted
like a
fossil

Mitch read the Tribune for the baseball scores and roundups.

Then, since you can read a sports page only so many times, he began

^e
rading everything else in the paper.

"Help me get the Blue Goose ready."

Out they went to the faded Dodge ~~main~~ 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.

... Roy
Sarpy said, "Here comes a lateral, Mitch." With both hands he

lobbed a rock the size of a workshoe toward Roy Mitch.

Mitch watched several fancy flings of rocks before ~~he~~ 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.

^{bad idea}
"Hey, huh uh," Mitch tried with ~~a~~ forced laugh, already knowing ^{ed be extreme trouble} this ~~was going to be bad~~. "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 ^{solid wallop} 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 ^{of his magnitude} arms lifting and dumping Sarpy backward. ^{He must have carried Sarpy 10'} 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. Loper 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 ^{first} which by the end of the 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.

moon of

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 ~~him~~ (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?"

you know how
"Lyle, I hate ~~taxi~~ to bitch against the kid's bookkeeping and

all, but..."

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

ir
The 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,
maybe whoever'sk keeping the
Mitch, on other jobs. A holiday comes and 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--
all steamed up
downtown. You remember, Dad. You were chewing nails about having
to hay with only ~~one~~ the buckrake and no bullrake.

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

Did he
mean
my
name
being
taken
up
vain?

"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 didn't make a mistake. I remember what happened then.

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

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

*Fritz 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."

on even wanting one.

Lyle:

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

Pat
Paul had it made,

Midge kept Dode~~on~~ 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
Eng. Arts
(ceranium)

If I hold very tightly to memory, ^{it} 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 drowning--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 got mins & machine opportunities.

Bob Marshall

• We use wire fences

The one thing that cd- be taken away from
TSS - so far - was its backdrop. Rocky Mtn
Front loomed

momentum lost,
(OO grounded)

Canterbury Tales Tube

entropy.

memories
spring human clocks
glazed.

droopy-winged
-travel drop.

Airports, way-stations of the OO. Lexa waited at the international

the human ark go by in a moving stream.
gate at SeaTac, watching for the hair that would announce Mariah.

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?"

"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, I meant,

Museum of Art is already crit-

m
br
o c
sch

TA
'b

"Hear anything of Riley?"

You bet

~~"Yeah."~~ 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 Manah, Calif. was another planet.

Riley himself was another planet, one M had already tried & cd-' exist there,

Marik:

"Cook. Umm."

"Easy ^{an instant, the} girl," ^{cooked an} L said ^{eyebrow} w/ mischief. "You'll get a rap in for ~~bad~~ ^{you'll get a rap in for} will get around

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

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

"Meet anybody?"

"Meet anybody, you of course mean?" "No,

nothing lasting." "There was a New Zealander

who was interesting.

→ "You're having none, 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 ~~air~~ 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 gauge out of it."

difficult ~~troublesome~~

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~~

known as long as yourself.

leaked to go around

highly

camera'd up,

ing
The two of them attacked Mariah's array of baggage and lurched off

a mile a min,

with a load apiece, Mariah saying, "Brought you stuff,

That's good

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

to the airport for you?"

Got something for

stupid
~~dumbfuck-~~

"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

~~shit~~ 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

*out of
panty
leaving*

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
~~house~~ 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~~ his body, (Cantrell, the football coach,

had suggested he squeeze a rubber ball while bed-ridden, improve his

arm and hand strength.) its susceptibility 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 ^{would} that changed 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

could be ~~reminded himself, there was a~~ ^{stunts #} lot of years of Lyle left to deal with.

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, ^{showing} that clinging
If act, it followed you, in the OO gaze of Lyle's.

old saying,
ed 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 ~~with~~ after ~~the~~ inhaling lunch with them. After his pack bobbed ^{er} out of sight below the brow of ~~the~~ 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 100)

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

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:

*LR, Ps
Expert
Patience
(improvement)

more

One diagnostic word,
str

in . glimpse of obligation
riding the avalanche.

parent
savings
away

act
tal

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

no parent
is everlasting
numbers
say so

He had known the moment would come. But the when of it, that was always

earlier
the ambush. Bingford had buried his famous father in Aspen a couple
this year.

of months ago. Ingvaldson's daughter the Unitarian minister had popped

constant compassionate
back from Duluth to frown ~~continuously~~ over his kidney stone episode

circles the
last month. Like flyways of rattled birds, America's concourses were

reluctantly
constantly crisscrossed with Baby Boomers, trying to nerve up for the

arrangements
bedside consultation, the nursing home decision, the funeral. Mitch

worried reluctant
believed he could generally pick them out at airports, the trim

fellow
businesswoman biting her lip, the pony-tailed guy, himself gray, with

the ten-thousand-yard stare.

stunned!
And the big curly-haired man who was himself sitting in his father's

badger den of a kitchen.

wait
loun

dying

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 ~~maneuvered~~ 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 ~~Ferragamo~~ popped his head over a bush to take a look. An equally surprised ~~Lyle~~ ~~extended his mouth~~

Japanese up open to looked back at him, the curved top of his cartridge clip. He thought the squatting figure was Ferragamo taking a crap, until he saw

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

*for a
moment
second*

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

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

stupidier than snot. But when he had his mind set on something he was
cleverness took over.
undeterrable.

Fritz had grasped that the bazooka was...

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.

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

straight face around officers, and a ~~knowing~~ look among the men.

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

liked having one of their own...

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 ^{could put up with better} ~~liked~~ 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 ~~piece~~ patrol to lead: this he liked. And could do .

^{was} ^{intrigued}
The combination ^{seized} Lyle, warmed him inside, a number of times a day.

Lyee
in abn:

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

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

waitress delivered Lexa's OO. "Here you go," ^{her}

She advised Mitch, "Yours will be a while."

... "Wait a minute, ~~it got here fast, & we~~ ^{came in by a good 10 m}
We both ordered @ same time, same thing, special.
(ended up) ordering same thing. Who's mine?"

waitress bit her lip & ^{peered} ~~glanced~~ nervously toward

kitchen. "Cookie is on a kind of a slowdown

M & L surveiled the heads to join waitress's
perusal of kitchen & were met w/ a glare.

"She's mad @ boss," waitress explained ^{on} "so
she's only doing one order at a time." An
angry flick of (order slip) "The, 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."

isn't
"What, you think Lyle 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?"

I'll show you the Rozier

"Don't ask. Not right now treasure vault of Rocker Ds

and Quarter Circle P's tomorrow."

70
26
2

"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?"
work?

"He's old now."

Lyle
"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.

*getting
"I don't
you"*

"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 .

~~Ch~~
A suppo
A do.

L: "You 2 go ^{ahead} ~~on~~. I'm kind of on - outs w/ ^{Murph} OO."

"We cd eat someplace else... ^{also,} if there is
anyplace else?"

L: "Naw, that's OK, ^{get yourselves on down to Murphy's,} I'm not hungry anyway.

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

"See you later, then."

M: "Drive, will you." he liked him over in concern.
he: "Want to ^{go by} ~~see~~ high school?"
_{me swing}

"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."

forbidding

see
kitchen
as
a
challenge.

↑ Share
of
chance
not
M had
deeply
happy

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.

how
"Nice of you, anyway."

...

"Mitch and I will make out fine."