

The Inlander *free*

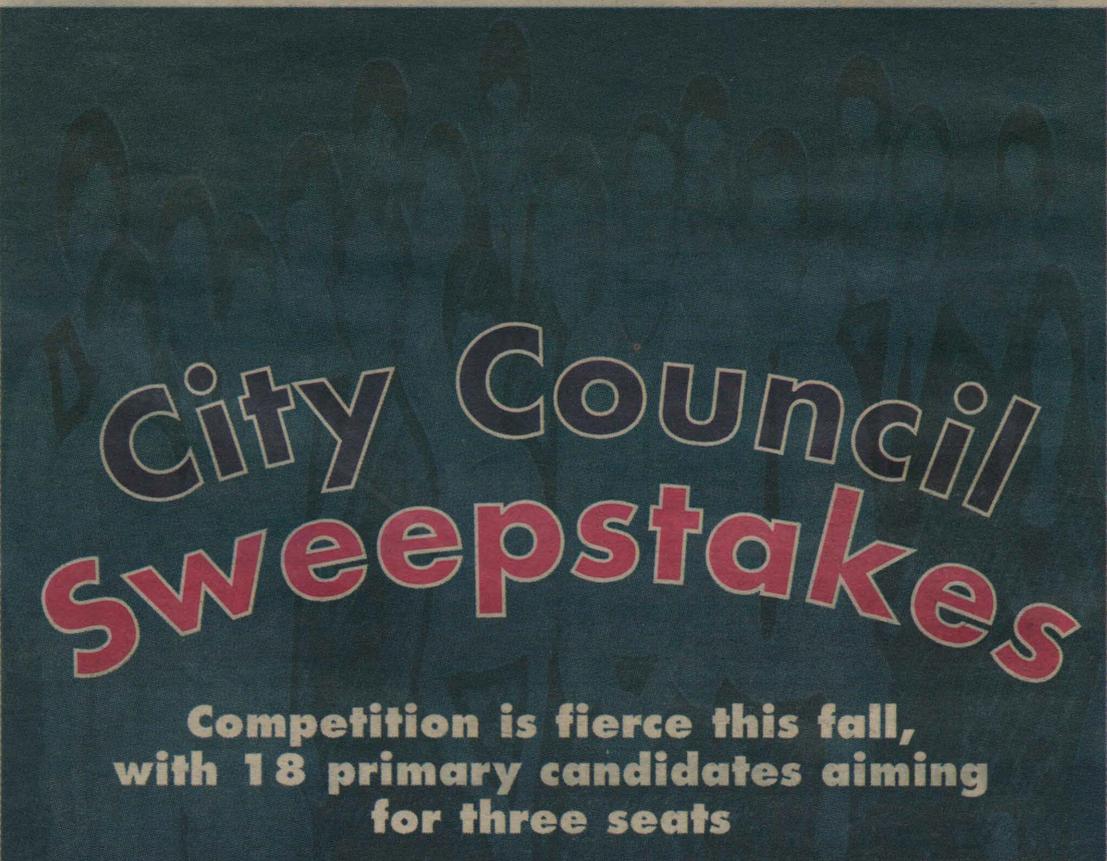
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

