The Hills West of Noon

by Ivan Doig

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moved each morning, he would be cradled like a prince between somebody's lap and the saddle pommel as the horses shouldered through the timber.

But in this season on the final mountain, the surprising drifter ducking through swags of pine branches on the back of a horse is me. Later, my father never tired of telling what a cantankerous rider I made. The only thing we could get you to ride was a sawbuck pack saddle. You know what they are, like a little sawhorse, setting on top of the saddle rigging. Hard as a rasp to sit on, but in there you straddled like it was the only thing going. Ride sometimes half a day in it. You were a stubborn little dickens. This, with the grin up at me as I loomed half a head over him.

My own best-remembered moment from that far summer fit that same sober cussedness. I had been given a bow and a few arrows, maybe an early gift for my birthday. Time after time, my arrows fly far from the paper target my father has tacked to the back of the cabin. I pout, kick at the high bunchgrass as I think. Then I edge close until the round sharp tip of the arrow hangs inches from the paper. I let go the bowstring, and
as hawks with wind under our wings. Once a week, the camptender from the home ranch would come the dozen miles of trail to us. The blaze-faced sorrel he rode and the packhorse haltered behind would plod in from the shadows which pooled in our valley under the shouldering slopes, until at last the rider would step off from his stirrups into the cabin clearing and unknot from the packsaddle the provision sacks, faded white as tiny clouds, which bulged with our groceries and mail. My father, with his wise tucked grin, surely tossed a joke: Hullo, Willie. Bring us that side of T-bones and a barrel of whiskey this time, did ye? I've told ye and told ye, our menu needs some fancying up... As surely, my mother would have appeared from the cabin, her small smile bidding the caller to the tin mug of coffee in her hands. As surely again, I would have been at the provision sacks as my father began to unpack them, poking for the tight-rolled bundle of comic books which came for me with the mail.

Minutes later the camptender would be resaddled and riding from sight. For the next seven mornings again, until his hat and shoulders began to show over the trail crest another time, only the three of us nestled there in the clean blue weather of the soundless mountains.

Three of us, and the sheep scattered down meadow slopes like a slow, slow avalanche of fleeces. Before I was born, my mother and father had lived other herding summers, shadowing after the sheep through the long pure days until the lambs had
fattened for shipping. You wouldn't believe the grouse that 
were on those slopes then. The summer we were married and went 
herding on Grass Mountain, all that country was just alive 
with grouse then. I'd shoot them five at a time, and your 
mother — your mother'd cook them at noon when the sheep had 
shaded up. We'd eat one apiece and seal the rest in quart 
jars and cool them in the spring water so we'd have them cold 
for supper. They were the best eatin' in this world. Lot of 
times we'd have them for breakfast too, before we moved camp. 
Y'vee, on forest reserve you're supposed to move camp about 
every day. The first summer there on Grassy, we moved camp 
fifty-eight times in sixty days. We had a brand new box 
camera we were awful proud of, and we'd take a picture of our 
campsite every time. Your mother...

The pair of words would break him then, and fool that I 
could be, I would look aside from his struggling face. In 
these afteryears, it is my turn for the struggle inside the 
eyes and along the drop of throat, for I have the album pages 
of those campsites along the ridgelines and swale meadows of 
their first summer mountain.

Off the stiff black pages, two almost-strangers grin out 
into my eyes, like past neighbors seen again across the years, 
and I wonder at all I know and do not know of these two:

My father looks stronger than I ever knew him, and even 
more handsome, the straight broad lines of his face framed 
cleanly around the dimple-scar in the center of his chin. His
stockman's hat has been crimped carefully, sits on his head at a perfect angle. His shoulders line out level and very wide for a man just five and a half feet tall, but this strength at the top of him trims away to a lower body slender as a boy's. I am reminded that he was so slim down the waist and hips that the seat of his pants forever bagged in, and the tongue of his belt had to flap far past the buckle, as if trying to circle him twice. Certain photos catch him as almost mischievous, cocking the dry half-grin which sneaks onto my own face as I look at him. In others there is a distance to him, a sense that except for accident he might be anywhere else in the world just now, and maybe a being entirely unlike the one I know here. In any pose, he looks at the camera squarely, himself a kind of lens aimed back at the moment.

