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(1980)

March 31--Now begins a new era. This morning I began the schedule-in-earnest for the Sea Runners, setting up a pair of file boxes and typing ideas and details onto cards and then starting on the lead. At about 10:30, the call from Carol Hill, saying she's leaving HBJ and the editing profession.

April 2--The third day of work on Runners, and a good and astonishingly quiet and well-paced one.

Spent Monday morn and much of y'day morn on the lead for Runners, and it seems to me a good one. Have also set up file boxes--just had done so when Carol Hill called on Monday--and today studied maps of Alaska and BC coast, made a point-to-point list of islands and coastal spots the canoe journey could have touched at. This afternoon, have culled file card entries from notebooks.

April 10 - Y'day afternoon I went downtown for maps of the Sea Runners' route--mounted on plywood with stickpins tracing the route from island to island

18 July '80--Just now (10:35) came in from my daily walk around the neighborhood, a fine blue day with fog along the Olympic Peninsula from Kingston to Point No Point. On the way I got to thinking about the pressure periods a manuscript needs. For example, I've decided to rent customary cabin #7 at the Juan de Fuca Motel for 2-3 days while C's folks are visiting here, make those days when I am on Dungeness Spit at dawn, then go and write, long days of exertion on the manuscript as I did when I edited our *News: A Consumer's Guide* in a motel at LaPush. *Runners* so far needs two strong pressure periods: the first one to get the 50 pp. sample by Oct. 15, so Liz can sell it well; the second, beginning after Jan. 1, to get the entire book into draft by June 1, for polishing during the rest of the year. *This House of Sky* needed pressure to get the ms sample ready, but then much the stronger pressure in the period of finishing the ms. *Winter Brothers* had no sample to be worried over, so the pressure times came at the end, or towards it: when I decided to make the book truly day-by-day, and when I did the editing, first the going-over of the language and then trimming down the day entries.

19 Jul '80: for whatever reason, Merlyn didn't indent 1st lines of grafs when she did the ms draft for me. I've just read over the opening 14-page chunk, inserting graf marks as I went, and found it peculiarly pleasant to make the little blue (felt-tip) hook and two short strokes against the yellow paper. It all looks like sturdy progress, somehow.

July 21, '80, 9:35 a.m.--C and I airborne to Alaska; now 20 min. north of Victoria, flying along eastern shore of Vancouver Island. All is truly blue: the water, and the Coast Range, a kind of fog of clear blue, the snowcaps of the mountains like its froth.

Incredible peaks on north-northeast horizon, from 25 min. north of Victoria; like white cathedrals, with bright bushy storms moving among them.

Blue, of water and even of mountains, turns milkier as we fly toward cloudy weather.

Tremendous reach of white cloud strata, with occasional thick veins of gray, beneath us, 20 min. before Sitka. Like traveling through snow.

Descending to Sitka: clouds now thoroughly veined with gray; C says it's like the color bands of the Painted Desert, except all grays.

Landing at Sitka: plane's wingtips racing almost through trees of the islands, then down almost into water, then the runway pops up.

Oct. 15- Y'day, mailed to Liz the ms sample of Runners. One more flip of marble onto the roulette wheel.

Nov. 14--Heetic, hectic. Liz called, when?--night before last, the 12th?--with word from Marcia that \$15,000 is as high as HBJ will go for Sea Runners. Told her by all means have Tom Stewart at Atheneum look at the sample.

Nov. 17- about 15 min. ago, had a phone call from Liz, saying she's waiting to hear from Tom Stewart of Atheneum, who told her the Sea Runners sample is "stunning" and said he'd talk with "his people" over the weekend to see what they can offer. Stewart originally told her, before reading, that \$25,000 sounded high. So now we'll see; Liz has a call in to him, then has to get back to Marcia.

All of this marking, in some cosmic glint of irony, the official publication day of Winter Brothers.

Nov. 21, 3:45--O brave new world, with such decisions in't. Y'day morn just before 9:30, I borrowed a phone in the newsroom of the Bellingham Herald, listened to Liz say Atheneum had offered \$20,000 advance for Sea Runners, drew a breath and said let's take it, you done good.

The decision jangled at me through the day--bookstore parties in B'ham and Oak Harbor--and the long drive home through the wet dark, but today it still seems the sound choice. HBJ's original offer of \$7500 signaled that they haven't any faith in the Sea Runners; their upping of the offer to \$15,000 was a not-too-elegant effort to retrieve my interest, say that they didn't want to lose me as a writer. Ath'm has bid on basis of being impressed with the ms sample; Tom Stewart is an admired ed-in-chief, and I'd like again to be working with an ~~int~~ ed-in-chief; and the money from them is considerably closer to my effort to make a more-or-less living wage out of writing. The decision in Ath'm's favor would have been much easier had they offered \$25,000 or \$22,500; \$20,000 was the minimum I had set in my mind, would have asked Liz to shop the ms around some more. She tells me she thinks we've done as well as we could, given the current pub'g scene; that she thinks Ath'm can market a book such as Sea Runners well; and she thinks highly of Stewart.