WEEK OF AUGUST 25 - 31, 1999 • SPOKANE • EASTERN WASHINGTON • NORTH IDAHO

I want my

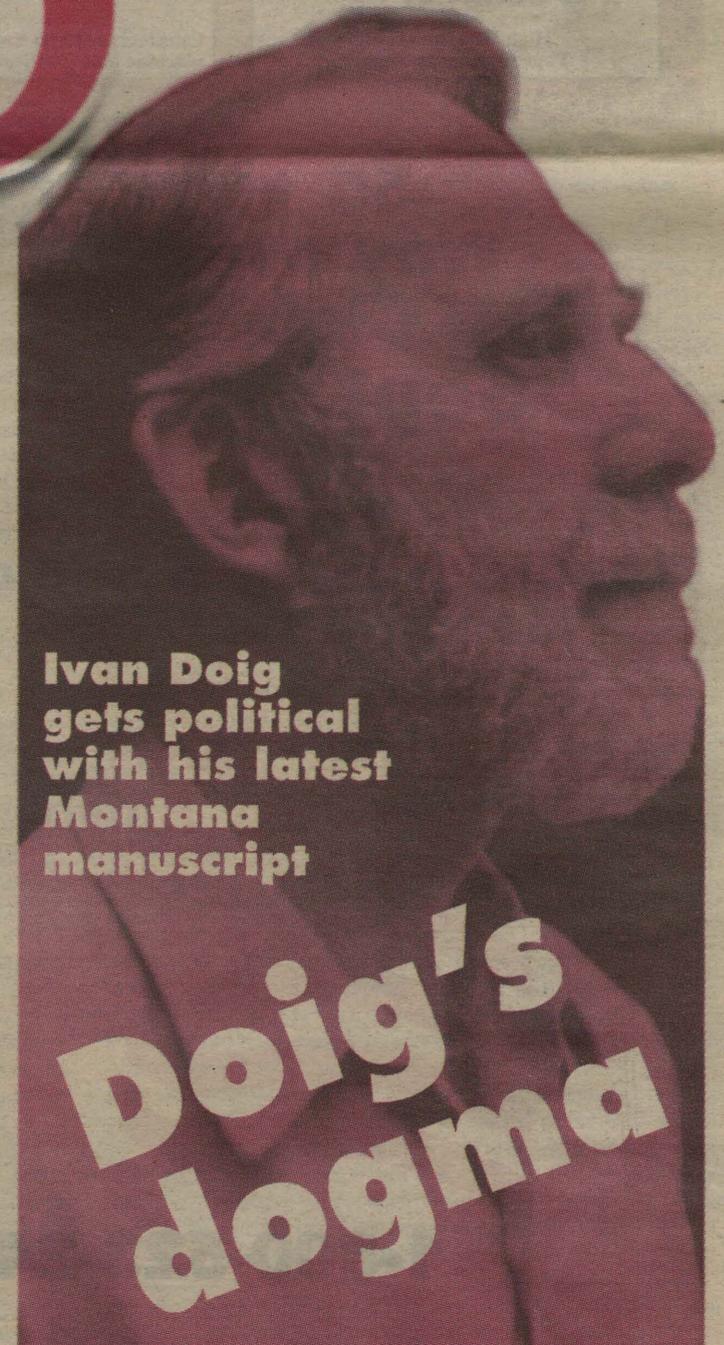
MP3

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 midjet 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*.

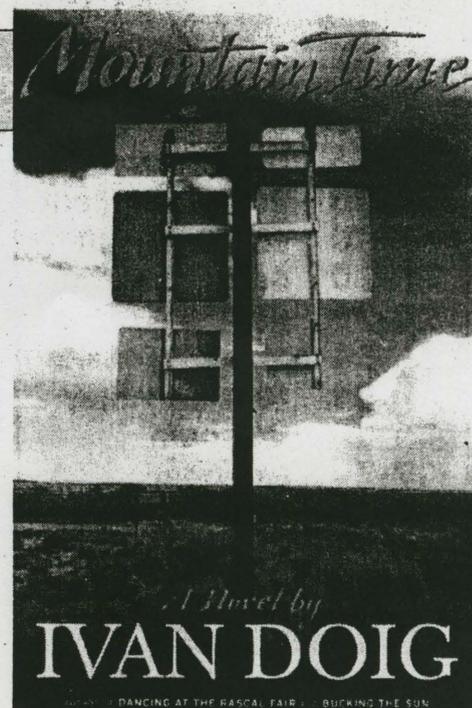
Photographer Mariah McCaskill tells her sister: “... there Missoula is, growing like crazy, and not a damn one of the new folks seems to want to subscribe to a

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*.

