

# Opposites clash under the vast Western sky

## Master writer Doig sends a son and his dying father on Montana explorations

### Mountain Time

By Ivan Doig

Scribner, 316 pp., \$25

The new West confronts the old West in Ivan Doig's new novel when Mitch Rozier, brooding environmentalist, comes home from Seattle to tend to his rainbow-chasing Montana father, a "sonofabitching guy who is always out to make a killing instead of a living."

*Mountain Time* is a rich, resonant read, crafted out of Western talk and terrain. It deals with the history we're given and the history we make for ourselves in a story about three sets of relationships: between lovers, between sisters and be-

### BOOK REVIEW

By Bob Minzeshelmer

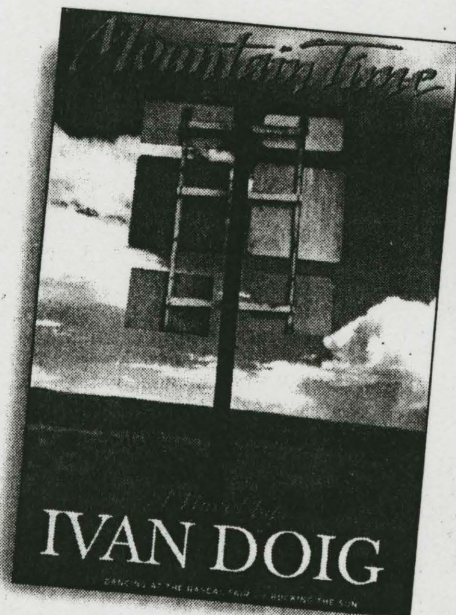
tween father and son.

The son left Montana more than 30 years ago, a big kid from a small town, banking his football scholarship as if it were a bingo jackpot. At the University of Washington, he grew "incurably curious about the insides of sentences and would rework a piece of writing until the paper gave out."

He ends up as an environmental columnist for a weekly newspaper in Seattle. But the paper is dying, and Mitch is haunted by "the ghost chorus of his trade": Wallace Stegner "magisterially whopping the nail on the head in every sentence of his hallowed 'wilderness letter.' Feverish Bob Marshall, the Thomas Wolfe of the Forest Service, writing and hiking himself to death in the mountains he so adored, his epitaph theirs: 'How much wilderness do we need? How many Brahms symphonies do we need?'"

The father, never asking that question, never makes a killing. He barely makes a living on land whose natural crop is cantaloupe-size rocks. His back yard is a rust museum of dead equipment when he summons his son home for a final, environmentally dubious get-rich-quick scheme and to reveal he's dying.

The son is targeted, Doig writes, for the



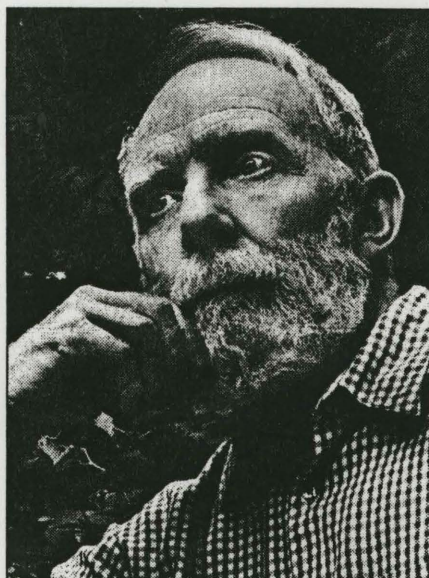
### Excerpt

Up there along the Divide of the continent extended the Bob Marshall Wilderness, named for that bat-eared Mozart of the national forests, roaming and rhapsodizing. Right now Mitch wished that more people had seen along with Bob Marshall that this neck of the earth was always going to be a country of great mountains and mediocre human chances.

"involuntary clerkwork of closing down a parent's life. The time came; it always came. The when of it was the ambush."

Doig likes those zinger sentences. He has written two family memoirs, including the heartbreaking *This House of Sky*, and five previous novels, including a sweeping Montana trilogy that covers three generations of the McCaskill family.

In *Mountain Time*, Mitch lives with Alexander (Lexa) McCaskill, a fellow refu-



By Marion Ettlinger

**Doig:** He grew up in a family of Montana sheep ranchers and now lives in Seattle.

gee from Montana who, after cooking on fish boats in Alaska, turned to fancy catering for Seattle's software crowd. Both are divorced and sorting out their relationship "a hilly day at a time, sometimes bumpy minute to minute." At 40, Lexa has "adjusted to a lot of life's double talk, but modern living-together still took some tiptoeing through the terms."

Adding to "the dose of family," as Lexa puts it, is her overpowering photographer sister, Mariah ("highly cameraed up," their father said of her approach to life). The three of them — Mitch, Lexa and Mariah — end up in an adventure that threatens to alter everything and revolves around an accident of history.

Doig writes playfully about the pretensions of the cyber-frontier and of the baby-boomer West, but he is at his best recreating the past and linking past and present. The only problem is that the McCaskill sisters, strong, independent women, are richer and more enduring characters than the illusive Mitch.

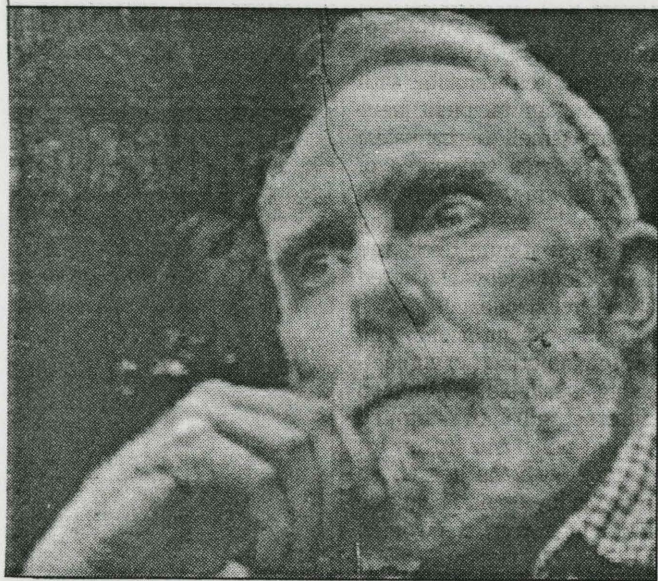
Doig is a writer who deserves wider recognition. *Mountain Time* is for readers who admire novelists who treat the landscape with as much affection as their characters (think Stegner or David Guterson).

Here's hoping Doig's next novel brings the legendary Bob Marshall, in a cameo appearance here, fully back to life.

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# A return to mountain roots

*Son leaves Seattle to play out this tale of family love and turmoil in Montana*



Ivan Doig

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**"Mountain Time"**

by Ivan Doig  
Scribner, \$25

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By TIM McNULTY  
*Special to The Seattle Times*

Seattle writer Ivan Doig's popular Montana trilogy, which follows four generations of the spirited McCaskill clan, might just have to become a quartet.

"Mountain Time," Doig's sixth novel, returns to the enduring themes and expansive landscapes that inspired his most memorable work: the complexities of love, loss

and family loyalties played out against the rugged Montana land.

The characters in this novel find their way back to their mountain roots by way of contemporary Seattle. Along the way, Doig gives us some delightful takes on the city, including the '60s, city newsrooms, old neighborhoods, new "cybernaires," and characters we feel we already know.

Mitch Rozier's life on the coast is coming unraveled. An aging and somewhat jaded environmental columnist for a Fremont-district alternative weekly, he is no longer at the top of his game. A final blow

comes when he learns that, after 25 years, his paper is going free, becoming, in his words, street litter. Things are not faring well at home either.

His relationship with his partner, Lexa (of the aforementioned McCaskill clan, featured in the Doig books "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me") is rocky at best, and his grown children from an earlier marriage want nothing to do with him. When the call comes from his father, a hard-bitten Montana ranch hand from whom Mitch himself has been estranged for much of his adult life, he heads back to his boyhood home to help sort out the old man's tangled affairs.

Mitch's father, Lyle, is a working study of the last gasp of the Old West. Surrounded by rusting farm equipment, junked trucks and stocks of old newspapers, he squints at a rapidly changing world through a haze of tobacco smoke. His latest get-rich scheme, selling the family's scant landholdings to a gravel company that plans to lace the Rocky Mountain front with mining roads, is put on hold by his son's arrival. The novel seems poised to take off in the direction of environmental journalism, but Doig has other veins to probe. Soon after his

**'Mountain Time' by Ivan****Doig**

arrival, Mitch finds that his father is dying of leukemia, and the tangled affairs confronting the son are now of his own making.

Readers of Doig's earlier novels will recognize the looming scarps of the Jericho and Roman reefs that frame the tiered ridges of the Two Medicine River country. Doig has fashioned a mythic landscape as memorable and real as Faulkner's. The same affections, betrayals and wars of the heart that propel his earlier novels endure here, along with the weathered limestone hills. Doig is at his best when sketching human frailties against the broad historical sweep of the mountain west, and Mitch's desire to understand the rift between him and his father sends the novel back through the Montana of the 1930s, as well as the hard-worked fields of his own youth.

To add to the emotional mix, Lexa arrives to help with Lyle and confront her relationship with Mitch. With her is her sister, Mariah, a photographer, who stays on to document Lyle's last days as a human-interest story for her paper, the Montanian. If the cast is beginning to sound a bit crowded, it is. Mariah whirled through the earlier novel, "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana," and her presence here seems superfluous. But Doig's storytelling thrives on the emotional entanglements between kin and kindred and the uneasy resolves to which they lead.

Doig also loves to brush his characters against historical disasters. Lexa's father just missed being sent out to fight the disastrous Mann Gulch fire, which took the lives of 12 young firefighters; her great-grandfather barely survived the deadly 1918 influenza epidemic. Mitch, too, seems to have caught the family penchant for the near-miss. Chance alone kept him from Coldwater Ridge the morning Mount St. Helens erupted; his partner, who was also covering the story, was less fortunate. History figures strongly into Lyle's story, too — the Depression and World War II helped harden his mind-set. But Lyle's battles were largely self-generated, and the only fatalities were his relationships with his wife and son.

"Mountain Time" clearly moves away from the bulky historical scaffolding of Doig's most recent novels: Montana's centennial in "Ride with Me," and the building of Fort Peck Dam in "Bucking the Sun." The history shaping the lives of these characters is written into their own hearts.

In what seems a final irony, Lyle asks his son to spread his ashes on a remote mountain in the heart of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, a place, in life, he would as soon have seen logged and mined to eviscerated heaps. Mitch is galled by the request, but his search for the reason behind it leads him to the truth of a family secret, the source of his own estrangement from the embittered old man, and possibly, a key to his own self-knowledge.

In "Mountain Time," Doig has delivered us another classic.

*Tim McNulty's most recent book, "Washington's Mount Rainier National Park, A Centennial Celebration," is published by Mountaineers Books.*

# Tale of Family Turmoil Set in the Rugged West

## Book Review

By MICHAEL FRANK  
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

**MOUNTAIN TIME**

By Ivan Doig

Scribner  
\$25, 318 pages

Ivan Doig's new novel, "Mountain Time," his sixth work of fiction, quickly announces itself as a story concerned with the West. There are the abundant references to the big names (and hearts) of Western—or naturalist—literature: Thoreau, Edward Abbey, Aldo Leopold, Wallace Stegner and Bob Marshall, inspiration behind Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness Preserve.

Doig also turns his attention to the Western cataclysms—the Valdez oil spill, the eruption of Mt. St. Helens—and tucks them into the characters' back stories, sometimes credibly, sometimes with the creaky sound of a theme being spliced into a life. Inevitably, he captures the landscape, which is majestic and beautiful but at the same time corrupted, abused, endangered. Out of these bricks much Western fiction has been built, not a little by Doig himself.

Painstaking brickwork does not always lead to felicitous storytelling, however, and although there is much to admire in "Mountain Time," especially in the relationship between its protagonist, Mitch Rozier, and his cantankerous, dying father, Lyle, there are also stretches of narrative that feel under-imagined and mechanical.

A man of substantial physical bulk, Mitch Rozier has, at 50, put in 25 years at Cascopia, an alternative Seattle paper where he writes a column called "Coastwatch." Thinking back over his life's work during an airplane journey, Mitch reflects that he has "tried his utmost to grope his way among all of it sprawled down there—the seabeat coastal capes, the snake routes of rivers, the strangely serene cliff-faces of dams, the faltering forests, the valleys going to suburbs, the slumbering but restless earthquake faults, the cloud-high mountains made of internal fire."

A 50-year-old man reviewing his life's work is bound to be thrown into some kind of crisis, as indeed

Mitch eventually is. It takes rather a while for Mitch—and "Mountain Time"—to reach the taut provocations provided by the senior Rozier. Along the way, the reader meets Mitch's girlfriend, Lexa McCaskill, a caterer to the latest Seattle cyber-millionaires, and the estranged children from his first marriage, Jocelyn (who, by moving West, becomes a somewhat more vivid, though still underexplored, presence in Mitch's life) and Ritz (who is estranged from his father). Also on the scene are Bing, Mitch's employer, whose paper is losing money, and Mariah, Lexa's sister, a photojournalist who accompanies Lexa and Mitch to Lyle's bedside to document his dying.

Mariah, unfortunately, brings out some of Doig's less elegant writing. There is the therapy-facile motivation for her photo-essay (she did not have a chance to grieve for her mother's death); she and her sister speak in dialogues that is arch and unconvincing; and she and Mitch engage in a wholly implausible flirtation that Doig concocts to add tension to the novel's slack last lap.

Mariah does succeed in taking some moving photographs of the expiring Lyle, and it is no wonder: He also brings out Doig's most honest work. Lyle, with his "drill-bit way of looking at you," is the philosophical and psychological opposite of his son. He is preoccupied with his experiences of World War II; as the owner of gravel pits in the Rocky Mountains, he is an abuser of the Western landscape who intends to abuse it further, by selling out to a company that wants to put roads down next to the Bob Marshall Wilderness in order to drill for oil; he has little illness with, or feeling for, nature, people and his only child.

Yet he is capable of surprises too: Lyle has established a relationship (by e-mail) with Mitch's estranged son that Mitch has not; as he dies, he changes his mind about nature and asks that his ashes be scattered over the wilderness that, his son maintains, he wanted "carved up into money."

In these conflicts between father and son, Doig has found an implausible marriage between theme and character, setting and subplot; they stand out as the most remarkable interludes in this otherwise uneven book.

LA Times Book Review

Mountain Time

Ritz + Lexa

more and more and more.

Congratulations +

Lee  
N. Plu

# An eloquent coda to a family trilogy

BY RON FRANSCCELL

**I**N MONTANA, not far from where Ivan Doig grew up beneath the big sky that still haunts him, three rivers flow together to form the deep, wide Missouri, lacing through time and landscape, the old West and the new.

Like the brawny Missouri, Doig has channeled three deep literary tributaries into "Mountain Time," a coda to his McCaskill family trilogy. Mitch Rozier is flotsam, a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a post-hip alternative Seattle weekly paper. He's a Baby Boom-

## BOOK REVIEW

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Author: Ivan Doig  
Publisher: Scribner  
320 pp.  
Price: \$25

er treading water amid tenuous job security, estrangement from his grown children and the company of his scrappy lover. Lexa McCaskill is jetsam, an earthy, divorced Montana expatriate catering swanky Seattle software soirées, also going nowhere.

Together, they are caught in the undertow of Lyle Rozier, Mitch's father. Lyle is dying of leukemia, and Mitch is summoned back to his childhood home in Montana, where he's caught up in the ordeal of his filial obligation: "You can't not go home again when someone is sitting there dying."

Mitch faces an ancient question unearthed by a new generation and twisted to fit a new sensibility. Dare we go home again? That's what Mitch asks himself when his father calls from Montana:

"The old hated tone of voice. Lyle Rozier proclaiming he had the world on a towrope and a downhill pull at last. Rubbing his opposite ear as if the words had gone right through him. Mitch winced into the phone that next morning. How many times had he heard this, or something an awful lot like it?"

But Mitch's reluctant reunion with his crusty old dad is flooded with lingering family disappointments and secrets — and the revelation that Lyle wants to sell the family land to a gravel company, and rewrite his own life history in the process. Lexa comes along for moral support but brings her sultry sister, world-weary photographer Mariah McCaskill, who documents Lyle's deathwatch and proves a bitter reminder of Lexa's unrooted angst. Lyle and Mitch, Mitch and Lexa, Lexa and Mariah: their disparate, desperate lives flow together when they hike into the mountains on a sad journey to scatter Lyle's ashes, with passages among the most stirring pieces of Western nature writing you'll find.

Three people, three intense relationships, three rivers. "Mountain Time" is the confluence: the very real familial clash between Lyle and Mitch echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West, where exploitation has always been at odds with environmental anxiety. But the reader also stands on the near bank of a dynamically flowing history in which men have both protected and profaned the Western



The reigning master of new Western literature delivers a new novel.

landscape.

Doig's poetic prose remains intact here, but for the first time in his literary career he's pretty funny, too, especially when he's satirizing the foibles and excesses of the Pacific Northwest "Cyberia": "the Cascopia (newspaper) building was in Seattle's Firemont district, where the Sixties still roamed. The hemp necessities of life were available there, as were cafes with good rowdy names such as The Longshoreman's Daughter, plus deluxe junk shops, plus bars that were museum pieces from the days when hair was Hair."

Or this description of Mitch's "lactose-intolerant" cubicle mate: "Shyanne had gone on and on in an avid whisper about corporately responsible non-lactic vegan dietary rules until it dawned on the (staff) that no milk in the office meant no lattes in the office, and she was rudely hooted down."

Humor aside, "Mountain Time" is still a serious story from the reigning master of new Western literature. It is a story about moving forward by going back. For Doig, now 60 and living in Seattle, the long journey home started with the autobiographical "This House of Sky," and has continued through fiction ("English Creek," for example) and nonfiction ("Heart Earth," his 1993 memoir and sequel to "This House of Sky.") It's not necessary that the reader be able to recite McCaskill family history from memory to enjoy "Mountain Time," just more fun.

"Mountain Time" will not dissuade those who rank Doig among the best living American writers, and one might even begin making comparisons to some of the best "dead" ones, too.

Like Faulkner, Doig is not just another regional writer with an ear for the perfect-pitch of parochial rhythms and shallow roots in the Rocky Mountain Front. He looks homeward, and he sees a place in all our minds, not just in those of us who live in and write about the West.

So it is with rivers. They move on, gaining strength as they go, to some bigger water. Then someday, whether in rain or snow, they come back. Doig keeps coming back, undiminished.

■ A Wyoming novelist and newspaperman, Ron Franscell is the author of "Angel Fire" and the upcoming mystery "The Deadline."

Walt Whitman + Ivan Doig: Indeed: I want have chosen a new which is reprint!  
ever, N.

# Doig, again weaves masterful Western tale

Ron Franscell

Special to The Denver Post

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## MOUNTAIN TIME

By Ivan Doig  
Scribner, \$25



Doig

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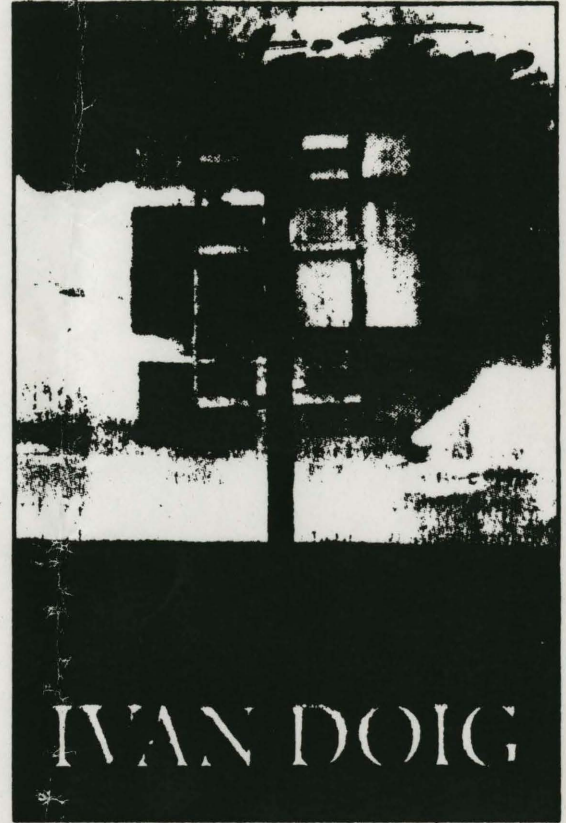
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"Mountain Time" will not dissuade those who rank Doig among the best living American writers, and one might even begin making comparisons to some of the dead ones, too. Faulkner comes most readily to mind: The Snopeses of Yoknapatawpha County are no more troubled or human than the McCaskills of Montana's Two Medicine country — two great rivers in different landscapes.

But like Faulkner, Doig is not just another regional writer with an ear for the perfect-pitch of parochial rhythms and shallow roots in the Rocky Mountain Front Range. He's bigger than the Big Sky. He stands upon the shoulders of Wal-



lace Stegner and A.B. Guthrie, taller than Edward Abbey and Tom McGuane, and seen much farther. He looks homeward, and he sees a place in all our minds, not just in those of us who live in and write about the West.

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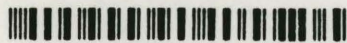
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AUG 15, 1999

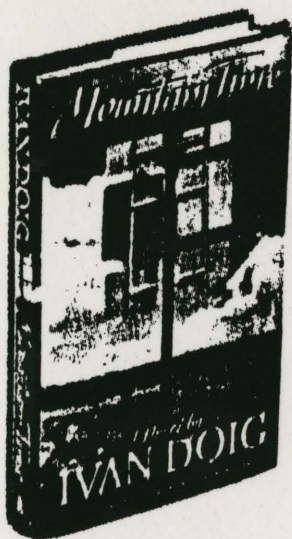


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**LUCE** PRESS CLIPPINGS

NOVEL

# 'Muscular' author fails in attempt to lift reader into action



## Mountain Time

★ Author: Ivan Doig.  
Publisher: Scribner.  
Price: \$25.  
Pages: 316.

Star ratings: ★★★★★ excellent, ★★★ good, ★★ fair, ★ poor

By Dan Carpenter  
BOOK EDITOR

I tend to drift in the opposite direction when I come upon a novel whose protagonist is a writer. When the writer is a newspaper writer, I tend to break into a trot.

An exception is Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News*, whose forlorn menagerie of smalltown ink-slingers is so far removed from my experience, and just about anybody else's, that I have no fear of the familiarity that breeds contempt.

Odd, then, that the estimable Proulx provides one of the jacket blurbs for Ivan Doig's latest novel of

the great outdoors, *Mountain Time*.

Her praise for this "muscular and exceedingly good writer" derives from his overall oeuvre and not specifically this entry, and I have a feeling politeness would compel her to leave matters vague.

Whatever authority and stylistic power may have earned the National Book Award finalist his high stature as a chronicler of the West are as sparse here as spreading oaks in his native Montana.

Though he hustles us to Seattle, San Francisco and Alaska as well as the home territory in this rather compressed story, none of those landscapes is conjured anew

Nor is there much freshness to the characters, particularly the main one, Mitch Rozier, a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a falling Seattle alternative newspaper who hears "the ghost chorus of his trade keening at him. Ed Abbey smoldering in his grave in the slickrock desert, Stegner magist-

erially whopping the nail on the head in every sentence of his hallowed 'wilderness letter.'"

Of course Mitch Rozier wishes he could write even faintly like Edward Abbey and Wallace Stegner. The reader only wishes Ivan Doig could; alas, his "muscular" prose, at least in *Mountain Time*, reads more like your local sportswriter trying to make a preseason exhibition game seem like an epic. And whoever left him alone with a love scene should be forced to judge the next 10 Raymond Chandler parody contests.

"Mitch enwrapped her, jolting her off her footing, seeming to stagger a little himself as he gave her a kiss that could have been felt in France. After the maximum visitation back and forth by their tongues, he pulled his head back and said thickly: 'She wasn't anybody. You're it.'"

Things get said thickly a lot in this book, with less justification than love-drunk Mitch has.

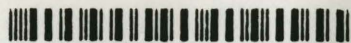
Perhaps Doig, following Stegner

and Jim Harrison and Ken Kesey and so many other sensitive, leathery guys, is just mining a played-out vein. When a middle-aged man returns home to his estranged dying father in the rugged beauty of the West, accompanied by two women who are rivals for his affection, and undertakes a quest to learn the old man's Dark Secret, we have more potential for a feature film than a piece of original literature. When Sundance does this one, the question will be whether Robert Redford will give in and play the old man or try to pull off the maximum visitation thing as a romantic lead one more mountainous time.

"Life is unfair, I can take," Mitch Rozier says in reference to a handsome cyber-millionaire who's one of the novel's many stereotypes. "But this guy has more going for him than Jesus did."

Lord knows Ivan Doig has a lot going for him also. He needs to get going, in some new directions.

AUG 12, 1999



**LUCE**

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PRESS CLIPPINGS

## Summer book capsules

From Staff/AP reports

Here are some capsule descriptions and mini-reviews of recent books:

■ **"A Very Strange Trip"** (Bridge Publications) by L. Ron Hubbard and Dave Wolverton.

This story, based on an unpublished story by the late Hubbard, is about an offbeat road trip and is a mixture of science fiction, adventure and light-hearted comedy. Everett Dumphee joins the army to avoid prison, but activates a time machine while transporting a truckload of experimental weapons. His romp through time while trying to return to the 20th century takes him to such eras as the Ice Age, the Mayan civilization and the Native American climate of the late 1800s. Humor is derived from slapstick situations and references to popular culture.

■ **"Gabiella"** (Forge) by Earl Murray

Gabiella Hall is a young English artist who, accompanied by her fiance, Sir Edward Garr, travels along the Oregon Trail in 1846 to paint portraits of the Indians. Also headed west is Quincannon, a young man hoping to re-establish a fur-trading company there. His and Gabiella's journal entries tell the tale of their journey, of Quincannon's growing love for Gabiella and of his bitter rivalry with Edward, a strong opponent of U.S. expansion into

the Northwest.

■ **"Mountain Time"** (Scribner) by Ivan Doig

Three types of relationships — father-son, sisters and lovers — figure into this tale about Mitch Rozler, 50, a journalist who returns to Montana to tend to his cantankerous dying father, Lyle. Joining Mitch is his girlfriend Lexa, who longs to settle down, and her sister, Mariah. When the three hike into the mountains to scatter Lyle's ashes, their lives and relationships undergo profound changes.

■ **"Sharpe's Triumph"** (HarperCollins) by Bernard Cornwell

This 15th in the series featuring Sgt. Richard Sharpe has the 19th-century British soldier playing a pivotal role in the Battle of Assaye, one of the great victories for the future Duke of Wellington and a milestone in Britain's colonization of India. Sharpe is at Fort Chasalgaon in 1803 when it is attacked by a band of mercenary soldiers led by Maj. William Dodd. Sharpe, the only surviving witness, heads the search for Dodd and his army.

■ **"A Certain Age"** (Doubleday) by Tama Janowitz

This darkly comic novel follows Florence Collins, a single woman in her 30s, as she searches for a rich husband and affluent lifestyle. Florence, a low-salaried jewelry appraiser at a minor New York auction house, attends every social event possible,

and spends her small paycheck and her mother's inheritance on designer clothes and on expensive cosmetics and beauty treatments, all in the hope of meeting Mr. Rich.

■ **"Expose"** (Mira) by Laura Van Wormer

Sally Harrington has left her writing job at a Los Angeles magazine for a job at a local newspaper in Connecticut. After she helps a man who thinks he is having a heart attack, his wife, Verity Rhodes, editor of a high-end magazine, gratefully gives Sally a plum assignment: profile Cassy Cochran, TV network president. Sally's research reveals Cassy to be an upstanding professional, but Verity isn't pleased: She wants Sally to dig up some dirt.

■ **"Lady Bird"** (Scribner) by Jan Jarboe Russell

This biography of former first lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson traces her childhood, success in business and role in LBJ's life, career and presidency. When LBJ unexpectedly assumed office in 1963, the Johnsons were thrust into the Vietnam War, the Cold War and the war on poverty, and Mrs. Johnson had the unenviable task of replacing Jackie Kennedy, one of America's most popular first ladies. Russell, a Texan who has covered the state's politics and culture for 25 years, draws upon interviews with Mrs. Johnson and with Johnson family members, friends and advisers.



# From Doig, a coda for the McCaskills

BY RON FRANSCCELL

desperate and disparate lives flow together when they hike into the mountains on a sad journey to scatter Lyle's ashes.

Three people, three intense relationships, three rivers. *Mountain Time* is the confluence: The very real familial clash between Lyle and Mitch echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West, where exploitation has always been at odds with environmental anxiety. But the reader also stands on the near bank of a dynamic, flowing history in which men have both protected and profaned the Western landscape, which is as much a character in Doig's work as any McCaskill.

Doig's poetic prose remains intact here, but for the first time in his literary career he's pretty damned funny, too, especially when he's satirizing the foibles and excesses of the Pacific Northwest "Cyberia": "The Cascopia [newspaper] building was in Seattle's Fremont district, where the Sixties still roamed. The hempen necessities of life were available there, as were cafes with good rowdy names such as The Longshoreman's Daughter, plus deluxe junk shops, plus bars that were museum pieces from the days when hair was Hair."

*Mountain Time* will not dissuade those who rank Doig among the best living American writers, and one might even begin making comparisons to some of the best *dead* ones, too. Faulkner comes most readily to mind: The Sartoris of Yoknapatawpha County are no more troubled and no more human than the McCaskills of the Two Medicine country in Montana. Two great rivers in different landscapes.

Ron Fransccell is a Wyoming newspaper editor and novelist.

In Montana, not far from where Ivan Doig grew up beneath the big sky that still haunts him, three rivers flow together to form the deep and wide Missouri, lacing through both time and landscape, the old West and the new.

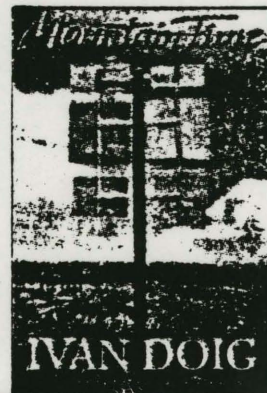
And like the brawny Missouri, Doig has channeled three deep literary tributaries into *Mountain Time*, a coda to his McCaskill family trilogy. Mitch Rozier is flotsam, a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a post-hip alternative Seattle weekly paper, a Baby Boomer treading water with his own past and present: estrangement from his grown children, tenuous job security and his scrappy lover.

Lexa McCaskill is jetsam, the earthy and divorced Montana expatriate swirling in Mitch's eddy, catering swanky Seattle software soirees, also going nowhere.

Together, they are caught in the undertow of Lyle Rozier, Mitch's father. Lyle is dying of leukemia and Mitch is summoned back to his childhood home in Montana, where he's caught up in the ordeal of his filial obligation: you can't not go home again when someone is sitting there dying.

Mitch faces an ancient question unearthed by a new generation, twisted to fit a new sensibility: Dare we go home again? That's what Mitch asks himself when his father calls from Montana: "The old hated tone of voice. Lyle Rozier proclaiming he had the world on a towrope and a downhill pull at last. Rubbing his opposite ear as if the words had gone right through him. Mitch winced into the phone that next morning. How many times had he heard this, or something an awful lot like it?"

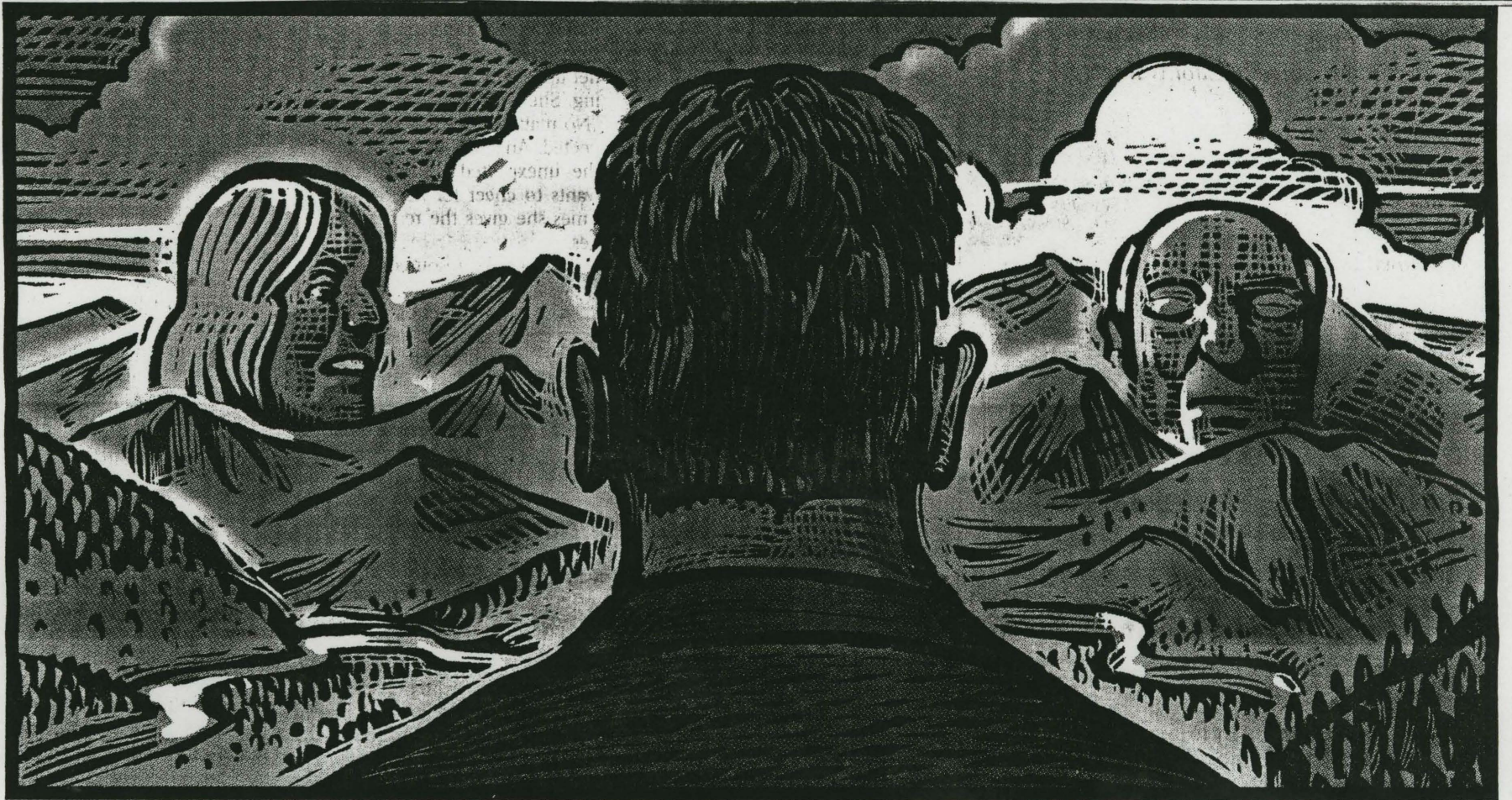
But Mitch's reluctant reunion with his crusty old dad is flooded with lingering family disappointments and secrets . . . and the revelation that Lyle wants to sell the family land to a gravel company, and rewrite his own life history in the process. Lexa comes along for moral support but brings her sultry sister, world-weary photographer Mariah McCaskill, who documents Lyle's deathwatch and proves a bitter reminder of Lexa's unrooted angst. Their



Mountain  
Time

By Ivan Doig. Scribners  
\$25.

# BOOK REVIEW



BILL RUSSELL / The Chronicle

## MOUNTAIN TIME

By Ivan Doig

Scribner, 316 pages, \$25

Reviewed by Ron Franscell

**I**n Montana, not far from where Ivan Doig grew up beneath the big sky that haunts him, three rivers flow together to form the deep, wide Missouri, lacing through time and landscape, the old West and the new.

Like the brawny Missouri, Doig has channeled three deep literary tributaries into "Mountain Time," a coda to his acclaimed McCaskill family trilogy. Mitch Rozier is flotsam, a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a post-hip alternative Seattle weekly paper. He's a Baby Boomer treading water amid tenuous job security, estrangement from his grown children and the company of his lover. Lexa McCaskill is jetsam, an earthy, divorced Montana expatriate catering swanky Seattle software soirees, also going nowhere.

Together, they are caught in the undertow of Lyle Rozier, Mitch's father. Lyle

# NORTHWEST PASSAGES

A father-son clash  
mirrors changes  
between the old frontier  
and the new  
in Ivan Doig's latest novel

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But Mitch's reluctant reunion with his crusty old dad is flooded with lingering family disappointments and secrets — and the revelation that Lyle wants to sell the family land to a gravel company and

► "PASSAGES": See Page 8

Wyoming novelist and journalist Ron Franscell is the author of "Angel Fire" and the forthcoming mystery "The Deadline."

## PASSAGES

From Page 1

rewrite his own life history in the process. Lexa comes along for moral support and brings her sultry sister, world-weary photographer Mariah McCaskill, who documents Lyle's deathwatch and proves a bitter reminder of Lexa's unrooted angst.

Lyle and Mitch, Mitch and Lexa, Lexa and Mariah: Their disparate, desperate lives come together when they hike into the mountains on a sad journey to scatter Lyle's ashes, with passages among the most stirring pieces of Western nature writing a reader will find.

In "Mountain Time," the very real familial clash between Lyle and Mitch echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West, where exploitation has always been at odds with the environment. But the reader also witnesses a dynamic history, in which men have both protected and profaned the Western landscape.

Doig's poetic prose remains intact here, but for the first time in his literary career he's pretty funny too, especially when he's satirizing the foibles and excesses of the Pacific Northwest's "Cyberia":

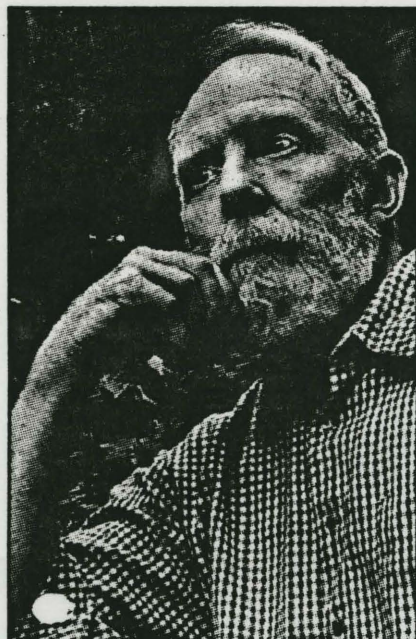
"The Cascopia [newspaper] building was in Seattle's Fremont district, where the Sixties still roamed. The hempen necessities of life were available there, as were cafes with good rowdy names such as The Longshoreman's Daughter, plus deluxe junk shops, plus bars that were museum pieces from the days when hair was Hair."

Or this description of Mitch's "lactose-intolerant" cubicle

mate: "Shyanne had gone on and on in an avid whisper about corporately responsible non-lactic vegan dietary rules until it dawned on the [staff] that no milk in the office meant no lattes in the office, and she was rudely hooted down."

Humor aside, "Mountain Time" is still a serious story from the reigning master of new Western literature. It is a story about moving forward by going back. For Doig, now 60 and living in Seattle, the long journey home started with the autobiographical "This House of Sky," one of The Chronicle's 100 best Western nonfiction books of the 20th century, and has continued through fiction ("English Creek," for example) and nonfiction ("Heart Earth," his 1993 memoir and sequel to "This House of Sky.") It's not necessary for the reader to be able to recite McCaskill family history from memory to enjoy "Mountain Time," just more fun.

"Mountain Time" will not dissuade those who rank Doig

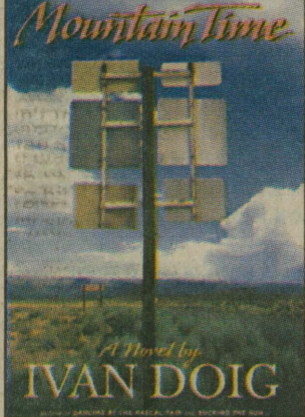


among the best living American writers, and one might even begin making comparisons to some of the best *dead* ones, too. Faulkner comes most readily to mind: The Snopeses of Yoknapatawpha County are no more troubled or human than the McCaskills of Montana's Two Medicine country — two great rivers in different landscapes.

*Doig is not just another regional writer with an ear for the parochial rhythms and shallow roots of the Rocky Mountains. He's bigger than the Big Sky.*

So it is with rivers. They move on to some bigger water, gaining strength as they go. Then someday, whether in rain or snow, they come back. Doig keeps coming back, undiminished.

albuquerque journal  
Dec. 19, 1999



## Wests collide in Doig's 'Time'

"Mountain Time" by  
Ivan Doig

Scribner, \$25, 316 pp.

REVIEW BY TOM  
WILLIAMS

What happens to people honed on Montana granite when they become expatriates in the skin-deep culture of the upwardly mobile? Nothing very nice, to judge by the characters in Ivan Doig's newest novel, "Mountain Time."

A substantial departure from his earlier work, Doig's new book may disappoint fans of his lyrical tales of the rugged Montana Rockies and the men and women who match them.

"Mountain Time" spends at least half its pages following ex-Montanans Mitch Rozier and Lexa McCaskill through their lives in different versions of Seattle hip culture.

The dialogue Doig puts in these characters' mouths is gratingly terse in-crowd: These folks are from Two Medicine country? Apparently even a Montanan can be overlaid with triviality.

The imminent demise of Mitch's father brings Mitch and Lexa, together with her sister Mariah (of Doig's "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana"), back to Montana.

Events conspire to bring Mitch and the McCaskill sisters to Phantom Woman Mountain and a rough, nominally cleansing adventure that resolves the unstable balance between their Old West roots and New West survival modes.

Doig's premise is worthy and interesting. It involves a confrontation of the values of the old and the new West. Unfortunately, the characters who carry the new west into the contest are thin and unlikable; pivotal events are unconvincing.

While "Mountain Time" isn't up to Doig's usual high standard, it is pleasing to note that he is bringing his considerable literary skills to new territory.

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Tom Williams is working on his doctorate in astrophysics at UNM.

TO UZ + J VAN

## REVIEWS

### Love and Grace

by Thomas Fleming

Una vita in fabbrica:  
itinerario spirituale

by Mario Marcolla

Milano: Maurizio Minchella Editore;

101 pp., Lire 18,000

This is a remarkable book by a remarkable man. Mr. Marcolla is well known to many conservatives in Europe and the United States for his observations on modern philosophy contributed over the years to *Osservatore Romano*. He is a keen student of Anglo-American conservative thought as well as having been a friend and translator of the late Russell Kirk. Dr. Kirk and the editor of this magazine are only two of many Americans whom Marcolla has served as *cicerone* in their explorations of Italian political and intellectual life.

Despite frequent bouts of ill health, Mr. Marcolla exudes an air of benign understanding, though not complacency. What this little book reveals, however, is the long and hard road that has been traveled on this spiritual itinerary. Born into a family reduced to poverty, Marcolla watched his father trying to preserve his dignity working in the factories of Torino. The young Mario was sent to work in a bakery. As he grew older, he drew up plans for his self-education, only to see them founder for lack of time and energy. He found time to study Italian literature, and learned German and English eventually.

After studying some accounting, Marcolla went into the textile industry and by the time of his retirement had worked his way up to plant manager. His real life, however, was intellectual and spiritual. As a working man, he took an eager interest in Marx and the Russian Revolution, eventually finding in it a "Luciferian rebellion" of matter against form. Working among the looms and shuttles, he contemplated the great problems of existence and came to regard the factory as "a place of pain and sorrow, a nursery of men and women devoid of deep relations, without spiritual roots."

Factory work, he realized, was inher-

ently dehumanizing:

The influx of machines modeled on scientific reasoning appeared . . . to be diabolical: assembly-line work mortified the personalities, creating psychological dissociations which were noticeable in the old workers, in their worn-out look, in a kind of inattention which was the sign of an unconscious crisis, of the impossibility of being whole men like the old-time artisans and peasants from which they were descended.

Much of this memoir is devoted to Marcolla's progress through books, from leftists to Nietzsche and Evola and finally to the wisdom of the great Italian philosopher Augusto del Noce. The higher truth is to be sought, he concludes, in the human work that "binds each and every person to a supernatural destiny of love and grace." This is not the mysticism that flees the everyday world of hope and fear, but an appreciation of the mysteries woven on the loom of life. "Every man has his talents and spends them not by himself but, in his liberty and autonomy, in harmony with a providential plan that hangs over him and protects him."

Thomas Fleming is the editor of *Chronicles*.

### Our Time

by Bill Croke

Mountain Time

by Ivan Doig

New York: Scribner;

316 pp., \$25.00

In a regional literary world ripe with poseurs, Ivan Doig may be the true descendant of Wallace Stegner. Unlike the typical carpetbagger who begins with preconceived notions as to the nature of the "real" West, Doig actually grew up here during an unforgiving time when the place was good for nothing except for what could be physically extracted from it. The two authors have led somewhat

parallel lives, their work growing out of their Western roots, each accepting a necessary flight from beloved surroundings to an academic life lived in cities west of the West.

In Doig's new novel, *Mountain Time*, Mitch Rozier—at 50—is at loose ends. His career as an environmental journalist in politically correct Seattle ("Cyberia") is in a nosedive because of the financial restructuring of his paper, *Cascopia*. His ex-wife hates him, and his two now-grown children ignore him as he did them while they were growing up; his aged father is tormenting Mitch long distance with tangled business affairs that directly affect him. Mitch's girlfriend, a caterer and native Montanan like himself, is the glue that holds his life together.

Mr. Doig—author of the National Book Award nominee *This House of Sky*—is on familiar ground. In novels such as *English Creek*, *Ride With Me*, *Mariah Montana*, and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, he has created a Montana Yoknapatawpha, complete with multi-generational interrelated families and mutually remembered local history. A native, Doig knows the terrain of working-class Montana: the ranchers, farmers, and small-town businessmen who struggle to adapt to life in a changing West.

Mitch returns to Twin Sulphur Springs, "a country of great mountains and mediocre human chances," ostensibly to deal with his father's financial difficulties. There, Lyle Rozier nonchalantly tells him of the leukemia that is slowly killing him: "The doc says it's about got me. Why I called you." Lyle—a World War II veteran of the South Pacific—is a member of that great generation of Americans who expected nothing from life except the fruits of hard work, pain, and ultimately death, a generation—unlike their progeny—for whom whining and complaining were anathema. While sticking around to care for his ailing father (and forced to tolerate the annoying Donald Brainerd, a new New West high-tech neighbor constantly complaining that Lyle's yardful of rusting farm machinery and "tractor carcasses" is spoiling his bay-window view of the Rockies), Mitch is reminded—through flashbacks to his childhood growing up in "the Springs"—what kind of man Lyle really is: a taciturn survivor of a life typically fraught with contradictions and emotional turmoil, including the guilt left over

Take that Ford, Kim, etc.

from his estranged wife's death in a car wreck years before.

Complicating all this are the McCaskill sisters, Mariah and Lexa. Mariah, the elder, is a successful globe-trotting photojournalist. She is middle-aged, divorced, but still retains a wild, red-haired beauty that can "cloud men's minds." Mariah talks the reluctant Mitch into permitting her to photograph the willing Lyle's last days for a newspaper photo series. Lexa McCaskill, Mitch's live-in companion, patiently awaits the passing of his mid-life difficulties so that they can get on with their lives.

The central theme of *Mountain Time* is the baby boomer generation's reaction to two inescapable facts: the passing of their parents, the realistic and hardworking World War II generation, and their relations with their own children, the alienated products of divorce, mindlessly groping their way through a seemingly nihilistic turn-of-the-millennium high-tech consumer society. Mitch spends a lot of time contemplating his dying father and his own out-of-reach kids, for which the idealism he acquired during his coming-of-age in the 1960's doesn't seem to be of much help.

Sigmund Freud wrote that the most poignant day in a man's life is the day of the death of his father. When Lyle finally passes on in his sleep, Mitch sees the event as anticlimactic and is merely numbed. He, Lexa, and Mariah set out on a backpacking trip into the stunning Rocky Mountain Front backcountry of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, with the idea of honoring Lyle's wish to have his ashes scattered—and the ritual photographed by the journalistic voyeur Mariah—atop the (fictional) Phantom Woman Peak. In 1939, the 18-year-old Lyle had helped build the Phantom Woman fire tower while employed by the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, in the course of which he met—unbeknownst to him—the renowned conservationist Bob Marshall (about whose legendary tramps in the Northern Rockies Mitch is researching a piece). On that summer day in 1939, Bob Marshall almost broke a leg on an unnailed step on the tower; in 1996, Mitch Rozier does so after a row with Lexa and the professionally minded Mariah over changing his mind about the ash-scattering ceremony, because "My father never cared a whoop about any of this [the Bob Marshall Wilderness] . . . He wanted it carved up into

money. Just never quite managed to figure out how." Mitch's broken leg forces Lexa to hike out for help, leaving Mitch and Mariah to a contrived love affair in the fire tower cabin: a forced and predictable device designed to make for a happy ending when Mitch and Lexa reunite in Seattle at the novel's conclusion. Ivan Doig should know better.