23 Jan 81, 10:55 am--Sun came out about 20 min. ago, low on southern horizon--not much above the mtns across the Sound from Sitka, and with fierce reflection off water. It remakes the scene here, greatly softens it; the mtns lose their moody edges, go into simple outline with silver mist, of cloud or reflected light, cloaking them; all the mtns south and east of the Sound are cutouts now. The surroundings all seem at a couple of removes from what they were. Unmoored, maybe.

A hand
111
1-18-82

--possible use: the sun appeared as if it were a new idea in the scheme of things. A blaze in the ~~ky~~ sky. (first) (last) fuel

--Now that it's out, the sun is enormous,, coming thru this clear air with tremendous aureole of blaze. Air and unexpectedness magnify it?

81

Juneau, Jan. 24--Am aboard the Alpha Helix--or, as some of the crew disgustedly said y'day, often misprnced by Coast Guard and others to Alpha Felix--at the Coast Guard-NOAA dock. Flew in from Sitka y'day afternoon, after 2 days there. The Sitka stay was useful for Runners mood and detail--how Verstovia looms in on the town in winter, for ex. Weather there broke to couple of hrs of sun late y'day morning, a tremendous dazzle ~~xxxxxx~~ striking obliquely across the Sound to town. Only apprehension so far has been flight into Juneau, with the plane diving down, in a sort of roaring aerial skid, over the hill at the end of the runway; can't decide whether I more dislike landing or taking off with that hump looming in front.

Seem to be off to a reasonable start with the crew. Bill volunteered this morn that the wise policy is to get in good with the cook, Mary, and by instinct from ranch days I already was taking some care in that direction. At dinner last night, I chipped in \$2 with ~~one~~ ^{some} of the crewmen to buy her the wine carafe as a vase. ~~A~~

My mood is pretty good this morning, reassured at having seen the setup aboard here. Haven't managed to get done any real ms work, either at Sitka or here, altho in Sitka I figured out the ms spots where more detail is needed and concentrated the research accordingly (I hope). Public library here opens at 1, and I intend to go up there for the afternoon, see if it's possible to write.

Jan. 24 cont'd.—

The Helix is not as large as I expected, yet it's plenty sizable--133', with crew of 9 and capacity for 15 scientists. Good-looking ship, like a plumper version of a big fishboat, with white superstructure and baby-blue from railings down.

INSERT
21A & 21B

Jan. 25--6 pm--Have just finished supper, which is a fairly full affair because the ship turns out to be populated with numerous free-loaders besides me. ~~the chancellor, Howard Cutler and his wife; 2 Foundation members, Odin Strandberg and Brian Bundine, who has brought his wife, son, and another couple.~~ All this was considerably more than Dolly Dieter, the UA marine supt., had expected and bargained for, and while I'd felt some chill from her before today, when all these others turned up she was so pissed off that she began to regard me as an old-timer. It helped, I think, that I uncomplainingly and promptly moved rooms this morning when she asked me to.

Spent the afternoon standing on the bridge, more standing than I've done in some time. My back came out of it pretty well, though my right heel began to rebel by end of the day.

26 Jan., in Clarence Strait nearing Behm Canal: got up at 5 this morn, b'fasted with crew, went to bridge at 5:45, when the watch was to change, the capt'n taking over from the mate. But Mike the mate--crew also seems to include Mike the engineer and a third Mike called just Mike Miller--let the ~~xxxx~~ capt'n sleep in and stayed on bridge until 6:10. I stayed up there until 9--it's now 9:30--details are noted on Blue cards. Trip seems to be going well, so far I've balanced myself aloof enough from crew and passengers to get work done yet, I think, stay civil. Shut myself in my room pronto after supper, took an early shower a little after 7--just before the ~~xxxxxx~~ ship began a spell of pitching--then cont'd reading (Bill Turner's Call the Beast Thy Brother) until

Juneah, 24 Jan.

This morn alongside the Helix, school (?) of sea lions in the channel. They make quick ~~thru~~ forward thrusts of head thru water, as if puncturing a membrane. When many do it at once, they are close enough together, and their turbulence in the water is mass enough, that they seem some twenty-nosed sea creature pushing along.

--Their noise is a kind of burping roar, like: orhrhr!t

--a whale, probably a ^{humpback} ~~male humpback whale~~, also went past, in porpoise-like arcs of back sliding thru the water. Had a large dorsal fin, but I never saw the head for any colors there.

--When whale would spout, the spout would drift and hang in air, like dissipating steam.