To see him, the several hims encamped across the pages, is to begin listening for the burred voice, the retellings, the veers and jogs of his life: Ivan, I think I'll take on those two bands of sheep for McGrath. He's a bearcat to work for, but the son-of-a-buck knows livestock. That place was a haywire outfit from the start, or I'll put in with you. They had men on that place that by God you wouldn't send to fetch a bucket of water or they'd bring it back upside down. Cliff and I stood it for about a week, then we told the boss to write 'er out for us, we were heading for town... This doctor now, I don't know about him. If I was in as good a shape as he says I am, I wouldn't be sick at all....
Again the sentences snap, I see the handsome steady
mouth clamp itself, the chin-dot of scar come close beneath,
small but deep like a tool mark nicked in when his strong head
was carved. A single slight notch at the bottom of his face,
as if it might be the first lightest scratch of calamity on him.

But my mother: my mother, here in some summer of early
marriage, already seems frail, so slim--too light a being to
last there so near timberline. Again, because I know what was
to come, I believe myself into the notion that I can read it all
gathering on the album's somber paper. I print into my mind
from her every pose how fine-boned she was, hardly more than
tiny, with a roundish, slightly wondering face where most of
my own is quickly read. I coax from the photos detail
which seems to tell the sickness eroding in her; the pinch
across her slender shoulders, the eyes which are almost too
calm and accepting.

But the one thing which would pulse her alive for me does
not come. I do not know the sound of her voice, can never know
it. Instead she is wound in the other voices tracked through
the years. Her teacher at the one-room schoolhouse in a sea
of sage: The first morning of school, here I saw this girl
coming up on a black horse, just coming as fast as ever she
could. And it was your mother, and she was rushing up to
tell me there were mice in the well, and not to use that water.
The rancher's wife who had neighbored with her in some summer
of haying: I wouldn't see anyone for hours, and I would go across to your house and there your mother would be reading to you. She'd read by the hour, on a hot afternoon she'd keep you so cool and quiet just sitting there reading....She was so quiet, had such a soft fine voice. The forest ranger who oversaw their range that early summer on Grass Mountain: She could do about anything a man could -- ride, sling a pack, any of that. She even knew how to trap. We talked sometimes about runnin' a trapline, and I know she did in winters later on. But she had to be careful, y'know, anything she did, or she'd choke right down, short of breath.

Yes. This album of summers again, as if I might finger through the emulsion patterns to the moments themselves. At the backs of my familiar photoed strangers, always a forest, and always sunlight spattering down through the pine boughs to their rough shirt fronts. The canvas slopes of their tent are triangled grayly at the back of the day camp. Two black herding dogs, ears up in dog surprise, watch the lens. A pair of saddlehorses gawp in from the grassy fringes of camp as if afraid any attention might go by them. One creature in these early pictures does not fit, and this intrigues me -- the pet which is being stroked in my mother's hands. Those first seasons of following the sheep, my parents kept with them in their daily sift through the forest, an independent gray-and-white tom they had named Pete Olson. Somehow, amid the horses and dogs and sheep, and the coyotes and bobcats which ranged close to camp,
Pete Olson rationed out his nine lives in nightly prowls of the mountain. Then as camp was moved each morning, he would be cradled like a prince between somebody's lap and the saddle pommel as the horses shouldered through the timber. My parents were childless then, told by doctors that they might always be. If the prediction had held, if I had never been, would any but the silent alien glance of a cat ever have seen into those far summers of theirs? Would that time be different for not having met my eyes?

Yet the two are met, and in this season on the final mountain, the surprising drifter ducking through swags of pine branches on the back of a horse has become me. Later, my father would never tire of telling what a cantankerous source of pride I made in that riding family. The only thing we could get you on was a sawbuck pack saddle. You know what they are, like a little sawhorse setting on top of the saddle rigging. Hard as a rasp to sit on, but you straddled in there like it was the only thing going. Ride sometimes half a day in it. You were a stubborn little dickens. This, with the grin up at me as I loomed half a head over him. As I tried to find in myself that son from the past.

Wherever it may point, my own clearest moment of myself in that far summer has the mood of sober cussedness he recalled. I had been given a bow and a few arrows, likely an early gift for my birthday. Time and again, my arrows whacked far from
the paper target my father had tacked to the side of the cabin.