He does know his Rocky Mountains, and he paints his landscapes well. He knows his ranchers and Hutterites too, and has a sharp ear for the nuances of colloquial Montana speech. But as the critic-poet Randall Jarrell once observed, "A novel is a long narrative with something wrong with it." *Mountain Time* is at once a beautiful and a flawed thing.

*Bill Croke writes from Cody, Wyoming.*

## Damn Lies— or Statistics

by David B. Kopel

### More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws

by John R. Lott, Jr.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press;  
225 pp., \$23.00

The most important book ever published about firearms policy is John Lott's superb *More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws*. No other firearms book has reshaped the political debate so profoundly or its author been subjected to such a determined campaign of lies and libels. The intensity of the campaign against Lott is a powerful confirmation of his book's importance and one reason why it should be read by everyone who cares about firearms policy, which is literally a matter of life or death: Lobbyists who are trying to prevent the public from discovering John Lott's research are indirectly responsible for the deaths of hundreds of innocent people every year.

Throughout the 19th century, "the right to keep and bear arms" meant exactly what it said: The right to carry a gun was protected just as firmly as the right to own a gun. Some states, particularly in

the South, enforced laws against carrying handguns concealed, but the right to open carry was almost universally respected. By the 1970's, however, the right to carry had been restricted in most jurisdictions. America was well on the way to treating guns like cigarettes: permissible in private but completely banned from public spaces.

In 1988, however, Florida—thanks to the energetic support of the Florida Chiefs of Police Association and Unified Sportsmen of Florida—initiated a national trend by enacting a "shall issue" handgun permit law, allowing any adult who has a clean record and has taken safety training to obtain a permit to carry a concealed handgun for protection. Now, 29 states have a law similar to Florida's, while Vermont and Idaho (outside of Boise) require no permit.

Before John Lott came along, a few researchers (myself included) had studied the effects of these laws. Clayton Cramer and I (in the *Tennessee Law Review*) had analyzed changes in murder rates in "shall issue" states compared to national trends and found tentative evidence that murder rates fell after enactment of "shall issue" laws. David McDowall (in the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*) had analyzed murder rates in five counties and reported that they rose. These efforts, nevertheless, proved far inferior to Lott's.

John Lott has blown all the previous research away: His work amounts to the most thorough criminological study ever performed. Lott collected data from every one of the 3,054 counties in the United States over an 18-year period and, in contrast to the Kopel and McDowall homicide-only studies, examined changes in the rates of nine different types of crime. He also accounted for the effects of dozens of other variables, including variations in arrest rates, in the age and racial composition of a county's population, in national crime rates, and in changes made to gun-control laws, including the adoption of waiting periods. Lott's findings show that concealed carry laws significantly reduce violent crime. On average, the murder rate falls by ten percent, that of rape by three percent, and aggravated assault by six percent.

While crime begins to fall off immediately, the benefits of concealed handgun laws take about three years to make themselves fully felt. This is not surprising: In most states, a flood of applications occurs in the first few weeks the law is on the



The Great Salt Lake Book Festival opens Friday at Westminster College.

## No Fences: The New Breed Of Western Writers

BY JOAN O'BRIEN

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

The titles alone reveal a special relationship to the land. *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind*, *The Solace of Open Spaces*, *Crossing Open Ground*, *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*, *Arctic Dreams*, *The Canyons of Grace*.

Whether in fiction or nonfiction, memoirs or nature writing, authors like Ivan Doig, Cormac McCarthy, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams, Gretel Ehrlich, William Kittredge and Levi Peterson are producing work with what Wallace Stegner called the great theme of Western literature: the interplay between people and the land.

These lonesome cowboys of the New West — laboring in the most solitary of professions — evoke grand, natural landscapes and populate them with characters shaped by those spaces.

Doig, who will be in Utah this week to kick off the 1999 Great Salt Lake Book Festival, identifies that as a theme running through his books, whose characters "are, by and large, working people trying to find their way on the great and sometimes baffling landscape."

His keynote address Friday evening, "Trying to Place It: The Western Writer and the Geography of Imagination," opens the two-day festival at Westminster College. Admission to Doig's

See WESTERN WRITERS, Page D-5

### ■ BOOK FESTIVAL

The Great Salt Lake Book Festival will bring some 60 authors and book artists for lectures readings, book signings, storytelling and more. The event, sponsored by the Utah Humanities Council, opens with a lecture Friday at 7:30 p.m. by writer Ivan Doig in the Jewett Center at Westminster College, 1250 E. 1700 South, Salt Lake City. Cost is \$5. On Saturday, the festival continues with dozens of events, all at Westminster College, 1840 S. 1300 East. See schedule, page D-5.

## THE WEST UNDER COVER

Reviews of books of regional interest

### Mountain Time

By Ivan Doig; Scribner; \$25

BY MARTIN NAPARSTECK

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

A little less than half way through his sixth novel, *Mountain Time*, Ivan Doig digresses to tell us about the time one of his key characters was 18 years old in 1939 and working at a Civilian Conservation Corps camp along the Great Divide in Montana: Lyle Rosier, a Montana native, and Joe Ferragamo, an 18-year-old from New Jersey, become friends while working on a fire tower atop Phantom Woman Mountain. The seven-page digression forms a wonderful short story of its own, about how two young men learn to take pride in building something, even when they don't do the job quite right.

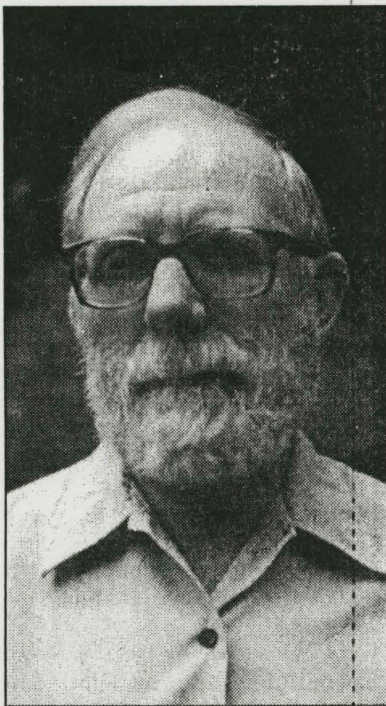
It's typical about what's right with *Mountain Time*. It's not so much a novel with occasional digressions, but rather a string of wonderful digressions knitted together with a strong plot line. It's as if the lives of his characters are the accumulation of the intersections of the digressions.

Mitch Rosier, a 50-year-old environmental writer living in Seattle returns to visit his father, Lyle, in Twin Sulphur Springs Mont. It's a trip filled with bad memories and unpleasant truths. Mitch learns that his father is dying from leukemia. His writing career seems to have dead-ended. His girlfriend Lexa seems at times to be distancing herself from him. His girlfriend's sister, Mariah, a world-traveling professional photographer decides she wants to photograph Lyle while he's dying. Lyle runs over Mitch's leg with a Dodge truck. And worst of all, the dying Lyle insists Mitch scatter his ashes from atop Phantom Woman Mountain. Mitch doesn't feel particularly close to his father: "Why can't people divorce their parents?" he wants to know.

Every few pages Doig stops his narrative to describe the environment, whether it's the rollerbladers zipping around him in San Francisco or the looming mountains ever in the background once the heart of the story moves to Montana. The technique provides a constant reminder that we are shaped by our surroundings.

Sometimes those surroundings are people, as when Lyle, Mitch, Lexa, and Mariah visit The Springhouse Supper Club, a nightclub, in Twin Sulphur Springs, and see a group of men enter, men they never expected would visit such a place: "the Hutterites dwelled in their farm colonies of a hundred or so people, talking German among themselves and following their Anabaptist communal religion. They had kept their way of life by avoiding things of the world that might infect it—television, radio, the camera's eye, public schools—and it might have been supposed that supper clubs would be prominent on that list."

Early in the novel we learn that Lexa helped Mariah start her photography career by getting goats to pose in interesting places: "That summer the promontory



Ivan Doig

rock turned into Grand Central Station for mountain goats, goats sniffingly curious, goats profoundly bemused, goats in win; some family groupings, goats in spectacular horned solo glory against the cliff line of the Rockies, roll after film roll of perfect posing goats. Mariah had pictures all summer long in the Gros Ventre Gleaner, the Hungry Horse News, the Choteau Acantha, and ultimately when the Associated Press picked one up, statewide." Not until the end of this two-page digression do we learn how Lexa helped Mariah: "Lexa's formula for making mountain goats line up and sniff with curiosity consisted of squatting here and there on that particular rock and" urinating.

At another point, Doig takes us to World War Two and the American invasion of New Guinea: "Some idiot on his last cigarette had crumpled the empty pack and tossed it onto the floor of the landing craft instead of over the side and the wad went into the sump pump like silk drawers up a vacuum cleaner," and the soldiers almost drown before they reach shore; they do reach shore, where Lyle is almost killed by a Japanese soldier, only to be saved by his buddy from their CCC days, Joe Ferragamo, with a quick burst from his Browning Automatic Rifle.

When Lyle dies Mitch, Lexa, and Mariah climb Phantom Woman Mountain, and during a brief argument between Mitch and Lexa, Mitch falls down the steps of the fire tower his father had helped build decades earlier, again breaking his leg. He's holding the container with his father's ashes during the fall.

Near the end, the New Guinea digression, the story about building the fire tower, the Hutterites, and a group of other digressions intersect to form a single plot. It's a masterful bit of plotting, revealing the characters more fully, justifying episodes that earlier seemed merely interesting, and turning the collection of digressions into a single story. It's Ivan Doig, one of the West's best writers, at his best.

Martin Naparstek is a novelist.

# Western Writers Explore a Vast Landscape

Continued from D-1

7:30 p.m. speech is \$5. The scores of readings, panels and lectures from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday are free.

The festival celebrating Western writing, sponsored by the Utah Humanities Council, will bring together writers known nationally and regionally, including Ellen Meloy, author of *The Last Cheater's Waltz: Beauty and Violence in the Desert Southwest*; Californian David Mas Masumoto, who just published *Harvest Son: Planting Roots in American Soil*; Lawrence Coates, the Southern Utah University professor who just published *The Blossom Festival*; Mark Spragg, the Cody, Wyo., author of *Where Rivers Change Direction*; Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Maxine Kumin, author most recently of *Quit Monks or Die!*, a novel set in the Southwest; and several others.

Critics tend to call the new generation of Western authors gaining ever greater respect and popularity "the writers of the purple sage." That rankles Doig, who says "it is simply a more rich and complex set of writers than those taglines imply."

It is not even geographically accurate. After all, there is little sagebrush where Doig now lives — Seattle. Some cannot even agree on what defines the West itself, much less its literature. There is the West of American Indian writers, of Latinos, of Japanese Americans, of Mormons, of activist environmentalists and others. There is the New West, the romantic West, the mythical West.

But there is no denying that landscape looms large in Western writing, perhaps because there is so much of it.

"Utah contains more BLM acreage than any other state with the exception of Nevada and Alaska," notes author Dawn Marano, acquisitions editor at The University of Utah Press and a presenter at Saturday's festival.

"However uninspired it seems to start with something as quantifiable as acreage, it serves to provide an immediate perspective on this thing we call the literature of the West. That is to say, how can one live here in the West where so much land is public, is available to be explored and experienced directly — in a way not possible in the East — and not be drawn into having or assessing one's relationship to it?"

University English professor François Camoin agrees.

"One of the things that Western writers tend to be more aware of is that people don't exist abstractly and separately from where they live. It makes a whole lot of difference whether you are growing up in Torrey or growing up in Philadelphia."

Camoin, who is helping to stage a "Writing From the Land" workshop this month in Torrey, says that even Western city dwellers have a heightened sense of nature. The West may be the most highly urbanized area of the country, but at least its residents have easy access to open space.

To Marano, whose parents moved West from St. Louis when she was a child, that open space meant more than recreational opportunity.

"Even though my dad's livelihood was what brought us West, I understood that the more important opportunities here had to do with what was intangible: In the West there seemed to be enough space for an individual to reinvent or reimagine himself or herself and to feel attachment to that space and place in a direct, organic sense."

Of course, Western writing is not the only literature with a strong sense of place. Southern writing evokes the landscape

powerfully, as does Northeastern local-color writing.

But the fact that Western landscape is not only scenic but contested also makes it inspiring. In Doig's latest book, *Mountain Time*, one of the tensions is the conflict between the main character and his father over construction of a gravel road into a natural area in Montana.

Like Mitch Rozier in *Mountain Time*, Doig was born in rural Montana, the son of a ranch hand. Both Doig and his character left Montana to seek an education and work. Doig earned his doctorate from the University of Washington before launching his writing career. His first success was *This House of Sky*, followed by *English Creek*, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, *Ride With Me Mariah Montana* and *Bucking the Sun*.

If landscape is a dominant theme of Western life, so is the leaving of it. The Montana economy could not support Doig, nor could it the characters in his book. And Doig says he encounters similar economic refugees throughout the country when he is out on book tours.

The landscape is not the only space in Western writing. University of Utah English professor Steve Tatum has detected an evolution in what he calls "the tremendous amount of quality writing going on" in the West.

The authors evoke a sense of place in their writing, but not just one of landscape and nature. It is what Tatum calls "social space" where "people are moving and living." Ethnic writers, in particular, are creating work with that strong sense of social space, where different cultures interact and conflict.

Such writing pays more attention to the social realm, he says.

The social interactions are what people remember of Doig's books. "When people come up to me at signings, it's not about landscape," Doig says. "They identify with the characters."

## FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

The following is the schedule of events for the Great Salt Lake Book Festival Saturday at Westminster College, 1250 E. 1700 South, Salt Lake City. All are free:

### All Day

The University of Utah's Marriott Library Preservation Department will operate a children's-book hospital for worn and torn volumes (no pop-up books or heirlooms, please). Limit of three per family. Outdoor canopy.

### 10 to 10:50 a.m.

- Joel Long, "Attic Triggers in Poetry."
- Madelyn Garrett, "A History of the Book, from clay tablet to artist book."
- Margaret Rostkowski, "Diving into the Story."
- Aden Ross and Kaye Terry, "Collaboration: Text as Art, Art as Text."
- Helen Cox, "Jump Start Your Book Group: Latino Literature and Stories from the Land."
- Jim Weiss, "Storytelling Workshop for Parents and Teachers."
- "Writing the West" Panel with Timothy Egan, Ann Walka and Steve Trimble.

### 11 to 11:50 a.m.

- Dawn Marano, "The Writing Life."
- Bibliotherapy, Salt Lake City Public Library Travel Books.
- Kinde Nebeker, "Artistic Collaboration with a Poet."
- Lawrence Coates, "The Blossom Festival."
- Graciela Thomas & Linda Oda, "Multi-cultural Child."

■ Kent Powell & Miriam Murphy, "Mining the Gold in Local History."

■ Jim Weiss, "Storytelling for Children."

■ Poetry Panel with Donald Revell, Katharine Coles, Ken Brewer, Natasha Saje.

■ Hal Cannon & Teresa Jordan, "Writing and Producing for Public Radio."

### Noon to 1 p.m.

- Stephen Trimble, *The Sagebrush Ocean* slide presentation.
- Morning presenters sign books, outdoor canopy.

### 1 to 1:50 p.m.

- Pat Coleman, "What Shakespeare Knew."
- Tony Weller, "Rare Books, The Whats, Whys and Hows of Collecting."
- Bea Williams, "Sailing with the Titanic."
- Ellen Meloy, "Deep Maps of Place: Landscape and Memoir."
- Jackie Osherow reading *Dead Men's Praise*.
- Ron Carlson, "My Fictional Utah."
- Neal Kramer, Marilyn Young, Dean Hughes, Darius Gray, "Contemporary Mormon Fiction."
- Luis Urrea, Stories from *Nobody's Son*.

### 2 to 2:50 p.m.

- Gloria Skurzynski, "Writing for the Mass Market."
- Ann Cannon, "What's So Funny?"
- Kathy Peterson & Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Creating A World of Faith."
- Tom Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place*.
- Rob Van Wagoner, reading from

*Dancing Naked*.

■ Leslie Norris, Poetry Reading.

■ William Kittredge & Annick Smith, Readings from *Balancing Water*.

■ Joan Nabors, "A Story, A Story."

### 3 p.m.

■ Early afternoon presenters sign books, outdoor canopy

### 3 to 3:50 p.m.

- Michael Dorrell, "Writing Plays for Radio."
- Robin Hemley, "Family Secrets: Writing the Forbidden."
- Pippa Keene, "Motherhead/Fatherhead — Multi-cultural Literacy."
- Allan Engen, "Skiing: A Historical Snapshot."
- Charlotte Freeman, "In media res: The Path to Publication."
- Maxine Kumin, Interview.
- Michael Lacapa, "Native American Storytelling."
- David Mas Masumoto, "Peaches & Raisins, Harvests of Family Stories from the Land."

### 4 to 4:50 p.m.

- Susan Gunter, "Henry James: Epistolary Relationships."
- Jim Fergus, "Making the Transition from Fiction to Non-Fiction."
- Victor Martinez, "A Parrot in the Oven."
- Trent Harris, *The Wild Goose Chronicles*.
- Randy Silverman, "Judging the Book by Its Cover."
- David Lee, Poetry Reading.
- The Science Fiction Century: Shayne Bell, Susan Kroupa, Michaelene Pendleton.
- Mark Spragg, "Speaking a Life in Pictures: From Film to Memoir."

### 5 p.m.

■ Late afternoon presenters sign books, outdoor canopy.

# "A Power Spot in My Memory"

## Ivan Doig recalls Bob Marshall, the West and growing up Montanan

By ANDREA THOMPSON

Say the words "Bob Marshall" and the immediate association for most would be the spread of wilderness north of Missoula. For Ivan Doig, the name conjures a semi-mythical figure of an insatiable hiker and outdoorsman, a poetic conservationist with the tragic aura of an early death.

It's this presence that infuses Doig's latest book *Mountain Time*, lurking behind the journeys and encounters between characters, acting as the binding thread that invisibly links one to another. The story follows eco-journalist Mitch Rozier from Seattle to his childhood home near Choteau, an area Doig knows intimately from his own childhood in Dupuyer. The climactic and most stirring section of the novel concerns a three-day hike into the Bob Marshall Wilderness, which Doig based on his own backpacking excursion there that spurred his interest in the man behind the name.

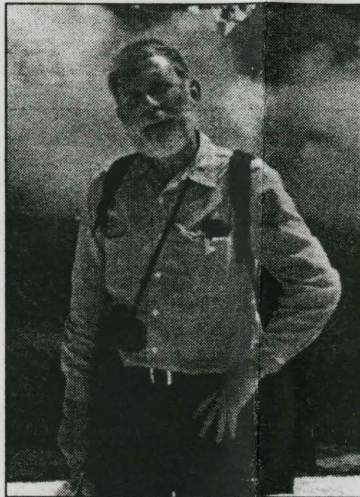
"I started doing some research on Bob Marshall," explains Doig. "The more I did, the more I realized what a marvelous, spooky, but effective figure he was."

That inspiration touched Doig, whose enthusiasm for the poetry of landscape—particularly Montana and Alaska in *Mountain Time*—is translated in passages of lyrical passion.

"I see the landscape as the stage for the lives of my characters. Those of us writing in the West have these memories of the Big Sky, outdoor experiences and the feel of the weather," explains Doig. "But within that I'm prompted to go further, I'm interested in whatever poetry I can find, metaphors, descriptions, clouds coming over the Rockies. It's a setting for my characters, but it's a setting for my language as well."

While Doig credits his life in the West as the inspiration for his fiction, he passionately argues against using the accident of locality to lump a group of disparate writers under the term "Western fiction."

"We're much better than that," he argues. "For example, James Welch in *Fool's Crow*, making that leap into the mind of a people. That's beyond a place, that's just hellish good writing. Or Mary Clarence Blew. Again, this is potent literature. While it takes place within, it also goes beyond a geo-



graphic determinant. We're a full orchestra, we're not just toodling an Old Susanna, some Western tune out here."

Doig also dismisses the appellation of "historical fiction" that many critics have affixed to his work. While a few of his novels draw from historical settings and even his contemporary novels, including *Mountain Time*, call up the shades of history to provide a textured background, Doig points out that the past has also been an essential part of fiction from Tolstoy to Faulkner.

"I mainly just consider myself a writer," he says. "I'm always aware of characters and language, and I've always thought history is just part of our lives. The trick is to touch it with a magic wand and make it good, imaginative reading."

Doig manages to do just that in his latest offering, deftly weaving the past into the narrative of the present. Focusing on the crisis of career and relationship catalyzed by a return home, Doig illuminates how each character's actions are affected by prior events in their own lives and even in the lives of generations before them. Following Mitch in his tension-fraught journey home to his father are Lexa and Mariah McCaskill, part of the family Doig created in his earlier "Montana trilogy." The ever-shifting dynamics between the two Rozier men and the McCaskill women play out against the conflicts of Western expansion and environmental concerns, the dusty poverty of the pioneer families and the wealthy new settlers.

While *Mountain Time* incorporates characters from his earlier books, Doig describes his latest offering as springing from outside the blueprint

of the series. "It partly came from seeds here in Seattle—of the rampant money with the software boom, looking around and seeing people try to lead their ordinary lives among skyrocketing property values and Starbucks popping up on every corner," he explains. "I find it a fascinating scene as a writer to watch, and thought it would be interesting to set Montana exiles against this scene of Seattle becoming a 'hot.com' place."

Fundamentally, Doig translates his love of Montana into compelling stories of relationships and landscapes. Despite his own residence in Seattle, his imagination is fed by the country of his youth, a place he calls a "power spot in my memory." Although he moved from Montana in 1962, his tender treatment of the wilderness and his insistent fictional returns to the Montanan landscape attest to his rejoinder, "I think the question is more, did I ever leave?" *fj*

**Ivan Doig will appear at Chapter One on Aug. 17 at 7:30 p.m., Fact and Fiction on Aug. 18 at 7 p.m. and at Waldenbooks on Aug. 19 at 6 p.m.**

## AUDIO FILE

Stuart Kaminsky, the Edgar-winning author of three series to date, has added a new character to his extensive repertoire. Florida-based detective Lew Fonseca, a depressed, balding Italian-American widower with a kind heart and a sardonic attitude, takes on a couple of missing-person cases in **"Vengeance"** (Dove Audio; abridged fiction; six hours; four cassettes; \$25; read by Joe Barrett).

Fleeing Chicago for Key West after his wife was killed in a car accident, Fonseca sets up shop in Sarasota, Fla., after his elderly Toyota dies in a Dairy Queen parking lot. Though officially working as a process server, he is working on two cases, one involving a runaway teen-ager and the other a missing trophy wife.

Much like the writer of an old film noir, Kaminsky begins near the end of the story before bringing us back to fill in the details. An old hand at telling tales, Kaminsky creates a believable and suspenseful world, then surrounds his protagonist with enticing secondary characters. Narrator Joe Barrett further enhances material that is already addictive.

Fonseca sounds like the world-weary, depressed man he is.

Robert Parker has been branching out in different directions for the past couple of years.

Though he has broken away from his Spenser character at other times during his lengthy career, Parker's first foray into another series began a couple of years ago with Jesse Stone. Now he is trying his hand at the distaff side of detecting with his first female detective, Sunny Randall, in **"Family Honor"** (Dove Audio; unabridged fiction; six hours and 30 minutes; six cassettes; \$30; read by Andrea Thompson).

Parker created Sunny for actress Helen Hunt, who is to star in the movie version of this book next year. Basically, Sunny is Spenser with two X chromosomes. She has the same moral code as Spenser, is also childless and also dotes on her dog. Sunny's sidekick is named Spike, not Hawk, but both men are tough and rather unusual cohorts in the anti-crime game.

The minimalist plot involves a missing girl and her creepy parents. As with most of Parker's novels, characterization and dialogue count for more than the story line. It is also a short piece of fiction. Not a bad thing for the listener, as it was brief enough to be released onto audio unabridged and reasonably priced.

Thompson, a television actress, has a strong understanding of irony. She captures Sunny's slightly cynical intelligence and does so with flair.

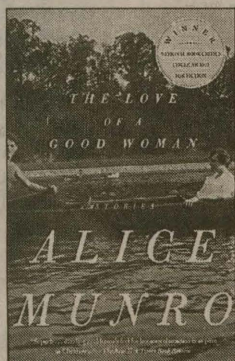
— Rochelle O'Gorman

## NEW IN PAPERBACK

## THE LOVE OF A GOOD WOMAN

Alice Munro  
Vintage, \$13

Alice Munro is to short stories as John Keats is to verse: well-crafted, imagistic and poetic. "The Love of a Good Woman," which won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, is a collection of eight short stories. "The Children Stay," a story about a family's relationship, takes place



while the family is on vacation. Munro writes, "What perfect weather. Every morning, every morning it's like this, the first pure sunlight falling through the high branches, burning away the mist over the still water of Georgia Strait." Her proclamation about a simple

morning sets the tone for her narrative style, which is precise and painfully real.

— Nicole Chvatal

## Chronicle is antidote to nuclear fog

A Pulitzer winner expands on her award-winning series to the government's ongoing "culture of secrecy"

By RICK HARMON  
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

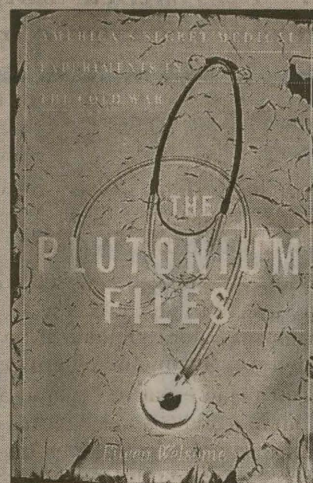
When it comes to America's ongoing joy ride with atomic power, burying and unburying, in one guise or another, seem to be the current fashion.

Last summer, Portland General Electric oversaw the removal and transport of the Trojan Nuclear Plant's decommissioned nuclear reactor from its location near Rainier for burial on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in southeastern Washington. Meanwhile, on the national stage, scientists and politicians continued their farcical, not-in-my-back-yard debate about the "ideal" long-term burial site for the nation's deadliest radioactive wastes.

As for the burdens of unburying, Eileen Welsome's "The Plutonium Files: America's Secret Medical Experiments in the Cold War" joins an already impressive groundswell among journalists, historians and activists, a many-pronged effort to pressure the U.S. government into greater openness and honesty about its decades-long sponsorship of nuclear science and technology.

Welsome, an investigative reporter for the Albuquerque Tribune, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1994 for her newspaper series on 18 people who unknowingly were injected with plutonium between 1945 and 1947 by doctors associated with the Manhattan Project, the U.S. Army's top-secret World War II mission to build the world's first atomic bomb.

Welsome might easily have written a much shorter book that simply expanded on her newspaper series and detailed her own 12-year relationship with the story. Such a book would have included her current prologue (if you read these 11 riveting pages, you will likely read the rest of the book) and about 150 of the published book's 564 pages. However, by placing her dramatic account of the 18 plutonium injectees in the context of the government's larger program of human radiation experiments between 1945 and 1971, Welsome



## THE PLUTONIUM FILES

Eileen Welsome

The Dial Press,  
\$26.95



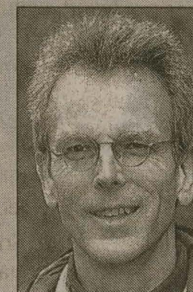
WELSONE

## BOTTOM LINE

A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter examines the U.S. government's human radiation experiments.

## Secrecy and intimidation at Hanford

Even though the Clinton administration has done more to loosen the Department of Energy's grip on the facts about the country's nuclear past than all nuclear-era presidential administrations combined, the work of a Portland oral historian and journalist, Michael O'Rourke, has shown that the agency's security apparatus has by no means retreated from its secretive activities.



O'ROURKE

O'Rourke's 1995 article in Cascadia Times, "Blowing the Whistle on Whistleblowers: How Hanford Violates the Civil Rights of Its Employees," detailed a shocking record of repression and intimidation suffered by employees who dared to speak out about environmental and safety problems within the Han-

ford complex.

O'Rourke points out that, among the "security and investigative agencies" responsible for the civil-rights assaults on whistleblowers, the Department of Energy's Office of the Inspector General, which reports directly to Congress and is free of the energy secretary's authority, has been the most notorious.

O'Rourke has been interviewing people on the subject of Hanford's past and present since the early 1980s and plans to turn over his tapes and transcripts to the Oregon Historical Society's oral history collection. Currently, he is recording interviews on the theme of public involvement in operations and decision-making at Hanford.

— Rick Harmon

Prenatal Clinic — to name just three of the prestigious institutions that hosted radiation experiments — medical practices now widely considered unethical were undertaken out of a kind of scientific curiosity run amok under the influence of Cold War superpatriotism.

"Interesting" data can undeniably be obtained by exposing human subjects to all manner of trauma, radiation included. But traditional medicine's regard for the welfare of individuals usually has protected nonconsenting patients from procedures with no potential

frequently supported grandly by government largesse, doggedly sought during those years to define the limits of "safe" radiation exposure for humans. Implicit in their striving was a kind of faith (and hope) in the existence of demonstrably "safe" doses of radiation. Otherwise the public could call into question the integrity of their work, not to mention the nation's entire atomic program. In the end, though, most scientists have acknowledged what just a few argued at the time: Any amount of radiation exposure is potentially harm-

and Willard Libby, come about as close to the "mad scientist" profile as we are likely to get). But the overarching villain in her story is government secrecy.

The "culture of secrecy," as Welsome calls it, was born as a result of the legitimate security precautions of the Manhattan Project, flourished under the unbridled ambition of the succeeding Atomic Energy Commission and fully hardened amid the paranoid workings of the contemporary Department of Energy. Giving rise eventually to both bad ethics and bad science, the culture of secrecy became more of a bureaucratic preservation reflex than any sort of useful adjunct to national security.

Welsome's narrative takes a somewhat unexpected turn in several chapters at the book's end. Even though most of us lived through and read newspapers during this period, the author's accounts of former Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary's groundbreaking "Openness Initiative" press conference in December 1993, of President Clinton's Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments of 1994-95 and of Clinton's October 1995 formal apology for the government's historical radiation experiments greatly clarify and intensify our dim recollection of those landmark events.

(Welsome excuses us somewhat with the reminder that the president's admission and apology were vastly overshadowed by the verdict in the O.J. Simpson murder trial on the same day and that media coverage of the Clinton speech consisted of "sound bites on the evening news and stories on the inside pages of the nation's newspapers.")

The author makes a convincing case that at the end of the 20th century — in the wake of decades of nuclear-weapons testing and an assortment of other significant releases of radiation into the environment — we are all, to some extent, "downwinders." We should keep in mind, though, that the plight of some downwinders (for example, those in our own region who have for decades lived immediately downwind from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation) has been dramatically more perilous than that of most others.

Despite the efforts of Welsome and others to unbury these shadowy episodes in our history, con-

Events listed are open to the public at no charge unless otherwise indicated. The area code for all phone numbers is 503 unless otherwise indicated.

## LECTURES

**Russell Banks:** Portland Arts & Lectures presents an evening with the author of "The Sweet Hereafter" and "Affliction," 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, 1037 S.W. Broadway. Cost: \$5-\$18, details: 227-2583.

## READINGS

**Doris Baines:** The author reads from her book "Christmas Traditions & Legends," 3 p.m. Sunday, Barnes & Noble Jantzen Beach, 1720 N. Jantzen Beach Road.

**"Don't Forget to Die":** Margaret Chittenden reads from her new Charlie Plato mystery, 5 p.m. Sunday, Murder by the Book, 3210 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.

**Geronimo Tagatac:** The author will read and discuss his work, 4 p.m. Monday, Hatfield Room in the Mark O. Hatfield Library, Willamette University, Salem.

**Portland poets:** Three poets read from their works; Dan Raphael reads from "isn't how we got here," Douglas Spangle reads from "2 1/2 Bridges" and David Else reads from "Green Water Tower," 7:30 p.m. Monday, Powell's City of Books, 1005 W. Burnside St.

**Craig Lesley:** The author reads from his works, including "River Song," 7 p.m. Tuesday, The Alameda Cafe, 4641 N.E. Fremont St.

**Willamette Writers:** The winners of the Kay Snow writing contest read from their entries, 7 p.m. Tuesday, The Old Church, 1422 S.W. 11th Ave. Details 452-1592.

**Richard Burgin:** The author reads from his book "Fear of Blue Skies," 7 p.m. Tuesday, Looking Glass Bookstore, 318 S.W. Taylor St., and speaks as part of The Catlin Gabel School's Jean Vollum Distinguished Writers Series, 9:55 a.m. Wednesday, Cabell Center Theater, The Catlin Gabel School, 8825 S.W. Barnes Road.

**Frank McCourt:** The author reads from his book "Tis," 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, First Congregational Church, 1126 S.W. Park Ave. First come, first served.

**Michael Henderson:** The author reads from his book "Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate," co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Oregon, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Borders Books & Music, 708 S.W. Third Ave.

**"River, Cross My Heart":** Breana Clarke reads from her novel, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Powell's City of Books, 1005 W. Burnside St.

**David Neiwert:** The author reads from his book "In God's Country: The Patriot Movement and the Pacific Northwest," 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Powell's on Hawthorne, 3723 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.

**"The You That Is Everywhere":** Gary Rosenthal reads from his collection of love poems, 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Powell's on Hawthorne, 3723 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.

**Gumball poets:** Gumball Poetry is a mix of literary journal and gumball machines; the gumball poets read their work, 8 p.m. Thursday, Cafe Lena, 2239 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.

**Izzy Covatt:** The author reads from her autobiography, "My Name Is Izzy," 6 p.m. Friday, Tower Books, 1307 N.E. 102nd.

**Blue Begonia Press:** Editor Jim Bodeen and three other poets read from their work.

Bodeen reads from "This House," Charles Potts reads from "Lost River Mountain," Lee Bassett reads from "Poems of Lee Bassett 1973-2000," and Jody Aliases reads from "Loving in Time of War," 7:30 p.m. Friday, Powell's City of Books, 1005 W. Burnside St.

**Jay W. Nicholas and D.M. Beach:** The two children's book authors read from their books; Nicholas reads from "Down to the Sea," and Beach reads from "Sydney Kangaroo's Christmas," 1 p.m. Saturday, Jackson's Books, 320 Liberty St. S.E., Salem.

**Kay Allenbaugh:** The author reads from her book "Chocolate for a Woman's Spirit," 1 p.m. Saturday, Barnes & Noble Jantzen Beach, 1720 N. Jantzen Beach Road.

## OTHER EVENTS

**Northwest Authors:** Join 75 authors, photographers and artists, including Ivan Doig and William Sullivan, at the 33rd annual Holiday Cheer and Authors' Party, noon Sunday, Dec. 5, Oregon Historical Society, 1200 S.W. Park Ave.

**Christine Barnes:** The author gives a slide show on her book "Great Lodges of the Canadian Rockies," 7 p.m. Monday, Powell's Travel Store, 701 S.W. Sixth Ave., and at 4 p.m. Saturday at Paulina Springs Book Company, 252 West Hood St., Sisters.

**Caprial Pence:** The chef and author is joined by chef Mark Dowers as she shares recipes from her latest book, "Caprial's Soups & Sandwiches," 7 p.m. Monday, Borders Books & Music, 708 S.W. Third Ave.

**"Oregon Golf":** Author Paul Linnman and photographer Rick Schafer sign and discuss their book, 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oregon Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, 321 S.W. Salmon St., and 11 a.m. Saturday, Barnes & Noble Lloyd Center, 1231 N.E. Broadway.

**Christopher Leebrick:** The storyteller performs "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," by Dr. Seuss, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Clackamas Corner Library, 11750 S.E. 82nd Ave., Suite D.

**M.K. Wren:** The author discusses her book "Neely Jones" as part of the Mystery Lovers Book Group of Borders Beaverton, 7 p.m. Wednesday, Borders Beaverton, 2605 S.W. Cedar Hills Blvd.

**National Writers Union:** The union presents a panel on "Surviving the Publishing Industry in the 21st Century" that includes publisher Dennis Stovall and author Ed Goldberg. Doors open at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Friendly House, 2617 N.W. Savier St., cost: \$15 members, \$25 nonmembers; details: 232-9212.

**Cheryl Mack and Rick McClure:** The authors read from their book "For the Greatest Good: Early History of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest," 11 a.m. Saturday, Waucoma Bookstore, 212 Oak St., Hood River.

**Joe Bianco:** The author signs his books, including "Oregon Rediscovered," 1 p.m. Saturday, Waldenbooks Lloyd Center, 976 Lloyd Center.

**Fund-raiser and silent auction:** Bid on items donated by Portland area restaurants, businesses and organizations to support the Mountain Writers Series, 8 p.m. Saturday, Mountain Writers Center, 3624 S.E. Milwaukie Ave.

## CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

**Liz Nakazawa:** The published writer offers a class on beginning free-lance writing, 10:30 a.m. Saturday, 282-5343.

has done much more. The shorter book might have been more aptly titled "The Plutonium Files," but the longer book does a greater service.

What were these nuclear doctors up to, anyway? At the University of Chicago's Metallurgical Lab, at the University of Rochester Medical School's Manhattan Annex, at Vanderbilt University Hospital's

benefit to their health (and possibly from potentially harmful procedures). For a few decades in the middle of the 20th century, however, those traditional constraints were crushed beneath the rationale of a "higher cause": the need to gather any and all information of conceivable value in the struggle against world communism.

Scientists and medical doctors,

and most of what physicians needed to know about the onset of radiation sickness in humans already had been chronicled in the immediate aftermath of the atomic bomb explosions in Japan.

Welsome's descriptions of the supporters and perpetrators of the radiation experiments reveal plenty of arrogance and opportunism (and, in the cases of Edward Teller

certed efforts to bury and cover up continue, inevitably so among those responsible for disposing of (via burial) the nation's still-growing supply of dangerous radioactive wastes, but also among those still seeking to keep the full truth about the country's nuclear past from public scrutiny.

Rick Harmon is a Portland freelance writer and editor.

## McMurtry: West has yet to yield 'great book'

Continued from Page E5

the nature of storytelling and whether it might be different in time, space and Texas:

"My question to Walter Benjamin would be, what kind of stories arise in a place where nothing has ever happened except, of course, the vagaries and vicissitudes of individual life?" McMurtry writes.

Indeed, the Pulitzer Prize-winner defines his own writing (23 novels, three essay collections and more than 30 screenplays) as an exploration of frontiers, both of the land and the spirit. Taken in that light, "Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen" is about the frontier called Larry McMurtry, and this self-portrait is likely to be the closest thing to an autobiography we'll ever see out of tiny Archer City, Texas.

In the book, McMurtry extols the virtues of everything from a lime Dr. Pepper to rodeo queens, laments the decline of oral storytelling and cowboys, and paints a portrait of a landscape so vast and empty it hardly seems possible it could be filled to the brim with the spirit of its inhabitants. McMurtry writes poignantly, occasionally humorously, about his own cloistered childhood, spent largely in fear of shrubbery and poultry, and his surprising distaste for the cowboy life. He is most eloquent when writing about his own passion for reading and books, two entirely different subjects for a man who is not only a prolific writer and reader but also a rare-book dealer and collector.

And from the most recognized name in Western literature, a man who long ago sensed a need for "some congruity between prose and landscape" and who admits he has liked "not a word" in a couple of his novels, comes a somewhat sullen assessment of the region's writing: "The American West has so far produced depressingly little in the way of literature. Out of it

may have come a hundred or so good books, a dozen or so very good books; but it has not, as yet, yielded up a great book."

In the end, "Walter Benjamin" is about growing up and growing old. McMurtry slyly weaves his personal story with the story of a ripening frontier that has been washed by repeated waves of people, ideas and industries, but survived. The Western small town — whether it's the fictional Thalia or his real hometown of Archer City, or any of a thousand others — is losing some of its dreams but goes to sleep each night hoping for new dreams to come along.

For those towns and their people, the future is a frontier all its own, with its own vagaries and vicissitudes. For McMurtry, too.

"I'm now in my 60s, which means that I'm looking at a maximum of about 30 more years of

life," he writes. "Which should I do? Read or write? Though I have now read a lot of books, the range is still green with thousands of potentially interesting books yet unread."

McMurtry doesn't directly answer his own question. But fear not: By the time you read this, his next manuscript will already be in the hands of his editors.

At the crossroads of either impermanence and the "urge to leave a track," McMurtry chooses both ways. He knows he can't precisely describe the beauty of prairie sunlight, but he continues to try, anyway.

Sam the Lion must be looking over his shoulder.

Ron Franscell, a Wyoming novelist and newspaperman, is the author of "Angel Fire" and the upcoming mystery "The Deadline."

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## Books

PICK  
OF THE  
WEEK

## Frank McCourt

The author of "Angela's Ashes" and "Tis" returns to Portland for a 7:30 p.m. Tuesday reading at the First Congregational Church, 1126 S.W. Park Ave. First come, first served. Free.



"When the MS Irish Oak sailed from Cork in October 1949, we expected to be in New York City in a week. Instead, after two days at sea, we were told we were going to Montreal in Canada."

♦ Frank McCourt, from "Tis"

# Woman, Victorious

"AHAB'S WIFE" RETELLS "MOBY-DICK" FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW,  
SUBSTITUTING LOVE FOR VENGEANCE

By ELLEN EMRY HELTZEL  
THE OREGONIAN

**E**arly in Herman Melville's classic novel, "Moby-Dick," we learn about the origins of one of the men who will sail on Captain Ahab's voyage with destiny.

"Queequeg," Melville writes of the tattooed and tomahawk-toting sailor, "was a native of Kokovoko, an island far away to the West and South. It is not down in any map; true places never are."

It is with this same spirit of discovery that you should approach "Ahab's Wife," Sena Jeter Naslund's version of "Moby-Dick," as a story written in the style of the 19th century but with a wholly 20th-century sensibility. This is a place you won't find on any map because it is neither firmly rooted in its time nor in ours. But that shouldn't diminish the pleasure of reading a story that's both ambitious and full of little treasures that pay homage to the book that inspired it.

The full title is actually "Ahab's Wife, or, the Stargazer," in obvious imitation of "Moby-Dick, or, The Whale," as Melville called his novel. "Moby-Dick" of course, is the story of a fatal obsession, of the limited vision of human perspective.

In contrast, "Ahab's Wife" imagines the story of "Moby-Dick" from a woman's perspective, and what a different story it is. Here is a tale of the importance of community, of love and caring in constant search of a home. It celebrates traditional feminine ideals while also jettisoning the notion that women are lesser actors on the stage of life.

Naslund, a novelist and professor of writing at the University of

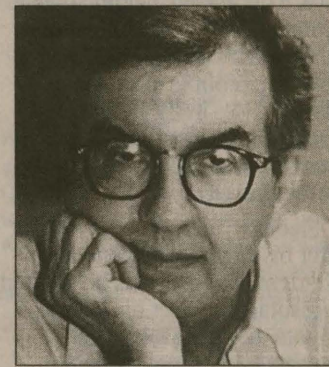


## AHAB'S WIFE

Sena Jeter Naslund  
William Morrow, \$28

## BOTTOM LINE

An exhilarating novel based on Melville's "Moby-Dick." Following the traditions of 19th-century literature, Naslund has created a heroine who will charm modern readers.



DIANA OSSANA

LARRY McMURTRY

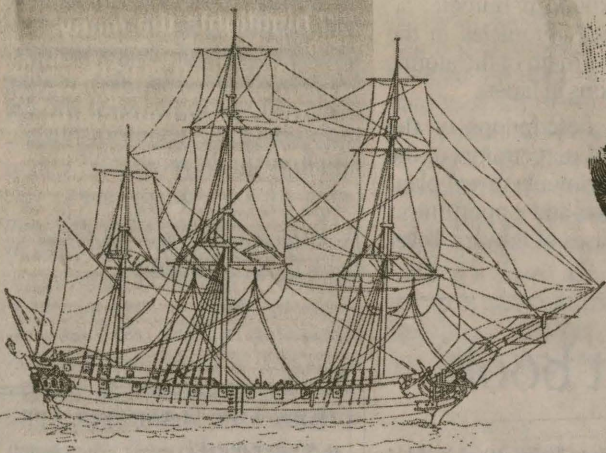
## Larry McMurtry explores his inner frontier

By RON FRANSELL  
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

In "The Last Picture Show," Sonny tests his manhood by relieving himself from the top of a high, sloping dam, trying unsuccessfully to hit the water below. Sam the Lion, the character whose spirit infuses Larry McMurtry's 1971 novel, is secretly watching over his shoulder and understands.

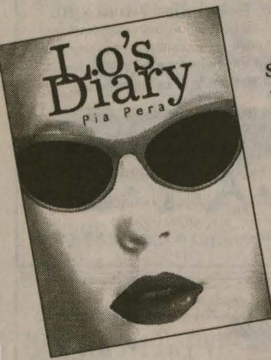
A few moments later, as the man and boy talk about growing up and growing old, Sam the Lion tells Sonny, "Oh, it ain't necessarily miserable. . . . About 80 percent of the time, I guess."

It's not Sam the Lion peering over McMurtry's shoulder in "Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections at Sixty and Beyond," however. Instead, it's the ghost of Walter Benjamin, a long-dead German essayist and cultural theorist whose own life experiences couldn't have been further removed from the life of a ranch kid who'd never even heard of Hemingway, Faulkner or T.S.



DOVER

## Lolita's account of past, present adds little to Nabokov tale



in a short-story writer, Pia Pera. Pera's "Lo's Diary" (Foxrock,

Women's voices seem to be everywhere these days. Besides "Ahab's Wife," another current attempt to put a woman's perspective on a masterpiece is a first novel by an Ital-

\$22.95), a retelling of Vladimir Nabokov's "Lolita," came out after a legal wrangle between the author and Nabokov's estate, which ultimately allowed the book to be published this fall with a preface by Nabokov's son, Dmitri.

"Lo's Diary" features a Lolita for the '90s: This is a girl who knows what she's doing, deliberately arousing the fusty old professor who from the start is discombobulated by her presence. She is a wicked child, who not only treats her mother horribly (understandable, giv-

en her age) but also fries her hamster on a light bulb just to see what will happen (psychopathic, at any age).

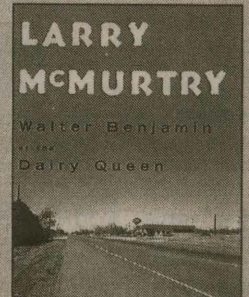
In "Lo's Diary," Lolita did not die in childbirth but instead has survived into her middle years and now wants to publish the diary that covers the years of Nabokov's original book. Names have been changed (she is Dolores Maze, not Haze, etc.), but the plot is the same, with embellishments intended to help us understand Lolita's dysfunction. Besides the loss of her father, Lolita now has a baby brother who died

when she was 4.

The perils of walking in the steps of a great master are everywhere apparent in this book. Although Pera has created a spirited narrator, the girl is neither sympathetic nor deep (and Humbert, for all his flaws, is a man of complexity who tells his story with all the confusion that is rife in the human experience). Lacking the subtlety that makes "Lolita" such a great novel, "Lo's Diary" looks even paler in comparison than it would if it had been a free-standing work.

—Ellen Emry Heltzel

... that he was about to enter college in 1954. Why Benjamin? Because, as McMurtry explains in this 204-page essay about reading, writing and life, his inspiration for this book came from "Illuminations," a collection of Walter Benjamin's essays on storytelling, which McMurtry read 20 years ago as he was preparing to write a history of his home country in Texas. The essays made the writer wonder about Please see **MCMURTRY**, Page E6



**LARRY MCMURTRY**  
Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen  
Simon & Schuster, \$21

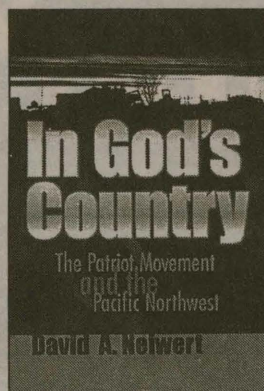
### BOTTOM LINE

In this memoir and meditation on aging, the creator of "Lonesome Dove" reveals himself as a highly self-critical writer and devotee of European literature.

## NEW IN THE NORTHWEST

### IN GOD'S COUNTRY David A. Neiwert

Washington State University Press, \$19.95 paperback



promote a fearful, paranoid world view that isolates believers from the mainstream of society."

How does this apply to the Pacific Northwest? According to Neiwert, the Patriot movement has substantial roots here, especially in Montana. There, frustrated farmers, millworkers and loggers look for a solution to their economic problems and sometimes turn to the Patriot movement. Neiwert says that while most members of the movement are blue-collar workers, they are not stereo-

typical "beer-bellied louts and loudmouths who (like) to bellyache about everything in sight." Instead, they "are often Joe and Mary Smith from next door."