Jan. 26 cont'd -

just past 8. Had trouble falling asleep, but no more so than in a motel room. So far the ship's motion hasn't bothered me. Mike the mate said we did come through a gale in the after-midnight hours, I guess s. of Wrangell Narrows, with 40-50 mph wind.

My feeling so far, though I may get bored with this trip by tomorrow or the next day, is ~~that~~ the one I've had on last summer's trip to Alaska and the recent times ~~in~~ in Montana, that, hell, I can do this as well as these people, and so I pretty much do it.

27 Jan., 7:40 pm--Am behind in today's diarying, partly due to abt $2\frac{1}{2}$ hrs spent in bunk this afternoon, to avoid seasickness while crossing Qn Ch Sound, but material is mostly on the notecards. Should record my bravura stand against seasickness, tho. This morn, during the crossing of Milbanke Sound, I had to come down from the bridge for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr because of queasiness. So this afternoon, knowing we'd hit the Qn Ch swells about 3, I prepared myself by taking a Dramamine-type pill $\frac{1}{2}$ hr beforehand as directed, then had couple cups of coffee to

27 Jan. cont.--fend off any drowsiness from that, plus some handfulls of gorp for energy, then went up to the bridge, declaring to myself that I'd by god whip seasickness this time, stick out the entire Qn Ch crossing. 20 min. later, I was sprawled flat on my bunk.

The bonus of this voyage has turned out to be Enid Cutler, wife of the UA chancellor. Y'day morn I was on the bridge watching day-break, and she hesitantly came across and asked what I was making notes about, then began talking colors to me and tipped me to the technique of looking not quite squarely at the object to get a truer sense of its tone; then she went down and got her paints and did me 2 quick watercolors of shoreline. Then after supper, she did a portrait of me, an astonishingly good one, and I asked her if she'd ever had a show. She said yes, she'll be in one in Lincoln Center in May... Since then, she's done rapid but quite fine portraits of most of the crew, the engineer's son from a photo, etc.

The other thing I have intended to put down--I've been feeling it all during this voyage--is that this coastline awaits its great book. I wonder if I can do it.

28 Jan., 8:45 am, in Strait of Georgia, likely off Hornby I.--Am feeling good at the moment, after a tough night. Couldn't get to sleep, spent more than 4 hours trying. As with y'day's effort against seasickness, I tried all the logic I could think of, sitting in galley talking to Howard Cutler until about 8, then went to bed, ~~read~~ read, and about 8:30 took a D₂ amamine, hoping it would put me to sleep in the next half hour or so. Nothing. Finally tried another D'mine after midnight, either it or exhaustion of lying sleepless in bunk so long did the job.

28 Jan. cont.--But I got up at 5, flailing at alarm as if it were a snake as it racketed on the floor beside my bunk, and went up for the morning watch with the captain as I've done each day. We're making good time, he says--a following wind has put us up to 11.6 knots; ship had been doing 10.95 average. He thinks now we'll reach the Duwamish shipyard by 11, 11:30 tonight.

Just now passing east of lighthouse on raft of rock; Sisters light, maybe?

Have enjoyed the capt'n, Roy ~~R~~ Robeck, and the rest of the crew. R served in merchant marine and 2 yrs aboard a hospital ship--the 1st one into Yokahama at war's end, to take aboard American POWs--and is coming up on his ~~60th~~ 60th b'day. Watching both him and the mate, Mike Demchenko, provides that pleasure of seeing someone good at his job. The ship seems to have excellent people at the vital jobs--captain, mate, cook, engineer--and at least middling good crew below that.

29 Jan--Home, as of about 12:45 this morning. Lack the energy to do a full entry today, but should note what kind of day it's been: Jean Walkinshaw of channel 9 called; then Larry Rumley, about S. Times' intention to run excerpt from Winter Bros, which was news to me; in the mail C left for me to open was Miami Herald review; when I called a few prime bookstores to tell them of S. Times, Marilyn Martin at U Bk Store told me Winter Bros is reviewed in this week's People magazine, which I told her at last has given me the ultimate definition of mixed emotions.

18 Feb. '81: After a faltering day y'day, trying to tool up from a 3-day weekend, this has been a day of strong editing, the writing and rewriting of the past weeks evidently having reached a critical mass.

First of the day's decisions was one of style. To cut what had been the resumption ~~from~~ following the ms sample--"So, Melander's plan had slipped them from the seven-year shackle of New Archangel. Now it would be seen whether it somehow could carry them ten hundred miles along one of the earth's most wild coastlines"--and go directly back to action, Melander permitting a few hours of sleep before resumed paddling. The rhetorical sentences, I intend to tuck away within quicker passages somewhere. If I do some of this, I should be speeding the narrative with action leads, yet delivering notional passages within...

--Sometime within the past few days, I've had the idea of going to italicized interior passages for K and probably W in the last portion of the book, probably K's beginning right after he realizes there are no further maps, and W's after Braaf's drowning.