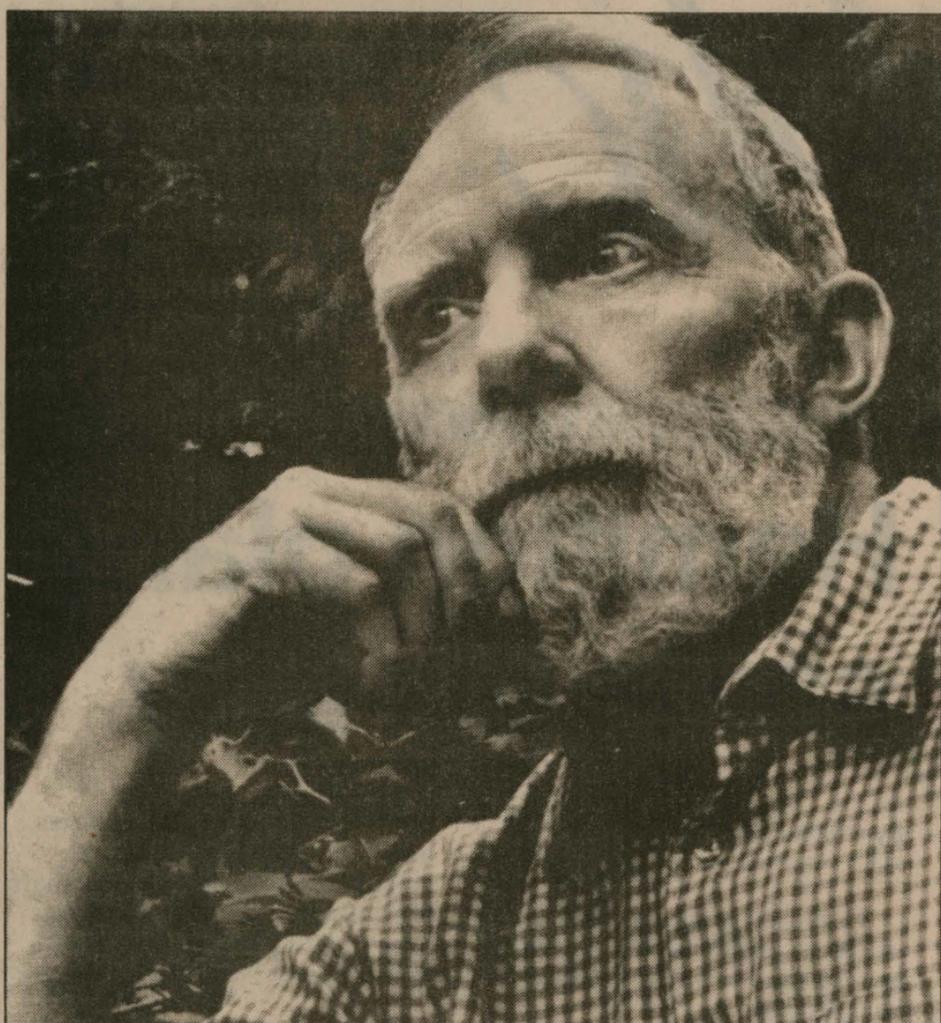
His vivid descriptions of the western landscape and taut insights into human and geographical vulnerability have earned him a reputation as one of the country’s finest storytellers. “Ivan Doig has been, from *This House of Sky*, his first grand entry into literature, one of the great American voices, 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?

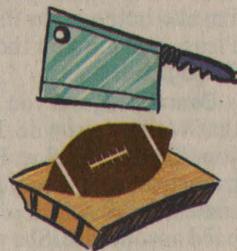
By Paul Turner
Staff writer

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.



Any way you slice it, there's no getting around an obnoxious fan.

■ **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



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.