Neiwert reads at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Powell's on Hawthorne, 3723 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd.

—Nicole Chvatal

## LITERARY SNAPSHOT

**Who:** Christine Barnes  
**Residence:** Bend

**Author:** Barnes has written three books: "Central Oregon: A View From the Middle," "Great Lodges of the West" and the new "Great Lodges of the Canadian Rockies" (W.W. West, Inc., \$35).

**What are they about?** The titles are self-explanatory. "Great Lodges of the West" came out in 1997 and was a smash hit, selling about 30,000 copies and winning the 1998 Benjamin Franklin Award for best history book. "Great Lodges of the Canadian Rockies" is a sequel of sorts as Barnes, watercolor artist Fred Pflughoft and photographer David Morris moved north to Canada.

**Stunning visuals:** The parks and lodges get most of the credit, and Barnes is quick to give the rest to Pflughoft and Morris, whose work makes both "Great Lodges" books into coffee-table keepers that appeal to anyone planning a vacation in the West.



**Another audience:** Barnes did a bang-up job researching the construction of these beautiful lodges and included architectural plans and drawings that enhance the history behind the buildings. Architects noticed and have responded enthusiastically.

**Previous writing history:** Barnes started as a journalist and was the features editor at three Bay Area newspapers: the Contra Costa Times, the Oakland Tribune and the San Francisco Examiner.

**Public appearances:** Barnes will sign her books from 12 to 5 p.m. today at the Holiday Cheer and Authors' Party at the Oregon History Center, 1200 S.W. Park Ave. At 7 p.m. Monday (her birthday), she will give a slide show at Powell's Travel Store, 701 S.W. Sixth Ave. At 4 p.m. Saturday, she will give a slide show at Paulina Springs Book Company, 252 West Hood St., Sisters.

—Jeff Baker

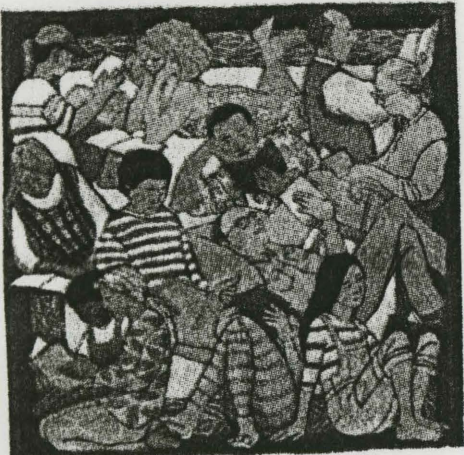
## ARTS

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1999

INSIDE

Books  
Classical Music  
Movies/Theater  
Visual Arts

MARILYN KARRAS, FEATURE EDITOR, 237-2150



Book Festival poster by Kathleen Peterson.

## Book festival is back next week for 2nd year at Westminster

By Dennis Lythgoe  
Deseret News books editor

Last year's experiment was a winner, with 45 writers, poets, book dealers and historians conducting panels and workshops for 900 enthusiastic participants. As a result, "The Great Salt Lake Book Festival" for 1999 will be held once again the weekend of Sept. 17 and 18 at Westminster College.

And although the Utah Humanities Council is bringing in several heavy-hitters, this is a festival intended not for the literary elite but for all lovers of books.

Ivan Doig — a noted Western writer and author of numerous Western-based novels, including his latest, "Mountain Time," just published by Scribner — will be the keynote speaker on Friday, Sept. 17, at 7:30 p.m. in Westminster's Jewett Auditorium. He will discuss the nature of his work — "Trying to Place It: The Western Writer and the Geography of Imagination," and will then sign copies of his book. (There is a \$5 charge for this lecture.)

On Saturday, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., more than 60 writers will make presentations, ranging from nature writing in the West; poetry and contemporary fiction; Hopi, Apache, African and English storytelling. (All Saturday events are free.)

There will be a number of demonstrations, including medieval book illumination, papermaking, letterpress printing, decorated paper, gold tooling, bookbinding and children's bookmaking workshops by Utah bookmakers throughout the day. Attendees may make their own paper from old blue jeans and shredded U.S. currency or watch as ink is made from iron galls. There will even be a children's "book hospital" to provide free "emergency treatment" for a favorite book. (Not more than three per family and no elaborate pop-ups or family heirlooms, please.)

Traditional music will be provided by the Beehive Band, many booksellers will offer displays of current books and visiting writers will sign their own books.

Please see **BOOKS** on E:5

DESERET NEWS, SUNDAY, SEPT. 12, 1999

## BOOKS

Continued from E1

Writers who will be signing as well as speaking include Lawrence Coates, author of "The Blossom Festival"; Maxine Kumin, author of "Quit Monks or Die"; David Lee, author of "Legacy of Shadows"; Timothy Egan, author of "Lasso the Wind"; Dawn Marano, author of "When We Say We're Home: A Quartet of Place and Memory"; and Mas Masumoto, author of "Harvest Son, Planting Roots in American Soil."

Charlotte Freeman, whose book, "Place Last Seen," will be published in March 2000, and Susan Gunter, with two upcoming books: "Dear Munificent Friends: Henry James's Letters to Four Women," to be published in October, and "Dearly Beloved Friends: Henry James's Letters to Younger Men," scheduled for next year — will also appear, as well as several other authors.

Some of the topics considered during the conference include "A History of the Book," by Madelyn Garrett; "Stories in Your Car," by Hal Cannon and Teresa Jordan; "Utah: The Right Place," by historian Tom Alexander; "Balancing Water," by William Kittredge and Annick Smith; and "Mormon Fiction," by Neal Kramer and Marilyn Arnold.

There will be sessions on Shakespeare, humor, writing plays for radio, poetry reading and storytelling. Jim Weiss, who has been telling stories for more than 25 years, will tell some of his original stories as well as retell some ancient and modern classics.

The festival is sponsored by the University of Utah's Marriott Library, Signature Books, Sam Weller's Books, Utah Arts Council and the Salt Lake Tribune, with volunteer support from the Friends of the Salt Lake City Library.

# Has Doig filled role as premier Western American writer?

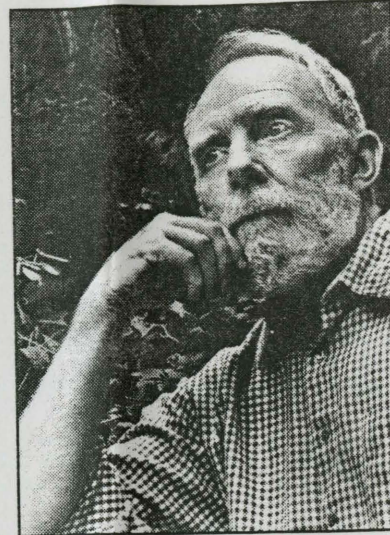
By Dennis Lythgoe  
Deseret News staff writer

Although he writes rich Western novels based in the Montana landscape of his boyhood, Utahns can identify with Ivan Doig because he has been compared so often with their own Wallace Stegner. Since Stegner's death, some critics have said Doig is now the premier Western American writer.

"That's for someone else to say, I guess," said Doig, good-naturedly, in a phone interview from his home overlooking Puget Sound in Seattle. "Wally managed to fill so many roles — novelist, biographer, conservationist, professor and lots of others — I just concentrate on fiction, and I'm a fairly deliberate worker at that. That's the only portion of Stegner's shoes I would try to step into."

Doig's writing is prolific, and he has won awards for many of his beautifully written books, including "This House of Sky," "Winter Brothers," "The Sea Runners," "English Creek" and his most popular seller, "Dancing at the Rascal Fair." More recently, he has written "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana," "Heart Earth," and "Bucking the Sun."

His newest book, "Mountain Time," is hot off the press, pub-



Ivan Doig

lished by Scribner's.

"The male protagonist," said Doig, "has turned 50 in 1996, a classic baby boomer, and it's about this generation, coming out of the 1960s, reaching one of those generational times of reckoning, sandwiched between growing children, who have gone their own inexplicable route in life, and aging parents who are starting to lose control over their lives." The story begins in Alaska, Seattle and San Francisco. Then the characters are reluc-

tantly pulled back to their Rocky Mountain roots in Montana by family obligations. In one case, a man "has to tend to a father of whom he has said, 'Why can't we divorce our parents?'"

It has been a busy year for the 60-year-old Doig, including not only his finishing "Mountain Time" but buying a new house and undergoing two knee operations. "I'm just catching my breath," he said. Following some speaking obligations and book promotion, he will return to Seattle to start work in October on a new novel, this one harking back "to the homestead community

of 'Dancing at the Rascal Fair,' " his 1987 book that sold 200,000 copies.

Although a Montana native, he has come to love Seattle as well. "I claim dual citizenship in the Puget Sound area and Montana. Right now, as I look out the window, I see pretty little clouds perched on the Olympic Mountains and ships passing by. But I'm just back from two weeks in Montana, a visit that was glorious and triumphal with about 500-600 people at my talks there — and it's only a day's drive from Seattle to Missoula."

Doig is not new to Utah, having

visited here several times to talk about his books and his ideas about the West. At the Great Salt Lake Book Festival, his subject will be "Trying to Place it: The Western Writer and the Geography of Imagination." Doig said he will be reacting to "the shorthand notion that where we come from on the map accounts for our books. That claim makes what hair I have left stand up on end. I think Western writing uses a lot more of the literary orchestra than simply that kind of one-note description. Character is

Please see **DOIG** on E12

## DOIG

Continued from E5

very powerful in Western writing."

Historian Richard Maxwell Brown told Doig that such books as his "This House of Sky," and others written by William Kitteredge, Terry Tempest Williams, etc., are "grassroots biography and autobiography. They are about the universals of human life." According to Doig, he and other Western writers "have grown up in the sagebrush, but we're all trying to write beyond those outback roots — about love, family, work, life and death — and I think doing it damn well."

Although trained as a journalist, Doig also holds a Ph.D. in history, which he mines considerably for his books. By and large, he says, historians have been generous in evaluating his work. "Reviewers get snippy sometimes. William Faulkner has been praised for getting into Mississippi history, so it never occurred to me that the past should not play a role in my novels. Some reviewers have not been happy to wade through historical background or flashback when they want a nuclear submarine surfacing or something."

As far as comparisons to Stegner are concerned, Doig says, "I think

mine and Stegner's fiction is different. Mine is maybe funnier. I don't see myself using some template of me as my male characters. Wally himself would have fessed up to doing a little of that. Characters change when you put them on the page, but I think I'm trying to make up a broader cast of characters, with more women than he did. Those are shades of difference between us."

Writing has never come easy to Doig, but he doesn't believe in writer's block, either. "A person can be blocked, but I'm not sure the writing is the culprit. I'm from a journalism background, and I never met an editor who would say, 'OK, we'll just run a blank space there.' I don't necessarily work consecutively through a book. If I don't know what comes next, maybe I'll skip ahead and write. You have to create characters and incidents. Some of them may come out by the time the manuscript is finished, but it gives me a critical mass to work with."

Doig recalls a sign he used for a long time that said, "Anybody can write on a good day." He has discovered that writers have to write on bad days, too. "It's part of being a professional. As I look back over my manuscripts, I find it pretty hard to tell the difference between the bad and the good days."

ARTS & LEISURE

BOOKS

Life Stories

Two sports stories that transcend the genre.

Ivan Doig tackles everything from the environment to terminal illness in his new novel "Mountain Time." (Scribner, \$25) After hiking 20 miles into Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and seeing bear tracks, the protagonist of "Mountain Time" takes a weary seat, opens his backpack, and pulls out — what else? — a laptop computer. The digital notebook isn't just incongruous, it's extra weight, but Mitch Rucker is carrying a lot more baggage. At 50, he's out of work, sorting through his father's life, and trying to understand where things have gone wrong with his live-in girlfriend, Lexa McCaskill. A former sheepherder, Lexa is making the rugged hike look easy, and her beautiful sister, Mariah, isn't breaking any much of a sweat either.

Doig is building a lot more than a triangle with Mitch and the two McCaskills. As with his earlier novels and nonfiction, the environment, especially along the Continental Divide, dominates this story. But when we learn that Mitch's father, Lyle, has leukemia, the novel takes another turn. Mariah, a photographer, wants to record Lyle's final days. She puts it to him bluntly: "How you face death is worth telling readers. There's this aging population, and a battalion of us infirmary Baby Boomers who've never had to deal with anything more serious than burying the class hamster ... people need to see your kind of emotion."

If that dialogue sounds a little forced, it's a side effect of Doig's prose. He works hard — sometimes too hard — at packing information into every sentence. Still, when it comes to the heart, Doig is much more subtle, and Mitch's struggle with his dying father and his attempts to reconnect with Lexa are touching. So is the push and yawl of Lexa and Mariah's sisterhood. The lives in this book are rife with missteps — characters managing to do exactly the wrong thing, usually with the best of intentions — which keeps them thoroughly real and engaging. And Doig never lets up. His men and women constantly push forward, one rocky step at a time. — *Jed Livingston*

They're the best basketball players you never heard of: Guya like John Stiggers, James "Speedy" Williams and Earl "The Goat" Mangault are inner-city playground legends who never made it to an NBA court.

Their stories bounce around courts in Harlem, Brooklyn, Philadelphia and Los Angeles like tall tales, but word of mouth was the only way their stories spread. Until the recent publication of "Pickup Artists" (Vero Books paper \$15) that is Larry Anderson who writes for Sports Illustrated, and Chad Millman, an editor at ESPN Magazine, have compiled an informal, loose, scintillating history of the game that glows with portraits of would-be stars who never made it past the playground, and frequently, tragically, wound up in jail.

But while the highlights of the book are the profiles, complete with vivid descriptions of legendary blacktop moves and contests, "Pickup Artists" does more than just shine a light on unknown individuals. Anderson and Millman trace the roots of the playground game, beginning in the 1920s and '30s, when basketball belonged to Jewish and Irish inner-city kids. They describe the rising influence of black street players, who came to dominate the game in the middle part of the century.

The authors tell how money, drugs and crime began to infiltrate the playground, fueled by big-time college programs and big-time urban dealers. Along the way, they also fascinatingly describe how Converse and then Reebok and Nike rode the nationwide infatuation with inner-city chic to billion-dollar athletic apparel profits.

It's a massive mosaic, but the authors never lose control of the material. They jump from era to era, but keep the narrative personality-driven, so the story never drags.

"Pickup Artists" is about basketball, but only on the surface. It's about the lure of money, the temptation of crime and ephemeral fame. It's a rare book, a story about sport that transcends the genre. — *Muck Seron*

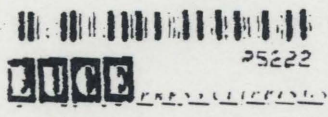


*Dear Ivan and Liz  
I wasn't sure it was  
a "sports story,"  
but love the  
praise.  
N.*

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OCT 17, 1999



A ROCKY JOURNEY

# Lyrical language inspires high-country longing

By BOB DAVIS  
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

With the exception of Tom Wolfe, I don't really like the snappy banter, made-up dialogue or inner monologues of most current fiction. Which brings us to Ivan Doig's latest book, *Mountain Time*.

It has snappy banter that seems so foreign to real life, at least my boring life. It has moments of introspection with such seemingly clear insight for our characters. And, unless Doig is eavesdropping on some really

**Mountain Time**  
by Ivan Doig  
Fiction  
Scribner, \$25

perky, yet morose, people at his local Starbucks, it has made-up dialogue.

It also has some interesting characters. *Mountain Time*'s Mitch Rozier should be appealing to this reviewer. Like me, Mitch is an environmentally conscious journalist who is a former college football player. Unfortunately, that wasn't enough for me to suspend disbelief and actually care about Mitch.

Unlike me, Mitch is a divorced fiftysomething who has been writing a weekly environmental column for more than two decades. He lives in Seattle with Lexa, his girlfriend, who is also divorced. He is estranged from his grown-up kids. He has a bad relationship with his cantankerous father, whose health is fading.

That's a lot of drama for 300 pages.

Despite his flaws, it would be easy to like this guy. But to be honest, a collection of Mitch's weekly environmental columns might be a better read than following the twists and turns of his (1) midlife crisis, (2) strained relationship with Lexa, (3) weakened job prospects with his financially troubled employer.

Ivan Doig, who has been characterized as a great writer you've never heard of, can and does paint beautiful pictures with *Mountain Time*. His description of life in Montana along the Rockies is amazing. It makes one desire to be in the shadow of a mountain.

Here's a sample: "It was only midafternoon when they came to the clear rush of water. Aspens pintoed the opposite bank, their leaves exquisitely trembling in the least whiff of breeze. From not far upstream poured the more industrious sound of a waterfall, twenty or thirty feet high, a toboggan of white water."

With writing like that, even this fiction-phobic reviewer can offer praise for *Mountain Time*.

I would suspect that readers who have never been on the trail might get a desire to strap on a pack and start hiking after reading this book. That alone is worth a recommendation.

Bob Davis is OpEd/Sunday editor for the Star-Telegram

*Dear Ivan,*  
This is one of the nicest reviews I've ever read, but I'm thrilled that they're still coming.  
He's all well.  
Ivan.

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Libraries are oxygen,' says writer Ivan Doig

Author to speak at library benefit

BY GALE FIEGE MANN  
American staff writer

For novelist Ivan Doig, a consummate journalist and historian, libraries are "pantries of research" where treasure hunts are sure and characters rise from the archives.

From his Seattle home on Monday, the celebrated writer of the American West said he's happy to be a part of the "Great Beginnings" event next month that will help raise money to build a new public library in Anacortes.

The library is certain to create new pride in the community and probably will become a civic centerpiece — not to mention the benefits to Anacortes readers and researchers, Doig said.

"Libraries are oxygen for me," he said.

For his autobiographical first book, "This House of Sky," Doig wanted to write about his father's visits to the saloons in their hometown of White Sulphur Springs, Mont., because it was in those establishments that his dad hired his haying crews. Being a boy back then, Doig couldn't remember the names of all the bars, but down in the depths of the University of Washington library he found a 1947 telephone book.

"There were the names, and then I began to bring back the personalities of these saloons," he said.

For his non-fiction book "Winter Brothers," Doig said he "practically lived in the (UW) library" to read the diaries of James Swan, who was the federal Indian agent to the Makahs at Neah Bay in the 1880s.

"And sometimes, what's best about libraries is that you find things you're not looking for," he said. For his first novel, "The Sea Runners," beautiful old Russian maps offered up by a librarian at the Alaska State Library actually became a character in the book.

The Montana trilogy of "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," took Doig to libraries in Scotland and to the archives of the Montana Historical Society.

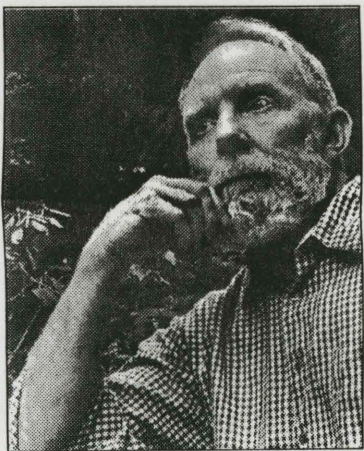
Plenty of research also went into the new novel, "Mountain Time," from which Doig will read at the Anacortes fund-raising event.

The Bob Marshall Wilderness, a million acres of magnificent landscape high in the northern Rockies, plays a big part in the book, which Doig calls a "cousin" to the trilogy.

A 1977 backpack trip with his wife, Carol, into high lonesome of the Bob Marshall Wilderness triggered in Doig an interest in the Forest Service recreation director for which it is named. And that meant a trip to read Marshall's papers at the University of California at Berkeley.

Set in Seattle, Montana and Alaska, "Mountain Time" is the story of the intense relationships between a father and his son, the son and his girlfriend, and the girlfriend and her sister.

And as he does so well, Doig writes about the land and the people bonded to it — even if they no longer live in Montana. Many



Ivan Doig

**What's best about libraries is that you find things you're not looking for."**

Ivan Doig

expatriates live in the Puget Sound region and many of them will relate to the characters of the new book.

"Yes...the Montana Diaspora, the scattered tribe who, such as in my case, went out to find work," Doig said.

"Mountain Time" is receiving favorable reviews from critics who enjoy Doig's humor and dialogue, and the author said he works hard to deliver a good "reading" of these colorful scenes to his audiences.

"Writing is a performance art. I work from a script and mark it up the way a symphony conductor or choreographer would make notes on a score. Different scenes work for different audiences. I'm not an actor, but readers have come to expect a good performance, and I've seen in action other writers who one would think had never even heard of a bookmark."

On hearing that the theme of the fund-raising event next month is "Great Beginnings," Doig said that just like a good newspaper story, the opening line — the great beginning — of a novel has to immediately capture the reader's attention.

"The first dozen or so have to be pretty goddamn good words. Sometimes I'll work long and hard on the lead of the story. I probably rewrote the start of "This House of Sky" 75 times. But it's worth it, because great beginnings are remembered," he said.

Here's the new one: "Lexa McCaskill ran both hands through her coppery hair, adding up the appetites."

Doig tells us more about Lexa and the other characters of his new novel at "Great Beginnings," the Anacortes Public Library Foundation's fund-raising kickoff for a new library building, Saturday evening, Oct. 2, at the Anacortes Port dock warehouse. The event includes an art auction, local food and drink, dancing to The Atlantics and Doig's reading. Tickets — \$30 each — are available now at Watermark Book Co., 612 Commercial Ave.

# Change of seasons

Poignant *Mountain Time* looks at lives in time of loss

By David Cummings

**MOUNTAIN TIME**, by Ivan Doig: Scribner, New York, 1999, 352 pp., \$25.

For the past few months I've been wrestling with accepting and reconciling the need to establish my father in an extended-care facility in another city. I thought I wasn't in the mood for a "relationship book," particularly one dealing with this topic. The review copy of *Mountain Time* lay untouched for a couple of weeks. I started reading it the same day as the funeral of my last remaining grandparent. This background, of course, affected my reaction to this book. I was fascinated by watching a man about my age deal with his dying father, and seeing him go back to his childhood home and deal with the memories and emotions that were all too familiar.

All over America, adults just entering middle age are realizing something with alarm. Dealing with aging and dying parents makes their comfortable lives quite different than expected, at least for a while. In *Mountain Time*, Mitch Rozier, age 50, finds that his life is moving sideways at best, not advancing. He is soon to lose a second-class job at a small newspaper, his two children of a failed marriage can't stand to be around him, and he is drifting apart from his love interest, caterer and outdoorswoman Lexa McCaskill. Just as he realizes the need to lower expectations for his future, he gets a totally unexpected call for help from his father, Lyle. Rushing from Seattle to his boyhood home in Montana, Mitch thinks that he's just going to talk his father out of a harebrained scheme to sell the homestead for quick profit. He soon learns that the real task is to help his father gracefully die from leukemia.

*Doig is a well-respected expert at making the outdoors real and understandable to the reader. His skills at writing dialogue equal his ability to describe the American West.*

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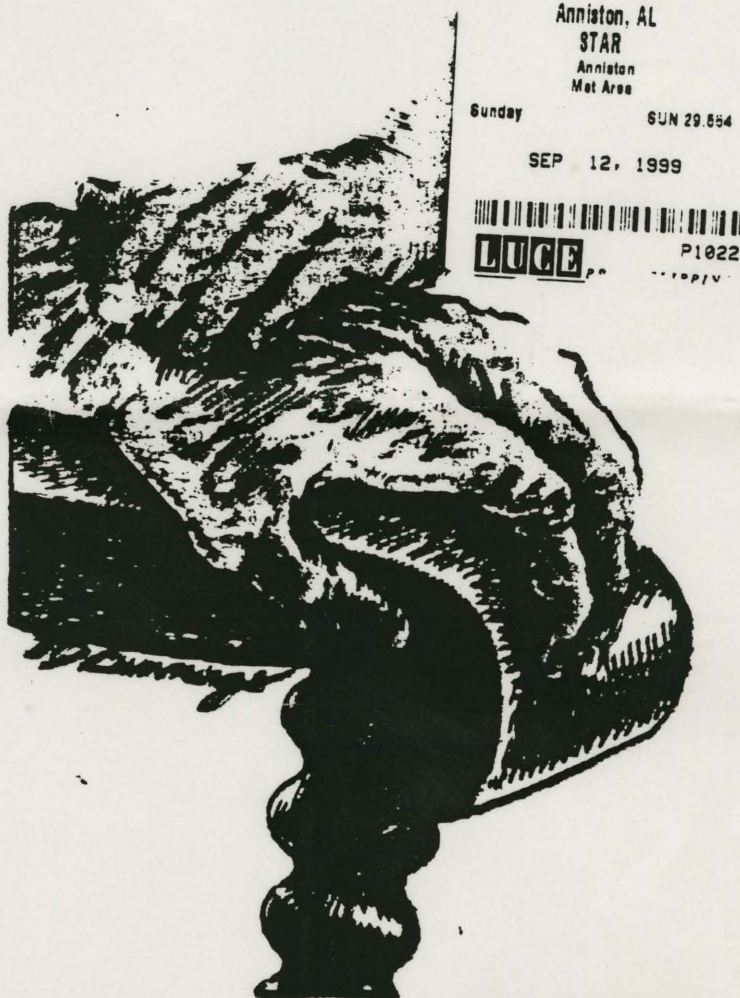
Mitch and Lyle have a complicated relationship, and writer Ivan Doig makes their awkward reconciliations at the end of the father's life ring true to anyone who has already had occasion to deal with these matters. Learning of his father's serious illness, Mitch soon realizes that his already-complicated life has taken on this unwelcome intrusion for its duration. He is joined by his girlfriend Lexa and her older sister Mariah, just back from a globe-trotting photographic tour. They give Mitch and his father both comfort and aggravation, having been drawn to this cluttered Montana homestead by a sense of duty and compassion.

Mariah, ever the photojournalist on the make, gets grudging permission to record Lyle's last days as a photo essay to be published after his death. Mitch just hopes that the estrangement in his relationship with Lyle doesn't show. Author Doig masterfully draws the backstory of this relationship. His skill in making these characters

seem real gives the reader a sense of being involved in a true family drama as it unfolds.

Mitch is puzzled by his father's last request — to have his ashes scattered to the wind at Phantom Woman peak. It is the deep wilderness site of a fire tower that Lyle built as a young CCC worker during the Great Depression. This is quite uncharacteristic for the father that Mitch thought he knew so well. By the end of *Mountain Time*, we see that figuring out this puzzle is the key to Mitch's being able to reconcile his relationship with both his father and the women in his life.

On the week-long wilderness hike to Phantom Woman with Lyle's ashes, the relationship between Mitch and the sisters McCaskill takes unexpected and dangerous turns, and near-tragedy occurs in more than just one way. This sad, dutiful hike will change all of their lives forever. The reader is intrigued as all of the threads of the story, past and present, weave together into an outcome that is quite rewarding. Doig is a well-respected expert at making the outdoors real and understandable to the reader. His skills at writing dialogue equal his ability to describe the American West.



*Mountain Time* is highly recommended to any middle-aged person who is soon to be dealing with the reality of aging parents. Doig skillfully makes you relate to his story, and makes you understand how other people deal with this issue that can't be avoided in our lives:

"America's airport concourses were constantly crisscrossed with Baby Boomers trying to nerve up for the waiting bedside consultation, the nursing home decision, the choosing of a casket. Mitch could generally pick out the stunned journeyers home in airport waiting lounges, the trim business-woman who lived by focus sitting there now with a doll-eyed stare, the man celebrating middle age with a ponytail looking down baffled now at his compassion-fare ticket. Targeted from here on, for the involuntary clerkwork of closing down a parent's life. The time came; it always came. The when of it was the ambush."

These characters and their relationships seemed totally real. I felt that I was reading about people I knew doing things that seemed eerily familiar. It is rare to be so taken in by a work of modern fiction. That is the best indicator of its worth to the reader.

David Cummings is an Anniston dentist.

# 'Mountain Time' is new Ivan Doig novel

**Mountain Time**  
Ivan Doig (Scribner, \$25)

Celebrated Seattle author Ivan Doig twines together past and present, West Coast and interior West, documented history with fictive invention and the perplexing vagaries of kinship and partnerships in his new novel, "Mountain Time."

In this tale of generational conflict and romantic insecurity, aging environmental columnist Mitch Rozier is summoned from Seattle by his father, a tough old Montana ranch hand, to look over some papers. Lyle Rozier has set up a deal to sell the family's modest Rocky Mountain real estate holdings. A gravel company plans to churn up as much of the landscape as it can get away with.

This is just the latest in a long line of Lyle's half-baked, get-rich-quick schemes. As Mitch complains to his live-in lover Lexa, his dad is "always out to make a killing instead of a living."

But when Mitch arrives in Montana, he discovers that his father may be playing his final hand — he has been diagnosed with terminal leukemia. To help the old man through his final days, Mitch and Lexa orchestrate a clumsy tag-team commute back

## BOOKMONGER

BARBARA LLOYD McMICHAEL

and forth between their lives in Seattle and Lyle's impending death in Montana. They are joined by Lexa's photographer sister, Mariah, who secures Lyle's permission to capture on film his journey toward death!

The environmental concerns that at the outset seem like the obvious point of conflict for this book instead take a back seat to Doig's investigation of human vulnerability. The elasticity of loyalty is central to these characters.

This is Mitch's chance to gain crucial insight into the troubled relationship he has had with his father, and perhaps apply those lessons to the estranged relationship he has with his own children by a failed marriage years before.

As in his other books, Doig shuffles actual historical events into the mix. There is no escaping the fact that a couple of the pivotal plot points in "Mountain Time" are shaped by foolish peccadillo, not tragic inevitability, but Doig's characteristically nimble prose (he describes it at one point as the "playful curlicues" of language) goes a long way to-

ward smoothing over some of the improbable or entirely too convenient developments in this tale.

But even the go-for-broke inventiveness with story construction and language can wear thin, and Doig's snappy dialogue, particularly his attempts at Gen-X lingo, seems forced at times. (When Mitch snubs the young co-worker with whom he shares a cubicle, she huffs, "We are over being cubular together.")

When he turns his attention to the landscape, on the other hand, Doig cannot go wrong. Seattle, San Francisco, Eastern Washington and especially Montana — all of them ably explored as literary settings by other authors — simply gleam with newfound clarity under the pen of this master. In "Mountain Time," of course, the landscape is much more than a setting. It also is a player.

While this may not be Doig's strongest work, it still is no disparagement to note that this time out, the author's reach has exceeded his grasp.

*The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest.*

## ▶ THE BOOKMONGER

## Doig roams from Emerald City to Big Sky country

"Mountain Time" — by Ivan Doig; Scribner — \$25

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# Tale ably, entertainingly takes emotional journey

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In this tale of generational conflict and romantic insecurity, aging environmental columnist Mitch Rozier is summoned from Seattle by his father, a tough old Montana ranch hand, to look over some papers. Lyle Rozier has set up a deal to sell the family's modest real estate holdings along the Rocky Mountain Front — a gravel company plans to churn up as much of the landscape as it can get away with.

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The Bookmonger

**'MOUNTAIN TIME'**  
by Ivan Doig  
Scribner, \$25

Barbara Lloyd McMichael, writes about the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest.

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**LUCE** P1578  
PRESS CLIPPING

# 'Nature wins in 'Mountain Time'

By Halle Shilling

Camera Staff Writer

*Mountain Time* by Ivan Doig.  
Scribner, \$25. 316 pp.

The characters in Ivan Doig's latest novel aren't good at dealing with people. They are much better with landscapes, preferably those with large open spaces and mountains.

Doig, the critically acclaimed author of "This House of Sky" and other novels, tackles the contemporary West with an expansive story about two middle-aged baby boomers — a generation "jelly-sandwiched between grown children who've gone their own way and aging parents who are losing control of their lives," Doig writes — trying to understand their roots.

The book opens with Lexa McCaskill, a 40ish woman trans-

planted from Montana sheep country to Seattle, where she lives not so happily with her lover, Mitch Rozier.

Lexa is obsessed with her past and still trying to comprehend her failed marriage. Mitch is a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a failing weekly newspaper. He has virtually no relationship with his two grown children and he winces when his father, Lyle, leaves a message on his answering machine, which prompts him to return to his hometown.

"When the middle name of your hometown is sulphur, there is not much you can do about the smell of your childhood," Doig writes, introducing Twin Sulphur Springs, Mont.

Mitch discovers two problems back home. His father has terminal leukemia, and has concocted

a terminal scheme to get rich quick: He's going to sell the family ranch to a corporation that will mine gravel to pave roads into the nearby Bob Marshall Wilderness Area — the only thing about Montana that remains sacred for Mitch.

Lexa arrives at the ranch to await Lyle's death with her sister Mariah, a photojournalist who convinces the other three to allow her to document the patriarch's last days for a photo essay. As Lyle lies dying, Mitch turns over every rock of his past, including

Please see NATURE on 6F

Old Firehouse  
Art Center  
667 Forth Ave.

The Visual Arts Center  
Serving the St. Vrain Valley

## September Events

Friday, Sept. 7, 6-9pm

Artwalk in downtown Longmont

Opening: Artist Candace Shepard presents  
Growing Concerns

THE NEWS TRIBUNE

# Sound Life

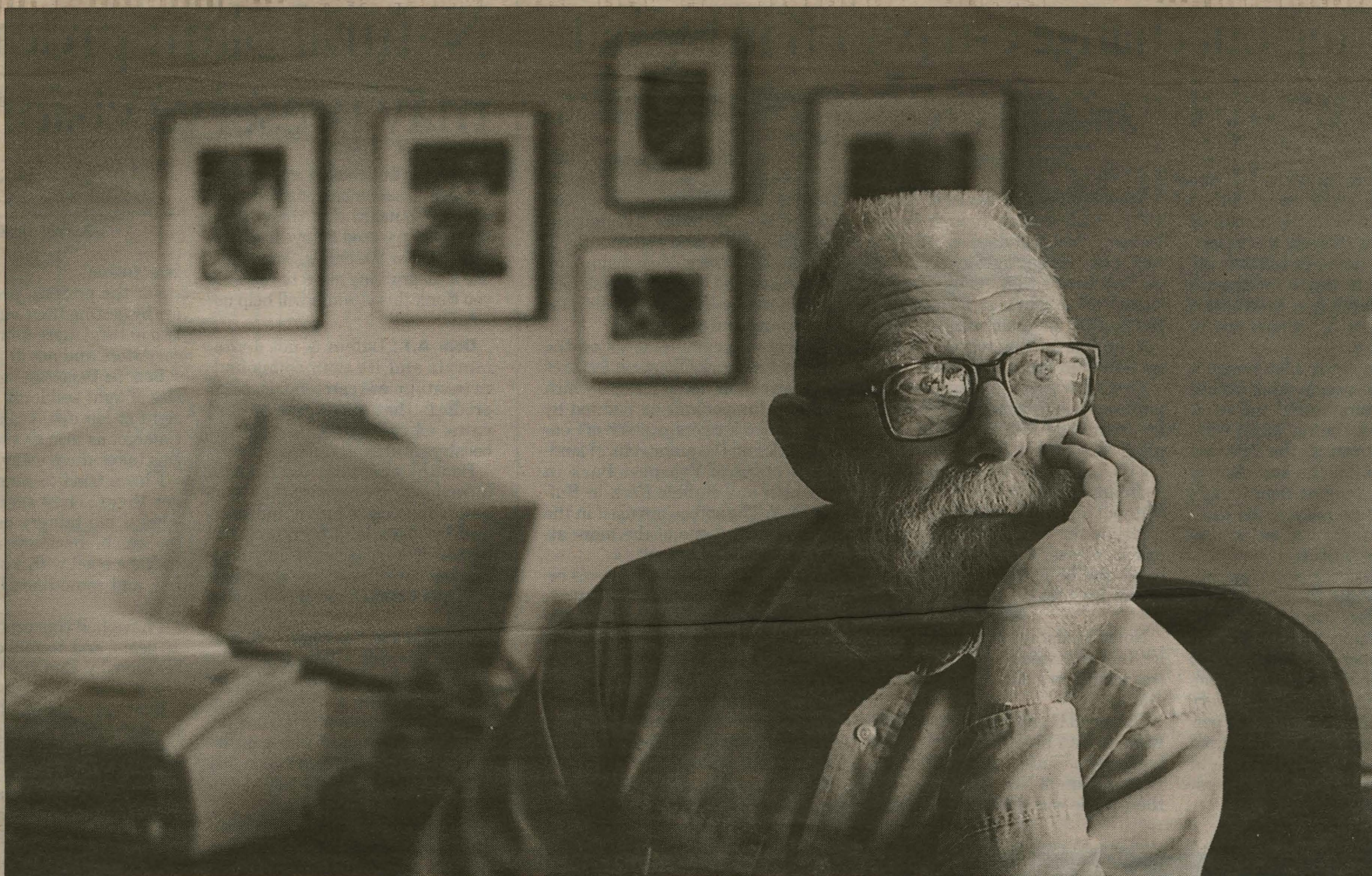
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1999



## Living on 'Mountain Time'

Novelist Ivan Doig's Montana roots run deep in his life and his latest novel

— Susan Gordon, Page 3



PETER HALEY/THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Novelist Ivan Doig still takes notes with pen and paper, but he uses a computer to write and says, 'I'm not entirely the Luddite I'm sometimes portrayed as.'

# Doig draws on Northwest lore, people

## PREVIEW

Ivan Doig will sign copies of "Mountain Time" in Seattle at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the Elliot Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main St.; at noon on Sept. 28 at Costco in Old Aurora Village; and following a 7 p.m. reading on Oct. 4 at the University of Washington's Kane Hall. No South Sound signings or readings are scheduled.

Author utilizes his Montana heritage in 'Mountain Time,' a book 'meant to ring your baby-boomer chimes'

BY SUSAN GORDON  
THE NEWS TRIBUNE

Financial success has blessed Ivan Doig with a picture-postcard view of the snowy Olympic Range.

He got it a year ago, about the time he finished his ninth book, "Mountain Time." The novel, a tale of Seattle baby boomers who return to their Montana roots, appeared in bookstores last month.

The writer and his wife, Carol, had lived in the same Shoreline neighborhood, north of Seattle, for about 25 years before moving to their present waterfront home. With nine books still in print, Doig has earned the wherewithal to move up in the world.

When he's not promoting his books, or doing research elsewhere, Doig rolls out of bed before dawn. By 6:30 a.m., he's in his basement office — facing the mountains — trying to make words dance.

"My internal clock runs on ranch and farm time," Doig explained.

At 60, he no longer rises early to haul water from a neighbor's pump, the way he did in Montana when his family lived in a house without running water. In

his youth, Doig cleaned ashes from the kitchen stove, chased sheep across the Rockies' flanks, hoisted hay bales, drove tractor.

He was born in White Sulphur Springs, Mont., east of the Continental Divide. His father was an itinerant sheep rancher. His mother died of asthma the morning Doig turned 6. Doig was the couple's only child.

His grandmother helped raise him. A fount of proverbs who quit school after third grade, she introduced Doig to the power of colorful language. His dad was a storyteller who took Doig to the bars, where he heard more.

The story of Doig's hardscrabble upbringing is the heart of "This House of Sky." Published in 1978, the memoir was a finalist for the National Book Award and remains Doig's most highly acclaimed work.

Other books have added to Doig's following. Most are fiction, some are not, but all deal with the people and the landscape of Montana and the Pacific Northwest.

"He's one of the most important writers the Northwest has ever produced," said fan J.C. Mutchler, an assistant professor of Western U.S. history at Pacific Lutheran University.

Doig writes authentically about the West's beautiful, but harsh, realities because he's been there, Mutchler said. "I don't think he romanticizes. ... He has that love of the land that any Western-

er with a big W has."

Doig earned a doctorate in history at the University of Washington, but academia held no appeal. Still, even his fiction is woven around facts. "He definitely does his homework," Mutchler said. "He knows his history as well as anybody."

Doig's trilogy "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," "English Creek," and "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana" follow Montana families from the turn of the century through the Depression to the present day.

Elizabeth Simpson, a Lopez Island High School English teacher, compares Doig to William Faulkner. "He's mapped out his own Yoknapatawpha County in Montana," Simpson said. In 1992, her doctoral dissertation on Doig was published as a book, "Earthlight Wordfire: The Work of Ivan Doig."

In "Mountain Time," Doig brings back some old characters. The new book hinges on two connected crises, but it's mostly about family. "What do we do when a parent suddenly becomes our child?" is how Simpson put it. The second issue is environmental. The dying dad wants to sell his land to an outfit that seeks to find gas and oil near a wilderness preserve.

"It's meant to ring your baby-boomer chimes," Doig explained. "You can't not go home again when these family obligations come and seek you out. ... I wanted to explore that generational tussle."

One of "Mountain Time's" characters is a writer, Mitch, who went to the University of Washington in the 1960s, when Doig was in graduate school. A minor scene in the book recalls Mitch's presence at what hip Seattle then called "the piano drop": The real thing was a Country Joe & the Fish concert on a farm near Duvall, where 3,000 people gathered in April 1968 to see a helicopter drop a piano to the ground.

"I wish I'd gone to the piano drop instead of staying home writing my dissertation," Doig joked. Still, he got it in the book, plus a lot of other Seattle color.

Doig has called Seattle home since 1966. He goes back to Montana frequently: on book tours, for research, and to pick up memorabilia that bring stories to mind.

Doig owes much to his wife, who last year retired after 30 years teaching at Shoreline Community College. "I think a working partner, a working spouse, is necessary when you start out to be a self-unemployed writer," Ivan Doig joked about his and Carol's marriage. "But she now points out that I now support her and bought her this house."

The Doigs share a custom-made desk in the downstairs office, where Ivan puts down words on both yellow legal pad and a computer. "Pen, pencil, notebook, whatever it takes," he said. "Dialog often comes better by pencil on pad

## ON THE COVER

Novelist Ivan Doig enjoys a view of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains from his office in his Seattle home (photo: Peter Haley/The News Tribune).

**Doig**

Continued from Page 3

the first rough draft." Doig doesn't like the computer; he says the screen bothers his eyes. At the Royal Standard typewriter once regularly used isn't set up w. "I'm not entirely the Luddite sometimes portrayed as," Doig said.

At his desk, Doig fingered tiny antique black-and-white snapshots, pictures of 1920s ranch hands: his dad, his uncle and a family friend. Nearby another photo, a anonymous group of students and teachers who posed for a portrait outside a turn-of-the-century Montana school.

Doig said his next book will likely mark back to that era. When he's writing, he uses such pictures to stimulate his imagination. He also leans on notes, filed neatly on 5-by-7 cards. He pulled one out. Typed neatly in the middle was a single sentence. "Susan Duff knew that the chapters of her life sat uneasy with each other." She will probably be the protagonist of his next book, Doig said. But how those words will fit in, he can't say.

For Doig, the hardest part of a book is writing the first draft. He often doesn't outline plots beforehand. "Part of writing any book is seeing where it's going to lead," he said.

He prides himself on his workmanlike approach: his early rising, his daylong persistence. Since 1978, publishers have come out with a new Doig book every several years. When he's working on one, Doig writes between 400 and 1,000 words a day. "Mountain Time" took him two years to complete.

Some of Doig's characters are heroic in stature, but the writer is an average-sized guy: 5-foot-9, 168 pounds, all gray beard and hair. These days, only his eyebrows recall his red-headed youth.

He left Montana when he won a full scholarship to Northwestern University in Chicago and studied journalism. For a time, he wrote editorials for a chain of newspapers based in Illinois. He never worked as a reporter, but "unabashedly takes notes" wherever the fancy strikes him. "That's part of being a writer, hanging onto the good stuff and using it sometime."

He keeps a tiny, wire-bound notebook tucked in a pocket of his light blue chambray shirt, his "dairy chic." In the other pocket is a pair of glasses. (Doig switches among three prescriptions, including one for the computer.) At home, he also wears jeans and comfortable-looking shoes. He takes an afternoon break for a long walk with Carol and quits writing about 4 p.m.

After that, he and Carol have a drink — he likes bourbon, she likes Scotch — and listen to National Public Radio news.

"There's a kind of dailyness of grace in maintaining a routine," he said. "Single writing leads to burnout, he figures. "Steadiness is the way to go."