23 Feb. '81:

Am at a stumping section, as I recall I was with the Tidyman material in House of Sky and the Mt. Rainier material in Winter, tho I hope this one is not so major. (Both those came out to be among the best pieces in those books.) I need to describe the North Pacific, and as yet don't have the background for it. First thing this morn I scrapped the material I'd intended about explorers, thinking I'd better keep the emphasis on the ocean itself; may, however, say something about the NW passage quest, to the effect that the Pacific never yielded itself to this notion that it was a crooked stair to somewhere else.

2-27-81: The 20 or so pp. after B's champagne swig have taken shape the past few days; next week I'll have Merlyn do the 1st typescript of this section. Have tried to regulate pace and nuance in this section, even at this "early" stage. An example: have been aware that too many of the scenes--there are I think 18 in the just over 20 pp.--end in periodic pronouncement style. The 1st one ends with the descptn of M as worker ant on mtn, the next ends with series concluding "dark brought night two of their leaving of NA". I had the Kuiu scene ending with "This had been a day of stumble...But..." Just now, I cut that as an ending, leaving that scene to end on action, canoe pulling to ~~the~~ shelter "just short of full dark", and putting the "stumble...but" material as lead for next scene.

A bonus of this is that the new "first day of stumble" phrase sets up later such stumbles, too.

2 March '81--It seems to be a positive disadvantage to have a good title ready for a book, as with Winter Brothers and now Sea Runners. While I was working on Winter ms, Sloan Wilson's novel Ice Brothers came out, and a book called I think Winter Journey. And late last week I opened the Feb. 20 Pub Wkly to find the 1st book in Nonfiction is titled Sea Run.

NONFICTION

SEA RUN: Surviving My Mother's

Madness

Mary Lou Shields. Seaview, \$11.95
ISBN 0-87223-665-X

In this example of a growing number of case histories by analysts, the author alternates between episodes of her life—past and present—and verbatim exchanges with her analyst. Together, during five years, they attempt to dispel her fears of repeating her mother's schizophrenic pattern. They seek also to help her recover from a sordid childhood spent under the care of stern relatives during her mother's confinement in a state mental hospital. To add to Shields's emotional travails, her drunken father's sexual advances warp her relationships with husband and lovers. A feminist consciousness-raising and self-defense group offers the author an outlet for her feelings of inadequacy as a woman in a male-dominated society, but gives her Freudian male analyst a hard time. One admires Shields's inner strength which brings her triumphantly through to the brink of a new career as a writer, the ghosts of her parents apparently laid to rest.

[March 23]

3 March '81--Making a last search thru pocket notebook from Alaska trip, prior to discarding for a new one, I find the line I may have put down somewhere else: I am part of an old coastal scene--back to the Indians--of the traveler and the stories he tells. Swan, of course, was another.

--Today I did a couple half-page Karlsson monologues, deliberately making the sentences shorter than the general run of the book, trying to make it sound more as a man would talk to himself. Also decided to have him "talk" to Melander occasionally in these.

6 March--1:45, end of a decent writing week: 25 pp., bang on schedule. Y'day was a muss, a recalcitrant grab-and-paste day, but the other 4 went well enough, better first-drafting than I'd expected, or so it seems now.

10 March '81--The month's name is apt so far; the past 7 writing days, I've marched on schedule, averaging 5 pp./day as intended. Most of it is choppy, written by the graf, sometimes just a sentence lifted from the file cards; it's the effort to get a critical mass accumulated, so I can get the revising and adding-to underway.

Today during the walk up to Sh'line (~~and maybe the sauna there~~) occurred to me to add the couple of proverbial bits--paper is the schoolman's forest, etc.--to the Rosenberg scene, and to say something here about the effort I'm making ~~with~~ to put a proverbial sound into this ms. The aim is to tap into the interest proverbs hold for us; they're nuggets of idea and language, and we all respond to their gleam. Thus, the proverbial tang of M's dialogue; and I'm considering whether to put biblical flavor into W's interior monologues. Have ransacked a number of books of seaman's slang and the like, to pattern M's talk on. Also, I trust that my proverbs aren't diluted too much by the fact that a number of them, I've made up.

12 March--An Edwardian spring? The sunlit weather goes on, days in the 60s. The season seems sprung, out of kilter; this is like having the start of summer 3 months too soon...

we'll be twirling parasols next.
Yet it may be that the pressure of the outside world forces me--us?--into equilibrium of our own. Dunno. I keep expecting things to go to hell, somehow.

For all that, my daily working mood is as good as I can expect; Runners seems to progress and to do a lot of good things on the pages. I continue to have the brinking feeling that I can make some kind of leap toward completion of this book. There're geographical crevasses, though; the Vancouver I. and Wash'n coast portions of the book haven't had the eyework done on them yet.