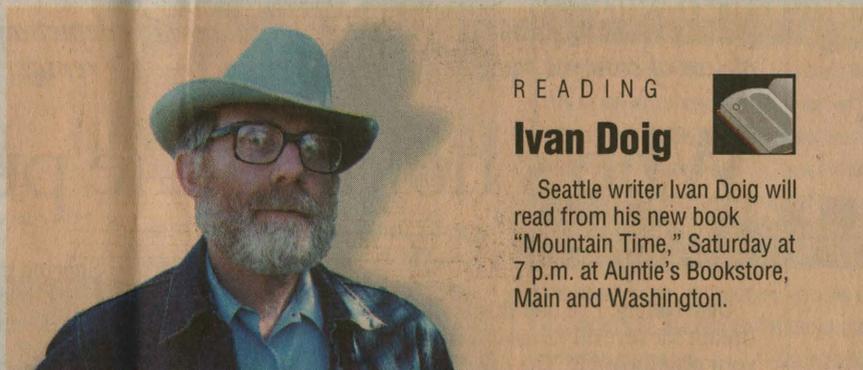
Bucking Montana

Ivan Doig expands geographic and cultural boundaries in his newest novel, 'Mountain Time'

By Susan English
 Staff writer

Montana'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 tenuous. When Rozier's father summons him home to Montana to discuss another get-rich-quick scheme, 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

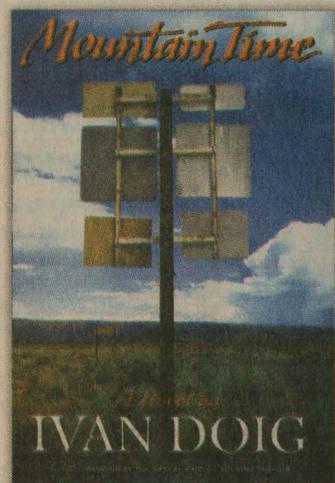
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Sunday, August 15, 1999

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

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

■ *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 gourmards 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



One Man's Montana

Bob Gilluly

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.