Reach staff writer Susan Gordon at 253-597-8281 or at susan.gordon@mail.tribnet.com

**MOVIE TIMES**

**Tacoma**

**AMC NARROWS PLAZA 8, 2208 S. Mildred St.**

- 1-Blue Streak, 1:30, 2, 4:50, 5:30, 7:20, 7:50, 9:35 (PG-13)
- 2-For Love of the Game, 1:20, 4:10, 7, 9:45 (PG-13)
- 3-Stigmata, 1:35, 5, 7:30, 9:55 (R)
- 4-The Sixth Sense, 1:45, 4:40, 7:10, 9:25 (PG-13)
- 5-Stir of Echos, 1:50, 5:10, 7:25, 9:30 (R)
- 6-The 13th Warrior, 1:40, 5:20, 7:40, 9:50 (R)
- 7-Mickey Blue Eyes, 5:35, 8 (PG-13)
- 8-Love Stinks, 2:05 (R)

**BLUE MOUSE THEATRE, 2611 N. Proctor St.**

- 1-Buena Vista Social Club, 6 (unrated)

**GENERAL CINEMAS' LINCOLN PLAZA 31 Montana (South 38th & I-5)**

- 1-Blue Streak, noon, 12:50, 2:20, 3:10, 4:40, 5:30, 7:10, 7:50, 9:30, 10:15 (PG-13)
- 2-For Love of the Game, 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 (PG-13)
- 3-The Sixth Sense, 12:10, 2:40, 5:15, 7:45, 10:20 (PG-13)
- 4-Stir of Echos, 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:10 (R)
- 5-Stigmata, noon, 2:30, 4:50, 7:15, 9:45 (R)
- 6-The 13th Warrior, 11:45, 2:10, 4:30, 7:20, 9:40 (R)

**GRAND CINEMA, 606 S. Fawcett Ave.**

- 1-An Ideal Husband, 5, 7 (PG-13)
- 2-Tea With Mussolini, 5:10, 7:25 (PG)
- 3-Twin Falls Idaho, 7:15 (R)
- 4-The Red Violin, 4:50 (unrated)

**TACOMA CENTRAL, 3102 S. 23rd**

- 1-The Muse, 3:10, 5:30, 7:40, 9:40 (PG-13)
- 2-The Astronaut's Wife, 1:50, 4:20, 6:40, 9 (R)
- 3-Bowfinger, 2, 4, 6:10, 8:30 (PG-13)
- 4-The Thomas Crown Affair, 2:10, 4:40, 7, 9:20 (R)
- 5-Runaway Bride, 2:40, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50 (PG)
- 6-A Dog of Flanders, 2:20, 4:50, 7:10 (PG)
- 7-Deep Blue Sea, 9:10 (R)

**TACOMA MALL TWIN, 4302 Tacoma Mall Blvd.**

- 1-Dudley Do-Right, 2:20, 4:45, 7:10, 9:30 (PG)
- 2-An Ideal Husband, 1:30, 4, 6:10, 8:30 (PG-13)

**TACOMA SOUTH CINEMAS, 7601 S. Hosmer**

- 1-A Dog of Flanders, 2:30, 5 (PG)
- 2-The Astronaut's Wife, 7:30, 9:40 (R)
- 3-In Too Deep, 1:50, 4, 6:10, 8:15 (R)
- 4-Bowfinger, 3:15, 5:25, 7:20, 9:20 (PG-13)
- 5-The Thomas Crown Affair, 2, 4:20, 6:35, 9 (R)
- 6-Inspector Gadget, 2:45, 4:45, 7 (PG)
- 7-Deep Blue Sea, 8:40 (R)

**Lakewood**

**LAKEWOOD MALL CINEMAS 10509 Gravelly Lake Drive S.W.**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 12:25, 1:45, 3:25, 4:35, 6:15, 7:45, 9:15, 10:40 (PG-13)
- 2-Stir of Echos, 1:35, 4:15, 7:15, 9:45 (R)
- 3-The 13th Warrior, 12:35, 1:55, 2:55, 4:25, 5:25, 6:55, 7:55, 9:25, 10:25 (R)
- 4-Outside Providence, 1:15, 5:55, 10:35 (R)
- 5-An Ideal Husband, 3:35, 8:20 (PG-13)
- 6-Bowfinger, 1:25, 2:25, 3:55, 4:55, 6:25, 7:25, 8:55, 9:55 (PG-13)
- 7-The Thomas Crown Affair, 2:35, 5:05, 7:35, 10:05 (R)
- 8-Deep Blue Sea, 12:55, 3:15, 5:35, 8:10, 10:45 (R)
- 9-Dudley Do-Right, 1:05, 3, 5:15 (PG)
- 10-The Haunting, 7:05, 9:35 (PG-13)
- 11-Inspector Gadget, 12:45, 2:45, 4:45, 6:45, 8:45 (PG)

**LAKEWOOD CINEMA 15 84th Street South and Tacoma Mall Blvd.**

- 1-Blue Streak, noon, 12:30, 1, 3:30, 4, 4:30, 7, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10, 10:30 (PG-13)
- 2-Love Stinks, 10:25 (R)
- 3-Stigmata, 12:25, 12:55, 2:45, 3:25, 6:30, 7:20, 9:35, 10:10 (R)
- 4-Chill Factor, 12:35, 3:45, 6:15, 9 (R)
- 5-In Too Deep, 6:55, 10:20 (R)
- 6-Mickey Blue Eyes, 12:40, 4:05, 7:05 (PG-13)
- 7-Mystery Men, 12:05, 3:05, 6:50, 9:45 (PG-13)
- 8-The Sixth Sense, 1:10, 12:45, 3, 3:50, 6:45, 7:25, 9:25, 10:15 (PG-13)
- 9-Runaway Bride, 12:20, 3:40, 7:10, 9:40 (PG)
- 10-The Blair Witch Project, 7:15, 9:55 (R)
- 11-The Iron Giant, 12:15, 2:25, 4:35 (PG)
- 12-American Pie, 1:50, 4:10, 7:35, 10:05 (R)
- 13-Tarzan, 12:50, 3:15, 5:15 (G)
- 14-Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace, 12:10, 3:10, 6:10, 9:10 (PG)

**Puyallup**

**PUYALLUP CINEMAS 1200 Fourth St. N.W.**

- 1-Big Daddy, 5:30, 7:30, 9:35 (PG-13)
- 2-The General's Daughter, 4:40, 7:05, 9:25 (R)
- 3-Eyes Wide Shut, 4:45, 8 (R)
- 4-Wild Wild West, 7 (PG-13)
- 5-The Mummy, 4:30, 9:15 (PG-13)
- 6-Tarzan, 5:20, 7:15, 9 (G)
- 7-Arlington Road, 4:35, 7:10, 9:30 (R)

**SOUTH HILL MALL SIX, 3500 S. Meridian**

- 1-Love Stinks, 2:45, 4:45, 7:20, 9:30 (R)
- 2-Outside Providence, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:25 (R)
- 3-Mystery Men, 4, 7, 9:35 (PG-13)
- 4-The Iron Giant, 2:55, 4:50 (PG)
- 5-Deep Blue Sea, 7:05, 9:15 (R)
- 6-Dudley Do-Right, 3, 5, 7:25, 9:10 (PG)
- 7-Inspector Gadget, 2:50, 5:05, 7:15, 9:20 (PG)

**LONGSTON PLACE, 13373 Meridian E.**

- 1-Blue Streak, 12:45, 1:15, 3, 3:30, 5:15, 5:45, 7:30, 8, 9:45, 10:15 (PG-13)
- 2-For Love of the Game, 12:50, 1:20, 3:50, 4:20, 6:50, 7:20, 9:50, 10:20 (PG-13)
- 3-Stigmata, 12:30, 1, 2:45, 3:20, 5, 5:35, 7:15, 7:55, 9:30, 10:10 (R)
- 4-Stir of Echos, 12:35, 2:55, 5:45, 8, 10:20 (R)
- 5-The Sixth Sense, 12:30, 3:15, 5:40, 8:10, 10:30 (PG-13)
- 6-Bowfinger, 12:40, 3, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50 (PG-13)
- 7-The Thomas Crown Affair, 2, 4:30, 7, 9:35 (R)
- 8-Runaway Bride, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40 (PG)
- 9-Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace, 12:40, 3:30, 6:30, 9:25 (PG)
- 10-The 13th Warrior, 12:45, 3:05, 5:20, 7:40, 10 (R)
- 11-Mickey Blue Eyes, 2:05, 6:55 (PG-13)
- 12-Chill Factor, 4:35, 9:20 (R)

**Bonney Lake**

**REGAL TALL FIRS 10, 20751 Highway 410 E.**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 4, 7, 10 (PG-13)
- 2-Blue Streak, 5:15, 7:35, 9:50 (PG-13)
- 3-The Sixth Sense, 5, 7:30, 9:55 (PG-13)
- 4-Stigmata, 4:45, 7:10, 9:40 (R)
- 5-Stir of Echos, 4:55, 7:05, 9:25 (R)
- 6-The 13th Warrior, 5:05, 7:30, 9:55 (R)
- 7-Chill Factor, 7:35, 9:50 (R)
- 8-The Thomas Crown Affair, 4:10, 7:15, 9:30 (R)
- 9-Runaway Bride, 4:20, 7:05, 9:35 (PG)
- 10-Bowfinger, 7:25, 9:45 (PG-13)
- 11-Dudley Do-Right, 4:30 (PG)
- 12-Love Stinks, 5:10 (R)

**Gig Harbor**

**REGAL GIG HARBOR CINEMAS 3 5401 Olympic Drive N.W.**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 4, 7 (PG-13)
- 2-Stigmata, 4:15, 7:15 (R)
- 3-The Sixth Sense, 4:30, 7:30 (PG-13)

**Port Orchard**

**PLAZA TWIN CINEMAS, 822 Bay St.**

- 1-The Muse, 4:30, 6:45, 8:45 (PG-13)
- 2-The Red Violin, 6:30, 9 (R)
- 3-Wild Wild West, 4:15 (PG-13)

**REGAL SOUTH SOUND 10, 1435 Olney Ave. S.E.**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 3:30, 6:55, 9:40 (PG-13)
- 2-Blue Streak, 4:15, 7:35, 9:45 (PG-13)
- 3-Stigmata, 3:55, 7:25, 9:45 (R)
- 4-Stir of Echos, 4, 7:30, 9:55 (R)
- 5-The Sixth Sense, 3:45, 7:10, 9:35 (PG-13)
- 6-The 13th Warrior, 3:50, 7:15, 9:10 (R)
- 7-Bowfinger, 4:10, 7:20, 9:15 (PG-13)
- 8-Chill Factor, 4:05, 9:50 (R)
- 9-Love Stinks, 7:40 (R)
- 10-The Thomas Crown Affair, 3:35, 7, 9:25 (R)
- 11-Runaway Bride, 3:40, 7:05, 9:30 (PG)

**Eatonville**

**ROXY THEATRE, 115 Mashell**

- 1-The Sixth Sense, 7:30 (PG-13)

**South King County**

**AMC SEATAC NORTH 31600 20th S., Federal Way**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 1:15, 1:40, 4:10, 4:40, 7, 7:30, 9:50, 10:15 (PG-13)
- 2-Blue Streak, 1:20, 2, 4:20, 5, 7:15, 7:50, 9:30, 10:05 (PG-13)
- 3-The Sixth Sense, 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, 9:55 (PG-13)
- 4-Stigmata, 1:30, 4:30, 7:30, 9:40 (R)

**AMC SEATAC SOUTH 2000 S. SeaTac Mall, Federal Way**

- 1-Mickey Blue Eyes, 5:40, 8:05 (PG-13)
- 2-Love Stinks, 5:50, 7:55 (R)
- 3-The Muse, 5:30, 7:40 (PG-13)
- 4-An Ideal Husband, 7:45 (PG-13)
- 5-In Too Deep, 5:45, 8 (R)
- 6-The Iron Giant, 5:55 (PG)
- 7-Mystery Men, 7:35 (PG-13)
- 8-Tarzan, 5:35 (G)

**CHALET THEATRE, 1721 Wells St., Enumclaw**

- 1-Chill Factor, 7:30 (R)

**CINEMA 17**

**SuperMall of the Northwest, Auburn**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 12:15, 12:45, 3:20, 4:10, 6:50, 7:20, 9:50, 10:20 (PG-13)
- 2-Blue Streak, 12:20, 12:55, 2:40, 3:10, 4:55, 5:25, 7:30, 8, 9:45, 10:15 (PG-13)
- 3-Stigmata, 12:05, 12:35, 2:30, 3, 4:55, 5:25, 7:15, 7:45, 9:40, 10:10 (R)
- 4-Stir of Echos, 12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:40, 10:10 (R)
- 5-Love Stinks, 12:40, 5:20, 7:55 (R)
- 6-The Iron Giant, 12:45, 2:35, 4:45 (PG)
- 7-Chill Factor, 2:50, 10 (R)
- 8-The 13th Warrior, 12:30, 2:55, 5:15, 7:40, 10:05 (R)
- 9-Mickey Blue Eyes, noon, 2:25, 5:05, 7:35, 10 (PG-13)
- 10-Bowfinger, 12:05, 2:20, 4:40, 7:05, 9:35 (PG-13)
- 11-The Sixth Sense, 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:20 (PG-13)
- 12-The Thomas Crown Affair, noon, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:15 (R)
- 13-Runaway Bride, 12:10, 2:35, 5, 7:25, 9:55 (PG)
- 14-The Blair Witch Project, 9:30 (R)
- 15-Inspector Gadget, 12:40, 2:50, 4:50, 7 (PG)
- 16-American Pie, 7:05, 9:20 (R)
- 17-Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace, 12:50, 4:20, 7:10, 9:55 (PG)

**ENUMCLAW CINEMA**

**258 Roosevelt, Enumclaw**

- 1-Dudley Do-Right, 6:30 (PG)
- 2-The 13th Warrior, 8:30 (R)

**GATEWAY CENTER**

**2501 Gateway Center Blvd., Federal Way**

- 1-Stir of Echos, noon, 2:20, 4:40, 7, 9:30 (R)
- 2-Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace, 1, 3:40, 7, 9:40 (PG)
- 3-Inspector Gadget, 12:30, 2:50, 5, 7:10, 9:10 (PG)
- 4-Runaway Bride, 1, 3:50, 7, 9:40 (PG)
- 5-Chill Factor, noon, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10 (R)
- 6-The Thomas Crown Affair, 1:10, 4, 7:20, 9:50 (R)
- 7-Bowfinger, 12:20, 3, 5:20, 7:50, 10:10 (PG-13)
- 8-The 13th Warrior, 12:20, 2:40, 5, 7:30, 10 (R)

**KENT SIX CINEMAS**

**10116 S.E. 256th, Kent**

- 1-For Love of the Game, noon, 4:15, 7, 9:45 (PG-13)
- 2-Blue Streak, 12:30, 2:45, 4:55, 7:25, 9:30 (PG-13)
- 3-Stigmata, 12:10, 2:30, 5, 7:20, 9:40 (R)
- 4-The 13th Warrior, 2:20, 2:35, 4:50, 7:10, 9:20 (R)
- 5-The Sixth Sense, 11:55, 2:15, 4:30, 7:15, 9:25 (PG-13)
- 6-Runaway Bride, 12:05, 2:25, 4:45, 7:05, 9:35 (PG)

**Olympia**

**CAPITAL MALL**

**302 Capital Mall**

- 1-Blue Streak, 2:30, 3, 5, 5:30, 7:30, 8, 9:45, 10:15 (PG-13)
- 2-The Blair Witch Project, 5:10, 9:30 (R)
- 3-The Muse, 2:40, 7:10 (PG-13)
- 4-Bowfinger, 2:50, 5:20, 7:45, 10 (PG-13)

**CAPITOL THEATRE, 205 E. Fifth Ave.**

- 1-After Life, 9 (unrated)
- 2-Best of the N.W. No. 25, 6:30 (unrated)

**LACEY CINEMAS, 4431 Martin Way E.**

- 1-For Love of the Game, 3:40, 4:10, 6:50, 7:20, 9:50, 10:20 (PG-13)
- 2-Stir of Echos, 2:55, 5:15, 7:45, 10 (R)
- 3-Stigmata, 2:35, 4:55, 7:15, 9:35 (R)
- 4-The 13th Warrior, 3, 5:25, 7:55, 10:15 (R)
- 5-The Sixth Sense, 2:45, 5:20, 7:50, 10:25 (PG-13)
- 6-The Thomas Crown Affair, 2:30, 5, 7:35, 10:05 (R)
- 7-Runaway Bride, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10 (PG)

**Seattle**

**BROADWAY MARKET CINEMAS 425 Broadway E.**

- 1-Return with Honor, 4:45, 7:30, 9:45 (unrated)

**EGYPTIAN THEATRE, 801 E. Pine**

- 1-Grand Illusion, 2, 4:30, 7, 9:30 (unrated)

**HARVARD EXIT THEATRE, 807 E. Roy**

- 1-Black Cat, White Cat, 4:15, 7, 9:45 (R)

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◆ FOR LOVE OF THE GAME (PG-13) Digital Stereo 1:20 (4:10) 7:00 9:45	◆ THE 13TH WARRIOR (R) 1:40 (5:20) 7:40 9:50
◆ STIGMATA (R) Digital Stereo 1:35 (5:00) 7:30 9:55	◆ MICKEY BLUE EYES (PG-13) (5:35) 8:00
◆ THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13) 1:45 (4:40) 7:10 9:25	◆ LOVE STINKS (R) 2:05

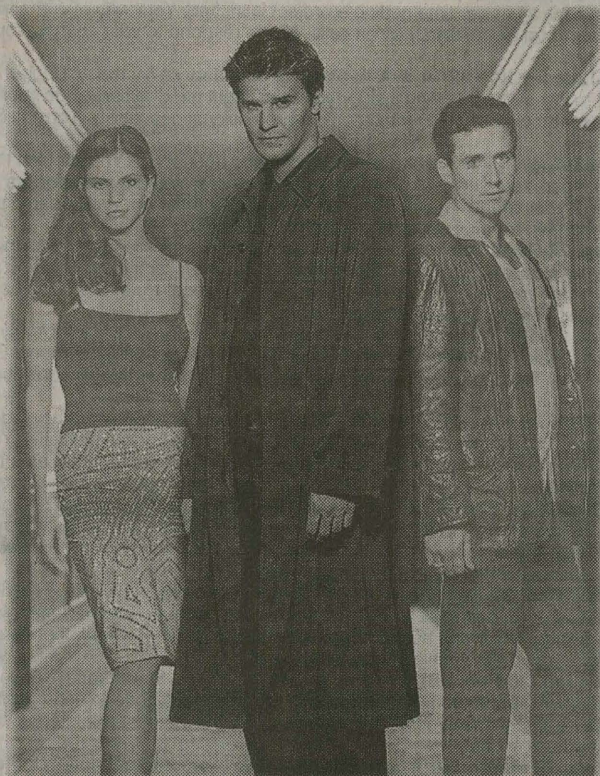
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**MARTIN LAWRENCE**

# BLUE STREAK

fact she was a high school girl who killed vampires. And yet, to be out of the Buffy loop was in many ways akin to

Buffy had to have a love interest. After all, making jokes about "The X-Files" ("I cannot believe [See GOODMAN, B-4])



"Angel" features Charisma Carpenter, left, David Boreanaz (as the title character) and Glenn Quinn.



Marilyn Horne is joined by tenor Jerry Hadley to sing "You're Just in Love" from Irving Berlin's "Call Me Madam."

EXAMINER / CHRIS HARDY

ra's artist development program, a cause close to Horne's heart. The afternoon featured an abundance of songs and opera excerpts (including a few from the honoree, who hasn't appeared here in a production since 1992), propelled more than one patron down memory lane, and reaffirmed General Director Lotfi Mansouri's knack for throwing a whale of a party.

As he escorted Horne to a chair on a stage (decorated with elements from the production of Vivaldi's "Orlando Furioso" mounted for Horne in 1989), Mansouri was absolutely correct to say that he felt like Ralph Edwards; this really was Horne's life. Numerous San Franciscans honestly felt that they had shared it with her. So have a lot of singers, for whom, in both word and action, she has served as counselor and guide.

They paid tribute in abundance. The guest luminaries, all of whom donated their services, included soprano Reneé Fleming, tenor Jerry Hadley and bass Samuel Ramey (who delayed their departures after Saturday's final "Louise" for this gig), sopranos Ruth Ann Swenson

[ See HORNE, B-7 ]

# Big changes in Big Sky

Novel looks at boomers' shifting lives, landscapes

By Edvins Beitiks  
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

WHEN YOU TALK about the gradual pounding-down of the American landscape, you can start with the fat-wallet colonies that have settled in the heart of Montana, former stomping grounds of author Ivan Doig.

"The Montana Riviera," Doig calls it, pointing toward Bozeman and other towns taken over by the literati and glitterati. "All these people coming out from Hollywood, all this money from the movies and the arts. But it's not the first time it's happened... my great-grandparents used to milk cows for John Ringling of Ringling Brothers Circus, the kabilionaire of his time."

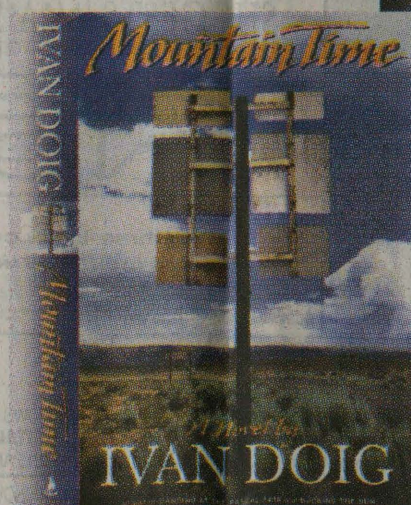
Doig, 60, on a western tour to tout his newest novel, "Mountain Time," just out

from Scribner's, said, "It's an old story, a very familiar story. There's a sense the West is being loved to death by these people. As Wallace Stegner said, 'You can love a place and still be dangerous to it.'"

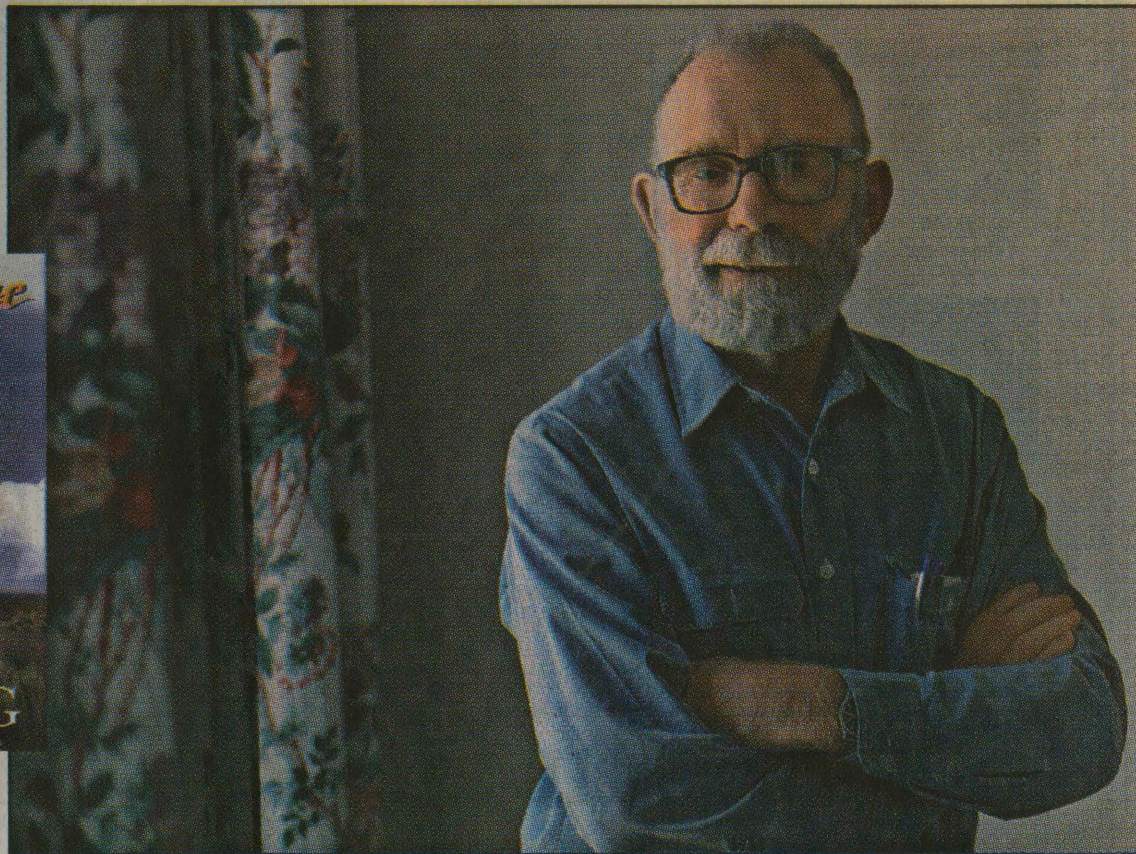
That's the theme at the heart of "Mountain Time," a story of aging baby boomers trying to deal with the deterioration of their parents' lives and the complications of their own lives in a changing landscape. Doig — author of novels "Bucking the Sun" and "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" as well as nonfiction works "Heart Earth" and "This House of Sky" — sees "Mountain Time" as a study in eternal questions being forced on a specific generation.

Mitch Rozier, 50-year-old writer for a militant environmental magazine, returns to his home in Montana to deal with the scrap ends of his father's life.

[See DOIG, B-6]



Ivan Doig: "I think we've pounded the earth pretty hard out here. It's untidy, it's destructive what we're doing, but there's still some hope."



EXAMINER / CHRIS HARDY

◆ DOIG from B-1

## Big changes in Big Sky

Lyle Rozier has decided to sell his home and land to a road-building agency intent on gouging into the Rocky Mountain Front. At the same time the elder Rozier, dying of cancer, asks for his ashes to be scattered from a fire tower on Phantom Woman Mountain, in the heart of the heart of the wilderness.

"Mountain Time" grew out of Doig's interest in what will happen "when the time of decision comes for baby boomers, when they will have to deal with the problems of their parents losing control of their lives. I asked myself how much they'll be able to do. Will they be able to face the hard tasks without

flinching? And I see Mitch as stepping up to that hard task, finding the resolve."

Mitch Rozier fights his father to the end, even beyond the end. As he tilts against his father's windmills, Mitch is joined by his lover, Lexa McCaskill, and her camera-carrying sister, Mariah. The three of them follow Lyle Rozier through the last days of his life — Mariah insisting on daily pictures of his dying — then face each other in the aftermath, arguing over his death wish.

Doig brings dying up close. At one point he writes, "By the time he was back from his trip to the drive-in, his father had made his way to the backyard and settled onto the running board of the defunct old blue truck, a can of Coors in one hand and a smoke in the other. 'Sure gonna miss these,

dead.' Mitch heard him mutter over the repasts of beer and nicotine. When Lyle became aware of him, he made room on the running board. 'Might as well eat here,' he told Mitch. 'Pretty evening and all.'"

The "sure gonna miss these, dead" line "came to me easily," said Doig. "But it was one of the rare ones that did." Other lines in "Mountain Time" show the sweat of Doig's creation, like "Died they all who were encamped along the north rim of the red zone as the power of Mount St. Helens welled over it, to the sun of fifty-seven."

Doig can smile behind his sentences, too, playfully wringing his hands over a rich neighbor crying about the jungle of rusting pick-up trucks and hay-balers next door: "Mitch put on an expression of sympathy. Ah, the troublesome life of the window Westerner. Those gorgeous purple mountains and the Lyle Roziers of the world in the way."

In spite of his respect for the hard-working dues paid by Lyle Rozier, Doig is not really sympathetic to the man. When Rozier makes the seemingly innocent request that his ashes be scattered in the wilderness, Doig is having none of it. The author suggests in "Mountain Time" that a dying wish is not necessarily sacred — if someone has lived a life that flies in the face of protecting the land, says

Doig, he cannot demand on his deathbed that his ashes be scattered in homage to that land.

Doig's argument goes against the religious belief that sinners can enter the Kingdom of Heaven, repentant, up to the last moment of their lives. But the issue in "Mountain Time" is an environmental issue, said Doig. "It's a question of how to treat the land, how to treat the people who have misused that land all these years. Forgiveness? Not in this case, not in this family."

Pointing to the words of Stegner, Edward Abbey and other environmentalists, Doig said, "I think Mitch is listening to the laptop voices of his Holy Ghosts — eloquent preachers of the land ethic. I wasn't trying to bring out any religious revelations in this book. But if the thought stays, and rankles, that's not bad."

Doig, who grew up in White Sulphur Springs in western Montana, took a job as a writer in Chicago after graduation, then found himself drawn more and more to the land. He and his wife, Carol, would find themselves "driving into Wisconsin on the weekends, just to be around evergreen trees." In 1966 Doig was recruited to teach at the University of Washington and he's been living in Seattle ever since, surrounded by evergreens.

Doig said that Seattle — "where you can see software money running in the streets every day" — is

just one more piece that makes up the jigsaw puzzle of these United States. "It's another part of the terrifically intricate country that this is," said Doig, adding San Francisco and its multicolored, multicultural neighborhoods to that mosaic.

It's important to keep the landscape of America, city and countryside, from deteriorating, said Doig, who remains optimistic in spite of evidence that the land is losing its

fight against humans. "I think we've pounded the earth pretty hard out here," he said. "It's untidy, it's destructive what we're doing, but there's still some hope."

"We're not shooting each other right now. We're not killing each other for land, the way we did during the westward movement," said Doig. "We haven't had any blood wars in a long while, which says something good for us, I think."

◆ DUTCH from B-3

## Reagan biography sparks controversy

able? Ronald and Nancy Reagan granted Morris complete independence in writing this book, never requesting any glance at his pages. Has Morris used or abused that independence? Should "Dutch" even be placed in bookstores without a clear statement within the text itself that identifies the fictional and nonfictional sections and sources? Does it bring Reagan to life or trivialize his historical significance? These questions will get thrashed out on the talk shows, in the news magazines, within publishing houses, perhaps in courtrooms over the ensuing months. The attendant publicity will assure that legions of readers will buy

"Dutch," Random House will recover its huge investment, and Morris himself will become rich and famous. "Dutch" will make history by defying the very standards that make history worth knowing.

What Morris has done, in my judgment, is a scandal and a travesty, and its endorsement by a flagship American publisher is a sorrowful sign that editorial integrity has lost another battle to the proverbial bottom line. Although I never found it possible to vote for Ronald Reagan, as a historian it seems utterly clear to me that Dutch deserved better.

*Joseph J. Ellis teaches American history at Mount Holyoke College. He won the National Book Award for his biography of Thomas Jefferson.*  
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### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

#### The Daily Doodler

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APES BAS NADA
DOTH EGO I TOR
ALOT LEFTBANK
MONICA TABLES
COBB OLA
BANKROLL ENVY
OVA DROID TIA
WATT SANDBANK
IAM TEAR
AVOCET AYESHA
BANKRUPT CHAW
OVAL BEE HOWE
YALE ANS TEND
    
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#### The New York Times

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URSA MOSHE PALL
SAIS EATEN ARIA
EGGS ATILT ITEM
RUNOFTHEMILL
CAL SERE PAM
CAPITOL TEA AVE
AREA AIR PURER
BOLTOFLIGHTNING
LUTES DOE SAGE
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2:10 (5:00) 7:35, 10:05
- ☐ THE ADVENTURES OF ELMO IN GROUCHLAND (G)  
No Passes SDDS 1:30, 3:35 (5:40) 7:45, 9:50
- ☐ DRIVE ME CRAZY (PG-13) No Passes Dolby  
2:15 (4:40) 7:25, 9:40
- ☐ THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13) DTS Digital  
2:00 (4:50) 7:20, 9:45
- ☐ BLUE STREAK (PG-13) SDDS 2:20 (5:15) 7:30, 9:50
- ☐ JAKOB THE LIAR (PG-13) SDDS 1:40 (5:10) 7:35, 9:55
- ☐ FOR LOVE OF THE GAME (PG-13) DTS Digital 1:40
- ☐ THE 13TH WARRIOR (R) DTS Digital (4:45) 10:10

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- ☐ THREE KINGS (R) - On 2 Screens No Passes THX SDDS  
2:00, 2:45 (4:45, 5:30) 7:30, 8:15, 10:15, 10:55

**CASTRO THEATRE** Castro-Market 621-6120

San Francisco Film Society Presents  
'Max Ophuls: Moving Pictures'

- ☐ LEIBELEI (NR) 7:15
  - ☐ HAPPY HEIRS (NR) 9:15
- Tomorrow: 'The Tender Enemy'

**CENTURY PLAZA 10** 4  
N Fwy 380 East on NOOR off El Camino (650)742-9200  
★★★ Call Theatre for Barg. and Pass Policy ★★★

- ☐ DRIVE ME CRAZY (PG-13) Digital  
12:15, 2:30, 4:50 7:10, 9:35
- ☐ THE ADVENTURES OF ELMO IN GROUCHLAND (G)  
Digital 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00 8:00, 10:00
- ☐ DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R) Digital 12:00, 1:10,  
2:20, 3:30, 4:50, 5:50 7:15, 8:05, 9:40, 10:20
- ☐ AMERICAN BEAUTY (R) Digital  
11:50, 2:30, 5:10 7:50, 10:30
- ☐ BLUE STREAK (PG-13) Digital 12:30, 1:30,  
2:45, 3:45, 5:00, 6:00 7:15, 8:15, 10:30
- ☐ STIR OF ECHOES (R) Digital 9:30 P.M.
- ☐ FOR LOVE OF THE GAME (PG-13) Digital

**LANDMARK'S BRIDGE THEATRE** 4  
3010 Geary at Blake 352-0810

- ☐ THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT (R) Dolby SR (5:30) 7:40, 9:50

**LANDMARK'S CLAY THEATRE** 4  
2261 Fillmore near Clay St. 352-0810

- ☐ ROMANCE (NR) Dolby Stereo Digital  
(12:10) 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30

**LANDMARK'S EMBARCADERO CENTER CINEMA** 4  
1 Embarcadero Center Promenade Level 352-0810  
Advance Sales Now Available At The Box Office  
Now Accepting Applications

- ☐ GUINEVERE (R) Dolby Stereo Digital  
(12:30) 2:50, 5:10, 7:40, 9:50
- ☐ EARTH (NR) Dolby (12:20) 2:40, 4:55, 7:20, 9:40
- ☐ THE BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB (G) Dolby Stereo Digital  
(12:10) 2:25, 4:45, 7:10, 9:30
- ☐ RUN LOLA RUN (R) Dolby SR (1:15) 3:15, 5:15, 8:00, 10:00
- ☐ THE DINNER GAME (PG-13) Dolby SR  
(12:00) 2:10, 4:30, 7:00, 9:10

Four-Hour Free Validated Parking  
After 5 PM Mon - Fri and After 10 AM Sat & Sun

**REGENCY** Sutter-Van Ness 776-8054  
Bargain Matinee 1st Two Shows Daily  
Low Rate Parking Holiday Inn & Cathedral Hill Hotel.

- ☐ THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13) Digital  
1:15, 3:30, 5:45, 8:00, 10:15

**ROXIE** 3117 16th St at Valencia 863-1087  
Tonight Only! Recent Erotic Short Films!

- ☐ EROTIC TALES I (R) 5:45, 10:10
  - ☐ EROTIC TALES II (NR) 8:00 Only!
- See both programs for one admission!

**ST. FRANCIS I & II** Market bet 5-6th 362-4822

- ☐ AMERICAN PIE (R) 11:15, 2:45, 6:10, 9:35
- ☐ MICKEY BLUE EYES (PG-13) 1:00, 4:25, 7:50
- ☐ CHILL FACTOR (R) 11:05, 2:30, 5:55, 9:20
- ☐ BOWFINGER (PG-13) 12:50, 4:15, 7:40

**SEAVUE** 520 Palmetto, Pacifica (650)359-5282

- ☐ THREE KINGS (R) 5:00, 7:15, 9:30
- ☐ THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13) 5:05, 7:30, 9:45

**SONY IMAX THEATRE** 4  
Fourth & Mission (415)369-6200

**TANFORAN DISCOUNT CINEMAS** 4  
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- ☐ RUNAWAY BRIDE (PG) 12:00, 2:30, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15
- ☐ A DOG OF FLANDERS (PG) 12:15, 2:15
- ☐ BOWFINGER (PG-13) 12:00, 4:45, 9:00
- ☐ WILD WILD WEST (PG-13) 2:15, 6:30
- ☐ THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT (R) 12:30, 4:00, 7:30
- ☐ UNIVERSAL SOLDIER: THE RETURN (R) 2:20, 5:45, 9:20
- ☐ AMERICAN PIE (R) 4:15, 7:50
- ☐ AUSTIN POWERS: THE SPY WHO SHAGGED ME (PG-13) 6:00, 9:40

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Geary/18th 752-5100

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**DOWNSTAIRS**

**UNITED ARTIST METRO** 4  
Union/Webster 931-1685

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- ☐ JAKOB THE LIAR (PG-13) Dolby 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

**UNITED ARTISTS METRO CENTER COLMA** 4  
280 Metro Center off Juniper Serra (650)994-1065  
Bargain Matinee All Shows Before 6pm Daily  
STEREO IN ALL AUDITORIUMS

- ☐ THREE KINGS (R) No VIPs accepted until 10/11 Dolby Digital  
1:00, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30  
No VIPs accepted until 10/11 SDDS 11:30, 2:15, 5:00, 7:45, 10:30
- ☐ MYSTERY, ALASKA (R) No VIPs accepted until 10/11 SDDS  
11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:20

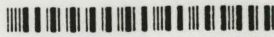
**PLUNKETT & MACLEAN** (R) No VIPs accepted until 10/11  
UltraStereo 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:00, 10:00

- ☐ JAKOB THE LIAR (PG-13) SDDS 11:30, 2:10, 4:45, 7:30, 10:15

**MUMFORD** (R) DTS Digital 12:00, 2:40, 5:15, 8:00, 10:30

**UNITED ARTISTS STONESTOWN** 4

AUG 29, 1999



N4904

**LUCE** PRESS CLIPPINGS

# Eloquent landscape, but thin characters

*MOUNTAIN TIME*, by Ivan Doig. Scribner—316 pages. \$25.

By **SAM COALE**  
Special to the Journal

Baby Boomers in Seattle. Mitch Rozier, 50, writes Coast-watch, a column on environmental issues for a weekly newspaper that's about to close. He's divorced, living with Lexa McCaskill, 40, who's divorced, a former rodeo champion, a feisty hiker who works as a caterer. His father Lyle, living like a "Swamp Yankee" in Twin Sulphur Springs, Montana, has leukemia. Lexa's beautiful sister Mariah, 42, who's divorced and a world-hopping photographer, shows up and decides to shoot Lyle's last days.

Mitch, Lexa and Mariah spar with Lyle at his rockbound ranch. Lyle has always been full of schemes that have never worked out. The latest is a collection of branding irons to sell. And he wants to sell his place to gas-and-oil interests who need gravel to build roads into the mountains.

Ivan Doig has written several novels about the West as well as non-fiction. He writes eloquently about landscape, in particular about the Rockies and other mountains: "You could see out over a dozen watersheds and headwaters, out to the dark pelt of pine on a hundred mountains, out into supple valleys, out all the way to the half-mile-high walls of stone that fronted the mountain range." And about light, weather conditions, rivers.

But Doig's characters are hip, one-liner-spouting creatures who pass through ephemeral moods and whims and leave no trace or shadow. They are arch and thin and drift or coast ineffectively from place to place or person to person.

The trouble is that Doig seems to like this would-be-casual humor. He writes the way his characters talk. "At best, Mitch could write a column with a skateboarder's eye for odd angles and fast surfaces." Doig quotes Robinson Jeffers, than quips, "It was a time when zinger sentences walked the earth."

A "blonde and tawny woman" is quickly summed up: "Sheena@jungle.com." Mitch's dying dad Lyle thinks that the sisters, Lexa and Mariah, "had the sort of mouths that needed hot-sters." Great line, but not much depth there.

Consequently, though Lyle and Mitch joust and feint ("Maybe in error, but never in doubt — that was my father"), and though inevitable death lurks in the wings, you don't feel anything. It must be those "odd angles and fast surfaces" that Doig skates so well around and across. It makes for a sluggish, superficial book.

At one point Mitch thinks "that this neck of the earth was always going to be a country of great mountains and mediocre human chances." Maybe that's the problem. At another "Mitch reminded himself this was a how occasion, not a why."

Doig is fine at hows — action, description — but not at whys — character, depth of emotion. There are some splendid set pieces: the trek through the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area in Montana; the flight up the pipeline from Valdez in Alaska; Mitch at 16, working for his father, picking rocks out of a field and getting his leg run over; Lyle's memories of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1939 and fighting the Japanese in New Guinea; the final journey up a lookout tower to scatter Lyle's ashes.

But the characters fade in and fade out, no match for the gnarled, knotty prose that works wonders on mountain vistas. Doig has a great eye, but it works best in solitary moments, observing the world around him, when nobody else is talking.



MARION ETLINGER

**IVAN DOIG:**  
Hip one-liners.

# Ivan Doig's flowing tale of family

A son returns to Montana  
and his dying father in the  
latest McCaskill book

BY RON FRANSCCELL  
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

In Montana, not far from where Ivan Doig grew up beneath the big sky that still haunts him, three rivers flow together to form the deep and wide Missouri, lacing through both time and landscape, the old West and the new. And like the brawny Missouri, Doig has channeled three deep literary tributaries into "Mountain Time," a coda to his McCaskill family trilogy.

Mitch Rozier is flotsam, a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a post-hip alternative Seattle weekly paper, a baby boomer treading water with his own past and present: estrangement from his grown children, tenuous job security and his scrappy lover. Lexa McCaskill is jetsam, the earthy and divorced Montana expatriate swirling in Mitch's eddy, catering swanky Seattle software soirees, also going nowhere.

Together, they are caught in the undertow of Lyle Rozier, Mitch's father. Lyle is dying of leukemia, and Mitch is summoned back to his childhood home in Montana, where he's caught up in the ordeal of filial obligation. There, he faces an ancient question confronting a new generation and twisted to fit a new sensibility: Dare we go home again?

That's what Mitch asks himself back in Seattle, listening to his father: "The old hated tone of voice. Lyle Rozier proclaiming he had the world on a towrope, and a downhill pull at last. Rubbing his opposite ear as if the words had gone right through him, Mitch winced into the phone that next morning. How many times had he heard this, or something an awful lot like it?"

Mitch's reluctant reunion with his crusty old dad is flooded with lingering family disappointments and secrets — along with the revelation that Lyle wants to sell the family land to a gravel company and rewrite his own life history in the process. Lexa comes along for moral support, bringing her sultry sister, world-weary photographer Mariah

Please see DOIG, Page E5

## Doig: Men have protected and profaned the West

Continued from Page E3

McCaskill, who documents Lyle's deathwatch.

Their desperate and disparate lives flow together when they hike into the mountains on a sad journey to scatter Lyle's ashes.

Three people, three intense relationships, three rivers. "Mountain Time" is the confluence: The familial clash between Lyle and Mitch echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West, where exploitation has always been at odds with environmental anxiety. Their story also reflects the dynamic, flowing history in which men have both protected and profaned the Western landscape, which is as much a character in Doig's work as any McCaskill.

Doig's poetic prose remains intact here, but for the first time in his literary career he's funny, too, especially when he's satirizing the foibles and excesses of the Pacific Northwest "Cyberia": "The Cascofia [newspaper] building was in Seattle's Fremont district, where



IVAN DOIG

### Taking the whole cake

"All right, all right," Mitch said with a hand to his forehead as if trying to start things moving in there. "If I'm going across the mountains to stop that father of mine from screwing up royally, I need to call Bing for three 60. If there's still anything to have time off from." But he turned back from the phone to Lexa. "I don't suppose you could come along? Ride shotgun down the avalanche?"

"Can't. Mariah."

Mitch blanked on that.

"My sister is flying in," Lexa said with red-letter enthusiasm. "Tomorrow."

"I knew that." He sneaked a glance toward the refrigerator message center.

"Only child." Lexa shook her head. "You guys always got the whole birthday cake to yourself."

— "Mountain Time"

the Sixties still roamed. The hempen necessities of life were available there, as were cafes with good rowdy names such as The Longshoreman's Daughter, plus deluxe junk shops, plus bars that were museum pieces from the days when hair was Hair."

"Mountain Time" will not dis-

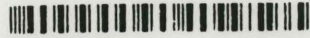
suaude those who rank Doig among the best living American writers, and might even beg comparisons to some of the best dead ones, too. Faulkner comes most readily to mind: The Sartorises of Yoknapatawpha County are no more troubled and no more human than the McCaskills of the

Two Medicine country in Montana. Two great rivers in different landscapes.

Wyoming novelist and newspaperman Ron Franscell is the author of "Angel Fire" and the upcoming mystery "The Deadline."



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Sunday



N5734

**TUCE** PRESS CLIPPINGS

# Doig at his best in masterful 'Mountain Time'

**Mountain Time.** By Ivan Doig.  
Scribner. 320 pages. \$25.

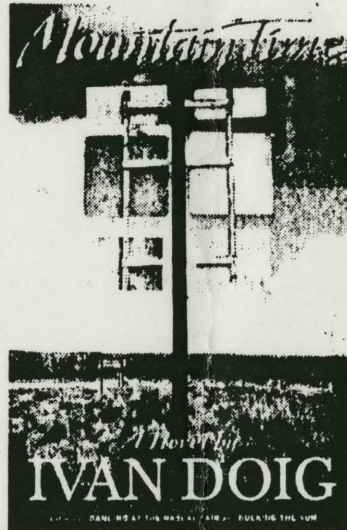
By RON FRANSCCELL  
Special to the Journal Sentinel

In Montana, not far from where Ivan Doig grew up beneath the big sky that still haunts him, three rivers flow together to form the deep, wide Missouri, lacing through both time and landscape, the old West and the new.

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hood home in Montana.

Mitch faces an ancient question unearthed by a new generation, twisted to fit a new sensibility: Dare we go home again? That's what Mitch asks himself when his father calls from Montana:

"The old hated tone of voice. Lyle Rozier proclaiming he had the world on a towrope and a downhill pull at last. Rubbing his opposite ear as if the words had gone right through him, Mitch winced into the phone

that next morning. How many times had he heard this, or something an awful lot like it?"

But Mitch's reluctant reunion with his crusty old dad is flooded with lingering family disappointments and secrets, and the revelation that Lyle wants to sell the family land to a gravel company and rewrite his own life history in the process. Lexa comes along for moral support but brings her sultry, cynical world-weary photographer Mariah McCaskill, who documents Lyle's deathwatch and proves a bitter reminder of Lyle's unrooted angst. Their desperate, disparate lives flow together when they hike into the mountains on a sad journey to scatter Lyle's ashes.

Three people, three intense relationships, three rivers. "Mountain Time" is the confluence: The familial clash between Lyle and Mitch echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West, where exploitation has always been at odds with environmental anxiety. But the reader also stands on the near bank of a dynamic, flowing history in which men have both protected and profaned the Western landscape, which is as much a character in Doig's work as any McCaskill.

Doig's poetic prose remains intact here, but for the first time in his literary career he's pretty damn funny, too, especially when he's satirizing the foibles and excesses of the Pacific Northwest's "Cyberia." The Cascofia (newspaper) building was in Seattle's Fremont district, where the Sixties still roamed. The hempen necessities of life were available there, as were coffee, beer, and rowdy, name-checked, neo-hippies. Doig's wit debiles funnily, and the way his steam rises in the days when hair was hair.

"Mountain Time" will not dissuade those who rank Doig a Northwestern University graduate, among the best living American novelists, and one might even begin making comparisons to some of the best "dead" ones, too. Faulkner comes most readily to mind: The Snopeses of Yoknapatawpha County are no more troubled and no more human than the McCaskills of the Two Medicine country in Montana. Two great rivers in different landscapes.

A Wyoming novelist and newspaperman, Ron Franscell is the author of "Angel Fire" and the upcoming mystery, "The Deadline."

# -town r Makes



## Ivan Doig novel depicts a people going downhill

### MOUNTAIN TIME: A NOVEL

By Ivan Doig  
Scribner, 1999  
\$25, 316 pp.

"Mountain time" refers to that part of the country where the landscape has been whittled less by culture than by geophysical phenomena.

Travel into its rural areas and time seems to go backward. Relics of the past literally litter the land.

The Continental Divide is hard to stay on top of.

Rugged men and women worked to settle the American West. Their children flowed away from its slopes like water.

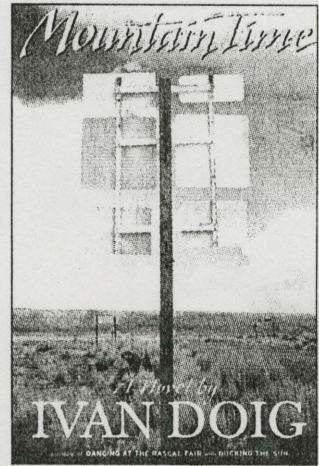
Dreams are one thing,

living another.

Nobody knows this better than Ivan Doig, born and raised in mid-century Montana. Son of a rancher and grandson of a homesteader, he witnessed rough life from a pioneer perspective. His Montana memoirs, published in 1978, became an immediate Western classic. "This House of Sky" detailed with devastating eloquence the passing of culture through land known best as "God's country." Subsequent novels have continued his theme of exploring soul growth in relationship to environment.

"Mountain Time," his newest novel, is a study in declination. Everyone and everything is going downhill; health, work, passions, land, even relationships.

Mitch Rozier is a man in midlife crisis when his cantankerous father summons him home again. Siphoned from Montana in the early 1960s by a University of Washington football schol-



### ▼ Reading

**AUTHOR:** Ivan Doig reads from "Mountain Time: A Novel" at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Fairhaven Middle School Auditorium. Tickets are \$3 at Village Books, 1210 11th St., and the door. Proceeds benefit Bellingham Food Bank.

arship, he has not been back to Twin Sulphur Springs except for an occasional visit. An environmental columnist for an alternative Seattle weekly, his job security is dubious. He hates writing anyway, dreads making the words up, does not enjoy his compatriots.

A failed early marriage and estranged relationships with his children make him feel older than 50. Lexa McCaskill is a light in his life, but even their romance is dubious. Together five years, both are perplexed, still holding out on each other.

Mitch leaves Seattle and heads straight for home when his father announces plans to sell the family ranch to a gravel company. Lyle's issues are bigger than

ing before announcing the strip.  
 "I always drew as a kid," he says. "I had fantasies of drawing Batman and all the super heroes.

I need help."  
 "That's it!" one of them responded.  
 Lee holds out hope the syndi-

cartooning."  
 Reach John Harris at jharris@bellingham.gannett.com or 715-2207.

# Doig

Continued from Page C1

real estate, however. He is dying of advanced leukemia.

Lexa arrives with her photo-journalist sister in tow, and Mariah begins shooting Lyle on his

death march. Complications arise, and a crisis ensues when Mitch fails to come to peace with his exasperating father.

Montana takes over, teaching Mitch the lesson he needs to jump-start his passion for life.

Ivan Doig is a fine writer — a master writer — even a tender writer, but "Mountain Time" is

not his best effort.

Luminous prose is a craft, but even the best craft needs water and a pilot who can sound deep revelations. Doig's endeavor this time is ambitious but fallow, softened by too much solemnity, constraint and decorum.

Ara Taylor reviews books for The Bellingham Herald.

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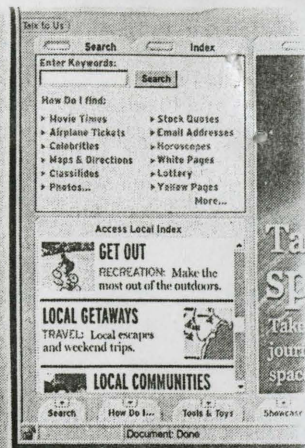
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# DATEBOOK

TELEVISION B9

THEATER LISTINGS B2

MOVIE LISTINGS B6, B7

COMICS B8

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1999

B1

## West-Side Stories

Readers rank the 20th century's best nonfiction this side of the Rockies

**T**he trouble with compiling any best-of list is that the compiler never gets to take part in what makes lists so much fun, i.e., complaining about the omissions afterward. Nonetheless, it's with great pride that The Chronicle hereby surrenders its list of the 100 best nonfiction books of the 20th century written in English about — or by an author from — the Western United States.

The Chronicle Western 100 owes its existence to precisely the kind of griping it may now inspire. One year ago, the editorial board of a major New York publisher disseminated its list of the 100 best novels written in English and published in the 20th century. Critics promptly called the list too old, too white, too male and too representative of the publisher's back-list.

A month ago the same house promulgated a follow-up list of the 100 best nonfiction books written in English and published in the 20th century. They took care this time to change their editorial

board until it looked more like America. Sure enough, the nonfiction

**DAVID KIPEN**

*Books*

list wound up looking more like America, too — if only America ran westward from New York to the Rockies and then stopped, like a frisky dog at the end of its leash.

The Chronicle Western 100 lets 20th century English-language nonfiction off the leash. It was devised on the nervy assumption that an unscientific, self-selected sampling of interested Western readers could pick just as viable a list as the editorial board of a venerable Manhattan publisher. That faith has since been amply repaid, with Chronicle readers coming out of the woodwork to write, e-mail and buttonhole their smart, opinionated nominations.

The top vote-getter on the Chronicle Western 100 is Mary Austin's "Land of Little Rain," her classic 1903 account of the terrain between Death Valley and the High Sierra — a book Edward Abbey called "a small, tender, old-fashioned and engaging book, a part of the basic literature of American nature writing."

Hard on its heels were Wallace Stegner's "Beyond the Hundredth Meridian," Abbey's "Desert Solitaire" and Ivan Doig's "This House of Sky."

Let no one blame himself for not having read all, or many, or perhaps even any of these

books. Blame instead an East Coast literary establishment that tends to get the West wrong only when it isn't ignoring it completely.

Look at the top 10 magnificent writers and reflect that none of them, not one, made New York's nonfiction list. Not Austin, who blazed the trail for a century of writing about the wild. Not Stegner, whose Stanford writing program has nurtured generations of distinguished writers in the West. Not Abbey, whose comic novel "The Monkey Wrench Gang" helped radicalize environmental thinking in America. Not Doig, the Montana-born, Seattle-based master whose impatiently awaited new novel, "Mountain

Time," hits bookstores this summer. And not Evan S. Connell either, the San Francisco mailman-turned-novelist whose landmark examination of Custer and the Little Big Horn was not only written in the West but published here as well by the late, much-lamented Northpoint Press.

**INSIDE**

Complete list of the top 100. **B5**

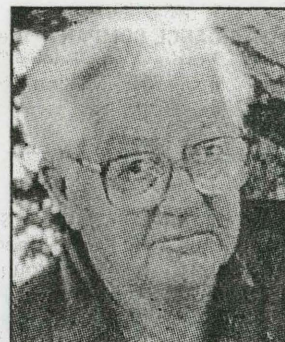
Connell's "Son of the Morning Star" also has the distinction of getting a vote from the man to whom it's dedicated, the gifted San Francisco writer Curt Gentry. "Helter Skelter," Gentry and Vincent Bugliosi's harrowing book about the Charles Manson murders, missed joining "Son of the Morning Star" on the list by the narrowest of margins.

So did books by Mary McCarthy and Susan Sontag, whose origins in Seattle and the San Fernando Valley, respectively,

► **KIPEN:** Page B5 Col. 1



Mary Austin



Wallace Stegner



Edward Abbey

### The Top 10

1

"Land of Little Rain"  
Mary Austin

2

"Beyond the Hundredth Meridian"  
Wallace Stegner

3

"Desert Solitaire"  
Edward Abbey

4

"This House of Sky"  
Ivan Doig

5

"Son of the Morning Star"  
Evan S. Connell

6

Western Trilogy  
Bernard DeVoto

7

"Assembling California"  
John McPhee

8

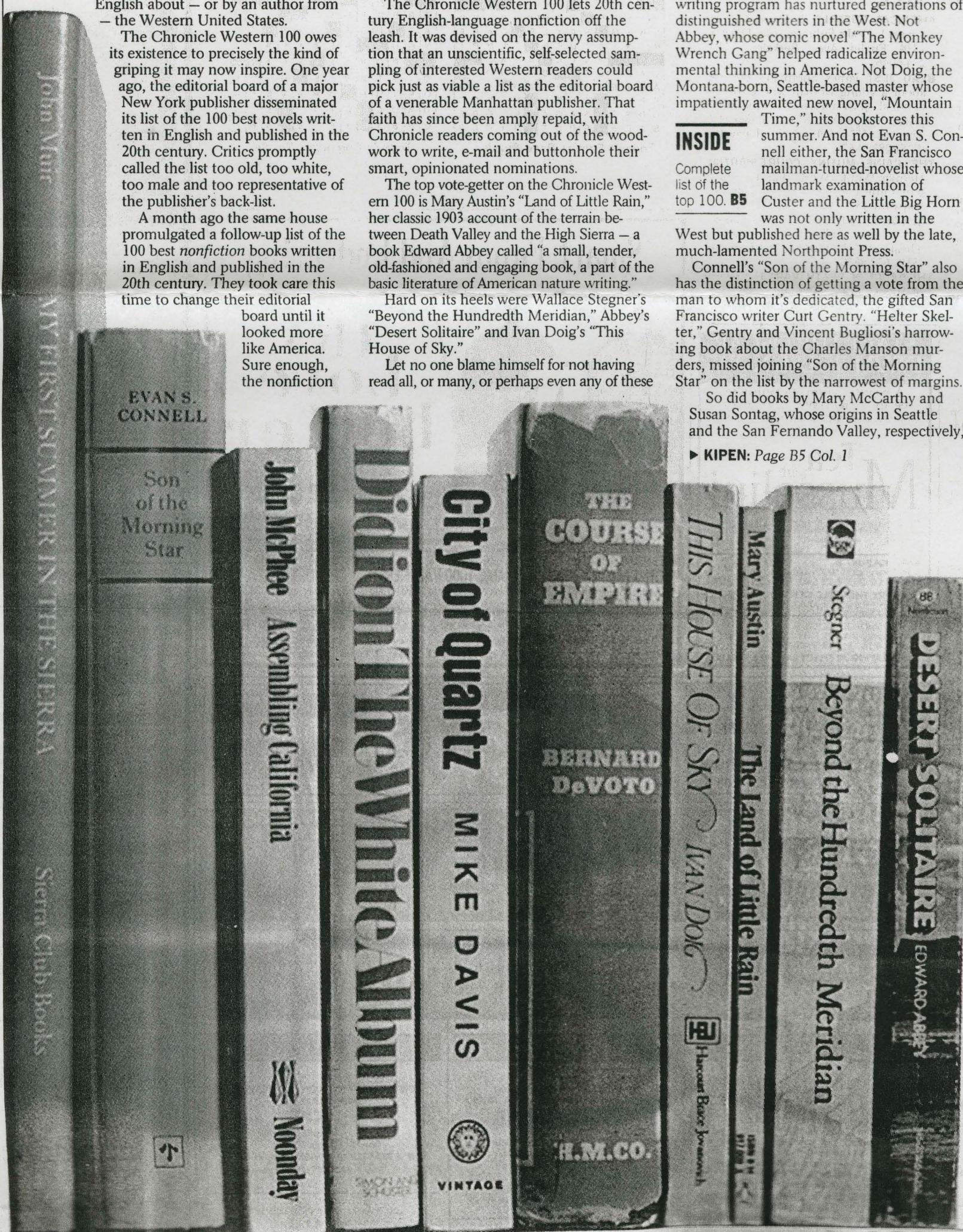
"My First Summer In the Sierra"  
John Muir

9

"The White Album"  
Joan Didion

10

"City of Quartz"  
Mike Davis



# Readers Rank Doig, Didion Works Among Best Nonfiction

## ► BOOKS

From Page B1

did not go unremembered. Even Harold Ross, the founding editor of the New Yorker, got a vote via James Thurber's uproarious biography of him, which never quite manages to conceal the quintessential New Yorker's birthplace: Aspen, Colo.

But The Chronicle Western 100 fields too strong a team for us to dwell on its bench, however deep. Better to single out the joy of finding Ursula K. LeGuin's essay collection "Dancing at the Edge of the

### CHECKING IT TWICE



Did we blow it? Send your opinion of The Chronicle Western 100

to Book Review, San Francisco Chronicle, 901 Mission St., San Francisco, Calif. 94103, or weigh in via the Web at [sfgate.com](http://sfgate.com). Just type "good books" in the keyword box.

World" just a few slots below "Ishi in Two Worlds," the story of the last Yahi Indian as written by LeGuin's mother, the Berkeley anthropologist Theodora Kroeber. Or the ghoulish thrill of seeing Joan Didion's "The White Album" on the list cheek by jowl with George Stewart's "Ordeal by Hunger," his superior reconstruction of what befell the Donner Party, which included some of Didion's forebears.

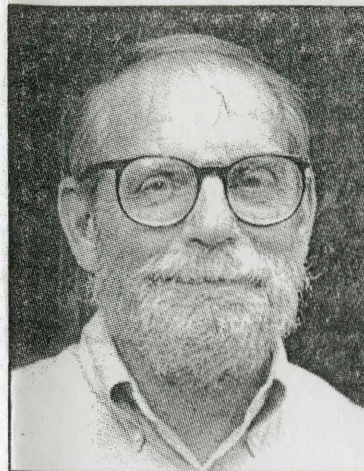
Didion owes her high place on the list in part to the intercession of Cyra McFadden — herself no mean writer of nonfiction, as anyone who's read her memoir "Rain or Shine" can attest. McFadden took time to drop a postcard on behalf of Didion's "White Album" ("still her best book"), Herbert Gold's "Fathers" (not nonfiction and therefore ineligible but "a modern American masterpiece" just the same) and Norman MacLean's "A River Runs Through It" (outpolled by his more frankly nonfictional "Young Men

and Fire").

Both MacLean books had votes enough to make the list, as did multiple books by other writers, but a decision was made early on to adopt a one-book-per-author proviso. One hundred sounds like a lot, but it's not, and too many worthy writers came up short as it is, even without having to compete for a spot against five different John Muir titles.

Ties were broken, rules bent and the continent Solomonicly divided at the Rockies.

Tiebreaker discretion also allowed for the placement of Joseph Henry Jackson's "Anybody's Gold" — duly nominated by the readership, not the editor — in the inevitably conspicuous No. 100 slot. The Chronicle's book editor from the 1930s through the 1950s, Jackson championed John Steinbeck and other Western writers when the East Coast wouldn't give them the time of day. He reviewed a book every morning in these pages for almost



John McPhee  
His "Assembling California" was No. 7

20 years and, like his opposite number at the Los Angeles Times, Robert Kirsch, read himself into an early grave. To them for their service to Western literature, and to the eru-



John Steinbeck  
Co-wrote "Sea of Cortez," at No. 28

dite readers who made this list possible, The Chronicle Western 100 is gratefully dedicated. To those readers who missed their chance to vote, be patient: Nonfiction is only half



Maxine Hong Kingston  
Her "Woman Warrior" came in No. 42

the story.

David Kipen is The Chronicle's book editor. He can be reached at [kipend@sfgate.com](mailto:kipend@sfgate.com).

## The Chronicle's Western 100

- "Land of Little Rain," Mary Austin
- "Beyond the Hundredth Meridian," Wallace Stegner
- "Desert Solitaire," Edward Abbey
- "This House of Sky," Ivan Doig
- "Son of the Morning Star," Evan S. Connell
- The Western Trilogy, Bernard DeVoto
- "Assembling California," John McPhee
- "My First Summer in the Sierra," John Muir
- "The White Album," Joan Didion
- "City of Quartz," Mike Davis
- "Ordeal by Hunger," George Rippey Stewart
- "Ishi in Two Worlds," Theodora Kroeber
- "Americans and the California Dream" (five volumes), Kevin Starr
- "Cadillac Desert," Marc Reisner
- "A Sand County Almanac," Aldo Leopold
- "California: The Great Exception," Carey McWilliams
- "Arctic Dreams," Barry Lopez
- "Farewell to Manzanar," Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, James D. Houston
- "Young Men and Fire," Norman MacLean
- "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," Dee Brown
- "Bad Land," Jonathan Raban
- "The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience," J.S. Holliday
- "The Art of Eating," M.F.K. Fisher
- "And the Band Played On," Randy Shilts
- "The Big Four," Oscar Lewis
- "The Solace of Open Spaces," Gretel Ehrlich
- "In the Spirit of Crazy Horse," Peter Matthiessen
- "Sea of Cortez: A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research," John Steinbeck, Edward F. Ricketts
- "The Practice of the Wild," Gary Snyder
- "Dancing at the Edge of the World," Ursula K. LeGuin
- "Great Plains," Ian Frazier
- "The Great Plains," Walter Prescott Webb
- "Land of Giants: The Drive to the Pacific Northwest, 1750-1950," David Sievert Lavender
- "Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas," Mari Sandoz
- "City of Nets," Otto Friedrich
- "Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place," Terry Tempest Williams
- "The Content of Our Character," Shelby Steele
- "High Tide in Tucson," Barbara Kingsolver
- "Winter," Rick Bass
- "Undaunted Courage," Stephen Ambrose
- "The Woman Warrior," Maxine Hong Kingston
- "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," Tom Wolfe
- "I Lost It at the Movies," Pauline Kael
- "The Devil's Dictionary," Ambrose Bierce
- "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," Hunter S. Thompson
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- "The Hunger for Memory," Richard Rodriguez
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- "The Air-Conditioned Nightmare," Henry Miller
- "T. Rex and the Crater of Doom," Walter Alvarez
- "The Way to Rainy Mountain," N. Scott Momaday
- "The Man Who Walked Through Time," Colin Fletcher
- "John Barleycorn," Jack London
- "Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans," Ronald Takaki
- "Dirty Truths: Reflections on Politics, Media, Ideology, Conspiracy, Ethnic Life and Class Power," Michael Parenti
- "The Executioner's Song," Norman Mailer
- "The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West," Patricia Nelson Limerick
- "Living Up the Street: Narrative Recollections," Gary Soto
- "The Captive Mind," Czeslaw Milosz
- "California Fault: Searching for the Spirit of a State Along the San Andreas," Thurston Clarke
- "Lonesome Traveler," Jack Kerouac
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- "An Autobiography," Ansel Adams
- "The Great Thirst: Californians and Water, 1770s-1990s," Norris Hundley
- "Hole in the Sky: A Memoir," William Kittredge
- "Twentieth Century Pleasures: Prose on Poetry," Robert Hass
- "Skid Road: An Informal Portrait of Seattle," Murray Morgan
- "My Wilderness," William O. Douglas
- "The Klamath Knot," David Rains Wallace
- "Sweet Promised Land," Robert Laxalt
- "The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary," John Rechy
- "Additional Dialogue: Letters of Dalton Trumbo, 1942-1962"
- "Final Cut," Steven Bach
- "The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890," Leonard Pitt
- "It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West," Richard White
- "Communalism," Kenneth Rexroth
- "I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked," Upton Sinclair
- "And a Voice to Sing With," Joan Baez
- "Miles From Nowhere: In Search of the American Frontier," Dayton Duncan
- "Winter in Taos," Mabel Dodge Luhan
- "The Voice of the Desert," Joseph Wood Krutch
- "Where the Wasteland Ends: Politics and Transcendence in Postindustrial Society," Theodore Roszak
- "Traveling Light," Bill Barich
- "The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History," Leo Braudy
- "Stepping Westward," Sallie Tisdale
- "Money and Class in America: Notes and Observations on Our Civil Religion," Lewis H. Lapham
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- "Sinclair Lewis," Mark Schorer
- "Dashiell Hammett: A Life," Diane Johnson
- "The Town That Fought to Save Itself," Orville Schell
- "Hide and Seek," Jessamyn West
- "Anybody's Gold," Joseph Henry Jackson

# Generational bloodlines converge like Western waterways in 'Mountain Time'

By **RON FRANSCCELL**  
COX NEWS SERVICE

**I**n Montana, not far from where Ivan Doig grew up beneath the big sky that still haunts him, three rivers flow together to form the deep and wide Missouri, lacing through time and landscape, the old West and the new.

And like the brawny Missouri, Doig has channeled three deep literary tributaries into "Mountain Time," a coda to his McCaskill family trilogy ("English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana").

Mitch Rozier is flotsam, a 50-year-old environmental columnist for a post-hip alternative Seattle weekly paper, a baby boomer treading water with his own past and present: estrangement from his grown children, tenuous job security and a scrappy lover.

Lexa McCaskill is jetsam, the earthy and divorced Montana expatriate swirling in Mitch's eddy, catering swanky Seattle software soirees, also going nowhere. Together, they are caught in the undertow of Lyle Rozier, Mitch's father. Lyle is dying of leukemia, and Mitch is summoned to his childhood home in Montana, where he's caught up in the ordeal of his filial obligation: "You can't not go home again when someone is sitting there dying." Mitch faces an ancient question unearthed by a new generation, twisted to fit a new sensibility: Dare we go home again?

That's what Mitch asks himself when his father calls from Montana:

"The old hated tone of voice. Lyle Rozier proclaiming he had the world on a towrope and a downhill pull at last. Rubbing his opposite ear as if the words had gone right through him, Mitch winced into the phone that next morn-

## BOOK REVIEW

### ■ Mountain Time

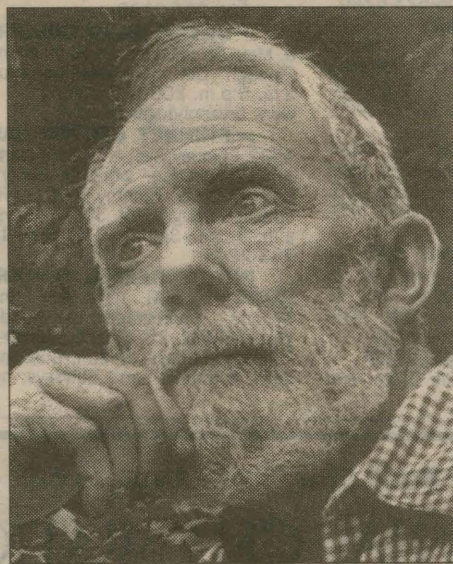
By Ivan Doig. Simon & Schuster, 316 pages, \$25.

ing. How many times had he heard this, or something an awful lot like it?"

But Mitch's reluctant reunion with his crusty old dad is flooded with lingering family disappointments and secrets — and the revelation that Lyle wants to sell the family land to a gravel company, rewriting his own life history in the process. Lexa comes along for moral support but brings her sultry sister, world-weary photographer Mariah McCaskill, who documents Lyle's death watch and proves a bitter reminder of Lexa's unrooted angst. Their desperate and disparate lives flow together when they hike into the mountains on a sad journey to scatter Lyle's ashes.

Three people, three intense relationships, three rivers. "Mountain Time" is the confluence: The very real familial clash between Lyle and Mitch echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West, where exploitation always has been at odds with environmental anxiety. But the reader also stands on the near bank of a dynamic, flowing history in which men have both protected and profaned the Western landscape, which is as much a character in Doig's work as any McCaskill.

Doig's poetic prose remains intact here, but for the first time in his literary career he's pretty funny, too, especially when he's satirizing the foibles and excesses of the Pacific Northwest "Cyberia": "The Cascopia (newspaper) building was in Seattle's Fremont district, where



## COMING UP

■ **Ivan Doig.** Seattle writer reads from "Mountain Time," 7 p.m. Monday, Third Place Books, 17171 Bothell Way N.E., Lake Forest Park. 206-366-3333.

the Sixties still roamed. The hempen necessities of life were available there, as were cafes with good rowdy names such as The Longshoreman's Daughter, plus deluxe junk shops, plus bars that were museum pieces from the days when hair was 'Hair.' "

"Mountain Time" will not dissuade those who rank Seattle's Doig among the best living American writers, and one might even begin making comparisons to some of the best dead ones, too. Faulkner comes most readily to mind: The Sartorises of Yoknapatawpha County are no more troubled and no more human than the McCaskills of the Two Medicine country in Montana. Two great rivers in different landscapes.

■ A Wyoming novelist and newspaperman, Ron Franscell is author of "Angel Fire" and the upcoming mystery "The Deadline."

The very real familial clash between Lyle and Mitch in "Mountain Time" echoes the clash between the historic and contemporary West.

## Readings and signings

A check mark indicates a recommendation by the P-I's John Marshall.

### TODAY

✓ **JOHN MARSHALL** — Photographer presents a slide show and discussion of 'Washington II,' 6:30 p.m., Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park Towne Centre, 17171 Bothell Way N.E. 206-366-3333.

✓ **JAMES HILLMAN** — Reads 'The Force of Character: And the Lasting Life,' 7 p.m., The Elliott Bay Book Co., 101 S. Main St. 206-624-6600.

### SATURDAY

**BILL SCHULTHEIS** — Local author and commentator reads 'The Coffeehouse Investor: How to Build Wealth, Ignore Wall Street and Get on With Your Life,' 10 a.m., Pages: Books, News & Web, 432 15th Ave. E. 206-324-1000.

**CHRIS DUFF** — Port Angeles writer/kayaker reads 'On Celtic Tides: Around Ireland By Sea Kayak,' 4:30 p.m., Elliott Bay, 206-624-6600.

**STEVE CRESON AND DARRIN DANIEL** — Editors of the book 'Think of the Self-Speaking: Harry Smith Selected Interviews' read excerpts, 7 p.m., Confounded Books, 3506 Fremont Ave. N.

206-545-0744.

**NATASHA SAJÉ** — German-born writer from Salt Lake City reads 'Red Under the Skin,' 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay, 206-624-6600.

### SUNDAY

**THALIA ZEPATOS** — Travel author reads 'A Journey of One's Own,' 2 p.m., Wide World Books & Maps, 1911 N. 45th St. 206-634-3453.

**ZACHARY MARCUS** — Former Elliott Bay Book Co. bookseller gives a slide show and talk on 'Experiences on the Eastern Front: A First-Hand Account of the War in Kosovo,' 2 p.m., Third Place Books, 206-366-3333.

**FOUR POETS AND AN OPEN MICROPHONE** — Shari Miller, T. Clear, Nicky Ducommun and James Gurley read from their works, 3 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 1530 11th Ave. N.W., Issaquah. 425-557-8808.

**SUSAN BRADLEY** — Reads 'How to Be Irresistible to the Opposite Sex,' 7:30 p.m., Barnes & Noble, 300 Andover Park W., Suite 200, Tukwila. 206-575-3965.

### MONDAY

**DAVID M. KENNEDY** — History professor at

Stanford reads 'Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945,' 5 p.m., Elliott Bay, 206-624-6600.

**CARLENE CROSS** — Bainbridge Island writer reads 'The Undying West: Stories From Montana's Camas Prairie,' 7 p.m., University Bookstore, 206-634-3400.

✓ **IVAN DOIG** — Seattle writer of the American West reads 'This House of Sky,' 7 p.m., Third Place Books, 206-366-3333.

**RICHARD BACH** — San Juan Island author reads 'Out of My Mind: The Discovery of Saunders-Vixen,' 7:30 p.m., Elliott Bay, 206-624-6600.

### TUESDAY

✓ **ROBERT D. KAPLAN** — Reads 'An Empire Wilderness: Travels Into America's Future,' 5:30 p.m., Elliott Bay, 206-624-6600.

**CECILE ANDREWS** — Seattle columnist reads 'The Circle of Simplicity,' 7 p.m., Third Place Books, 206-366-3333.

**LARRY BRAMMER AND MARIAN BINGEA** — Read 'Caring For Yourself While Caring For

CONTINUED on Next Page



# Jonathan Yardley

## MOUNTAIN TIME

By Ivan Doig  
Scribner. 316 pp. \$25

Montana has become the In Place among certain members of the cognoscenti, and as an unhappy consequence has suffered a small invasion of writers, film makers, movie stars and other undesirables. But one does not have to be a native to know that the environment they inhabit is a long way from the "real" Montana. A far more accurate depiction of it is to be found in the writing of Ivan Doig, who grew up in that desolate, beautiful state in a family of sheep ranchers and who has devoted himself to celebrating (and preserving) the Montana he knows in the pages of his books.

He has now published nine, of which *Mountain Time* is the sixth work of fiction. Here as before, his best writing is about landscape and place; he has more trouble with people, especially when he fills their mouths with stiff dialogue, but his abiding love for his home ground carries the day in *Mountain Time*, as it almost always does in his work.

Not surprisingly, given its central subject, that work has a strongly autobiographical cast, as certainly appears to be the case with *Mountain Time*. Doig doesn't do fictional autobiography as it's commonly practiced these days—navel-gazing, mercifully, is not among the tricks of his trade—but he uses the raw material of his own life as the starting point for exploring the lives of other people and the places where they live. Thus the protagonist of this novel, Mitch Rozier, is a Montanan now living in Seattle, as Doig himself does, and a man deeply concerned about the preservation of his home state's natural environment, as Doig himself is.

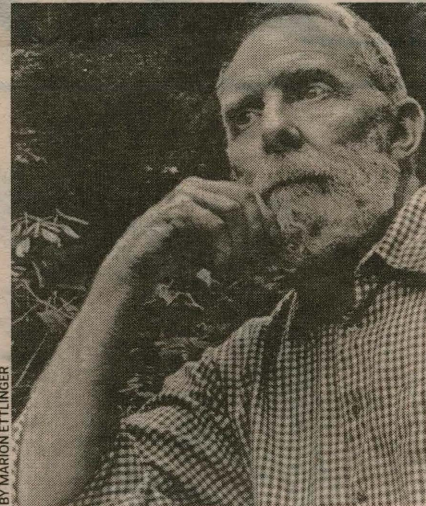
Mitch is, by his own reckoning, "a fifty-year-old unfeathered biped carrying too much weight," including "a marriage behind me that I wouldn't wish on an alimony lawyer," "grown children who maybe are what they are because I didn't wage a fifteen-year war over them with their mother, and they don't care spit about me," a job with a marginal Seattle newspaper that's teetering toward extinction, and a crotchety old father, Lyle, who has summoned him back to Montana for a renewal of their eternal standoff.

Mitch lives in Seattle with Lexa McCaskill, an earthy woman a decade younger than he who runs a small catering operation while trying to keep their loving but fragile relationship on a more or less even keel. Mitch is a big, athletic guy—he played football at the University of Washington until the temptations of the 1960s counterculture

got the better of him—whose size disguises a soft and vulnerable heart. He writes a column called "Coastwatch" for a newspaper called *Cascopia*, and he writes mostly about the environment; he is no tree-hugger, but he loves nature and would just as soon that it not be turned into one gigantic parking lot.

He's been called back home to Twin Sulphur Springs on what turns out to be a pretext: His father claims to have it in mind to sell off the rocky land on which he has perched for years to Aggregate Construction Materials, Inc., the managers of which think "there's going to be oil and gas wells" in the vicinity. But it soon develops that Lyle has been told he has a terminal illness, and is wrapping up the loose ends of his life. When he tells Mitch the news, everything changes:

"One diagnostic word, all it took. The space of a breath had brought Mitch his turn in the gunsights of obligation. . . . Like the flyways of rattled birds, America's concourses were constantly crisscrossed with



Ivan Doig

Mitch is . . . "a fifty-year-old unfeathered biped carrying too much weight," including "a marriage behind me that I wouldn't wish on an alimony lawyer."

Baby Boomers trying to nerve up for the waiting bedside consultation, the nursing home decision, the choosing of a casket. Mitch could generally pick out the stunned journeyers home in airport waiting lounges, the trim businesswoman who lived by focus sitting there now with a doll-eyed stare, the man celebrating middle age with a ponytail looking down baffled now at his compassion-fare ticket. Targeted from here on, in featureless waiting rooms the color of antiseptic gloves, for the involuntary clerkwork of closing down a parent's life. The time came; it always came. The when of it was the ambush."

Mitch goes to Twin Sulphur Springs by himself, but when Lexa asks if he'd like her to join him, he immediately and gratefully says yes. Then, suddenly, they are joined by her

sister, Mariah, a noted photographer, "a woman who cut trails through life as brisk as a comet, and as unfollowable." She ingratiates herself with Lyle, and tries to persuade him that she should make, and publish in newspapers, a photographic record of his final days. "There's this aging population," she tells him, "and a bazillion of us Baby Boomers who've never had to deal with anything more serious than burying the class hamster, back in first grade. I hate to say it, but people need to see your kind of situation."

Lyle really doesn't take much persuading, being not just contrary but egotistical in the bargain, with the result that a number of interconnected subplots are created: Mitch and Lyle, Mitch and Lexa, Lexa and Mariah, Lyle and Mariah, Mitch and Mariah, and, looming forever in the distance, Montana, "a country of great mountains and mediocre human chances." In addition, the story is freighted with a heavy burden of memory, as Mitch recalls his contentious dealings with his father, his own unhappy marriage, and the meeting in Alaska with Lexa—herself then married to someone else—that marked the beginning of the end of his old life, and hers.

These are a lot of balls to keep in the air, but by and large Doig is up to the challenge. If human speech presents formidable obstacles for him—the phrase "wooden dialogue" has rarely been more apt—human emotions do

not; he understands his characters well, and manages to make them all the more interesting not in spite of their flaws but because of them. Lyle in particular is complex and surprising, especially as he struggles to disguise the fear that the disease inflicts upon him, fear such as he has not felt since he was a young man fighting in the South Pacific.

In *Mountain Time* as in life itself, people are more interesting than causes. Doig is an environmental true believer whose fiction often teeters along the narrow line between story and tract, but this time he successfully resists the temptation to preach. He lets the story tell itself, which is what stories are supposed to do. ■

Jonathan Yardley's e-mail address is [yardley@twp.com](mailto:yardley@twp.com).

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Where this symbol appears next to a book title, the first chapter of this book is available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com>

# Writer finds discipline in farming, journalism roots

Author Ivan Doig, born in Montana and raised on a farm, finds the land still inspires him and draws him back for research. He is on a Montana book tour for his newest effort, "Mountain Time."



**F**arm-boy roots and the discipline of chores gave writer Ivan Doig the ability to rise each morning and work.

The native Montanan and ex-ranch hand says his early days of helping on the farm coupled with his fortitude in graduate school at Northwestern University and later as a book reviewer to teach him deadlines.

"It doesn't matter if you're not in the mood to feed the cows or herd the sheep," Doig said in an interview from his Seattle home. "Do the work."

And "doing the work" has been a matter of course for the 60-year-old Doig since he started work half a lifetime ago to become an author.

He is usually up by 5 a.m., taking a walk or weeding his lettuce patch while drawing inspiration from Puget Sound. "I've been known to return phone calls at 5:30 a.m.," he chuckles, noting that not everyone rises with the sun. "But I break the work into portions and if I'm having trouble moving the plot forward, I move to a different section of the book and work on weather passages, descriptive parts, or the dialogue."

Doig was 39 when "This House of Sky," his first effort, was greeted with bravos and rapturous reviews. That was a finalist for the National Book Award in contemporary thought and the language of the book was praised as coming from "the hands of an artist...it touches all landscape and all life," said the Los Angeles Times.

Since then he has accomplished a trilogy of novels — "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," "English Creek," and "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana." The book tour for his latest novel, "Mountain Time," kicked off this week and ends in Portland, Ore., Dec. 11, after more than three dozen readings and book signings.

"I make sure they take me home after four or five readings, though," he says. "Otherwise, it gets daunting, and I miss the writing part."

Writing nine books and more than 200

articles and book reviews has given Doig a pride in his dedication. "I've never missed a deadline and I think my habit patterns from journalism have served me well in the book writing," he said. But he no longer does book reviews, as he did for years for the New York Times, Washington Post and USA Today. "They simply take too much time from the rest of my writing."

Doig, married to teacher Carol, encourages would-be journalistic writers to take the leap into fiction and novels if that's their hearts' desire. "But I tell people to get the financial part secure first. Have a partner who can help you with insurance. My wife supported me for many years while I was working on the first book — it was actually just over six years in the making and two and one-half years at the keyboard."

The latest effort, "Mountain Time," contrasts mountain time with human time. Doig says it deals primarily with three relationships: father and son, sisters, and lovers. The book is, he says, "a novel of the Baby Boom generation jelly-sandwiched between grown children who've gone their own way and aging parents who are losing control of their lives."

The action takes place in Alaska, in Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, and in San Francisco, among other places. The attempt, he says, was to connect human and geographical qualities and vulnerabilities.

"I work very hard to make my characters and situations convincing," he says. "In this latest book, I have a very large character — a big guy — whose extra physical dimensions tie him in with the larger-than-life landscape."

Doig works a lot with rhythms in his characters' dialogue, and linguistic trademarks, and he works hard to make his names memorable. "I keep files on names, faces, characteristics gleaned from life and observation," he says. "And of course, I make things up too. You have to draw on your own imagination."

Journalists, he says, sometimes have trouble making the transition to novels

because "they try to be even-handed, which is a basic principle of journalism. But in fiction, your characters have to have passions and obsessions and you can't be afraid to hold back."

The much honored author also likens his work to that of a sculptor, watercolorist or jazz musician. "I've talked with all of those artists and they all try to make their work real by 'getting it in the fingers' — whether it's the feel of the rock, the effectiveness of the sketch or the feel of the keys under the fingers. I'm trying to do that with my characters, landscape and language."

Doig also has tart observations about being pigeonholed, as many before him have been, "as a western writer."

The best writers often come from regional roots, he says. "Eudora Welty was pegged as a southern writer and she wrote wonderful books about life. Wallace Stegner fought the pigeonholing. On and on," he says. "Everybody is a regionalist. Tolstoy is a regionalist."

Years ago, he says, the New York Times did a roundup piece on what they stereotyped as "Writers of the Purple Sage." They misspelled Wallace Stegner William Stegner. Doig laughs at another writer's comment that "Out here, West of the Hudson, we've always pronounced the name 'Wallace'."

He is fond of quoting poet William Carlos Williams who said, "the classic is the local fully realized." Doig says he "rocked back in my chair when I first came across that. The finest words of many a good writer are marked by place."



## Arts & Entertainment

By Christene Meyers

### Ivan Doig Readings, Signings

**Saturday, Aug. 21,** Museum of the Rockies sponsors at Country Book Shelf, 1-3 p.m.

**Monday, Aug. 23,** Miles City Town and Country Club, 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, Aug. 24,** Alberta Bair Theater in Billings, 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, Aug. 25,** Great Falls, Hastings Books and Music, 4-6 p.m.

**Friday, Aug. 27,** Kalispell, Books West, 5-7 p.m.

## Park: Ball's in DEQ's lap

(Continued from Page 1)

els of iron and manganese throughout the area, "which might be correlated more with the old landfill," he said. At this point, he added, it doesn't appear that the petroleum contamination is reaching the river.

According to Butler, testing so far indicates that perhaps five to 10 acres near the center of the park are affected by the petroleum-based pollution. Additional testing slated for early September may reveal more details, but for now officials are going on the assumption that the contamination is not widespread.

"I feel like we have the extent fairly well isolated," she said. The city and state have imposed no restrictions on use of the park.

Initial funding for contaminant testing in the area was a \$45,000 grant from the federal Environmental Protection Agency's "brown fields" program, which helps state and local governments study sites that could be listed under EPA's Superfund cleanup program. Another \$32,000 for studies was issued to the city last year by EPA, but now that gas-related contamination has been found, new "brown fields" money will not be available because of a petroleum exemption in Superfund regulations, said Denise Martin, supervisor of DEQ's Site Response Section in Helena. That decision by EPA has left city officials footing the bill to complete the next three rounds of initial

testing, but the cost should only be about \$3,000, Butler said.

"It's worth getting that information," she said of the sampling, which is expected to continue on a quarterly basis until early next year under this phase of the investigation. Depending on what further sampling shows, she and Stagner said, more testing may be needed later. More decisions will also need to be made about finding the party responsible for the contamination, and what to do - if anything - about cleaning up the site.

"That is a ball that is completely in DEQ's lap," Butler said. "The city feels we've done our share."

Recent pressure testing on Conoco's nearby pipeline didn't show any leaking, Butler added, and other refineries with lines in the area haven't yet been asked to test their equipment. She added that a 1976 spill in the vicinity is being investigated as well.

Meanwhile, Butler said the city, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and MSE-HKM Inc., a city-contracted engineering firm, are moving ahead with plans to lay riprap and other stabilization materials along the park's riverside banks to keep more garbage and soil from eroding into the Yellowstone. Earth moving in the \$1 million project, for which the Corps has committed to pay 65 percent, could get started in late October or November, she said.

## Doig rewrites until work 'starts to dance'

By JIM LARSON

The Billings Outpost

"Low grade fishing," the author called it. Real "tin and bait fishing," he said.

These were the words that author Ivan Doig used to describe the passage that he was about to read from his new novel, "Mountain Time." He added, "I tremble to read this scene in the home of Norman Mclean."

Mr. Doig speaks as well as he writes. He amused and entertained a large group of admirers last week at the Alberta Bair Theater.

Before plunging into the reading, Mr. Doig spoke of the things that "fuel" his writing. Often praised for his excellent ear for

dialogue, the author noted that "every work has its own vocabulary." He said that he works consciously at developing the vernacular of each book. He listens for "the poetry of the working class."

When asked if he knew how his stories would end when he started them, Mr. Doig said that he knows when the story will begin and end, but not the exact plot. He said that he works within an "arc of time."

"I have a notion of where the plot is going, but I am often guided by the language," he said. He also noted that the characters provided some of the plot.

An audience member asked Mr. Doig how he felt about rewriting. He answered, "I am a ferocious rewriter. I'm more of a rewriter

## People in Billings

### Insurance agent recognized

Mark D. Sorlie of Billings received the Emerald Award in July during the 119th annual meeting of agents of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. in Milwaukee.

Mr. Sorlie was recognized for selling more than \$9.3 million in insurance for Northwestern. He is associated with the company's Samuel P. Peila District Agency in Billings, of the Mike M. Anderson General Agency in Bozeman.

### Community Band picks conductor

Ken Boggio, longtime band conductor in Hardin, has been chosen to direct the Billings Community Band in the coming year.

Rehearsals begin at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 1, in band room at Senior High School. No auditions are required to join.

Call Carmen Galt at 259-3476 for information.

### Billings teacher honored

Richelle R. Selleck, a kindergarten teacher at Poly Drive Elementary School, has been selected for a Disney's American Teachers Award.

Ms. Selleck and Glasgow High School teacher Gordon P. Hahn were among 39 teachers selected from more than 75,000 nominations. They will be honored in Los Angeles in an awards show that will be shown on the Disney Channel on Nov. 15.



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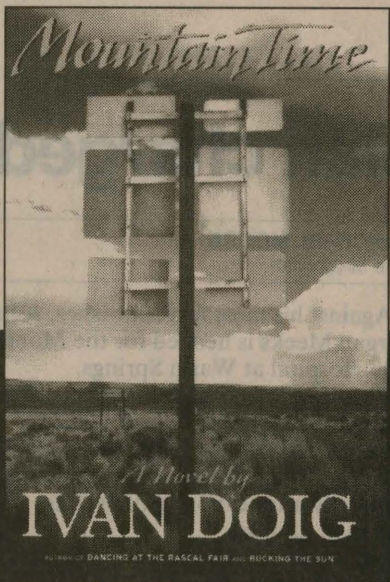
at a book signing of

*Mountain  
Time*

on

**August 19th**

...  
**12:00 p.m.**

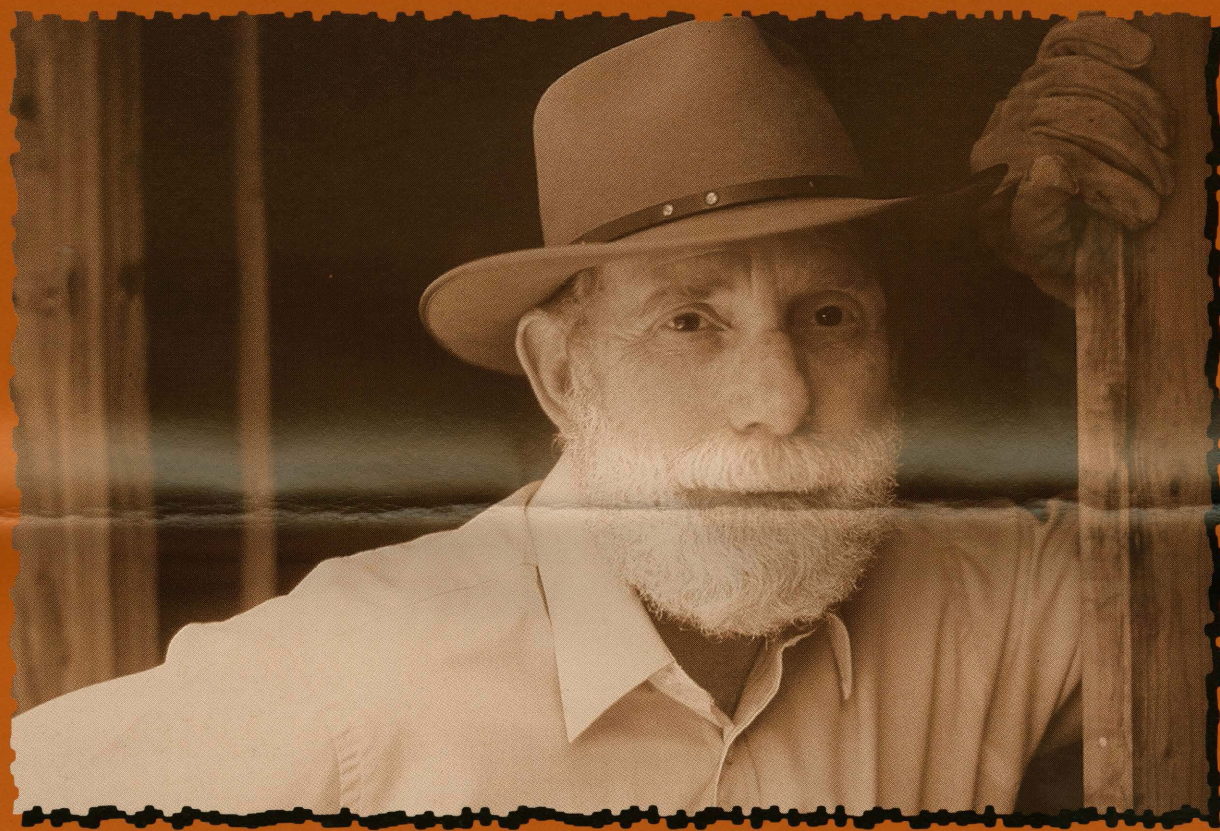


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— A NOVEL —

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Committee for the Wallace Stegner Chair in Western American Studies, MSU  
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COUNTRY BOOKSHELF

# This Week

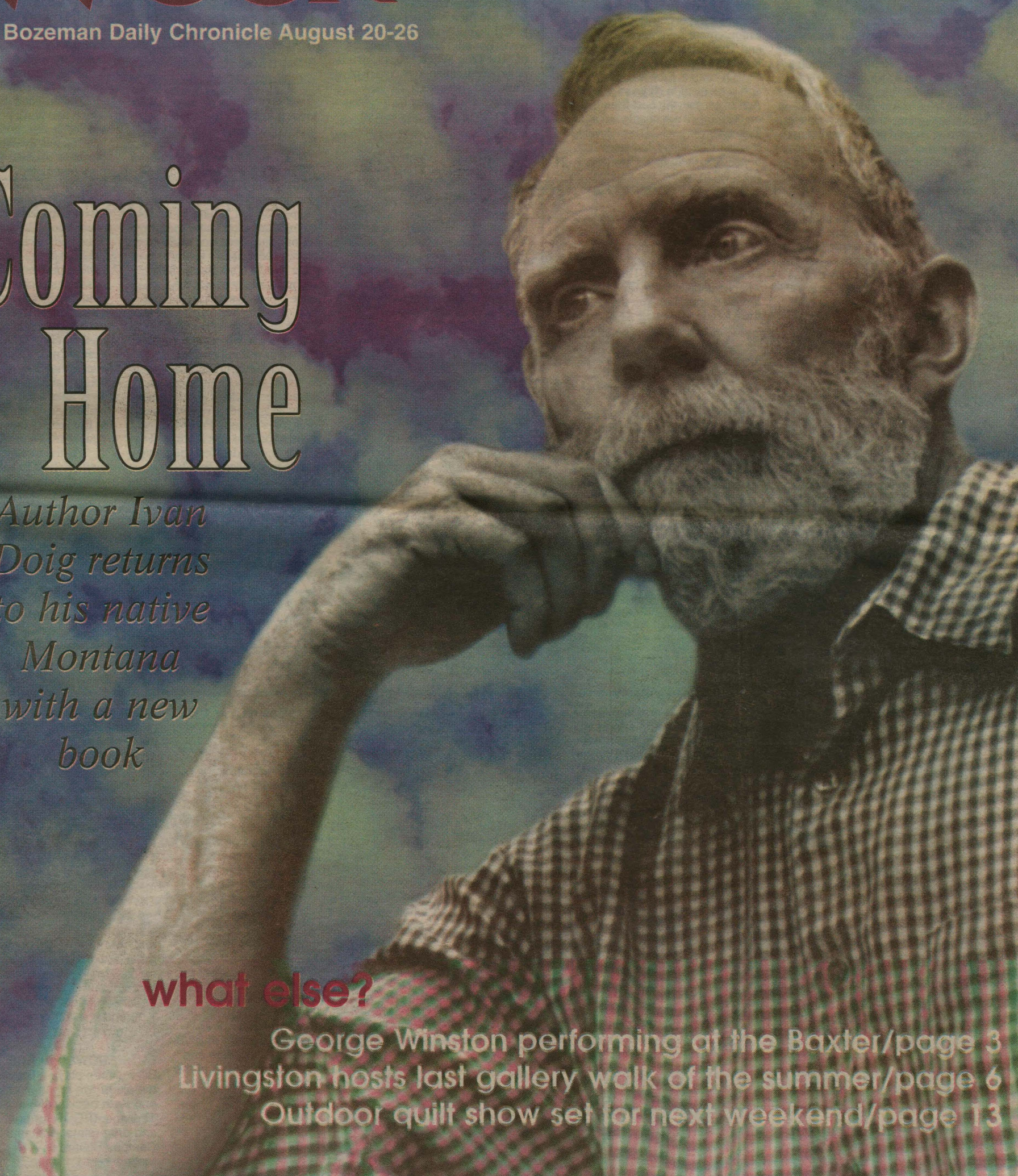
The Bozeman Daily Chronicle August 20-26

## Coming Home

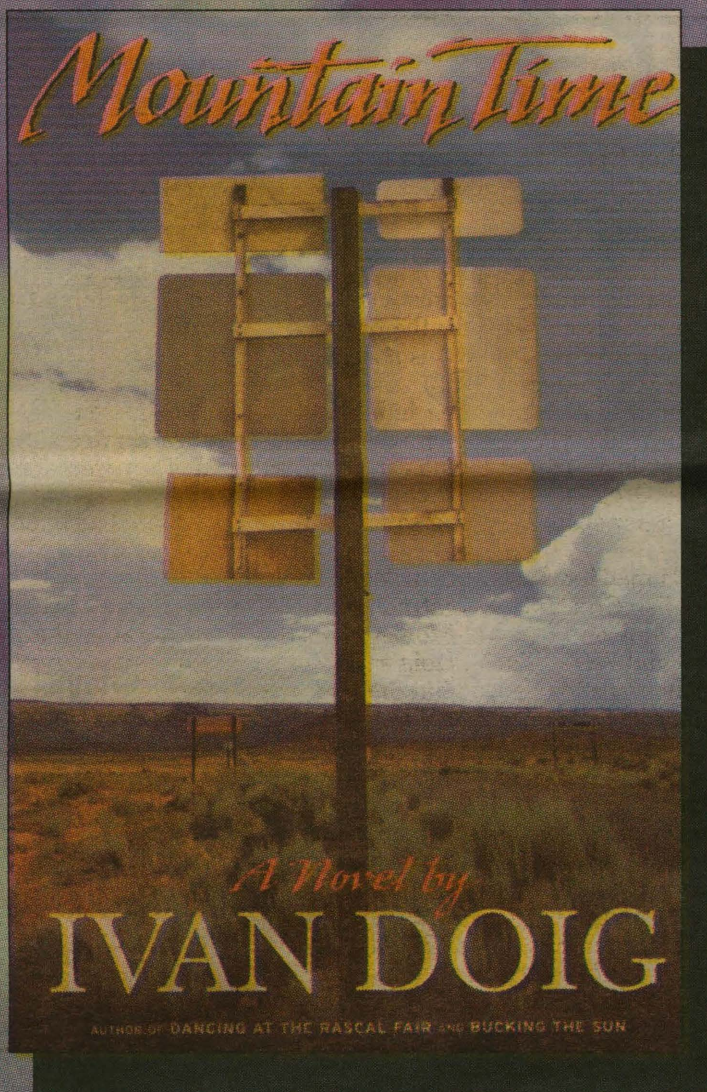
*Author Ivan Doig returns to his native Montana with a new book*

### what else?

George Winston performing at the Baxter/page 3  
Livingston hosts last gallery walk of the summer/page 6  
Outdoor quilt show set for next weekend/page 13



# Living on Mountain t



stories by Karin Ronnow  
of the Chronicle

Ivan Doig is coming home, well almost.

He's coming to Bozeman, which is, as the crow flies, just about 68 miles short of White Sulphur Springs, where he was born 60 years ago, and where generations of his family are buried.

Driving into the Gallatin Valley from the west, the first thing he and his wife, Carol, will see is the Bridger Range

"The Bridgers come on the horizon as we come down that valley. I can't not see them," he says. "There is a lot of the story of my life there, great turns in my life, of my mother dying back there in the mountains and my dad beginning to raise me. And two books. I've been born of events there."

But Bozeman is about as close as he'll come to home on this trip.

"White Sulphur Springs is a bit of a different case for me," he says, his voice slowing. "It is striking, the power of the land where your people lie, under those headstones. It is a place you don't go back to lightly when you're trying to do some other stuff."