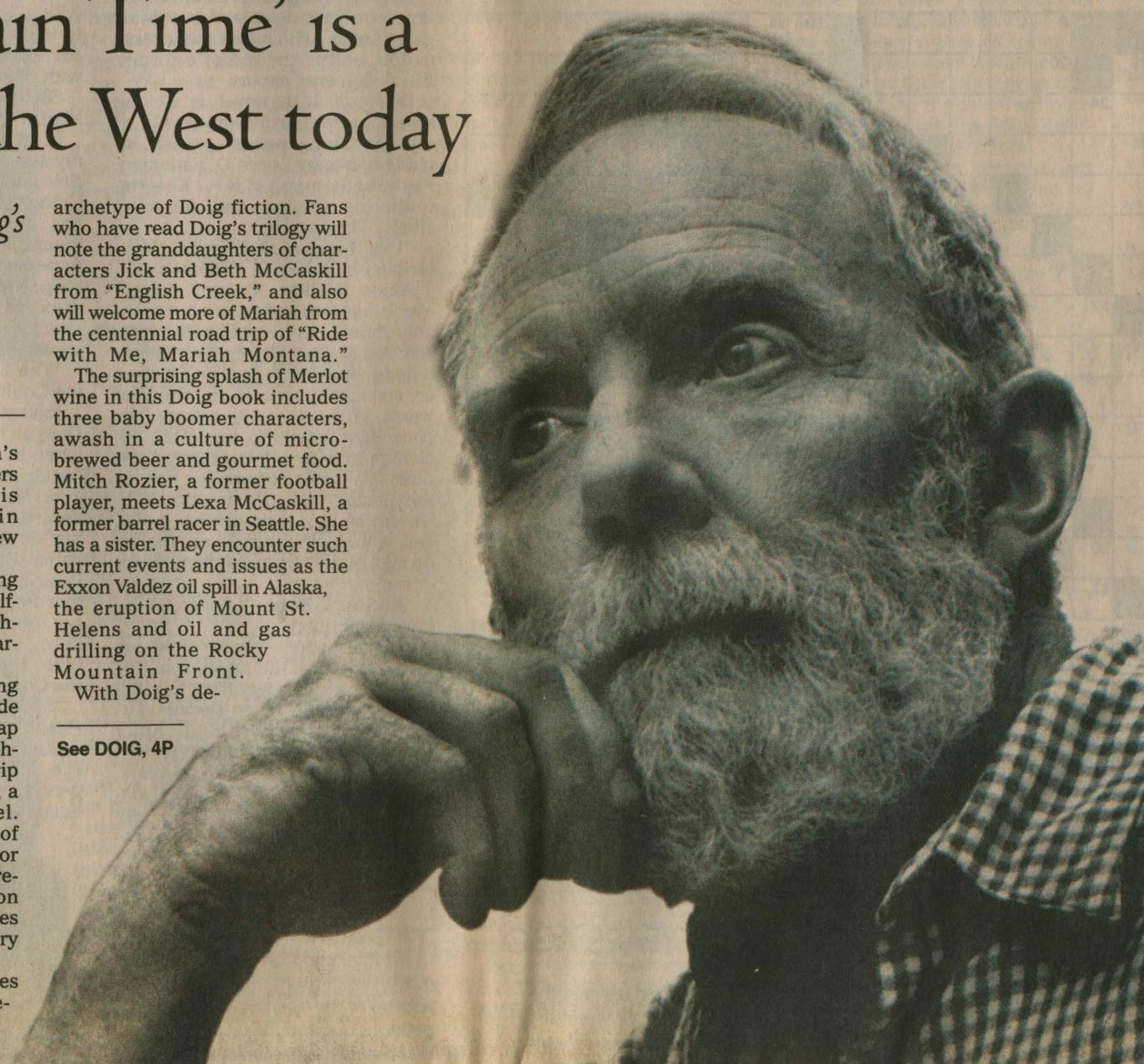
Pacific Coast officials decided to wait a year before voting on Montana's application.

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



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.

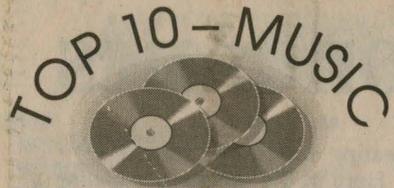


A 1994 U.S. Postal Service stamp that honored black Buffalo Soldiers who served after the Civil War.

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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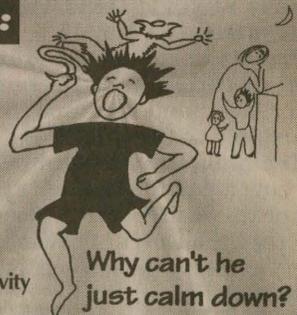
Neurofeedback is a scientifically based, non-invasive program for training the brain to regulate activity levels and to improve focus and attention.

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Recent advances in Neurofeedback have made it cost effective. Twenty to forty sessions usually complete the training.