And this time, the "other stuff" includes a book tour. He will be here to read from his newest book, "Mountain Time," and deliver the Stegner lecture at Montana State University.

He will be greeted by an extended family of fans and friends who have felt the tug of his tales about the Montana landscape, a place that has forever stayed with him "in terms of the material in the powerspot of my memory," he says.

"The people I heard tell stories, my father and my grandmother and my dad's buddies in the bars in White Sulphur Springs and so on, all this forms a very vivid landscape of the mind for an impressionable child, which I guess I must have been."

The grandson of Montana homesteaders and son of Montana ranch workers, Doig left Montana for college at Northwestern University, where he

earned a journalism degree. Over the years, he has been a ranch hand, a newspaperman, a magazine editor and a writer. He earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington and settled in Seattle with Carol, whom he met at Northwestern.

But his memoirs and novels draw on his personal history, the seductiveness of pioneer independence peppered with an honesty about the ups and downs of real life.

"He is important here because he writes so eloquently about a place that means something to us," says Cindy Christin, a librarian at the Bozeman Public Library. "He writes about a way of life and people that, if we are not familiar with people like that, we would like to be; people who work really hard, on ranches, with sheep, that struggle with daily life on a regular basis. He brings those people to life for the rest of us. There are a bunch of people who are important to Montana but get kind of lost sometimes."

"Mountain Time," his sixth novel, starts in Seattle's coffeehouse and computer culture, but is an epilogue of sorts to his earlier fictional trilogy about the McCaskill family. The protagonist this time is Mitch Rozier, a Montana-born, divorced, 50-something environmental columnist for an alternative newspaper. His partner, Lexa McCaskill, is a Montana-born, earthy, divorced caterer.

Doig takes the two back to Montana, where Lyle Rozier, Mitch's exasperating father, wants his environmental son's help with some exploitative endeavor before he dies of leukemia. The two inevitably clash.

Mike Malone, MSU's president and Doig's friend for nearly 20 years, says, "He's one of the great observers of the West, of people and place, that's the fundamental thing. ... In his books you learn what was happening, in many ways, but you also get the meaning of

# ime

## Author Ivan Doig continues his observance of the West in new book

everyday life. He does that whether writing fiction or nonfiction."

Readers say his characters, and their hard-won lives carved from the rugged landscape, are believable. His narrative can be densely poetic, filled with turns of phrase and local cadence, drawn from his own library of dialogue and phrasing, recorded on file cards, a bit he purloined from another American author.

"I once read that the novelist Ann Tyler, the Baltimore novelist, was doing it," Doig says. "I can still remember an example that I read that she would keep these file cards on these characters. I thought, 'I could do that.'"

He says he now has "a pretty good amateur collection" of American slang, drawn from things he overhears, as well as tape-recorded interviews he has done over the years.

"Sometimes when I go to write dialogue, I spread out the cards to see if I can get the cards talking to each other," Doig says.

The result is characters that are remarkably real, especially to readers who grew up speaking the same language.

"That's the idea," he says. "All this meant to be something like Norman Maclean used to call 'the poetry under the prose,' getting the right sound under the prose."

After he wrote "This House of Sky" in 1978 — a memoir about growing up in Montana with his mother's mother and his father after his mother died of complications from asthma — he said he had heard from a reader.

"I think it was only a week or so after the book tour for 'This House of Sky' when this guy called, he said he was calling from a lambing shed in Idaho somewhere," Doig recalls. "He didn't want to say that, by God, it sounded right to him."

Christin points out: "A lot of the things about his life, I think, were really

hard. He is sort of a relic. He had a kind of childhood that not many people were able to experience. And the fact that he was able to articulate it into books for the rest of us" is his gift.

Doig has used the word "relic" himself.

"My grandmother, living as a ranch cook, lived right to the brink of time when hired men no longer sat down at that long table in the cookhouse. They lived in town with a family of their own and microwaved their dinners. My dad is a cowboy and shepherd and haying contractor and he had to constantly shift to accustom to machinery. Along with that goes the way of life, the land-based way of life, which was pretty much gone by the time I came along."

Now he has brought these stories through to the end of the 20th century with "Mountain Time." He will be here this weekend to tell his stories in his warm, intelligent style.

"He is the kind of person you read about in his books, a very traditional man, in the sense that his characters are traditional," Malone says. "But he is a great observer, one of the best observers the West has ever produced. There is a bevy of writers from Montana and you'd have to say he is the leading one of this generation."

But he remains approachable, Christin says.

"You don't find that author standoffishness," she says. "You get the sense that when he returns to Montana, he's back home."

*Author Ivan Doig will be speaking and reading from his new book, "Mountain Time: A Novel," at 8 p.m., Saturday, at the Museum of the Rockies. The event, the latest in a series of ongoing lectures by the Stegner Committee for Western American Studies at MSU, is free and open to the public. Prior to the reading, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., the Country Bookshelf will host a book signing with Doig.*

### The books of Ivan Doig

The author Ivan Doig, Montana-born and bred, has written six books of fiction and three non-fiction titles — all of which have a taste of Montana or the pioneer adventure. Listed in chronological order by date of publication, they are:

■ "This House of Sky" (1978) is a memoir. Doig has said he wrote the book because he felt his family had become relics of a culture that had disappeared. Nominated for the National Book Award.

■ "Winter Brothers" (1980) is nonfiction.

■ "The Sea Runners" (1982) was his first novel. Story of four Swedish men who fled from their indenturement to the Russian-American fur trade. They had signed on for seven years' service at Sitka, Alaska, but stole an 18-foot Indian canoe and escaped. They were found near Astoria, Oregon, three of them nearly starved to death. He was inspired by a newspaper clipping saying only that the three had been found.

His acclaimed Two Medicine trilogy:

■ "English Creek" (1984) introduces Jick McCaskill as a 14-year-old boy and the look and mood of Montana ranch country between the Depression and World War II. Doig says McCaskill is not his literary alter ego, "not by a long shot," but the Two Medicine country of Montana "for an important time was mine." English Creek and its valley are actually the Dupuyer Creek area on the Rocky Mountain Front where Doig lived during high school and was a ranch hand for several summers.

■ In "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," (1987), he goes back in time to the homesteading era. Angus McCaskill and Rob Barclay emigrate from Scotland to forge new lives as sheep farmers in the Two Medicine Country. The book begins in 1889, Montana's year of statehood.

■ In "Ride with Me Mariah Montana," (1990) the final volume in the trilogy, Jick is back, crusty and widowed at 65 years. He winds up chauffeuring his daughter, Mariah, and her obnoxious ex-husband Riley Wright on a three-month driving tour of the state in honor of the 1989 state Centennial celebration.

■ "Heart Earth," (1993) is a prequel to "This House of Sky," written after Doig found letters his mother had written to her brother, Wally, while he served in the Pacific theater during World War II. "I wrote once, of the pull of the past and childhood landscape, that you can't not go home again. The story I found compressed there in that half-year of my mother's last letters proved that to me again."

■ "Bucking the Sun," (1996) deals with the building of the Fort Peck Dam over the Missouri River in the 1930s. He introduces a family of men, the Duffs, and wives, all of whom live in the dam town of Wheeler. And he tells their stories of near-death experiences, love, childbirth, pain alongside the dam construction.

■ "Mountain Time," (1999), Doig's sixth novel, is an epilogue of sorts to his earlier trilogy.

# The Inlander *free*

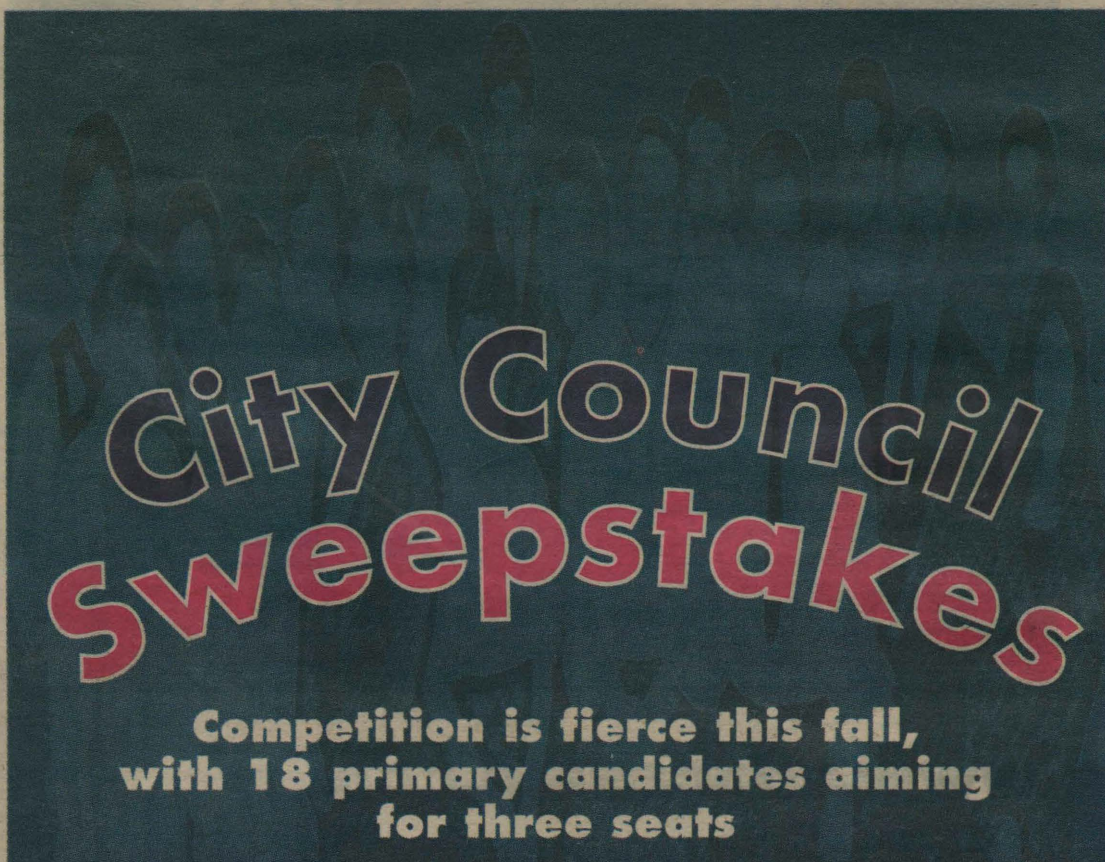
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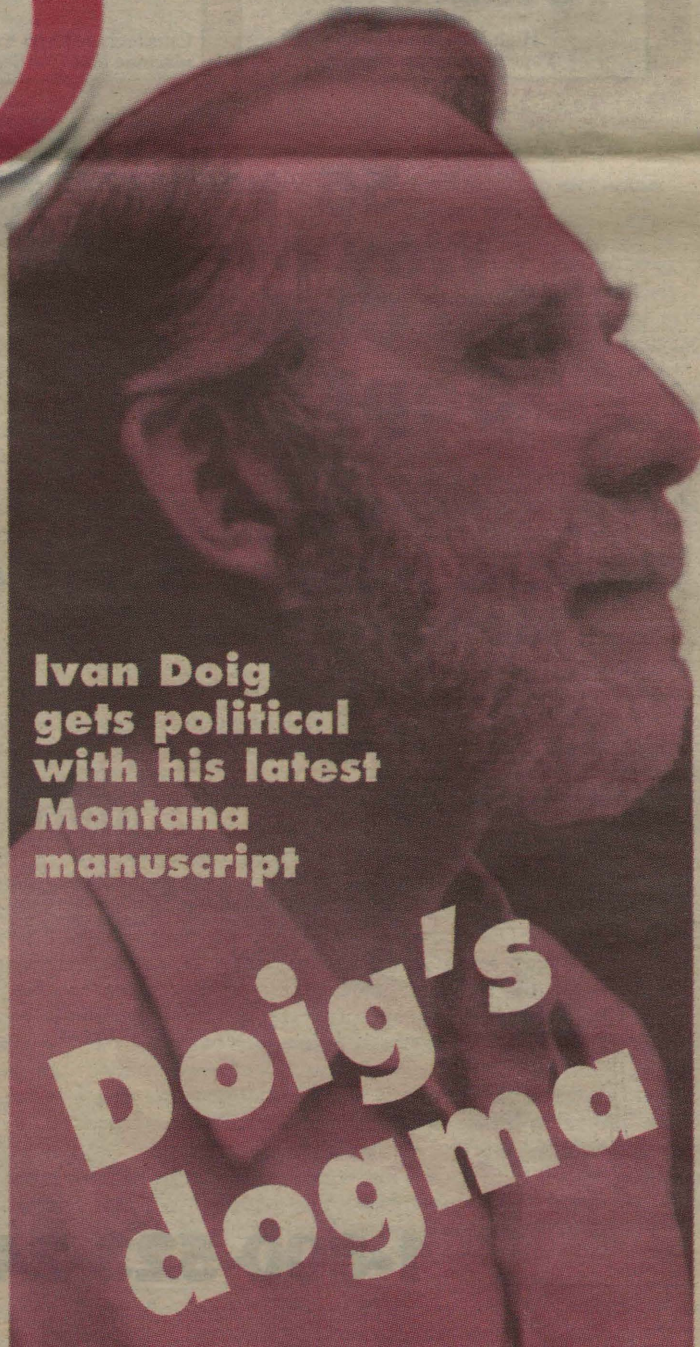
# MP3

Why a new Internet program — MP3 — is making record companies nervous and music lovers happy



## City Council Sweepstakes

Competition is fierce this fall, with 18 primary candidates aiming for three seats



Ivan Doig gets political with his latest Montana manuscript

## Doig's dogma

# The Inland Way

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURE

## Mountain man

Icon of Western Lit, Ivan Doig weaves together Baby Boomers, environmental disaster and his beloved Montana in his latest novel *Mountain Time*

BY SHERI BOGGS

It's a hell of a scene, this Mardi Gras on wheels: "In one single accelerating commotion the massed Rollerbladers let themselves loose, each of them a polymer marble in the spill that rolled toward Fisherman's Wharf. Tourists in rental cars wildly pulled over at the sight of this meteor shower of get-ups, the closets of San Francisco

### LITERATURE

airborne on low-flying naiads and masquers, leftover Wavy Gravys and incipient Courtney Loves, seasoned exhibitionists and heart-in-throat first-timers alike borne on boots speedy as midget locomotives. Skating the rim of the city, the rolling multitude hung a left at Bay Street and aimed its thundering wheels toward Fort Mason."

Not far into his newest book, *Mountain Time*, Ivan Doig's 50ish protagonist Mitch Rozier dons skates and strains to keep up with his edgily hip, twentysomething daughter. It's surprising to come across something so decidedly urban, so far removed from the Montana highlands and rugged folks one usually expects from Doig, certainly one of the most widely respected contemporary writers of the West. But to loyal fans of Ivan Doig, who reads this Saturday at Auntie's Bookstore, it's no surprise that the scene works so well. Snapping off the page with a lively crackle, Doig's prose has the force of both experience and perception, although in the case of the San Francisco 'blading frenzy, Doig was merely a very interested bystander.

"Well, here's my chance to really take some credit," he laughs when asked what it was like to tear through the streets of San Francisco on a sleek pair of inline skates, "but to be honest, that was just another piece of research."

If Doig's fans surmise that he is trading in the bittersweet poignancy and humor of family dynamics, the seasoned love of the land and a background rich in regional history for trendier topics, rest assured that this scene is only a tiny fraction of this generously realized, far-reaching story.

"When I had the idea for this book, I wanted it to be about the baby boom generation, and I wanted to work in some of the stuff about being from inland and moving to the coast," says Doig. "I also wanted to have a character in there who had been through the Alaskan Valdez nightmare, and I wanted to explore how generational tussles might come to bear on conservation issues."

He chuckles as he describes all the things he wanted in this book, acknowledging how ambitious it sounds, but in *Mountain Time*, the seemingly disparate elements do, in fact, fall together.

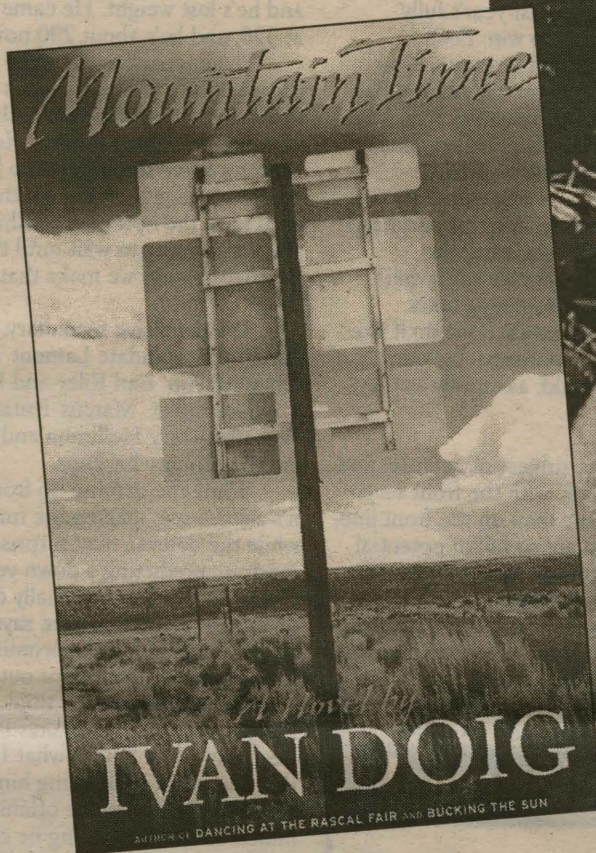
Primarily the story of Mitch Rozier's return to the northern Montana ranches of his childhood in order to care for his Alzheimer's-stricken father, *Mountain Time* also encompasses ecological disasters both real and imagined, the ramifications of belonging to the "sandwich" generation and the issues of culture and community.

The most central ecological issue of the novel is the controversial practice of oil and gas leasing along the Rocky Mountain front. "In the national forest, geologists have figured out that there are pockets of gas and oil in the folds of the mountains," explains Doig. "They're called reefs, and they're similar to ocean reefs. They are enormous rimrocks. There's been quite a struggle up there, people in the area and environmental groups arguing against the Forest Service leasing these energy sites out. The Rocky Mountain front is one of the last great islands of wildlife — it doesn't have a ski area and it doesn't have many of the other intrusions you see in expanses of that size."

Doig points out that the area is so remote and protected, the grizzly has made a comeback there. "I think it's the only place in the lower 48 where the grizzly has any prairie habitat left. At one time, the grizzly came out onto the prairie all the way into the Dakotas."

While Doig was working on his novel, however, the issue was resolved with unusual clearheadedness.

"It had become quite a contentious environmental question," says Doig, "and then the Lewis and Clark National Forest Supervisor, Gloria Flora, made quite a brave decision."



Flora banned oil and gas leasing along the Rocky Mountain front, and the Forest Service has since added a two-year moratorium on mining claims in the region. "Somewhere in the philosophy of the U.S. Forest Service, it says that they are supposed to do the greatest good for the greatest number," says Doig. "Well, you can read that bit of philosophy a variety of ways, and when it comes to multiple use, it's usually been read to mean logging and mining. It can create a hell of a lot of jobs at the moment, but after that, it's pretty much just maintenance. So contrary to popular belief, it doesn't really create any kind of job infrastructure. From what I've heard from people around here about the depreciation of the natural beauty of the area, this decision paves the way for the highest use of the area. It's a dramatic issue and I was kind of keen to get some characters involved in it."

**NOT SURPRISINGLY, CONCERNS** over land use also spill over into long-standing differences among the people and cultures sharing a region. In addition to hardscrabble farmers like Mitch's father eager to make a buck or two off the land whatever it takes, *Mountain Time* also moves equally well between the transplanted Montanans that have gone to the big city streets of Seattle (like Doig, who makes his home in the Emerald City) and the old world, hardworked serenity of a northern Montana Hutterite community.

"[My wife] Carol and I were lucky enough one summer when I was out here researching something to live in a Hutterite colony," says Doig. "It was a mindboggling look at another culture right here in this country. There are people around you dressed like Tolstoy's peasants, with the exception that they are tooth-and-nail modern in their agricultural equipment. This doesn't include television and radio, because they know those things are ready to snatch their kids away, but the tractors and all that are thoroughly modern. We were all admiration."

But admiration aside, where do they fit in this story of modern generations coming to terms with one another? "I find their presence here in Montana is a kind of prism, a refracting glass to think about and show the reader something different. That it's not all yuppies and lattes and llamas."

This need for deeper connections, whether between family, friends or surroundings is no doubt what draws many readers to

**TIME ZONE: DOIG FORGES A BRIDGE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL CULTURES IN HIS NEW NOVEL.**

Doig's work. "There is a search for a kind of community, of family, that we look to in literature," says Doig. "I think that's the endless popularity of something like *To Kill a Mockingbird* — by the end of the book, we're all in that family with Atticus, Jem, Calpurnia and Scout."

Those familiar with Doig's *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, *English Creek* and *Ride With Me Mariah Montana*, will recognize the name McCaskill. "This will be the fourth novel in which the McCaskills appear," notes Doig. "I've seen this book as having Mitch Rozier as the central character, but more and more as I do the readings and talk with people I realize that the McCaskill women in the book are as central as Mitch, even though it's Mitch's family story."

What Doig has really noticed on book tour, however, is how many readers can relate to Mitch's familial obligations, his need to honor what Faulkner called "the old, tired pull of blood."

"There was a baby boomer woman in Hamilton (Mont.), where I just read," he recalls, "who looked kind of teary-eyed, and she was telling me about how she was back here dealing with her father's congestive heart failure. And during the reading, there were at least several men in the audience who were wiping the corners of their eyes."

"I'm fascinated with the baby boomers having to do this, within their colossal numbers," says Doig who is just past the northern end of being a boomer himself. "Part of this book is about going home again, when you can't avoid going home again."

Which is something Doig knows all too well. While his character Mitch trades his home in Seattle for his obligations in Montana, Doig had to leave Montana to seek out a living in Seattle to do his part for his own family. "I've had to form a life out of Montana because I was an economic refugee," says Doig. "I left to find a wage to help support an aging father and a dying grandmother. And in terms of my professional life, the opportunities as a writer were simply elsewhere. If your work is going to be quite a major part of your life, that's what determines something like that."

But Doig is not often homesick for the high plains of his youth. "I like big water, I like living where I can look out at Puget Sound," he says. "We feel we have a good link between both worlds. We can get to Montana within a day," Doig says, then adds with a laugh. "It's not like being from Australia or Mongolia." ♦

Ivan Doig reads from *Mountain Time* on Saturday, Aug. 28 at 7:30 pm at Auntie's Bookstore. Free. For info, call: 838-0206.

## SHELF LIFE

PROFILES BY KRISTI NIEMEYER

Doig measures family bonds in *Mountain Time*

Montana-born author Ivan Doig returns to these familiar peaks and plains, with another novel that perches partly on the geography of his home state.

In *Mountain Time*, Doig tugs on another strand in the fabric of his fictional family, the McCaskills. This Scottish clan – immigrants to the Two Medicine Country in *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* and still wed to the land in *English Creek* – are fraying familial seams.

Sisters Lexa and Mariah McCaskill (introduced in *Ride with Me*, Mariah Montana) are the focus of this novel, along with another transplanted Montanan, Mitch Rozier of Twin Sulphur Springs. The story travels between three dramatic places – Seattle, Montana and Alaska – and three dramatic relationships: lovers, sisters and father and son.

Doig has said he tries to create novels “as highly charged as poetry. I believe all writers of caliber can ground their work in specific land and lingo and yet be writing of that larger country: life.”

As usual, Doig’s language bristles:

“...There was an immense coarse beauty to this season of work, the huge days and the infinite shapes of the rocks, the peninsular solitude of the hills so quietly clocking through him, the earned voyages of the stoneboat to the end of the

field and back again, that he knew he was honing himself against. What he was on his way to becoming, he didn’t know, although he daydreamed version after version – pilot, Mountie, fullback for the Cleveland Browns. None of it his father’s route, he was determined on that. But whatever his life turned out to be, the footprints of it started in these independent hills where sweetgrass sang its song.”

Doig was born in White Sulphur Springs in 1939 and grew up along the Rocky Mountain Front. His childhood provided the grist for his first book, *This House of Sky*; a finalist for the National Book Award.

The writer earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in journalism from Northwestern University, and has worked as a ranch hand, journalist and magazine editor. The newspaper business receives its share of sly jabs and laments in *Mountain Time*, with one character working as a columnist for a dying weekly on the West Coast and another employed as a photographer for Missoula’s daily, the *Montanian*.

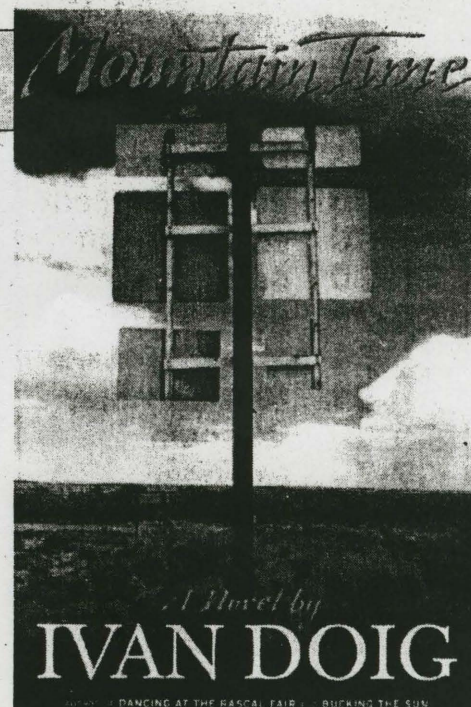
Photographer Mariah McCaskill tells her sister: “... there Missoula is, growing like crazy, and not a damn one of the new folks seems to want to subscribe to a

newspaper. So the management’s got problems, but they’ve also got thumbs for brains. Their idea of a roving photographer is ‘Here Rover, go fetch us another picture of some politician cutting a ribbon.’”

*Mountain Time* marks Doig’s fifth novel; in addition to his Montana trilogy, he’s written *The Sea Runners* and *Bucking the Sun*. Nonfiction books include *Heart Earth: A Memoir* and *Winter Brothers: A Season at the Edge of America*.

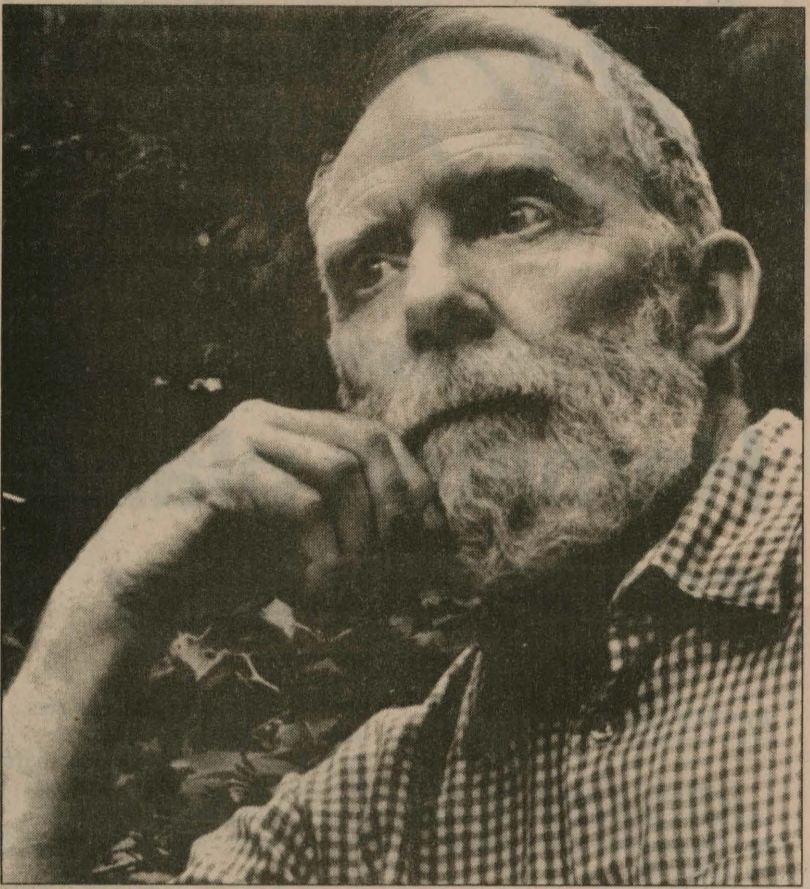
His vivid descriptions of the western landscape and taut insights into human and geographical vulnerability have earned him a reputation as one of the country’s finest storytellers. “Ivan Doig has been, from *This House of Sky*, his first grand entry into literature, one of the great American voices, full of grace, abounding in humanity, easeful in narration, hypnotic in pace, grand in range,” writes Thomas Keneally, author of *Schindler’s List*.

Doig has received the lifetime “Distinguished Achievement” award by the Western Literature Association, the “Spirit of the West” award from the Mountains and Plains Booksellers and honorary degrees from Montana State University and Lewis and Clark College. He resides in Seattle with his wife, Carol.



## MONTANA BOOK TOUR

- Missoula • Aug. 18**  
at Fact & Fiction
- Helena • Aug. 20**  
at Montana Book Co.
- Bozeman • Aug. 21**  
at Country Bookshelf
- Miles City • Aug. 23**  
at Town & Country Club
- Billings • Aug. 24**  
at Alberta Bair Theater
- Great Falls • Aug. 25**  
at Hastings
- Kallspell • Aug. 27**  
at Books West
- Spokane • Aug. 28**  
at Auntie’s Bookstore



Marion Ehlinger

Ivan Doig, author of "This House of Sky," Trilogy, will read from his latest novel, "Mountain Time, Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. at Chapter One Book Store.

# Doig visits Hamilton promoting new book

By **GEORGIANNA TAYLOR**  
of the Ravalli Republic

"My house and my wife's job happen to be in Seattle," Ivan Doig said, "but my mind and writing are in Montana. I regard Seattle as a suburb of Montana."

Doig, author of the highly successful and lavishly reviewed "This House of Sky," will be back in Montana this week on an eight-city promotion tour for his latest book, "Mountain Time." Tuesday, Aug. 17, he will be at Chapter One Book Store to read from the volume and autograph books.

Doig was raised in Montana. His mother died on his sixth birthday and he spent the rest of his youth running sheep with his father Charlie and his maternal grandmother Bessie Ringer.

"We weren't sheep ranchers," he said modestly. "We ran sheep on shares on other ranchers' land - we were the Western version of sharecroppers."

Those years, roughly the 1940's and 50's, provide the writer's strongest memories and the deepest well of experience from which he draws. The three-generation family lived in a small trailer house south of Dupuyer and ran sheep from there across the Two Medicine River on the Blackfeet Indian reservation just southeast of Glacier Park, until, he said, he got big enough to go out on jobs.

According to his own account in the foreword of the new 15th anniversary edition of "Sky," these jobs included working in lambing sheds, picking rock from grainfields, driving a power buckrake in haying season, a D-8 Cat pulling a harrow to summer fallow and a grain truck at harvest. He herded, trailed and cussed sheep, dug a well by hand and whitewashed a barn.

But while in graduate school at the University of Washington he started to notice that he was not meeting other people who had done any of those things.

"In the last years of the 60's" he wrote, "when the country was going through a period of convulsive self-questioning, I was, as usual, out of step. It was getting clearer and clearer to me what I was in life. I was a relic.

"And the son of another relic. And the grandson of yet a third relic."

He earned a Ph.D. in history, but

by then he had admitted that he much preferred being a writer to becoming college professor. He began free lance writing on a full time basis.

While still freelancing for magazines he began his first book to tell the story of his family and the land. The project stretched across six years. The last two and a half, he said, were spent at the keyboard. To cut down on the stress of dealing with a multitude of editors he finally hired an agent in 1974.

"No first book is easy to sell," he said, "but the 13th editor that saw the book took it. Once in print it had a quickly charmed life. It sold well and was reviewed wonderfully."

The book was published in the fall of 1978 and was a finalist for the National Book Award. It has been followed by eight others. The Montana Trilogy covers generations of the fictional McCaskill family in the Two Medicine country he knew so well. The three novels, "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," were published in 1984, '87 and '89, respectively. In the latter year Doig received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western Literature Association. He also received the Spirit of the West Award from the Mountains and Plains Booksellers.

How important a part does a sense of place play in the creation of a book?

"Landscape does give me a topic to work from - to work with," he said. "It kicks my writing into gear but I have covered quite a swath of them. Sense of place is not everything in Western writing. Characters are very important and language. I am trying to use a full orchestra."

The new "Mountain Time" is another novel of family connections, exploring the intense relationships between father and son, between sisters and between lovers.

According to Chapter One owner Russ Lawrence, "The focus shifts constantly between the human relationships and the land that claims them all.

The author added a day to his tour in order to appear in Hamilton. It is his first appearance here and his first reading from this book in Montana. For additional information call the bookstore at 363-5220.

# ARTS *etc.*



Photo by Carol M. Doig

AUTHOR IVAN DOIG, left, talks with Bud Moore of Condon in summer 1997. Moore provided background information for Doig's new novel, "Mountain Time."

## Ivan Doig comes home to Montana

■ New book set partly on Rocky Mountain Front

By SCOTT CRANDELL  
The Daily Inter Lake

Ivan Doig has returned to two of his favorite themes: mountains and McCaskills.

In his latest novel, "Mountain Time," Doig takes readers back to his roots on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front and back to the fictional McCaskill family he has chronicled since 1984's "English Creek."

The mountains — particularly those on the east-side front where Doig grew up — are a mainstay in his books.

"It's just great country," Doig said in a phone interview Wednesday, "like Joseph Conrad being given the ocean to write about."

Doig is wrapping up a tour to promote "Mountain Time" and will be in Kalispell at Books West tonight from 5-7

Ivan Doig will be at Books West in Kalispell today from 5-7 p.m. to read from his latest book, "Mountain Time," and to sign books.

### BOOKS & AUTHORS

p.m. for a reading and book-signing session.

In his writing, Doig also has returned several times to the McCaskills, although he said they appeared somewhat accidentally in his latest work.

"I hadn't really intended that," Doig said of sisters Lexa and Mariah McCaskill showing up in the book, "but it seemed to fit the plot line."

"Mountain Time" throws Lexa, a Seattle caterer; her lover Mitch Rozier, a Seattle environmental writer; and Mariah, a world-hopping photographer, together for an unexpected road trip back to their native haunts on the Rocky Mountain Front.

They end up in an emotional maelstrom that ranges from Mitch's dying father and his endless get-rich-quick schemes to a harrowing backpacking trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Doig's attention to detail is evident in his description of the rigors of the wilderness trip. He credits Bud Moore of Condon — "one of Montana's greatest outdoorsmen," by Doig's estimation — for providing backpacking background for the book.

Several passages also pay homage to Bob Marshall, the man for whom the wilderness is named.

Part of Doig's presentation tonight will include those book sections, and Doig said he will talk about his fascination with Marshall, both the wilderness and the man.

"Mountain Time," which touches on proposed oil-and-gas exploration of the Rocky Mountain Front, could easily have become an environmental treatise.

But Doig wouldn't have it that way. "I

See DOIG on Page A20

## Author admits fondness for the past

DOIG/From A17

like my people and lives to be more complicated than just writing tracts or screeds," he said.

Although "Mountain Time" and its predecessor, "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana" are modern-day tales, Doig said he prefers the past.

"I'm drawn to write about the past, I guess, because it seems to be such a part of our bloodstreams," Doig said. "I do think the past really counts in people's

lives."

Even "Mountain Time" ventures into the past with the World War II recollections of Lyle Rozier, Mitch's father.

For his next book, Doig plans a return to earlier days along the Rocky Mountain Front.

"I'm pondering going back to that homestead community of 'Dancing at the Rascal Fair,'" Doig said. That book, a sequel to "English Creek," was Doig's most popular, selling nearly 200,000 copies.

The Gathering of the Four Winds held tonight at The Met/D3

SECTION

D

Thursday, August 26, 1999

The Spokesman-Review  
Spokane, Wash./Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

INLAND NORTHWEST  
**INN**  
LIFE

**Tender beginnings**

Lake City Playhouse kicks off fall season with "Lend Me a Tenor."/Theater, D8

Weather/D8



**The Slice**

# Are you ready for kickoff?

By Paul Turner  
Staff writer

Push 'em back, push 'em back, waaaaay back!

It's time again to start practicing that most impotent form of aggression. Yes, the season for rooting against your enemies' favorite football teams has arrived.

And remember, in this sense, "enemy" is defined as anyone who gets on your nerves.

Have fun.

■ **1-800 job performance:** Margo Raymond is a stay-at-home mom with two children younger than 2. Her sign would say "How's my diapering?"

■ **Lyric alternatives:** "Well, I'm standing on a corner in ..."

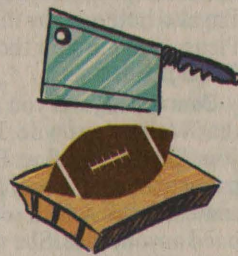
Instead of "Winslow, Arizona," Chuck Borris suggested "downtown Okanogan," "greater Walla Walla" and "lower Penawawa," among others.

John Wojtulewicz subbed in "Missoula, Montana," and also changed several other lines of that old Eagles song.

"It's some sheep my Lord" might give you an idea where his rewritten version of "Take It Easy" heads.

"Come on, baaaaaby ..."

■ **Just wondering:** At your business, who's the



**Any way you slice it, there's no getting around an obnoxious fan.**



Photo by Carol M Doig

■ **Slice answer:** Several readers said visitors probably chuckle as they take snapshots of the public health building in Spokane.  
 "It looks like it has urinals on the corners," said Kathy Beaver.

- **Lucky 7:** 1. Would you recommend the Sierra Silver Mine Tour in Wallace?
- 2. Who around here has a home floor plan with a bathroom nearest the dining area?
- 3. When writing checks to pay bills, do you believe that making truly definite decimal points somehow protects you from skulduggery?
- 4. Do you save your angriest phonemail messages so you can entertain co-workers?
- 5. Can you tell when your spouse/significant other is trying really hard to not check out an attractive member of the opposite sex?
- 6. What was the worst Little League team in Spokane history?
- 7. Ever been talking on the phone to someone who was using a cell phone while driving and heard that person get in an accident?

■ **Fly like an Eagle:** Newsweek recently dubbed Eastern Washington University a "hidden treasure."

The magazine also praised WSU and Western Washington University.

■ **Today's Slice question (a late summer Slice rerun):** What Inland Northwest school has the most ridiculous density of kids with the same first name?

■ The Slice appears Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Write The Slice at P.O. Box 2160, Spokane, WA 99210; call (509) 459-5470; fax (509) 459-5098. It's hard to believe John Belushi's character in "Animal House" would have wound up as a senator.

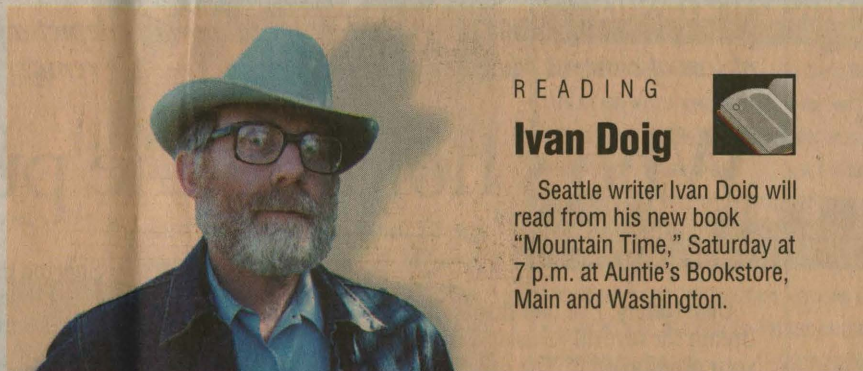
# Bucking Montana

*Ivan Doig expands geographic and cultural boundaries in his newest novel, 'Mountain Time'*

By Susan English  
 Staff writer

**M**ontana's no longer big enough for writer Ivan Doig. He grew up alongside the Rocky Mountain Front in White Sulphur Springs, Mont., the son of a sheep rancher. He set eight novels, including the popular "This House of Sky," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Bucking the Sun," in Montana.

But in his newest novel, "Mountain Time," Doig lets the bulk of the story unfold in Alaska and Seattle, where Doig has lived since 1966. Not that he avoids Montana altogether. The



READING

**Ivan Doig**



Seattle writer Ivan Doig will read from his new book "Mountain Time," Saturday at 7 p.m. at Auntie's Bookstore, Main and Washington.

main character eventually must return to the Big Sky state to come to terms with his father.

With this book, Doig purposely extended the geographic — and cultural — boundaries that defined his earlier novels.

the interior West.

"Everything happens more intensely to baby boomers because of the weight of their

Doig will read from his new book Saturday evening at Auntie's Bookstore as part of a regional book tour.

"I intended to take in a larger geography in this book," Doig said in a phone interview from his Seattle home earlier this month. "Partly because in trying to write about baby boomers, I thought a part of their lives, particularly Western baby boomers, is that they've had to go out onto new ground as their small towns dried up in

Continued: **Ivan Doig/D7**



Mark Miller, the lead singer for Sawyer Brown, co-founded the group and offers a dynamic stage presence with his twirling dance moves and outlandish outfits.

File/Associated Press

# No 'I' in Sawyer Brown

*And there's also nobody named Sawyer Brown in team-oriented band*

By Michael A. Capozzoli Jr.  
 Entertainment News Wire

**'S'**awyer Brown, I really like his music." Greg "Hobie" Hubbard, keyboardist for the country-rock group Sawyer Brown, has heard that comment more times than he cares to remember. To him, it just comes with the territory. The irony, of course, is that no one in the five-piece group is named Sawyer Brown. The band is named after a street in Nashville.

"It used to bother me a bit," says Hubbard, who co-founded the group with vocalist Mark Miller. "But I know now that they don't mean it in a malicious way. People have a million things going on in their lives and if they don't file away the right information about the band, then that's forgivable. The important thing is that they like the songs and that our music finds a home out there. Mark's voice is real identifiable, and that's very important to any band to have."

Another subject that comes up with irritating regularity is how, after 17 years of recording and touring, can the guys in Sawyer Brown still get along? According to Hubbard, even some Sawyer Brown fans assume that all those years together on a tour bus and in the studio have

Continued: **Sawyer Brown/D7**



ON STAGE

**Sawyer Brown**

Sawyer Brown performs tonight at 7 at the Silver Mountain Amphitheater. Tickets: \$21.50 and \$28.50, available at G&B Select-a-Seat outlets or call (800) 325-SEAT.

# Ivan Doig: May return setting to Montana in his next book

Continued from D1

numbers," Doig said. "It is such a jolt in the population so it seemed the book should be about people having to deal with new settings in life."

That, however, doesn't mean Doig has strayed from the adage "write what you know." While he certainly knows Montana and can find his way through the roughest terrain with prose, the new cyberscape also fascinates him.

"Being in Seattle during the era of Microsoft and Amazon.com is a pretty vivid scene for a writer.

"I wanted to have characters in this book whose lives keep brushing against all the wealth and change going on out here. I find it a really interesting scene to put characters into."

The book's storyline revolves around a 50-year-old environmental journalist, Mitch Rozier, whose career and relationships with his children and girlfriend are pondering. When Rozier's father summons him home to Montana to discuss another get-rich-quick theme, Rozier arrives to find his father dying of leukemia.

"Mountain Time," Doig says, has been in the research stage for several years. While the writer is conversant with all things Montana, the cyberscape of Seattle is new terrain for him.

"The research was quite a bit of a challenge for me," Doig says. "I had research both branding irons and talk to friends at Microsoft about

Web TV. I wanted to make the point that the old guy in the book, the guy who wanted to make a killing rather than a living, is more in tune with the Internet mania than the 40- and 50-year-old characters. I was trying to put a flavor in the book of the continuation of the get-rich-quick urges that many people in the West have."

Researching everything from appropriate dialogue between computer techies to Internet capabilities would indeed be a challenge for a writer who still works on a Royal Standard typewriter, as Doig does.

"I would hang out in the Fremont District in Seattle," Doig says. "I chose it as the place to put the newspaper where Mitch works. Fremont is the most street-sceney place in Seattle, it's reminiscent of the '60s.

"And I have friends in their 20s who work for Amazon.com and I hang around and listen to them. I've built a dossier of characters and language and I keep file cards on the characters."

Avid fans of Doig's Montana books may find "Mountain Time" a disappointment because of the dearth of visual imagery that is Doig's hallmark. But the 60-year-old writer may return to a Montana setting for his next book. "I'm looking over stuff but haven't decided for the next book or two whether the setting is Montana or if it will be about characters whose experiences open out onto the larger country of life."

The one content clue he did reveal: the main character will be a woman.

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# MONTANA PARADE

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Sunday, August 15, 1999

SECTION P

E-mail: gftribune@mcn.net



# IVAN DOIG

A glance at the Montana native's flavorful new novel

## 'Mountain Time' is a look at the West today

■ *The richness of Doig's writing is embodied in his diverse characters*

By JO-ANN SWANSON  
For the Tribune

One of Montana's best-loved writers described his work best in Great Falls a few years ago:

"I'm still working the land," said Ivan Doig, the self-confessed descendent of north-central Montana's "lariat proletariat."

In his new book, Doig, long since of Seattle, has tossed aside the confining grids of a road map and instead given us a topographical and metaphorical road trip with plenty of scenic pullouts, a few bumps and time travel.

"Mountain Time" is a taste of the West today, a new recipe for a heady stew. Some of the ingredients in Doig's huge cauldron are classics; others are novelties for the gourmants of his literary cooking.

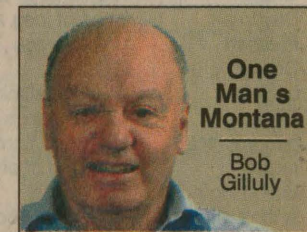
The stick-to-our-ribs potatoes and meat of any Doig stew remain his characters. Those who have read one of his best books, his memoir, "This

archetype of Doig fiction. Fans who have read Doig's trilogy will note the granddaughters of characters Jick and Beth McCaskill from "English Creek," and also will welcome more of Mariah from the centennial road trip of "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana."

The surprising splash of Merlot wine in this Doig book includes three baby boomer characters, awash in a culture of micro-brewed beer and gourmet food. Mitch Rozier, a former football player, meets Lexa McCaskill, a former barrel racer in Seattle. She has a sister. They encounter such current events and issues as the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, the eruption of Mount St. Helens and oil and gas drilling on the Rocky Mountain Front.

With Doig's de-

See DOIG, 4P



## Wild Bill Kelly was a real star athlete

Wild Bill Kelly was probably Montana's best natural athlete of the 20th century.

Oldtimers still make that argument, and there's little doubt that Kelly's exploits in the 1920s are the stuff of which legends are made.

One example: When Kelly enrolled at the University of Montana in 1923, the school was attempting to affiliate with the Pacific Coast Conference, a forerunner of today's Pac 10. Conference officials were skeptical of Montana's ability to compete against teams such as UCLA, USC, Oregon and Washington.

"We've got a freshman who probably will be the best football player in the league," countered Grizzly fans.

Pacific Coast officials decided to wait a year before voting on Montana's application.

Kelly, fresh out of Missoula County High School, quarterbacked the Grizzly freshman team to an unbeaten season. He ran, passed, played defense and kicked extra points.

That clinched it: Montana became a Pacific Coast conference member.

In his first league game, against Washington, Kelly intercepted a Husky pass and galloped 70 yards. His touchdown was nullified by a penalty, but later he returned a Washington punt 75 yards for a score.

That set the stage for

### Where you can see Ivan Doig

Seattle writer Ivan Doig, who grew up in White Sulphur Springs and Valier and wrote the celebrated memoir, "This House of Sky," is on a reading and book-signing tour of Montana to promote his latest novel, "Mountain Time."

Doig will sign books 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 25, at Great Falls' Hastings Books, Music and Video, 1017 10th Ave. S.

#### Other Montana stops:

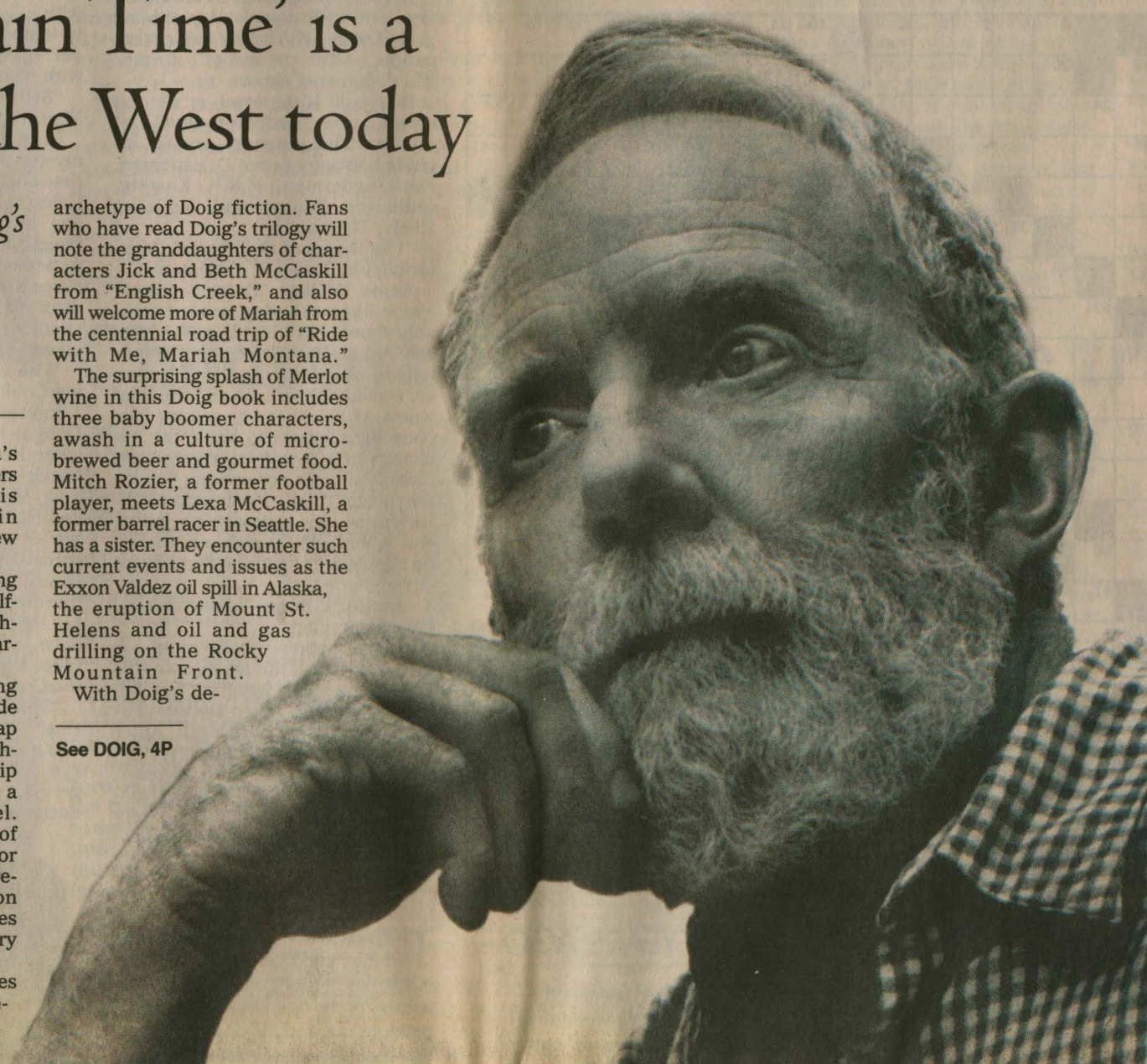
■ Tuesday: A 7:30-9 p.m. reading and signing at Chapter One, Hamilton.

■ Wednesday: A 7-8:30 p.m. reading and signing at Fact and Fiction, Missoula.

■ Thursday: A noon-1 p.m. signing at Costco, and a 6-7 p.m. signing at Waldenbooks; both in Missoula.

■ Friday: An 11 a.m.-1 p.m. signing at Montana Book Co., Helena.

■ Saturday: A 1-3 p.m. signing in



lowed at 7:30 p.m. with a speech at Montana State University.

■ Aug. 23: A 7:30-9 p.m. speech and signing for the Miles City Speakers Bureau at the Town and Country Club.

■ Aug. 24: A noon-1 p.m. signing at Billings' Costco, followed by a 7:30 p.m. speech and signing for Billings' Yellowstone Family YMCA Writer's Voice series at the Alberta Bair theater.

■ Aug. 27: A 5-7 p.m. reading and signing at Books West in Kalispell.

nize a triangle of main characters, two of them upright in sparking, antagonistic force fields. Crusty old Lyle Rozier, the one-man force, is a well-loved



Photo by Marlon Ehlinger

## Is there a 100-year grudge against the Buffalo Soldiers?

**KELLOGG, Idaho (AP)** — A violent, century-old labor dispute may have laid the groundwork for northern Idaho's racist image, a black studies professor suggests.

Quintard Taylor, a former professor at Washington State University, said the long-lived resentment may stem from black federal soldiers who were called in to quell a labor dispute between white miners and the Bunker Hill & Sullivan Co. in April 1899.

Taylor, now a University of Oregon department head, said he first heard of the incident when he and

Army outposts after the Civil War.

Taylor said he cannot produce a solid link to the involvement of black soldiers in the 1899 labor dispute, but suggests the memory may have prepared the way for racist groups that have taken hold in the region.

"One wonders, for instance, if there's an older generation that might have asked more questions about the white supremacists, but simply looked the other way because of their own local history," Taylor said.

"The waitress didn't say this area hates blacks because they are black," he said. "She said there was a lot of resentment because of what the black soldiers did. There was a very specific incident and it was tied to the region."

University of Idaho history professor Katherine Aiken said she doubts a link between black troops marching on white miners and Idaho's reputation as a haven for racists.

When residents talk about the incident, "the focal point of them looking back isn't that those troops are black," she said. "The focal point is the labor-management conflict."

See **SOLDIERS, 4P**



Wolves are reappearing in Idaho as a result of relocation efforts by the Nez Perce Indian Tribe.

AP photo

## Nez Perce leading Idaho recovery

By **BOB MOTTRAM**  
Scripps-McClatchy  
Western Service

**LAPWAI, Idaho** — In this land of soaring Douglas fir trees, rushing rivers and a sometimes near-vertical landscape, a ghost of America's frontier past is returning to its old haunts.

It is the gray wolf, known by some as the timber wolf, an embodiment of the Idaho wilderness. Its thrilling, melancholy howl echoes once again over the meadows and across the canyons of Idaho after an absence of decades. And the credit — or the blame — goes to the Nez Perce Indian Tribe.

The tribe stepped in to become lead agency in re-establishing the

wolf after the issue became too hot, politically, for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to handle. The tribe's action was unique.

"There is no other example in the nation where a tribe is leading the recovery of an endangered species statewide," said Keith Lawrence, tribal wildlife program supervisor. "We're proud of the effort we have put forth and the success we have had in the four-and-a-half years we have been leading the effort."

Traditionally, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service develops a recovery plan for a threatened or endangered species, it asks the state to head the operation.

"In this case, the state said it would rather not participate in the recovery," Lawrence said.

The Nez Perce already had been

involved with the state and the Fish and Wildlife Service in preparing a wolf Environmental Impact Statement, however, so the tribe decided to take over.

In 1995, it released 15 Canadian-caught gray wolves in Idaho, and in 1996 it released 20 more.

"Everything in the state south of Interstate 90 is deemed to be the recovery area," Lawrence said. "Within that is a core area where the wolves are — a network of Forest-Service-administered lands and wilderness lands that form the bulk of Central Idaho."

A count last year revealed that the 35-wolf release had grown to at least 115 animals, including 10 pairs with pups.

See **WOLVES, 4P**

Montana was far outmatched against most opponents, but he scored at least once against every conference member in those three years.

He led the conference in 1926 with 60 points and was voted to the All-America third team.

Kelly wound up his career by gaining 365 yards running and passing against Whitman College.

He scored four times and kicked four extra points.

This was a period in which defense and low-scoring games predominated. It wasn't until 45 years later, during the Jack Swarouth coaching era, that individuals racked up more yardage and more points.

Kelly got his nickname because he really was wild. Handsome, black-haired, of Irish heritage, he was the biggest man on campus. He also presided over the Phi Sigma Kappa moonshine distillery, according to his fraternity brothers.

The man was good with his fists, too. In the spring of 1923, he boxed an exhibition match in Missoula against Tommy Gibbons, who was then preparing for his heavyweight title fight against Jack Dempsey in Shelby.

Gibbons obviously didn't take the 18-year-old Montana lad seriously. He was still smiling to the crowd at ring-side when Kelly staggered him with a hard right to the jaw.

Gibbons recovered, counterpunched sharply and didn't take any more hits. Kelly was outclassed over four rounds but still got an ovation from fight fans.

Kelly went on to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers (yes, Brooklyn had a professional team and it was named the Dodgers) in a forerunner conference to the National Football League. He was the star halfback for five years.

Then, in 1931, he was stricken with acute indigestion and a heart condition. He died in a New York City hospital at the age of 26.

There are no monuments or statues of Wild Bill Kelly on the UM campus, and that's too bad. He was one of this state's real characters, of heroic proportions.

**Gilluly writes a weekly column; you may reach him through the Tribune at 791-1460 or (800) 438-6600.**

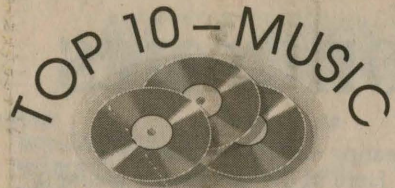


A 1994 U.S. Postal Service stamp that honored black Buffalo Soldiers who served after the Civil War.

his wife stopped for a meal in a Silver Valley restaurant while on his way to a job at WSU in 1971.

"A lot of people in this area are still angry over the black soldiers who came here in the 1890s," Taylor recalled the waitress saying. "I had no idea what she was talking about."

But since then, Taylor has become immersed in the history of blacks in the American West, particularly those Indians called "Buffalo Soldiers" sent to U.S.



**TOP SINGLES**

1. "Genie in a Bottle," Christina Aguilera
2. "Tell Me It's Real," K-Ci and JoJo
3. "Bills, Bills, Bills," Destiny's Child
4. "All Star," Smash Mouth
5. "If You Had My Love," Jennifer Lopez
6. "I Want It That Way," Backstreet Boys
7. "Summer Girls," LFO
8. "Last Kiss," Pearl Jam
9. "Where My Girls At?" 702
10. "Wild Wild West," Will Smith

**ALBUMS**

1. "Significant Other," Limp Bizkit
2. "Millennium," Backstreet Boys
3. "NOW 2," various artists
4. "Ricky Martin," Ricky Martin
5. "Guerilla Warfare," Hot Boys
6. "The Writing's on the Wall," Destiny's Child
7. "Baby One More Time," Britney Spears
8. "Astro Lounge," Smash Mouth
9. "Devil Without a Cause," Kid Rock
10. "Californication," Red Hot Chili Peppers

**COUNTRY SINGLES**

1. "Amazed," Lonestar
2. "Lesson in Leavin'," Jo Dee Messina
3. "Little Good-byes," Shedaisy
4. "God Must Have Spent a Little More Time on You," Alabama
5. "Single White Female," Chely Wright
6. "A Night To Remember," Joe Diffie
7. "You Had Me From Hello," Kenny Chesney
8. "Write This Down," George Strait
9. "The Secret Of Life," Faith Hill
10. "Little Man," Alan Jackson

**R&B SINGLES**

1. "Bills, Bills, Bills," Destiny's Child
2. "Tell Me It's Real," K-Ci and JoJo
3. "Fortunate," Maxwell
4. "Jamboree," Naughty by Nature
5. "Happily Ever After," Case
6. "So Anxious," Ginuwine
7. "Spend My Life With You," Eric Benet
8. "Where my Girls At?" 702
9. "It's All About You (Not About Me)," Tracie Spencer
10. "What Ya Want," Eve and Nokie

**MODERN ROCK TRACKS**

1. "Scar Tissue," Red Hot Chili Peppers
2. "What's My Age Again?" Blink 182
3. "All Star," Smash Mouth
4. "Nookie," Limp Bizkit
5. "My Own Worst Enemy," Lit
6. "Last Kiss," Pearl Jam
7. "American Woman," Lenny Kravitz
8. "Battle Flag," Lo Fidelity All Stars
9. "Someday," Sugar Ray
10. "The Kids Aren't Alright," The Offspring

# Doig: Author risks sentimentality

FROM 1H

grees in journalism and history, it's no accident that the media play a role the lives of the journalist, caterer and photographer in the book. Each is a lost boomer trying to connect to a past, for all purposes, began in Montana and continued elsewhere.

"Forgive us our press passes, laddie," Doig puns.

The flour that thickens this Doig dish is a big sense of Mountain Time, not one divided by grids of longitude. As readers move geographically, from the Coast to the Springs to the Divide, they dive into the past.

The momentum at the start keeps a reader turning back and

forth to follow the contemporary tempo with flashbacks and flash-forwards, until the book flows more smoothly in the second part. Doig plays with time as surely as Salvador Dali painted melting watches. In this sense, Doig's musings on history and current life have the scope of Susan Sontag's "The Volcano Lovers."

Doig is one of our best, a gifted and evocative writer who risks sentimentality and usually wins.

Sometimes, though, a godlike narrator jumps into a main character's thoughts, or out of nowhere comes memory that seems to belong to another character in this book's world.

With his ear for language, Doig's turns of phrase are often

beautiful, sometimes rough-hewn, mostly apt: "But whatever his life turned out to be, the footprints of it started in these independent hills where the sweet-grass sang its song" or "It fell to Lexa to do the private thinking about being back on a patch of earth like this, toe to toe with the old hungers." The richness can excuse such dribs and drabs of raspberry vinegar as "They strode away like cheetahs" or "the type of driver who gobbled up yellow lights like grapes."

F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

Come aboard. Doig's stew is in the galley. It's piping hot.

**Jo-Ann Swanson teaches English at the University of Great Falls.**

# Wolves: Tribe's wildlife program strained

From 1P

The Nez Perce effort is one part of a larger wolf recovery program that covers the northern Rockies, Lawrence said. A second part involves northwestern Montana, which wolves are recolonizing on their own from Canada. A third part involves Yellowstone National Park where — as in Idaho — captive animals were released.

The Yellowstone dispersal was termed a "soft" release, Lawrence said. Entire Canadian packs were transported into the park, held in pens there long enough to potentially acclimatize to the area, then released as family groups. In Idaho, managers practiced "hard" release. It allowed no time for acclimatiza-

tion.

Wolf recovery puts a strain on the tribal wildlife program, which is small.

"We've only got five people working on a variety of projects," Lawrence said. "But we've got a crew of five employed temporarily through the summertime working specifically on wolf recovery. So that makes a crew of seven working on wolf recovery."

Spring through early summer, the focus is on finding wolf dens and counting pups.

"We're really fixed on determining which packs have pups and which haven't," Lawrence said, "because it's part of the recovery goal."

Tribal staff members also trap and relocate wolves that prey upon

livestock. It was the potential for livestock killing by wolves that made their reintroduction into Idaho so controversial, especially among cattle growers and sheep growers.

Now, nearly five years into the effort, Lawrence thinks public opinion is changing.

"When we first started, people were concerned it was something the federal government had forced on them," he said, "and they were concerned about whether somebody would be there if they had a problem."

"We worked hard to get out and let them know there would be people to help them if they had concerns," he said, "and to work out protocols for handling those concerns."

By JOYCE JILLSON

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)** — Those around you need care and reassurance. It's a busy time; you may take a new position at work or in a group. You'll get the chance to influence others in rewarding ways.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)** — Think about your new associations, and prioritize your agenda, placing your own well-being at the top of the list. You have the advantage of an attractive partner to add to your confidence.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21)** — You make a fine impression just by being yourself, so there is no need to abuse charge cards, though it may be a temptation. You can make good friends while helping others. Get some rest.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22)** — A rival who threatens your love life should not be taken too seriously; you have the advantage of your own unique connec-



*Leo*  
(July. 23 to Aug. 22)

partner may disagree over spending and socializing. Arguments over money shouldn't be allowed to interfere with the beauty of family time. Use your creative resources to host a gathering.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)** — You could succeed wildly in the world of sales. Give a relationship one more try before throwing in the towel. A sweetheart's troubles are not your own, so only promise what you can deliver.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** — Your psychic powers are keen; use them to help

# Soldiers: Black troops used often to quell labor unrest

FROM 1P

It started with a union meeting in late April 1899 that most people figure simply got out of control, Aiken said.

A group of angry miners hijacked a Northern Pacific train at Burke and steamed down the valley for the Bunker Hill & Sullivan Co. mill at Wardner, picking up more liquor and men as they rolled along.

Angry at perceived slanders of the largely Irish Catholic miners and union leadership by the Bunker Hill's Protestant partners, and fearful of new drilling technologies that made many jobs expendable, a party of about 1,000 men blew up the mine's concentrator and offices on April 29, 1899.

One man died and two others were wounded by gunfire.

But when word of the bombing reached Boise, Gov. Frank Steunenberg wired President William McKinley for federal troops. Then Steunenberg dispatched state Auditor Bartlett Sinclair to deal with the conflict.

"Two companies of very-dark colored infantrymen from Fort Wright near Spokane were the first to arrive," Sinclair wrote in his memoir. The sight of the black soldiers was an "aggravating spectacle" to the striking miners.

The U.S. Army intervened in hundreds of labor disputes from the 1870s to 1900. In the West, that frequently meant black troops. Fort Shaw west of Great Falls contained

black troops as well.

In the Silver Valley, black soldiers from the 25th Infantry marched west from Fort Missoula in Montana to help quash labor riots in 1892. Seven years later, the all-black 24th Infantry came east from Fort Wright for the same task.

Although blacks were purposefully used to divide white union workers in other places, both Taylor and Aiken say they don't think the federal government was playing the race card in the Silver Valley.

The black infantry marched into Kellogg in early May 1899 and was ordered to arrest every man even suspected of befriending the union. A large bullpen was thrown together and more than 1,000 miners and their supporters were held without trial, charges or legal recourse for as long as six months.

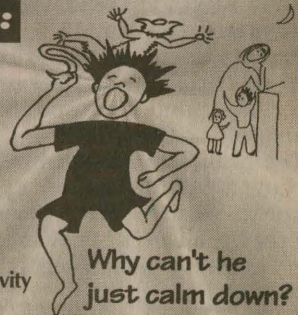
Nearly everyone in the Silver Valley had a relative in the bullpen and ended up visiting the squalid, temporary prison. Incarceration there became a symbol of martyrdom, said Aiken, who has done extensive research on the labor wars.

When she interviews people today, even those who became mining executives, they mention their grandfather or other relative was "in the bullpen."

There were few places in labor history where entire communities were surrounded, arrested and shackled with martial law, Aiken said. Martial law was not lifted in the Silver Valley until the spring of 1901.

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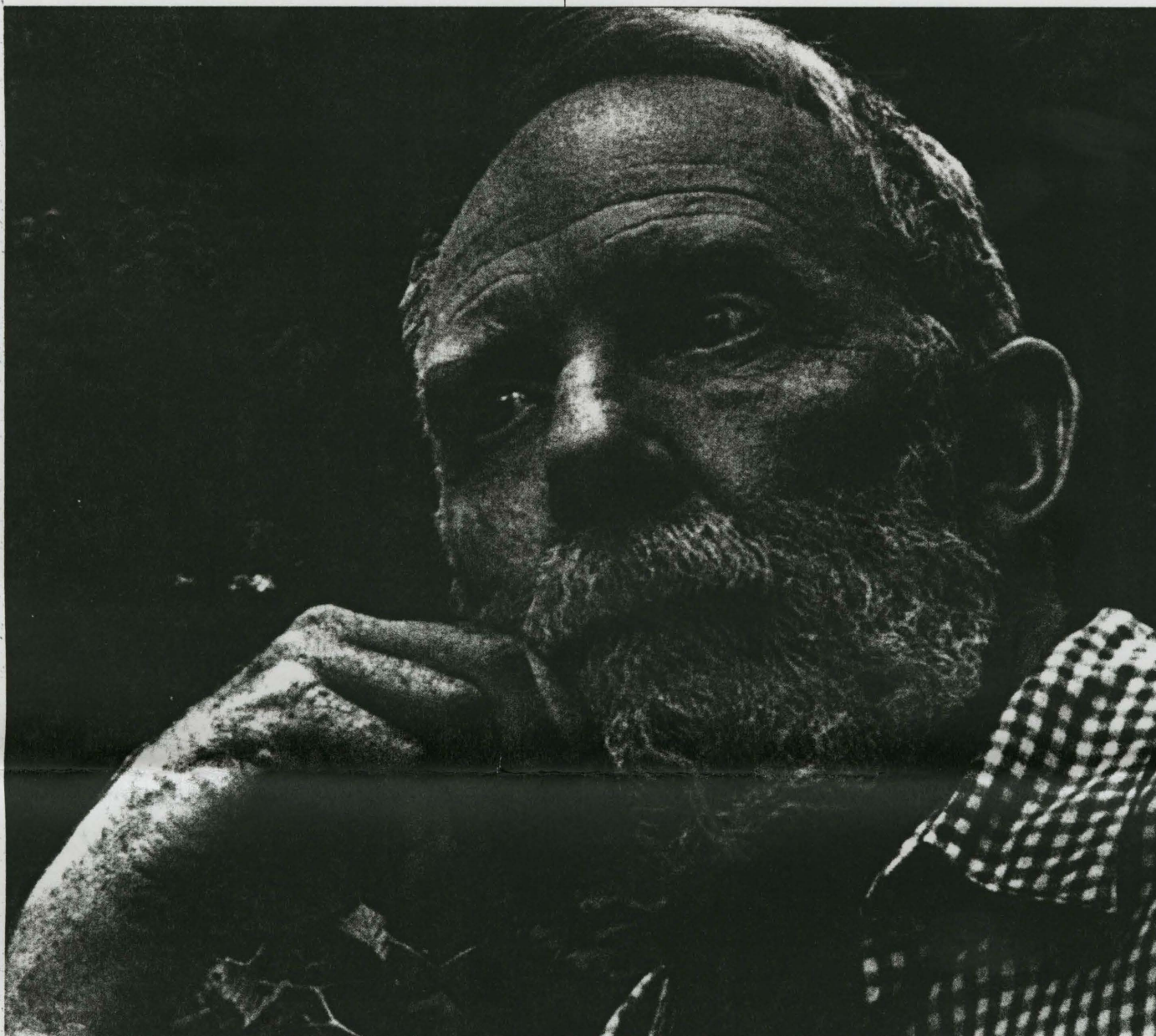
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## INTELLIGENTSIA

BY ANDREW ENGELSON



# Ivan Doig

Seattle's Montanan-in-Residence talks about his approach to writing and his latest novel

In computer-savvy Seattle, any author who composes on a vintage Royal Standard typewriter is by definition an outsider. Ivan Doig is one such author, and though he's lived here for more than 30 years, he still sees himself as a happy exile.

Doig left Montana for the Puget Sound area in 1966, but the mountain West has almost always been his subject of choice. In eight books, Doig has established a reputation as a Montana bard who just happens to live in Seattle. "A writer's always gotta be an outsider," says Doig, speaking recently at his home overlooking Puget Sound.

Doig is unrepentantly analog in a digital age. A simple spiral notebook in his shirt pocket serves as a repository for snippets of conversation, local images and facts culled from libraries and archives. A journalist and historian by training, Doig constantly uses this research to breathe life into his work.

In his new novel, *Mountain Time*, Doig finally reveals some of his studies on Seattle and the bizarre rituals he's observed in his adopted hometown—from micro-breweries to the foibles of the Internet nouveaux riches. For this son of a Montana

sheep rancher, it's like being an anthropologist in a foreign culture.

*Mountain Time* tells the story of Mitch Rozier, a baby-boom writer who, like Doig, was born in rural Montana and works in the cyberland of Seattle. Unlike Doig, Mitch is something of a failure—a bitter environmental reporter and divorced father working for a foundering weekly magazine called *Cascopia*. A phone call from Mitch's aging firebrand of a father sends him back to the rural Mountain Time Zone to wrestle with the events of his childhood: his mother's death in a car accident and his father's failed moneymaking schemes.

At the heart of *Mountain Time* is the reckoning time now confronting many of today's baby boomers, or, as Doig puts it, those members "jelly-sandwiched" between two immense changes in life: one's children leaving home and seeking independence, and one's parents growing older and becoming more dependent.

"Can we go home again and deal with it?" Doig wonders aloud. "For some it's a

strengthening ordeal; people find that they become closer because of it. Others are just baffled by it." In the story of Mitch's return home, Doig manages to craft a story that's unsentimental yet touching. It's filled with his trademark turns of phrase, including such gems as "All the faces in that family rhyme," and "His father's drill-bit way of looking at you as if he had seen you before you put your clothes on this morning and knew just what you were covering up."

Language is always safe from cliché in the hands of Doig. "I try to have a trap of poetry in every sentence," he says of his latest book. "I want to be enough of a student of the language to really reflect the time. It lends a kind of rightness to it, an intrinsic value to the writing." This tendency sometimes leads Doig to cobble together a witty phrase at the expense of realism. But he does have an ear for both contemporary and historical dialogue. "I'm not interested in minimalism," he says. "I am interested in making the language dance."

Some of Doig's literary precursors figure in the plot of *Mountain Time*, including Aldo Leopold and Bob Marshall, a man Doig fondly refers to as "a poetic bean-counter." Recalls Doig, "Marshall was a magnificent obsessive: He'd count the number of cuss words he heard in the course of a day, or how many miles he'd hiked. Ultimately, he hiked himself to death—but he left a collection of notebooks behind." It was Marshall who, as an employee of the U.S. Forest Service, single-handedly set aside much of what would later become today's wilderness system. In *Mountain Time*, Marshall's meticulously accurate notebooks serve as a counterpoint to Mitch's journey homeward.



"I wanted to capture the kind of cosmic power pulsing from these guys, and how it shines down on someone like Mitch," Doig says.

These "environmental gods," as Doig calls them, loom over the simmering personal battle between

Mitch and his dying father. Doig uses them to set a political conflict in extremely personal terms. *Mountain Time* is effective because these battle lines are as blurred as they are in real life, complicated by emotional attachments and personalities.

Doig insists that later-life struggles like the ones in *Mountain Time* are inevitable, whether you're an exile or close to your origins. As the Montanan-in-residence writes (tweaking Thomas Wolfe's famous injunction), "You can't not go home again."

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## Mountain Time

by [Ivan Doig](#)**Our Price: \$15.00****You Save: \$10.00 (40%)****Availability:** Usually ships  
within 24 hours.**Hardcover** - (August 1999) 352 pages**Add to Shopping Cart**  
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### Reviews

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Celebrated for his stirring, clear-eyed memoirs and novels of Montana--*Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, *This House of Sky*, and most recently *Bucking the Sun*--Ivan Doig vaults over the mountains in his new novel and lands in the midst of Seattle's *fin-de-siècle* coffee and computer culture. Mitch Rozier is an oversized, Montana-born, divorced, fiftysomething environmental columnist for a once-hip weekly newspaper on the verge of going under. Lexa McCaskill is his scrappy, earthy, no-nonsense "spousal equivalent"--a "compact Stetsoned woman in blue jeans," also from Montana and divorced, who makes a handsome living catering swanky parties for Seattle's software plutocrats. Doig has a fine time satirizing the excesses and absurdities of "Cyberia" before he abruptly shoos his characters back to Montana: Lyle Rozier, Mitch's Stegner-esque father, wants to involve his son in one more ransack-the-land scheme before leukemia kills him.

The wary standoff between father and son works on many levels: as a deeply realistic clash between two fierce, disappointed men; as a symbolic confrontation between the Old West and the new--Lyle's frank, freewheeling exploitation of Montana's vastness versus Mitch's helpless reverence for the environment; and as a brief, brilliant history of how people have lived off and with the land in 20th-century Montana. All of these strands come together in a stunning climax played out against the glorious backdrop of the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

One of the great novelists of the American West, Doig proves here that he is just as adept at conjuring up the vagaries of our shiny new cities as he is at taking the measure of rough, tough, old Montana. *Mountain Time* has everything going for it--great characters, breathtaking scenery, heartbreaking family feuds, wicked humor, a page-turning love story, prose so perfectly pitched you'll want to read it out loud. And there's something new for Doig aside from setting--a serene, twinkling levity. This is the work of a master having a hell of a good time. --David Laskin

From [Booklist](#), June 1, 1999

Readers of western literature treasure Doig's Two Medicine country trilogy

for its remarkable grasp of both place ("the unbeatable way the land latches into the sky atop the Rocky Mountain Front") and character (the grit of the ranchers, forest rangers, and firefighters who spent the last century carving hard-won lives from Montana's often inhospitable landscape). Now Doig returns to Montana for a coda to the trilogy in which the baby-boomer descendants of those rugged Montanan individualists attempt to come to terms with their history and their lives in a very different world. Set in both Seattle and Montana, the novel tells the story of two transplanted Montanans, Mitch Rozier and Lexa McCaskill, sister of Mariah (from *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*, 1990). Mitch and Lexa, living overbusy lives in Seattle, are summoned back to Montana by Mitch's father, Lyle, who is dying of leukemia and anxious to sell his land in the Rockies to a gravel company. The table is set with issues: Mitch's crisis prompts a fissure in his relationship with Lexa, aided and abetted by Mariah, who joins the pair for the deathwatch. In a marvelous set piece of nature writing, Doig takes his three principals on a hike into the Rockies, where they plan to distribute Lyle's ashes. Conflict escalates, tying together unfinished familial dramas and more contemporary boomer-age angst. Doig lets his penchant for poetic prose get the best of him on occasion, but fortunately, the grittiness of his characters more than offsets the florid authorial voice. A worthy addition to Doig's impressive saga of the twentieth-century West. *Bill Ott*  
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#### **From Kirkus Reviews**

A writer's midlife struggles to come to grips with his difficult, duplicitous father, his estranged children, and his lover make for a surprisingly muted story. While the grand scenery and keen regard for the natural world found in Doig's work (*Bucking the Sun*, 1996, etc.) are still present, they're mostly on the periphery of the action here. At center stage are the various problems vexing Mitch Rozier, a longtime environmental columnist for a Seattle paper. His grown children from a short, disastrous marriage are distant. He may soon be out of a job. His long-term relationship with Alexandra (Lexa) McCaskill, an outdoorswoman, seems to have become static and uncertain. Matters become even more complicated when Mitch is summoned home to a small town in Montana by his sly, exasperating father, Lyle. Inevitably, Mitch's return revives in him complex emotions about his adolescence, and in particular a puzzling episode in which he felt that his father, for reasons he would never reveal, betrayed him. Their awkward, prickly relationship becomes considerably more intense when Lyle reveals that he has advanced leukemia. Lexa arrives to offer moral support, bringing along her sister Mariah, a globetrotting photojournalist. She comes up with the idea, to Mitch's horror and Lyle's delight, of documenting the craggy, courtly Lyle's last days. After Lyle's death, the three set out for a wilderness area to fulfill Lyle's request that his ashes be scattered in the Rocky Mountains. Mitch breaks his leg, and Lexa has to use her wilderness skills to save them. Further complications ensue before Mitch can finally discover why his father had once betrayed him, but the truth, while seamy, isn't particularly shocking. Much is resolved but much including Mitch's relationship with his children is left unresolved. Whenever Doig writes about the natural world,

Mountain Time takes on life. But the self-absorbed, glum Mitch seems rather one-dimensional, the revelations here are unsurprising, and the climax is rushed. Believable but rather uninvolved work, and not Doig's best. --  
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### Book Description

In his latest novel, Ivan Doig writes of a generation, shaped by the sixties, that has reached its time of reckoning, and of a man who must uncover the secrets of his father's past before he can live and love in the present.

One of the greatest writers of the American West, Doig exquisitely renders the natural beauty of its landscapes as he contrasts human time with the immense clock of the earth, measuring the briefer existences that are our human fate against the patient witness of the mountains. Set in Seattle, San Francisco, Montana, and Alaska, *Mountain Time* is the story of three intense relationships: between father and son, between sisters, and between lovers. At once complex and subtle, these oldest quandaries of kinship and love are all dramatically in need of resolution.

Mitch Rozier, who has spent half his fifty years writing an environmental column for an alternative west coast paper, finds himself back under his father's roof, caught up in the ordeal of obligation -- *you can't not go home again when someone is sitting there dying*. The sisters Lexa and Mariah McCaskill wrestle with a past that has driven them away from domesticity and as far from their roots as they can get. Lexa has long been ready to settle down with Mitch; Mariah, a photographer who uses her camera to shield herself from the world, lands more reluctantly. And the figure from the generation that produced them, Mitch's father Lyle, both beguiles and exasperates as he attempts to rewrite events in his life before he leaves it.

Doig is masterful at illuminating both human and geographical vulnerability, constantly shifting our focus between the land -- breathtaking, essential and in need of protection -- and the people bonded to it.

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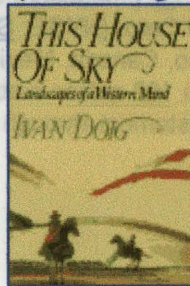
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**Reviews****Synopsis**

The fifteenth anniversary edition of the author's classic memoirs includes a new introduction that provides new information on the making of the book. By the author of *The House of Sky*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**Synopsis**

A memoir of the author's growing up in Montana explores the influences family, the land, and hometown ties have on individual direction and values. 2 cassettes. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**The author, Ivan Doig , August 2, 1996**

In the last years of the 1960's when this country was going through convulsive self-questioning, I was as usual out of step. It was getting clearer and clearer to me what I was in life. I was a relic.

And the son of another relic. And the grandson of yet a third relic.

This clear-headedness came over me in a most unexpected place: graduate school. I was at the University of Washington working toward a doctorate in history and noticed that I seemed to have come out of a time warp that I had left in Montana not all that many years before. In my Montana upbringing, I had worked in a lambing shed, picked rock from grainfields, driven a power buckrake in haying time and a D-8 Cat pulling a harrow during summer fallowing and a grain truck at harvest, herded sheep , trailed sheep, cussed sheep--even dug a well by hand and whitewashed a barn--and now I didn't seem to be finding other people who had done any of that.

Then during one of those winters of discontent in graduate school, my father and my grandmother--my mother's mother--came to Seattle to live with my wife Carol and me for the sake of my father's health, in our losing struggle against his emphysema. In almost all instances, I had done only enough of each of those Montana ranch jobs to convince me I did not want to do it every day the rest of my life. But here was a pair of persons who had gone on doing those tasks, and many more, until they simply could not, any longer.

The sight of these two people of the past who had raised me--Bessie Ringer, ranch cook, diehard Montanan since her early twenties when she stepped off a train in Three Forks with an infant daughter and a jobless husband; and Charlie Doig, ranch hand and rancher, born on a sagebrush homestead in the Big Belt Mountains south of Helena--the daily sight of these two in our Seattle living room, with a shopping center out the window below, very much made me aware of the relic-hood of the three of us. In the strictest dictionary definition: "an object whose original cultural environment has disappeared."

It has been eighteen years now since I finally put a period to the 410th page of the manuscript built upon those musings. My hands still sweat as I see the points at which the years of carpentry on THIS HOUSE OF SKY could have failed. Installments of the long work of getting SKY's words into print are in my diary, such as this entry from mid-January of 1975 after I'd spent half a day reworking the opening sentence of the manuscript and thought I'd managed to improve it by maybe two words:

"It would be magnificent to do the entire book with this slow care, writing it all as highly charged as poetry--but will I ever find the time?"

And another diary note, this one from mid-July of 1975, seven full years

after the genesis of this writing effort:

"I began to look back through the Montana book, and saw how poor some of it is. The raw material is good, and there can be more, but my writing so far doesn't click. Size of job scares me, I suppose."

But the next morning I made myself pencil my way through the manuscript again, and the morning after that, and after enough of those grindstone mornings I thought the words were perking up a bit. By late 1977, after an editor named Carol Hill at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich expressed interest in the sample she'd seen, I finished up the 100,000-word manuscript of THIS HOUSE OF SKY.

Away to New York went the 410 typed pages, and then, about six weeks later on the 19th of January, 1978, as I was stepping onto the jogging track at my wife's college Carol drove up to the gate, told me Carol Hill had phoned from Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and I'd better scoot home and call her right back.

There is a diary entry of what happened next, and it begins:

"Mark this day with a white stone."

Carol Hill in her first few sentences about the manuscript had said over the telephone to me: "spectacular...beautiful...elegant...wonderful" and "beautiful" again.

Then her best words of all, the ones I really needed to hear: "And we'll publish it this fall."

---

### Customer Comments

Average Customer Review: ★★★★★ Number of Reviews: 6

**A reader from Longmont, Colorado , December 13, 1998 ★★★★★**

**Holds up as one of my all-time favorites**

Doig's poetic use of language is haunting. I read and re-read many phrases and paragraphs just to fully appreciate the beauty he evoked with the language. As a native to the western landscape, I could visualize his story in a way so much more profound than the simple telling of the story. Certainly the best of Doig's books I've read so far! I highly recommend this book and am now buying a replacement copy for myself and one for a Christmas present.

**A reader from Salem, Oregon , November 18, 1998 ★★★★★**

**Excellent reading**

This book shall be held up as an example of master craftsmanship for generations to come. It is a western in the best sense. Do not miss This House of Sky.

**riverrd@totalnetnh.net from Epsom, New Hampshire , December 26, 1997 ★★★★★**

**Wonderful book about fathers & sons and loss.**

I ordered this book when it was first published for my dad. When I was home for his funeral the bookstore called to tell me it was in. I bought the book and read it about 6 months later. I have never read a book that was so unique in the way the author used language. If you want to know how cowboys and shepherders in Montana speak read this book. If you want to know how people compromise themselves for the ones they love read this book. If you want to gain insight into a truly fine father and son relationship read this book. If you don't want to be moved to tears and laughter don't read this book. It took me over a year to finish this book because the language was so vivid it transported me back to my childhood and I felt as if I were sitting in my dad's truck listening to him shoot the breeze with his cowboy friends. My father's voice whispered in my ear and I would have to put the book down. Read this book you will not be disappointed.

**cyndy@sequent.com from Washington State , December 24, 1997**

★★★★★

**An amazing piece of work!**

Ivan Doig's "This House of Sky" is one of the most moving books I have read. Raised in Montana myself, I can relate to almost every segment of this well written book. I have given it as gifts to several family members, all who have raved about it. Thanks, Ivan, for special memories and sharing your life.

**A reader , July 1, 1997 ★★★★★**

**One of the best books ever written!**

This House of Sky chronicles the early years of a boy growing up in Montana under circumstances that to others might appear difficult - his mother died young, his father and grandmother bring him up, poverty is never far. The author is a remarkable man whose tale that describes a way of life gone by and people whose spirit and determination are hard to find. This is one of the few books that I have read more than once - even after four or five reads it remains fresh. This is also great book to give as a gift, and the recent hardcover version has a special forward by the author. --*This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.*


**A reader , January 14, 1997 ★★★★★**

I have read and re-read This House of Sky several times in the past years. And yet, when I read the first several pages aloud to my wife a few nights ago, I was again moved to weep. In writing of his family, Doig tells the story of many western families and landscapes, including my own. The details of the lives are perhaps different, but the living, all bound up in the culture and landscape that produced me, is the same. It is profoundly moving to see it all expressed so well.

---

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## at a glance

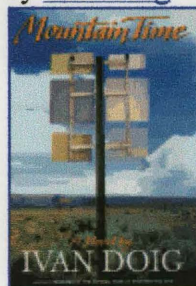
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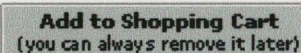
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## Mountain Time

by [Ivan Doig](#)List Price: ~~\$25.00~~Our Price: **\$15.00**You Save: **\$10.00 (40%)**
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**Hardcover** - 352 pages (August 1999)

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**Reviews**

Amazon.com

Celebrated for his stirring, clear-eyed memoirs and novels of Montana--*Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, *This House of Sky*, and most recently *Bucking the Sun*--Ivan Doig vaults over the mountains in his new novel and lands in the midst of Seattle's *fin-de-siècle* coffee and computer culture. Mitch

Rozier is an oversized, Montana-born, divorced, fiftysomething environmental columnist for a once-hip weekly newspaper on the verge of going under. Lexa McCaskill is his scrappy, earthy, no-nonsense "spousal equivalent"--a "compact Stetsoned woman in blue jeans," also from Montana and divorced, who makes a handsome living catering swanky parties for Seattle's software plutocrats. Doig has a fine time satirizing the excesses and absurdities of "Cyberia" before he abruptly shoos his characters back to Montana: Lyle Rozier, Mitch's Stegner-esque father, wants to involve his son in one more ransack-the-land scheme before leukemia kills him.

The wary standoff between father and son works on many levels: as a deeply realistic clash between two fierce, disappointed men; as a symbolic confrontation between the Old West and the new--Lyle's frank, freewheeling exploitation of Montana's vastness versus Mitch's helpless reverence for the environment; and as a brief, brilliant history of how people have lived off and with the land in 20th-century Montana. All of these strands come together in a stunning climax played out against the glorious backdrop of the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

One of the great novelists of the American West, Doig proves here that he is just as adept at conjuring up the vagaries of our shiny new cities as he is at taking the measure of rough, tough, old Montana. *Mountain Time* has everything going for it--great characters, breathtaking scenery, heartbreaking family feuds, wicked humor, a page-turning love story, prose so perfectly pitched you'll want to read it out loud. And there's something new for Doig aside from setting--a serene, twinkling levity. This is the work of a master having a hell of a good time. --David Laskin

#### From **Booklist** , June 1, 1999

Readers of western literature treasure Doig's Two Medicine country trilogy for its remarkable grasp of both place ("the unbeatable way the land latches into the sky atop the Rocky Mountain Front") and character (the grit of the ranchers, forest rangers, and firefighters who spent the last century carving hard-won lives from Montana's often inhospitable landscape). Now Doig returns to Montana for a coda to the trilogy in which the baby-boomer descendants of those rugged Montanan individualists attempt to come to terms with their history and their lives in a very different world. Set in both Seattle and Montana, the novel tells the story of two transplanted Montanans, Mitch Rozier and Lexa McCaskill, sister of Mariah (from *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*, 1990). Mitch and Lexa, living overbusy lives in Seattle, are summoned back to Montana by Mitch's father, Lyle, who is dying of leukemia and anxious to sell his land in the Rockies to a gravel company. The table is set with issues: Mitch's crisis prompts a fissure in his relationship with Lexa, aided and abetted by Mariah, who joins the pair for the deathwatch. In a marvelous set piece of nature writing, Doig takes his three principals on a hike into the Rockies, where they plan to distribute Lyle's ashes. Conflict escalates, tying together unfinished familial dramas and more contemporary boomer-age angst. Doig lets his penchant for poetic prose get the best of him on occasion, but fortunately, the grittiness of his

characters more than offsets the florid authorial voice. A worthy addition to Doig's impressive saga of the twentieth-century West. *Bill Ott*  
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#### **From Kirkus Reviews**

A writer's midlife struggles to come to grips with his difficult, duplicitous father, his estranged children, and his lover make for a surprisingly muted story. While the grand scenery and keen regard for the natural world found in Doig's work (*Bucking the Sun*, 1996, etc.) are still present, they're mostly on the periphery of the action here. At center stage are the various problems vexing Mitch Rozier, a longtime environmental columnist for a Seattle paper. His grown children from a short, disastrous marriage are distant. He may soon be out of a job. His long-term relationship with Alexandra (Lexa) McCaskill, an outdoorswoman, seems to have become static and uncertain. Matters become even more complicated when Mitch is summoned home to a small town in Montana by his sly, exasperating father, Lyle. Inevitably, Mitch's return revives in him complex emotions about his adolescence, and in particular a puzzling episode in which he felt that his father, for reasons he would never reveal, betrayed him. Their awkward, prickly relationship becomes considerably more intense when Lyle reveals that he has advanced leukemia. Lexa arrives to offer moral support, bringing along her sister Mariah, a globetrotting photojournalist. She comes up with the idea, to Mitch's horror and Lyle's delight, of documenting the craggy, courtly Lyle's last days. After Lyle's death, the three set out for a wilderness area to fulfill Lyle's request that his ashes be scattered in the Rocky Mountains. Mitch breaks his leg, and Lexa has to use her wilderness skills to save them. Further complications ensue before Mitch can finally discover why his father had once betrayed him, but the truth, while seamy, isn't particularly shocking. Much is resolved but much including Mitch's relationship with his children is left unresolved. Whenever Doig writes about the natural world, *Mountain Time* takes on life. But the self-absorbed, glum Mitch seems rather one-dimensional, the revelations here are unsurprising, and the climax is rushed. Believable but rather uninvolved work, and not Doig's best. --  
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#### **Book Description**

In his latest novel, Ivan Doig writes of a generation, shaped by the sixties, that has reached its time of reckoning, and of a man who must uncover the secrets of his father's past before he can live and love in the present.

One of the greatest writers of the American West, Doig exquisitely renders the natural beauty of its landscapes as he contrasts human time with the immense clock of the earth, measuring the briefer existences that are our human fate against the patient witness of the mountains. Set in Seattle, San Francisco, Montana, and Alaska, *Mountain Time* is the story of three intense relationships: between father and son, between sisters, and between lovers. At once complex and subtle, these oldest quandaries of kinship and love are all dramatically in need of resolution.

Mitch Rozier, who has spent half his fifty years writing an environmental column for an alternative west coast paper, finds himself back under his father's roof, caught up in the ordeal of obligation -- *you can't not go home again when someone is sitting there dying*. The sisters Lexa and Mariah McCaskill wrestle with a past that has driven them away from domesticity and as far from their roots as they can get. Lexa has long been ready to settle down with Mitch; Mariah, a photographer who uses her camera to shield herself from the world, lands more reluctantly. And the figure from the generation that produced them, Mitch's father Lyle, both beguiles and exasperates as he attempts to rewrite events in his life before he leaves it.

Doig is masterful at illuminating both human and geographical vulnerability, constantly shifting our focus between the land -- breathtaking, essential and in need of protection -- and the people bonded to it.

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### Customer Comments

Average Customer Review: ★★★★★ Number of Reviews: 1

Judecca@earthlink.net from East Village, NY, NY , July 27, 1999

★★★★★

#### Ivan Doig-Zen Master-Mountains Won't Remember Us

A painted silk scroll from China shows a zen poet and calligrapher trying to capture the satori, the spontaneous enlightenment sometimes attained by the immensity of the landscape. The tree-lined mountains, and the winding creeks and brooks overshadow the artist who sits at his bench as incense plumes rise into the landscape.

Ivan Doig has written what could be a zen contemplation with the power of a volcano in his newest work. It's not so much the wonderful characterization of the main characters and their innocence and fragility in terms of one another, but it is the way their bodies and minds, abused like much of the landscape, try desperately to connect.

Generations must come to terms: a dying one that had survived the depression and had fought through two world wars and an aging one, "the baby boomers" who rebelled against older ideals but feel what it's like to age, and wonder, in a cloud of nostalgia; Are there resolutions? Between Father and Son? Wife and Husband? Daughter and Father? Man vs. Nature?

All relationships are represented magnificently in Mountain Time. Nature casts a shadow on all the characters. The forests, the mountains, and the streams age with humanity, but they won't remember us.

In short, an apt metaphor is Mt. St. Helens, which figures in the novel and which Doig brings alive as a character. No one can forget the force of power, the gray blast of hot ash, the blanket of destruction marking itself in the mind. And one can see, today, the renewal and rebirth of the landscape even after such destruction.



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Editorial

## VIA FAX

**TO:** Ivan Doig  
fax: 206-542-6658

**FROM:** Brant Rumble,  
Assistant to Nan Graham

**DATE:** August 12, 1999

**RE:** Coverage of MOUNTAIN TIME

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Here's today's batch of reviews. If they're hard to read, know that hard copies are on the way via snail-mail.

Amazon sold 299 copies of MOUNTAIN TIME last week. Fyi—that's a terrific number for Amazon in one week

Doig, Ivan. *Mountain Time*.  
Scribner, Aug. 1999, c.320p. ISBN 0-  
684-83295-X. \$25.

Mitch Rozier is an aging baby boomer "half a century old and working for a give-away newspaper" in Seattle, where he spends his days wondering about the fu-

ture of his job as an environmental columnist and his disappointing personal life. His children from a previous marriage are strangers, and his relationship with plain-spoken caterer Lexa McCaskill, sister of Mariah (from Doig's 1991 *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*), is on rocky ground. Summoned home by his ailing father, Mitch travels to small-town Montana, where he is soon joined by Lexa and Mariah. There, Doig returns to more familiar territory as he plots the resolution of a decades-old conflict between father and son against the backdrop of the Rocky Mountain wilderness. Doig clearly enjoys poking fun at Seattle's decadent cyberculture, but he is at his best when writing about Montana, contrasting the differences between those who want to exploit the land and those who want to protect it. Not Doig's best novel, but essential reading for fans of his "Two Medicine" trilogy.—  
Charlotte L. Glover, Ketchikan P.L., AK

WWW-IMDB.COM

# Ivan Doig's 'Mountain Time' — relationships and redemption

**Mountain Time,** by Ivan Doig. Scribner J52 pages \$25

by HARRY MERRITT  
IN DEPTH

For years, Ivan Doig has been acclaimed as one of the leading writers of the American West, praised for a memoir called *This House of Sky* and assorted ritual and poignant novels set in Montana.