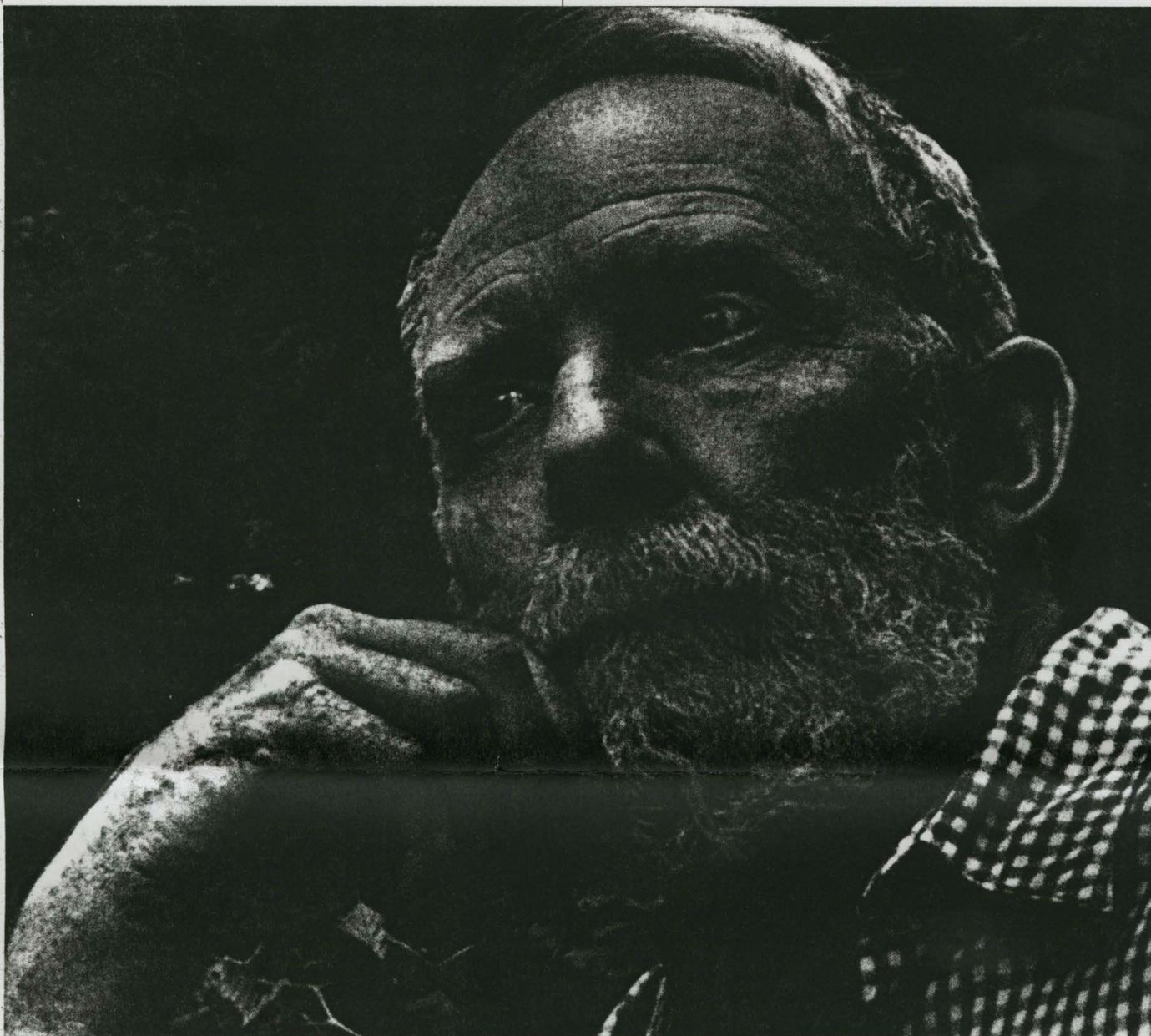
Neurofeedback is a form of operant conditioning based on basic research at UCLA and other universities over the last 30 years.

Opening in August
910 7th Street South



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.

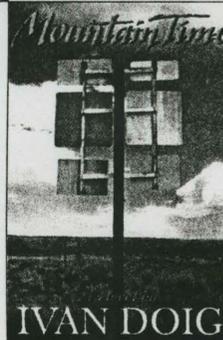
At the heart of *Mountain Time* is the reckoning time now confronting many of today's baby boomers, or, as Doig puts it, those members "jelly-sandwiched" between two immense changes in life: one's children leaving home and seeking independence, and one's parents growing older and becoming more dependent.