Having just read Doig's latest work of fiction, *Mountain Time*, it's a little tough to see what the new was about.

Despite some clever and graceful writing — some marvelous passages, really — *Mountain Time* is disappointment; the whole of it doesn't add up to very much. Still, it's worth paying attention to, for the rewards it delivers in its final chapters, and for the flashes, throughout, of Doig's considerable talent.

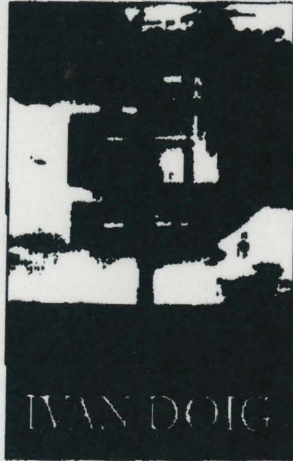
*Mountain Time* is all about relationships — between father and son, the son and his children, the

son and his girlfriend, the girlfriend and her sister — and the frustrations and lies that are so much a part of those relationships.

The son, the book's central character, is Mitch Rozler, a sometime college football player who writes about environmental issues for *Cascadia*, a *City Paper* like weekly in Seattle. Mitch is middle-aged and divorced, with two adult children he seldom sees or has much contact with.

He also doesn't have much contact with his own father back home in Twin Sulphur Springs, Mont. Lyle Rozler, a cranky and difficult retired rancher whose yard is strewn with rusted, decrepit farm machinery and whose latest get-rich-quick scheme is to sell cattle brands to the yuppies who are buying ranchland nearby and raising llamas.

Mitch's longtime girlfriend, Lexa McCaskill, runs a catering business in Seattle. Lexa and Mitch met in Alaska, after the Exxon Valdez oil tanker accident caused unimaginable pollution in



Prince William Sound. Lexa and her then-husband, Travis Mudd, were working on the cleanup; Mitch was there to write about it. Lexa has a sister, Mariah, a glo-

betrotting photographer with whom she has a friendly if competitive relationship. While Lexa's been arranging food for parties given by newly minted software moguls in Seattle, Mariah's been on New Zealand's South Island on assignment, cavorting, she says, with a much younger man.

Alas, the characters aren't as interesting as even these meager descriptions may suggest. Page after page, there is a lot of very literate talk, and not much cavorting, as the characters relate, or fail to relate, with one another. And there are various flashbacks — to Mitch's boyhood, to Lyle's war service, to Lexa's girlhood — that fill in helpful details. Through much of it, however, this reader was left hungry for some wonderful epiphany, some action or tension that would transform the book and make me care about these people.

Hope stirs for such a moment when Mitch at last departs New-Aggy, good coffee Seattle for wild and scenic Montana, the land Doig knows best.

Lyle, in his late 70s, says he needs Mitch to sign some papers about a pending sale of land Really, though, Lyle is dying, of leukemia, a fact he is slow to reveal.

When Mitch learns the truth, he summons Lexa, who arrives at the home piece with Mariah in tow. Mariah then decides that she must document, with photographs, Lyle's final days.

Only after Lyle dies, about 220 pages into the book, does *Mountain Time* awaken and start becoming the "story" Doig is so capable of telling.

It comes in the form of a dilemma: Mitch must decide whether he should honor his father's last wish, namely, to have his ashes scattered from a fire tower on Phantom Woman Mountain, in the vast Bob Marshall Wilderness, on the Continental Divide. Lyle, it turns out, worked there briefly as a Civilian Conservation Corps laborer when he was a teenager.

Mitch is surprised that his father wanted to be cremated — and baffled by the Bob Marshall re-

quest. Lyle never showed the least interest in the place, or, for that matter, anything suggesting environmental protection.

To carry out the request, a reluctant and skeptical Mitch will have to trek more than two days through the wilderness, possibly encountering a grizzly or two en route. That presents all kinds of possibilities, not necessarily the ones the reader expects.

In the end, Mitch finds his own way to deal with the request — with sudden, refreshing complications that reveal the central untruths of his father's life, and offer late redemption for readers of *Mountain Time* waiting for something, anything, to happen.

Harry Merritt, a Sun features editor, worked previously at the Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader, where he edited award-winning series, supervised political coverage and was the newspaper's writing coach.

Michael Przenbom's column will return Aug. 22

The Baltimore Sun Sunday, August 1, 1999

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^Old West or New West, take your pick<

^By RON BERTHEL=

^Associated Press Writer=

How do you like your Western fiction \_ historical or contemporary? Two new novels give you a choice.

The Oregon Trail in the 1840s is the setting for "Gabriella" by Earl Murray, author of more than 30 books about the American West. And modern-day Montana is the primary locale in Western writer Ivan Doig's "Mountain Time."

These books are among a new crop of hardcovers that includes novels by Bernard Cornwell, Tama Janowitz and Laura Van Wormer; and nonfiction, including a biography of Lady Bird Johnson, a history of rock 'n' roll and collected works of Jorge Luis Borges.

^`Gabriella' (Forge) by Earl Murray<

Gabriella Hall is a young English artist who, accompanied by her fiance, Sir Edward Garr, travels along the Oregon Trail in 1846 to paint portraits of the Indians. Also headed west is Quincannon, a young man hoping to re-establish a fur-trading company there. His and Gabriella's journal entries tell the tale of their journey, of Quincannon's growing love for Gabriella and of his bitter rivalry with Edward, a strong opponent of U.S. expansion into the Northwest.

^`Mountain Time' (Scribner) by Ivan Doig<

Three types of relationships \_ father-son, sisters and lovers \_ figure into this tale about Mitch Rozier, 50, a journalist who returns to Montana to tend to his cantankerous dying father, Lyle. Joining Mitch is his girlfriend Lexa, who longs to settle down, and her sister, Mariah. When the three hike into the mountains to scatter Lyle's ashes, their lives and relationships undergo profound changes.

^`Sharpe's Triumph' (HarperCollins) by Bernard Cornwell<

This 15th in the series featuring Sgt. Richard Sharpe has the 19th-century British soldier playing a pivotal role in the Battle of Assaye, one of the great victories for the future Duke of Wellington and a milestone in Britain's colonization of India. Sharpe is at Fort Chasalgaoon in 1803 when it is attacked by a band of mercenary soldiers led by Maj. William Dodd. Sharpe, the only surviving witness, heads the search for Dodd and his army.

^`A Certain Age' (Doubleday) by Tama Janowitz<

This darkly comic novel follows Florence Collins, a single woman in her 30s, as she searches for a rich husband and affluent lifestyle. Florence, a low-salaried jewelry appraiser at a minor New York auction house, attends every social event possible, and spends her small paycheck and her mother's inheritance on designer clothes and on expensive cosmetics and beauty treatments, all in the hope of meeting Mr. Rich.

# Tofu on the Range

*In Ivan Doig's latest novel, the new-age heirs to the old West face some midlife truths.*

## MOUNTAIN TIME

By Ivan Doig  
316 pp New York  
Scribner. \$25

By Bruce Barcott

**N**OW that Wallace Stegner is dead, Ivan Doig may be the most western writer we have. Over the past 20 years Doig has written, with a painterly eye and a native son's pride, of the landscape and history of Montana in both memoir and fiction.

Doig's Montana trilogy — "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rafted Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana" — traced the history of the McCaskill family from the old Scottish sheep rancher and school-teacher Angus McCaskill to his great-granddaughter Mariah, a photographer for The Missoula Montanain. Doig strives to

achieve what he has called a "poetry of the vernacular" in his characters' dialog, capturing the flavor of the land and of the times in their voices. In his last novel, "Bucking the Sun," set amid the construction of Fort Peck Dam in the 1930's, this meant that a barber was a "scissor merchant," a cook a "beanburner." With "Mountain Time," Doig turns his Montana trilogy into a tetralogy, extending the McCaskill saga into the late 1990's and shunting the family along the interstate 90 axis between Missoula and Seattle.

Mariah's sister, Lexa McCaskill, a 40-year-old caterer to Seattle's cybermales, finds her romantic fortunes fruitfully attached to an ornery environmental journalist named Mitch Razer. Razer, who's churned out the same eco-watch column for 25 years in Cascofia, "an urban weekly newspaper for people concerned to know the difference between tofu and fusion," has hit a patch of middle restlessness. He's disillusioned with his job, can't communicate with his daughter and knows that he and Lexa aren't firing on all cylinders. Into the lives of Lexa and Mitch fall just enough family rivalry and tragedy to keep the plot moving: Mariah drops in for a visit at the same time Mitch's dad, Lyle, announces that he is dying of leukemia.

Bruce Barcott is a contributing editor at Outside magazine.

Mariah's got her own job problems. She had escaped the dull assignments of the Montanain by winning a grant to travel the world for a year, but now the year is up and she's back snapping shots of ribbon-cutting ceremonies. When circumstances conspire to bring all four characters together in Lyle Razer's home in Twin Sulphur Springs, Mont., the young old man pro-vides Mariah with her next inspiration. Over supper she asks Lyle: "I'd like to — could I kind of hang around, do you suppose, and take pictures while you, umm, go through... whatever you're going to go through?"

Lyle agrees, despite his son's protests. Mitch seems to spend the entire novel running. Like the veteran columnist he is, he'll grouse about anything: dotted water, microbrews, Mariah's project and, not least of all, his father's plan to sell the family land to an oil-drilling outfit set to punch holes in the Montana wilderness.

It's never a promising sign when a novel's plot and underlying themes sound like sessions in a marriage workshop: reconciling with your adult child, depurging your spousal-equivalent commitments, re-solving parental conflict. What's more frustrating is the way Doig's self for the vernacular fails him when it comes to the West of the 1990's. Lexa describes a newspaper reporter as a "word merchant" and actually says to her sister, "danna you sweet hide."

It's as if she'd been raised by Gabby Hayek. For those of you living east of the Mississippi, rest assured that few of us out here speak like this, and those who do can usually be found saddling up horses at a dude ranch. We do not, as Mariah is wincingly said to do, wear our contradictions "like a gorgeous breastplate," and if we write for an alternative weekly newspaper we are not likely to utter phrases like "See if I give a zit!"

Sadly, only in a few passages does "Mountain Time" feature the kind of writing we've come to expect from Doig. One richly evocative scene, in which Mitch recalls a boyhood summer spent picking rocks out of farmers' fields in the Sweetgrass Hills of northern Montana, makes a reader wish Doig had abandoned his attempt to capture these aging hippies living in the Sulcon West and written a different book. Something along the lines of, say, "Boulder Merchants of Montana."

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Editorial

Ivan-

We have here what Susan Moldow  
calls a "wrong-minded" review.

- Brant

suffering of Japanese-Americans is depicted with rare force and candor. In the end, this tale of clashing cultures and generations also depicts a gaping wound in our history that no amount of token government reparations can heal. *Agent*, Susan Bergholz. Author tour. (Aug.)

### MOUNTAIN TIME

*Ivan Doig*. Scribner, \$25 (320p) ISBN 0-684-83295-X

If any writer can be said to wear the mantle of the late Wallace Stegner, Doig qualifies, as a steady and astute observer of life in our Western states. Infused with his knowledge and appreciation of the Western landscapes, his novels are a finger on the pulse of the people who try to reconcile their love of open spaces with the demands of modern life, particularly the form of "progress" that threatens the environment. In this ingratiating novel, Doig continues the story of the McCaskell family (seen previously in *English Creek*, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* and *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*), this time focusing on sisters Lexa and Mariah McCaskell. Lexa's marriage to a forest ranger and her days as cook in Alaska are behind her; now sturdy, capable Lexa runs a catering service in Seattle. She lives with rugged environmental journalist Mitch Rozier, another escapee from rough life in northern Montana. At 50, Mitch is facing a double crisis: the newspaper where his column appears is about to fold, and his foxy, rapacious father, Lyle, a notorious land despoiler, is dying of leukemia and has summoned him back to Twin Sulphur Springs. Lexa goes back to Montana, too, bringing her sexy sister, Mariah, just returned to the States after a year-long photographing expedition around the world. Lyle's illness and death unleash complex memories and future shocks. Tensions between Mitch and his father, between Lexa and Mariah, and between Mitch and Lexa come to a boiling point on Phantom Woman Mountain on the Continental Divide, where Lyle has ordered that his ashes be scattered. While the narrative eventually achieves cohesiveness, initially it is disconcertingly fragmentary, as Doig intercuts contemporary scenes with flashbacks. Among the novel's considerable strengths, however, are Doig's lyrical writing about scenery ("Up here the continent was tipsy with mountains") and local history. He excels in lively dialogue (sometimes a tad too cute), and in grasping the nuances of male-female relationships. But most importantly, this is an honest and resonant portrait of idealists facing middle age and learning to deal with past issues that shadow their lives. *Agent*, Liz Darhansoff. (Aug.)

having a hell of a good time. --David Laskin

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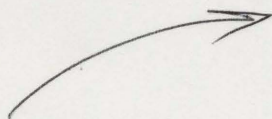
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Jean

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Nan Graham

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you if you insist.

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review (your fan Bob  
Mintesheimer) and the  
TBR has assigned it.

So it's worth a shot. Ever, Nan.

**MOUNTAIN TIME**

By Ivan Doig  
Scribner, \$25  
ISBN 068483295X  
Dove Audio, \$25, 0787120162

REVIEW BY BETH DURIS

In his sixth novel, Ivan Doig returns to Montana's Rocky Mountain Front and some of the most colorful natives of Two Medicine country, the McCaskill family. This time around, he turns his attention to Lexa McCaskill, a steady and successful 40-year-old caterer now living in Seattle with another Montana expatriate, Mitch Rozier.

An environmental reporter several years older than Lexa, Mitch left his home in Twin Sulphur Springs for a football scholarship to the University of Washington. Now, 30 years later, he is divorced, soon to be unemployed, and suddenly being summoned home by his estranged father Lyle.

A World War II veteran, Lyle has eked out a living from a series of "sure-fire and doomed deals" from uranium prospecting to rabbit raising. The physical similarities between father and son belie deep-rooted differences. For Mitch, an ardent conservationist, his father's disgust for the U.S. Forest Service "and all other government agencies that kept

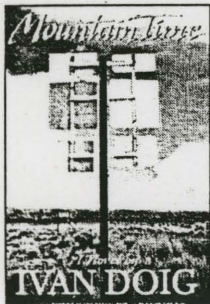
people like him away from the big pinata of natural resources in this country" especially rankles.

Soon after arriving in Montana, Mitch learns that Lyle is terminally ill with leukemia. Lexa comes out to help Mitch care for his father, bringing along her sister Mariah, a beautiful, continent-hopping photographer. Lyle gets on well with the feisty McCaskill sisters, and even allows Mariah to document his illness in a series of photographs for a Montana newspaper.

But old wounds fester between father and son, and Lyle passes away without a real reconciliation. His cryptic last wish, to have his ashes thrown from a fire tower on Phantom Woman Mountain, becomes the lightning rod for Mitch's anger, and prompts dramatic confrontations between Lexa and Mitch and the two sisters. Only in the aftermath of these conflicts does Mitch find the answers he needs to make peace with his father.

Distinguished by wonderfully evocative descriptions of the Western landscape, *Mountain Time* is sure to strike a chord with readers who have struggled with the past and won the freedom to embrace their own lives. ☞

Beth Duris is a writer in Washington, D.C.



AVAILABLE ON AUDIO

**iAntonio!**

BY PAT BROESKE

He is one-half of a famous show business couple—one that frequently makes the pages of the tabloids. But Antonio Banderas is known for more than his marriage to wild-child-turned-actress Melanie Griffith. Along with enjoying pin-up status for his darkly exotic and sensual looks, he has come to be known as a durable and critically admired leading man.

The Spanish import, who first found international fame in a string of subtitled movies directed by Pedro Almodovar, burst onto the U.S. scene in 1992 as one of the stars of *The Mambo Kings*, an adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (HarperCollins, \$13, 0060973277), by Oscar Hijuelos. Banderas went on to deliver vivid portraits of complex characters in movies ranging from *Philadelphia*, in which he dared to play a gay character, to the low-budget gunplay opus *Desperado*, to the more recent big budget paean to swordplay, *The Mask of Zorro*.

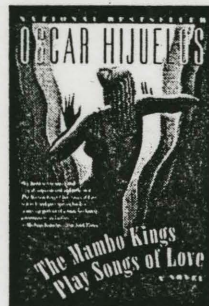
August will find him doing more battle, this time circa the tenth century. *The 13th Warrior* is based on Michael Crichton's ambitious *Eaters of the Dead* (Ballantine, \$7.99, 0345914740), which in turn is based upon the real-life

account of an Arab who traveled and fought with the Vikings. Actionmeister John McTiernan (of *Die Hard* notoriety) helms the movie, which is said to be rife with conflict involving both humans and monsters. We shouldn't be surprised. Crichton is a master at generating emotional fury amid lost/exotic worlds. Think *Congo*, *Jurassic Park*, *Lost World*, and *Sphere*, among others.

Mesmerizing other-worlds are a familiar stomping ground for Banderas. He pulled out all stops for a scary, sexy turn as Armand, the seductive bloodsucker of the controversial movie version of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (Ballantine, \$7.99, 0345337662). On a far subtler turn, he was one of the few members of an impressive cast (headed by Meryl Streep) who seemed at home in the sprawling South American saga about the Truebas family, depicted in Isabel Allende's acclaimed *House of the Spirits* (Bantam, \$7.99, 0553273914).

And yet another book-to-film is in his future. In *The Sparrow*, based on the futuristic thriller by Mary Doria Russell (Fawcett, \$12, 0449912558), he will be a Jesuit linguist on the trail of intelligent life on the planet Rakhat. ☞

Pat H. Broeske is the co-author of biographies of Howard Hughes and Elvis Presley.



MYSTERY

**ANONYMOUS REX**

By Eric Garcia  
Villard Books, \$23  
ISBN 0375503269

REVIEW BY BRUCE TIERNEY

On the streets of a not-too-distant future Los Angeles, a mystery begins to unfold. A nightclub burns to the ground and the manager, trapped in his office during the conflagration, clings to life by the slimmest of threads. An out-of-work gumshoe, shopworn and down to his last few dollars, is hired by the nightclub owners to investigate the situation. Quickly he finds himself in over his head. A slight variation of a story you've read a hundred times before, right? Wrong, bucko, because this time the private investigator is a dinosaur, a velociraptor to be exact.

It seems that dinosaurs did not become extinct, as science would have you believe. Any good evolutionist will tell you that a species, in order to remain viable, will adapt to its changing circumstances. Over millions of years, the dinosaurs became ever smaller with each succeeding generation; today they are of a size similar to human beings. As protective coloration, they have donned fleshlike costumes, and have been merrily posing as humans for centuries. John Fogerty, the lead singer of Creedence Clearwater, is one, as are Paul Simon, Newt Gingrich

and countless others. Some studies indicate that dinosaurs account for as much as 20 percent of the population. And they have successfully hidden their continued existence from the humans.

Our hapless detective, one Vincent Rubio, follows his nose (everyone knows that dinosaurs possess legendary olfactory capabilities, right?) from the Big Orange to the Big Apple in search of clues. Never suspecting that he might be the potential object of foul play, he is totally oblivious to the two gangsters tailing him in a black Lincoln limousine. (Need I point out that a dinosaur should have some experience with tails?) In no particular order, Vincent is roughed up, fired, framed, and placed in rather immediate danger of a steamy sexual liaison with (horrors!) a human female. A rather attractive human female, at that.

This is perhaps the biggest no-no in the annals of reptilia, an atrocity that is judged swiftly and harshly when uncovered.

Reminiscent at times of Jonathan Lethem's *Gun with Occasional Music* (in which the private eye is a wisecracking kangaroo), *Anonymous Rex*, Eric Garcia's first novel, is stylish, witty, and fast-paced. Protagonist Vincent Rubio is an engaging amalgam of sensitive new-age guy-osaur and, well, lounge lizard. And, of course, any detective hatched from an egg just has to bring new meaning to the term "hard-boiled." ☞



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## KIRKUS REVIEWS

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KIRKUS REVIEWS  
Date of Issue: June 1, 1999

**Diliberto, Gioia**  
A USEFUL WOMAN: *The  
Early Life of Jane Addams*  
Scribner (302 pp.)  
\$26.00  
Jul. 1999  
ISBN: 0-684-85365-5

A lively and thorough account of Jane Addams's early influences, hampered only by the aloofness of the subject herself.

Using family documents unavailable to previous biographers, Diliberto (*Hadley*, 1992; *Debutante: The Story of Brenda Frazier*, 1987) reconstructs Addams's early years and traces the transformation of a depressed, emaciated invalid into an energetic, busy woman. Diliberto weaves her tale seamlessly, while expertly interspersing regional history, psychological and political theories, and historical characters throughout. Jane was born to a pious and industrious Illinois couple, but her early life was plagued by illness and tragedy. Diliberto reveals Addams's steadfast devotion to her family, whose claims on her threatened to tear her away from her larger calling. Founding Hull House settlement in 1889 freed Addams of purposelessness and depression, and turned her into a national and international star of social reform. As she became more independent, Addams turned to her friends for love and support, particularly to Ellen Starr, her partner in founding Hull House, and Mary Rozet Smith, her delivering love. Diliberto is a bit overzealous in downplaying the possibility of sexual relations between these devoted friends. She likens Jane and Ellen to newlyweds on their first night in Hull House yet insists they had separate bedrooms, where, she emphasizes, they dressed separately. Addams's sexuality remains somewhat of a mystery, in part because she destroyed most of Mary's letters to her. Addams, known for her emotional reserve, was enigmatic in many ways. We get a sense of her feistiness and dedication through her actions (becoming garbage inspector for her neighborhood), yet she rarely leaps off the page. Instead, Addams shines through as a consummate do-gooder: a successful speaker and fundraiser, a loyal sibling, a progressive theorist, an understated feminist, and an excessively self-sacrificing caregiver.

A sympathetic biography of a woman who would have wanted above all to be remembered for being useful. (8 pages b&w photos, not seen)

...

**Doig, Ivan**  
MOUNTAIN TIME  
Scribner (320 pp.)  
\$25.00  
Aug. 4, 1999  
ISBN: 0-684-83295-X

A writer's midlife struggles to come to grips with his difficult, duplicitous father, his estranged children, and his lover make for a surprisingly muted story.

While the grand scenery and keen regard for the natural world found in Doig's work (*Bucking the Sun*, 1996, etc.) are still present, they're mostly on the periphery of the action here. At center stage are the various problems vexing Mitch Rozier, a longtime environmental columnist for a Seattle paper. His grown children from a short, disastrous marriage are distant. He may soon be out of a job. His long-term relationship with Alexandra (Lexa) McCaskill, an outdoorswoman, seems to have become static and uncertain. Matters become even more complicated when Mitch is summoned home to a small town in Montana by his sly, exasperating father, Lyle. Inevitably, Mitch's return revives in him complex emotions about his adolescence, and in particular a puzzling episode in which he felt that his father, for reasons he would never reveal, betrayed him. Their awkward, prickly relationship becomes considerably more intense when Lyle reveals that he has advanced leukemia. Lexa arrives to offer moral support, bringing along her sister Mariah, a globetrotting photojournalist. She comes up with the idea, to Mitch's horror and Lyle's delight, of documenting the craggy, courtly Lyle's last days. After Lyle's death, the three set out for a wilderness area to fulfill Lyle's request that his ashes be scattered in the Rocky Mountains. Mitch breaks his leg, and Lexa has to use her wilderness skills to save them. Further complications ensue before Mitch can finally discover why his father had once betrayed him, but the truth, while seamy, isn't particularly shocking. Much is resolved but much—including Mitch's relationship with his children—is left unresolved.

Whenever Doig writes about the natural world, *Mountain Time* takes on life. But the self-absorbed, glum Mitch seems rather one-dimensional, the revelations here are unsurprising, and the climax is rushed. Believable but rather uninvolved work, and not Doig's best.

...

suffering of Japanese-Americans is depicted with rare force and candor. In the end, this tale of clashing cultures and generations also depicts a gaping wound in our history that no amount of token government reparations can heal. *Agent, Susan Bergholz. Author tour. (Aug.)*

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**RINGING FOR YOU:**

**A Love Story with Interruptions**

*Anouchka Grose Forrester.* Scribner, \$22 (208p) ISBN 0-684-86292-1

British-based Forrester's larky first novel shimmies through the life of a well-educated, overqualified temp receptionist as she juggles her boring job with her frustrating love life. The unnamed narrator says she "took a Masters degree in the History of Punishment," though she omits this achievement from her résumé for fear of scaring off employers. Temping at the tedious Academy of Material Science in London, she uses free time at her 9-to-5 desk job to write a novel about her floundering romantic life, in part to convince herself that she isn't turning into "horrible corporate vegetation." She blames such frequent interruptions as phone calls or package deliveries—which are indicated throughout the text with whimsical textual icons—for preventing her from producing a cohesive narrative, and the result is an enjoyable jumble of neurotic journal entries, philosophical meandering and academic asides. Prone to panic attacks and narcoleptic fits, the rebellious and insecure narrator feels petulantly superior to her fellow drones. Explaining her abhorrence for office parties, she sniffs, "I don't want to see these people when they're drunk." Yet she also spends much of the novel obsessing over office hierarchy, as well as pondering the invention and social significance of the telephone, what books are and why people like them, and the meaning of extraordinary love and work versus the merely ordinary. Readers are likely to feel about Forrester's book the way her narrator describes her own reading material: skimming a contemporary American novel featuring a similar receptionist heroine, the spunky protagonist feels "jealous and then... bored" to find another angsty secretary to identify with, finding the manic pretensions a bit tedious, but appreciative of the "funny words and 'interesting' ways of saying things and witty (yet surprisingly 'deep') anecdotes." (Aug.)

**CINNAMON GARDENS**

*Shyam Selvadurai.* Hyperion, \$23.95 (400p) ISBN 0-7868-6473-7

The political upheavals of 1920s Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) provide a rich backdrop for this ambitious, cumbersome novel by the Lambda Award-winning author of *Funny Boy*. The plot, despite its weighty context, hinges more on the personal struggles of two characters to define themselves within a restrictive high-society family. Annalukshmi insists on being a modern girl—riding a bicycle, fighting for the right to

vote, staving off her family's attempts to find her the perfect husband. Her uncle Balendran, meanwhile, has spent most of his life conforming to his father's wishes: he runs the family businesses, refuses contact with his brother (who was banished for marrying a low-caste servant girl 28 years before) and—most significantly—leaves a loving homosexual relationship to marry the woman his father has chosen for him. Now, 20 years later, his former lover has returned to observe Ceylon's fledgling constitutional committee, and Balendran has to confront his life of blind obedience. The novel careens somewhat disconcertingly between Annalukshmi's story and Balendran's until the two accounts finally merge. Readers may be distracted by encyclopedic intrusions: "at that time, a sari was sewn onto belting that hooked around the waist very much like a skirt, the only dressing required being the pleats and the fall draped once about the body and over the shoulder." Such passages, sprinkled pedantically throughout, recede in the light of more colorful descriptions and developments, especially when the focus is Balendran's tormented oscillations between duty and independence. Selvadurai succeeds in bringing an Austenesque novel of manners—with its issues of marriage, gender and class—to Ceylon, while broadening the scope to explore themes of race, religion and sexuality in his sweeping tale of conformity and rebellion. *Agents, Bruce Wood, Jennifer Barclay. (July)*

**FYI:** *Born in Sri Lanka, Selvadurai lives Toronto.*

**JEM (AND SAM)**

*Ferdinand Mount.* Carroll & Graf, \$25.95 (432p) ISBN 0-7867-0649-X

A lively imagination, combined with solid grasp of Restoration England period details, animates this diverting historical novel. In 1994, a descendant of Jeremiah Mount, a minor figure mentioned in diaries of Samuel Pepys, discovers Mount's memoirs, lying undisturbed since Oliver Cromwell's time. "Jem" begins his narration as a teenager, when he is cast off his native village for stealing and packed off to Dover as an apprentice to an uncle, a pious bookseller. When sent to Canterbury to purchase sermons, church and lawbooks, Jem, a natural wheeler-dealer, also buys pornography, and so is able to move to London on the prowl. There, at the age of 21, he becomes a clerk at Whitehall and meets Pepys, a fellow clerk, in a tavern. Eventually, ambitious Jem rises to become Lord Chamberlain General Monck and his wife, Nan, who was once Jem's mistress. But Pepys is higher, acquiring more fame, fortune



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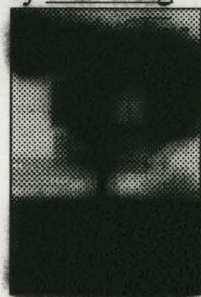
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**Mountain Time**

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Doig is masterful at illuminating both human and geographical vulnerability, constantly shifting our focus between the land -- breathtaking, essential and in need of protection -- and the people bonded to it.

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A painted silk scroll from China shows a zen poet and calligrapher trying to capture the satori, the spontaneous enlightenment sometimes attained by the immensity of the landscape. The tree-lined mountains, and the winding creeks and brooks overshadow the artist who sits at his bench as incense plumes rise into the landscape.

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Generations must come to terms: a dying one that had survived the depression and had fought through two world wars and an aging one, "the baby boomers" who rebelled against older ideals but feel what it's like to age, and wonder, in a cloud of nostalgia; Are there resolutions? Between Father and Son? Wife and Husband? Daughter and Father? Man vs. Nature?

All relationships are represented magnificently in Mountain Time. Nature casts a shadow on all the characters. The forests, the mountains, and the streams age with humanity, but they won't remember us.

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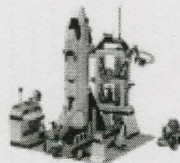
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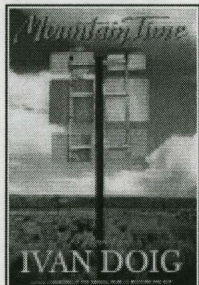
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## Customer Comments

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**Judecca@earthlink.net from East Village, NY, NY , July 27, 1999 ★★★★★**

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Wednesday, August 4, 1999



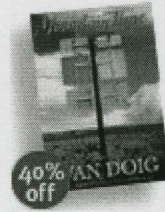
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What We're Reading Peak Performance



Ivan Doig sets the first half of his novel Mountain Time in the overcast, caffeinated metropolis of Seattle. But his hero, an aging environmental columnist, soon finds

himself back home in Montana--where the old and new West are squared off in a prolonged and comical clash.

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- Encarta World English Dictionary, edited by Anne Soukhanov
Black Notice, by Patricia Cornwell
The Last Victorian, by Kathryn Hughes

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Interviews, Articles, and More

Native Daughter

Louise Erdrich talks about her Ojibwa heritage, her sources of inspiration, and The Birchbark House. In Children's Books



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- 1. Black Notice by Patricia Cornwell
2. The Other Side and Back: A Psychic's Guide to Our World and Beyond by Lindsay Harrison, Sylvia Browne
3. Assassins (Left Behind) by Jerry B. Jenkins, Tim F. Lahaye

More Hot Books



Latest Oprah pick: Melinda Haynes's Mother of Pearl

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- Desert Queen by Janet Wallach
The Best American Sports Writing of the Century edited by David Halberstam
Investing Without a Silver Spoon by Jeff Fischer

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- *We Interrupt This Broadcast*, by Joe Garner, on A&E's *Open Book*®
- *Legacy: A Biography of Moses and Walter Annenberg*, by Christopher Ogden, on NPR's *Diane Rehm Show*®

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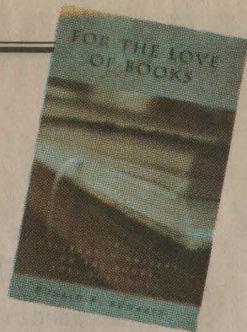
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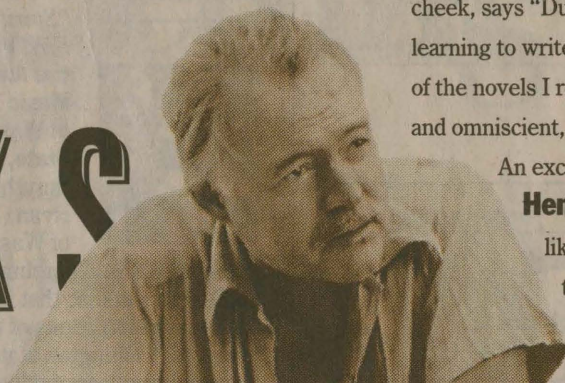
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**"For the Love of Books: 115 Celebrated Writers on the Books They Love Most"** (Grossett/Putnam, \$24.95), by Ronald B. Shwartz, takes on the question of what writers read (when they're not writing). Some excerpts:

# BOOKS



**Elmore Leonard**, tongue only partly in cheek, says "During the fifties when I was learning to write, I was discouraged by most of the novels I read, their authors so wordy and omniscient, their pages thick with prose.

An exception was **Ernest Hemingway**, bless his heart. I liked him immediately because there was often a lot of white space showing on his pages."



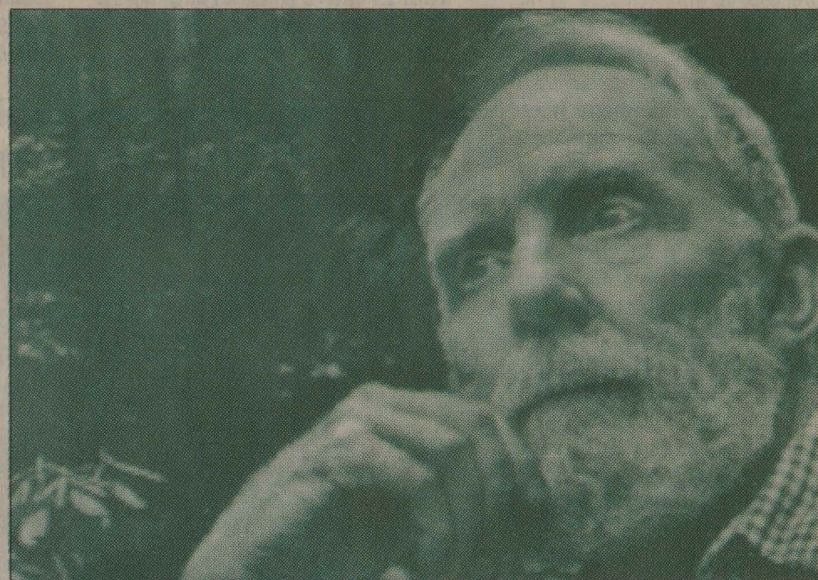
**Thomas McGuane** (reviewed below): After a childhood populated by **Captain Horatio Hornblower** and Booth Tarkington's "**Penrod and Sam**," "I stumbled upon "**Alice in Wonderland**" and felt for the first time an all too rare exultation, a real euphoria, of the pure music and power of language on its own terms."



**Anne Fadiman**: She read "**Assorted Prose**," **John Updike's** first nonfiction collection, at 18. "I decided that what Updike did was what I wanted to do too. Conveniently, I was too young to realize that he was Updike and I wasn't."

## A return to mountain roots

*Son leaves Seattle to play out this tale of family love and turmoil in Montana*



Ivan Doig

### "Mountain Time"

by Ivan Doig  
Scribner, \$25

By TIM McNULTY  
Special to The Seattle Times

Seattle writer Ivan Doig's popular Montana trilogy, which follows four generations of the spirited McCaskill clan, might just have to become a quartet.

"Mountain Time," Doig's sixth novel, returns to the enduring themes and expansive landscapes that inspired his most memorable work: the complexities of love, loss

and family loyalties played out against the rugged Montana land.

The characters in this novel find their way back to their mountain roots by way of contemporary Seattle. Along the way, Doig gives us some delightful takes on the city, including the '60s, city newsrooms, old neighborhoods, new "cybernaires," and characters we feel we already know.

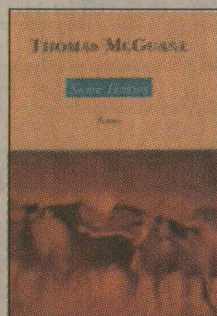
Mitch Rozier's life on the coast is coming unraveled. An aging and somewhat jaded environmental columnist for a Fremont-district alternative weekly, he is no longer at the top of his game. A final blow

comes when he learns that, after 25 years, his paper is going free, becoming, in his words, street litter. Things are not faring well at home either.

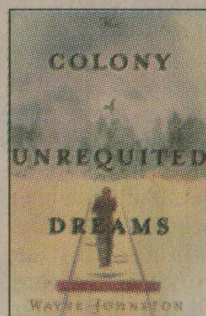
His relationship with his partner, Lexa (of the aforementioned McCaskill clan, featured in the Doig books "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me") is rocky at best, and his grown children from an earlier marriage want nothing to do with him. When the call comes from his father, a hard-bitten Montana ranch hand from whom Mitch himself has been estranged for much of his adult life, he heads back to his boyhood home to help sort out the old man's tangled affairs.

Mitch's father, Lyle, is a working study of the last gasp of the Old West. Surrounded by rusting farm equipment, junked trucks and stocks of old newspapers, he squints at a rapidly changing world through a haze of tobacco smoke. His latest get-rich scheme, selling the family's scant landholdings to a gravel company that plans to lace the Rocky Mountain front with mining roads, is put on hold by his son's arrival. The novel seems poised to take off in the direction of environmental journalism, but Doig has other veins to probe. Soon after his arrival, Mitch finds that his father is dying of leukemia, and the tangled affairs confronting the son are now of his own making.

Readers of Doig's earlier novels will recognize the looming scarps of the Jericho and Roman reefs that frame the



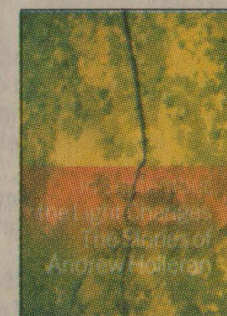
**Tales straight from a horse**



**'Dreams': part real,**

duced himself as Adolph E. Bernard, stressing the E as though there was some other Adolph Bernard that he was concerned he might be mistaken for."

Smallwood is a joy when popping the pretensions of these pompous adults, but he soon becomes one himself. Rail-thin and hawk-nosed, he adopts socialism, flees to New York and nearly starves to death. Upon his return, he collaborates with other political parties to get ahead. He becomes a moral coward, ready to knuckle under to the more powerful people he despises, always fearful of what people think



**Gay stories full of wit**

### BESTSELLERS

Current national bestsellers, as reported by Publishers Weekly.

#### Hardcover fiction

- "Hannibal" Thomas Harris
- "White Oleander" Janet Fitch
- "Granny Dan" Danielle Steel
- "Mother of Pearl" Melinda Haynes
- "The Testament" John Grisham
- "The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing" Melissa Bank
- "The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon" Stephen King
- "True at First Light" Ernest Hemingway
- "McNally's Dilemma" Lawrence Sanders
- "We'll Meet Again" Mary Higgins Clark

#### Hardcover nonfiction

- "Something More" Sarah Ban Breathnach
- "Real Age"

...estays with  
Morrie"  
Mitch Albom

4. "Suzanne Somers' Get  
Skinny on Fabulous Food"  
Suzanne Somers

5. "Shadow"  
Bob Woodward

6. "Live Now Age Later"  
Isadore Rosenfeld

7. "Body for Life"  
Bill Phillips and  
Michael D'Orso

8. "Simple Abundance"  
Sarah Ban  
Breathnach

9. "The Greatest  
Generation"  
Tom Brokaw

10. "See Jane Win"  
Sylvia B. Rimm

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## Local scene

Current best sellers at Barnes  
& Noble, Pacific Place, 600  
Pine St., Seattle.

## Hardcovers

1. "Hannibal"  
Thomas Harris

2. "Harry Potter and the  
Chamber of Secrets"  
J.K. Rowling

3. "Pooh and the  
Millennium"  
A.A. Milne

4. "True at First Light"  
Ernest Hemingway

5. "The Power of Logos"  
William Haig

## Paperbacks

1. "A Walk in the Woods"  
Bill Bryson

2. "Calm at Work"  
Paul Wilson

3. "Bag of Bones"  
Stephen King

4. "Memoirs of a Geisha"  
Arthur Golden

5. "Midnight in the  
Garden of Good and Evil"  
John Berendt

# lover's mouth

## "Some Horses"

by Thomas McGuane  
The Lyons Press, \$22.95

By IRENE WANNER  
Special to The Seattle Times

If you love horses, you probably love horse stories. Tom McGuane, a writer who bought a small Montana ranch in the '60s, confesses to an ongoing passion for animals in general and horses in particular. Over the years, they have become characters in their own right, in both his fiction and magazine articles. Now nine essays sing their praises as well as their problems.

"Horses occupy a special place," McGuane writes, "because they require so much care, and because they are curiously fragile. . . . If the horse were a Ford, the species would vanish beneath lawsuits engendered by consumer-protection laws."

For example, in "Roanie," McGuane admits his best horse was generally held to be "the ugliest horse in Montana." But the gelding was talented at cow cutting — separating and holding one herd-bound animal from the rest — and "For a few years, I made more money on his back than I did at my actual job." Little things scared Roanie, though, and McGuane soon learns "the only safe place is on his back."

McGuane has known a lot of colorful characters, both human and equine. His book is dedicated to Buster Welch, a trainer who appears as the Voice of Reason in several essays. The recent vogue of the horse-whispering gentle approach is nothing new to Welch. He emphasizes having a rider "get out of the way." Welch says, "All you need to know is what the horse was going to do anyway." Admiration for the animal's "spirit and vigor" can summon its talents more readily "than that spectacle of obedience, of compliance, in an animal that is all too trained."

But there are crazy horses. And they make for great stories. In "The Life and Hard Times of Chink's Benjibaby," McGuane describes a "kind and capable horse who hated confinement and machinery." In "Sugar," a mare's education is also McGuane's. His affection and respect for horses and the people who appreciate and collaborate with them are genuine. Even if you don't love horses, you'll probably love these essays.

# part fantasy

## "The Colony of Unrequited Dreams"

by Wayne Johnston  
Doubleday, \$24.95

By ERIK LUNDEGAARD  
Special to The Seattle Times

Imagine that John Irving wrote a novel about the life and times of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, but focused less on FDR's politics and more on an unrequited love affair with a fictional female journalist — then you'd have some idea of what Canadian author Wayne Johnston is up to with his novel "The Colony of Unrequited Dreams."

Our first-person protagonist is Joey Smallwood, Newfoundland's premier after the island forsook independence for confederation with Canada in 1949. Smallwood's father is a failure, and the family lives high on a hill in St. John in "the least desirable, most scorned of all the city's neighborhoods." Key images — simultaneously humorous and tragic — abound: "The Boot," which hangs outside Joey's uncle's successful shop and which mocks the less-prosperous Smallwoods; D.W. Prowse's massive tome, "A History of Newfoundland," which, like Smallwood, really existed, and whose huge weight is responsible, at various times, for avalanche and death and betrayal.

The childhood chapters are the best part of the novel. Joey's years at private school seem some combination of George Orwell's essay, "Such, Such Were the Joys," and the Steering School section of "The World According to Garp." At one point, Smallwood comments on the eccentric, oddly named teachers, including "a Frenchman who always intro-

relationship with Shelagh Fielding, his antagonist at private school but friend soon thereafter. It is Fielding (she never goes by her first name) who gets Smallwood a job as a reporter for the local paper. Eventually, she becomes Newfoundland's most famous columnist. A youthful bout with tuberculosis has left one leg withered, and she roams St. John's with a cane, limping and boozing, a Canadian Dorothy Parker with an ironic bon mot always on her lips.

One could say that author Johnston is quite the gentleman, for he gives Fielding the best lines in the book. Interspersed with Smallwood's story are snippets of Fielding's diary, along with chapters from her "Condensed History of Newfoundland" (her ironic answer to D.W. Prowse), and both are gorgeously written. It's as if Fielding, Johnston's creation, is a better writer than Johnston himself.

"You put your stethoscope on the soles of my feet and listened with an air of grave concentration," she writes to her recently deceased doctor-father, recalling childhood games. "You put it on my forehead and claimed that you could hear what I was thinking."

These snippets tend to be so sweet, so moving, that the reader quickly wonders whether Johnston made a mistake in focusing on Smallwood. Fielding deserves a book of her own, or at least a less cowardly counterpart in this one.

Immensely readable, "The Colony of Unrequited Dreams" is ultimately about Smallwood's love-hate relationship with both Newfoundland and Fielding. Newfoundland is described in fascinating, sometimes terrifying detail; Fielding is touching. It's Smallwood, Johnston's fictional creation of the real-life premier, who needs work.

## "In September, the Light Changes"

by Andrew Holleran  
Hyperion, \$23.95

By JUDY DOENGES  
Special to The Seattle Times

If you're looking for the perfect gay beach book, choose Andrew Holleran's short-story collection, "In September, the Light Changes." These elegant, witty pieces will linger in the mind long after the sun has set.

One reason is Holleran's ability to capture character in only a few silky sentences, a talent he first demonstrated in the classic gay novel "Dancer from the Dance," and, most recently, in "The Beauty of Men."

"One had to catch him at his booth at Odessa," Holleran writes about the erudite Mr. O'Connell in "The Ossuary," "where sitting with him as he ate a huge plate of pierogi was like having a private tutorial — his mind, his manners, were so fine."

Most of the narrators in Holleran's stories are acolytes of a certain type: Well-educated, well-connected and unnamed gay men, they move from New York's Greenwich Village out to Fire Island and down to Key West in search of love, usually with the wrong men.

Several stories hearken back to the heavy cruising days of the '70s ("The Penthouse" and "Joshua & Clark"); and in only a few does AIDS appear ("Amsterdam" and "Sunday Morning: Key West").

My favorite stories, though, are those with older, odder characters. There's the unforgettable Mr. Friel in "The Hamburger Man" ("A hamburger man is someone people used to ask to lunch or dinner but he gets demoted," Mr. Friel explains), who wears a heavy suit in the thick heat of summertime Manhattan that mimics the swaddling he wears around his desire for men.

Mr. Friel, a writer and editor who once knew the near-greats of literature, lives in squalor that matches the wreck of his emotional life. (He slips on a pile of ancient New Yorker magazines and has to be hospitalized.) Now Mr. Friel must dine out on feeble stories about celebrity hangers-on.

The only flaw in "In September, the Light Changes" is Holleran's difficulty in fashioning endings to his stories. But finally it doesn't matter: You'll be too busy soaking up the vivid atmospheres of uptown *pieds-à-terre* and downtown gay bathhouses that make reading Holleran's stories such a singular pleasure.

country. Doig has fashioned a mythic landscape as memorable and real as Faulkner's. The same affections, betrayals and wars of the heart that propel his earlier novels endure here, along with the weathered limestone hills. Doig is at his best when sketching human frailties against the broad historical sweep of the mountain west, and Mitch's desire to understand the rift between him and his father sends the novel back through the Montana of the 1930s, as well as the hard-worked fields of his own youth.

To add to the emotional mix, Lexa arrives to help with Lyle and confront her relationship with Mitch. With her is her sister, Mariah, a photographer, who stays on to document Lyle's last days as a human-interest story for her paper, the Montanian. If the cast is beginning to sound a bit crowded, it is. Mariah whirled through the earlier novel, "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana," and her presence here seems superfluous. But Doig's storytelling thrives on the emotional entanglements between kin and kindred and the uneasy resolves to which they lead.

Doig also loves to brush his characters against historical disasters. Lexa's father just missed being sent out to fight the disastrous Mann Gulch fire, which took the lives of 12 young firefighters; her great-grandfather barely survived the deadly 1918 influenza epidemic. Mitch, too, seems to have caught the family penchant for the near-miss. Chance alone kept him from Coldwater Ridge the morning Mount St. Helens erupted; his partner, who was also covering the story, was less fortunate. History figures strongly into Lyle's story, too — the Depression and World War II helped harden his mind-set. But Lyle's battles were largely self-generated, and the only fatalities were his relationships with his wife and son.

"Mountain Time" clearly moves away from the bulky historical scaffolding of Doig's most recent novels: Montana's centennial in "Ride with Me," and the building of Fort Peck Dam in "Bucking the Sun." The history shaping the lives of these characters is written into their own hearts.

In what seems a final irony, Lyle asks his son to spread his ashes on a remote mountain in the heart of the Bob Marshall Wilderness, a place, in life, he would as soon have seen logged and mined to eviscerated heaps. Mitch is galled by the request, but his search for the reason behind it leads him to the truth of a family secret, the source of his own estrangement from the embittered old man, and possibly, a key to his own self-knowledge.

In "Mountain Time," Doig has delivered us another classic.

Tim McNulty's most recent book, "Washington's Mount Rainier National Park, A Centennial Celebration," is published by Mountaineers Books.

## Inside

Deloris Tarzan Ament reviews two new novels with artists as their protagonists: "The Artist's Widow" by Shena Mackay and "The Artist of the Missing" by Paul Lafarge. Page M 9.