"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

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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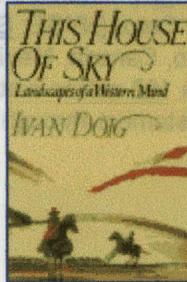
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Reviews**Synopsis**

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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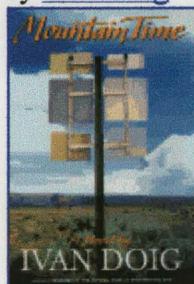
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Reviews

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

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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.

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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

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 prices \$25

by HARRY MERRITT
IN STAFF

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*, is a little tough to see what the 199 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 place 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 truths 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 Przenhan's column will return Aug. 22

The Baltimore Sun Sunday, August 1, 1999

Aug-12-99 04:43pm From-SCRIBNER'S EDITORIAL 12TH +12126324818 T-781 P 04/04 F-600

^BC-FEA--Books-August,1233<

^BOOKS 8-2<

^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.

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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

NOW 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 Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana" — traced the history of the McCaskill family from the old Scotch sheep rancher and schoolteacher Angus McCaskill to his great-granddaughter Mariah, a photographer for *The Missoula Montanan*. Doig strives to achieve what he has called a "poetry of the vernacular" in his characters' dialogue, 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 shuttling the family along the Interstate 90 axis between Missoula and Seattle.

Mariah's sister, Lexa McCaskill, a 40-year-old caterer to Seattle's cybermaures, finds her romantic fortunes frerfully attached to an ornery environmental journalist named Mitch Rozier. Rozier, who's churned out the same eco-watch column for 25 years in *Cascopia*, "an urban weekly newspaper for people concerned to know the difference between tofu and furoin," has hit a patch of midlife 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 *Montanan* 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 Rozier's home in Twin Sulphur Springs, Mont., the dying old man provides 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, mmh, go through ... whatever you're going to go through?" Lyle agrees, despite his son's protests. Mitch seems to spend the entire novel tuning. Like the veteran columnist he is, he'll grouse about anything: bottled 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: reconnecting with your adult child, deepening your spousal-equivalent commitment, resolving parental conflict. What's more frustrating is the way Doig's ear 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, "damn your sweet hide." It's as if she'd been raised by Gabby Hayes. 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 Silicon West and written a different book. Something along the lines of, say, "Boulder Merchants of Montana." □



SCRIBNER

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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

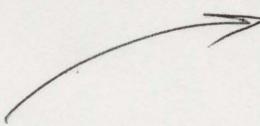
If any writer can be said to wear the mantle of the late Wallace Stegner, Doig qualifies, as a steady and astute observer of life in our Western states. Infused with his knowledge and appreciation of the Western landscapes, his novels are a finger on the pulse of the people who try to reconcile their 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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Jean

1/29/99.

Nan Graham

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you if you insist.

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review (your fan Bob
Mintesheimer) and the
TBIR has assigned it.

So it's worth a shot. Ever, Nan.

FICTION

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. ☞

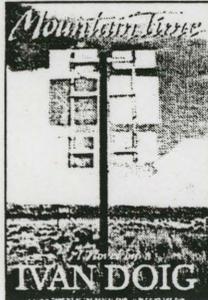
Beth Duris is a writer in Washington, D.C.

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." ☞



AVAILABLE ON AUDIO

MOVIES

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*, to the low-budget gunplay opus *Desperado*, to the more recent big budget paeon 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



Random House/Discovery

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KIRKUS REVIEWS

In quoting or excerpting, please refer to
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.)*

MOUNTAIN TIME

Ivan Doig. Scribner, \$25 (320p) ISBN 0-684-83295-X

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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 timented 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)*

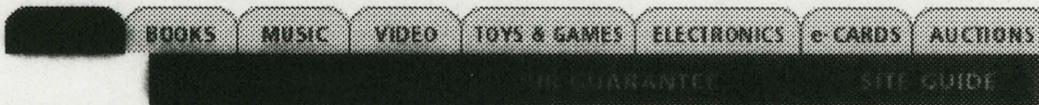
FYI: *Born in Sri Lanka, Selvadurai lives Toronto.*

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 Jeremias Mount, a minor figure mentioned in the 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 out of 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 proceeds. 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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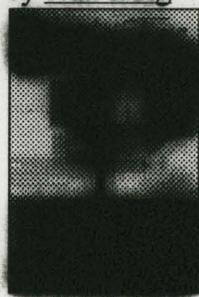
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Reviews

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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.

Customer Comments

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Judecca@earthlink.net from East Village, NY, NY , July 27, 1999

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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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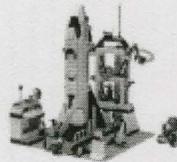
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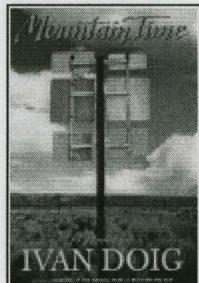
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Reviews

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--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. -- Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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.

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.

Customers who bought titles by Ivan Doig also bought titles by these authors:

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Wednesday, August 4, 1999

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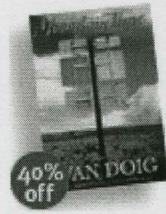
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What We're Reading
Peak Performance



Excerpt

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.

Recent "What We're Reading" Picks:

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In Art, Architecture & Photography



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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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"For the Love of Books: 115 Celebrated Writers on the Books They Love Most" (Grossett/Putnam, \$24.95), by Ronald B. Schwartz, 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."



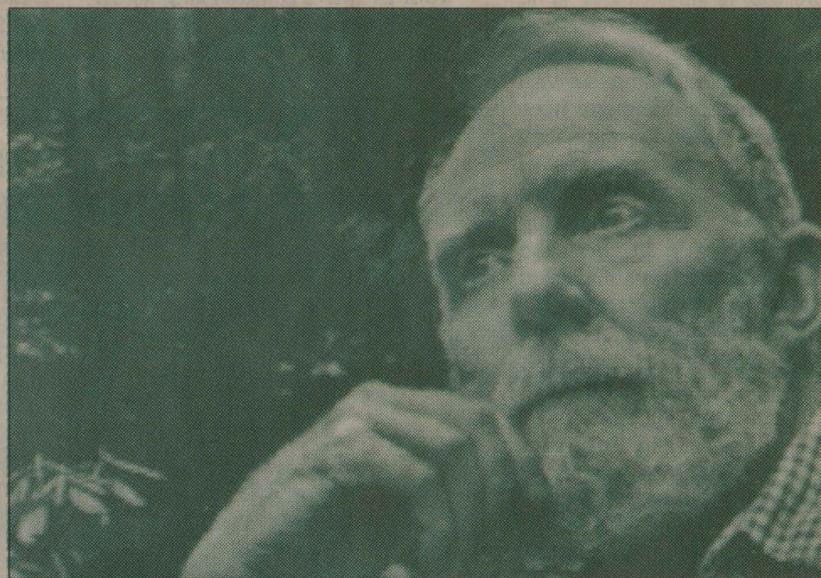
Thomas McGuane (reviewed below): After a childhood populated by **Captain Horatio Hornblower and Booth Tarkington's "Penrod and Sam,"** "I stumbled upon **"Alice in Wonderland"** and felt for the first time an all too rare exultation, a real euphoria, of the pure music and power of language on its own 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.

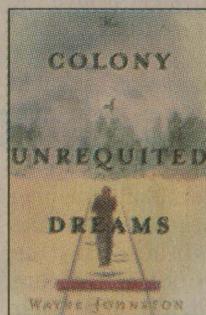
His relationship with his partner, Lexa (of the aforementioned McCaskill clan, featured in the Doig books "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me") is rocky at best, and his grown children from an earlier marriage want nothing to do with him. When the call comes from his father, 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"

- ...essays 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
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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.