I see myself pouting it out, kicking at the tan bunchgrass as I think, as the creek makes its shying mutter. Then I edge close to the cabin wall until the round sharp tip of the arrow hangs inches from the paper. I let go the bowstring, and the bullseye zips open with a hard snapping sound.

That, with every instant of remembering clear as the noon air. Yet of my mother's death, whatever I try, just a single flicker, dim and hurtful, ever is called back: the asthma has claimed her, there are only two breathings in the cabin now, my father is touching me awake in lantern glow, his shadow hurled far up onto the wall, to say she is dead, Ivan, your mother is dead, sobbing as the words choke him.

The start of memory's gather: June 27, 1945. I have become six years old, my mother's life has drained out at 31 years. And in the first gray daylight, dully heading our horses around from that cabin of the past, my father and I rein away toward all that would come next.
Memory is a set of sagas we live by, much as the Norse wildmen in their bear shirts. That such rememberings take place in a single cave of brain rather than half a hundred minds warrened into one another makes them sagas no less. By now, my days would seem blank, unlit, if these familiar surges did not come. A certain turn in my desk chair, and the seat cushion must creak the quick dry groan of saddle leather under my legs—and my father's, and his father's. The taste in the air as rain comes over the city is forever a flavor back from a Montana community too tiny to be called a town. A man, the same college degrees after his name as mine, trumps in a debating point during a party argument, and my grandmother's words mutter in me on cue that he grins like a jackass eating thistles.

Rote moments, these, mysteryless in themselves. It is where they lead, and with what fitful truth and deceit, that tantalizes. If, somewhere beneath the blood, the past must beat in me to make a rhythm of survival for itself—to go on as this half-life which echoes steadily as a second pulse inside the ticking moments of my existence—if this is what must be, why is the pattern of remembered instants so uneven, so gapped and blotched? I can only believe it is because memory takes its pattern from the earliest moments in the mind, from childhood. And childhood is a most savage queer
flame-lit and shadow-chilled

time. Think once more how the world wavers and
intones above us then. Parents behave toward us as if
they are tribal gods, as old and unarguable and almighty
from next door and the schoolyard and a thousand lanes of
as thunder. Other figures loom in, count coup on us with
encounter, whatever lessons of life they brandish, then ghost off.
We peek into ourselves and find deviling there as well.

Riddles are delight at its most tricksterish high chant: Thirty-two white
horses on a red hill. Now they're tramping, now they're champing, now
they're standing still. Where are they? Bafflement to the other, triumph
to you: In your mouth! And darker frolic: this first sudden set of years
also is the one season of life, for

most of us, when we can kill emotionlessly—or worse, simply
from curiosity, to see how the tiny mice prodded from their
field nest are different, dead, from the tiny mice, alive,
of an instant ago. Cruelty comes new to us, and astonishing,
yet we are at our cruelest to each other, mocking playmates
home in sobs. Marauders, we are marauded, too. Darkness
blankets down around a child as if the planet's caves have
emptied all their shadows over him. Everything fights the
child's ambitions—fences reach too high, streets are too
wide, days too short and too long. Imagination is the single
constant friend, and even imagination does its share of
betrayal, scowls itself into scaredness and doubt.

Just so does life blaze around us before we learn we
are creatures of civilization. Just so, when childhood
itself has passed into the distance behind me, does my
remembering of the thirty-year story that begins with my
mother's last breath and entwines three peculiar lives go
on the way it was recklessly shaped in me then.
I believe myself into the notion that I can read it all gathering
forcockrath's orders, say in great agreement rightly you are,

but why, the other longfellow hand, would listen sharply

then.

blood read until apply brought it for one or the other of
of value for one another, and every sign of going on with their
jobs that came up. Hulkcocked together, they showed never a step
with practice slips in between, and put him on the dreardest

for his part, cursed Micky elaborately at least once a week,

speechly instate himself about the mystery of it all. Micky,

you could see his life move as he progressed, his outline
work for Mccrack, as much of it as he did, in a slow hurt and

something just short of a spectator. He could go about his

afraid any attention might go by them. Would
The clockless mountain summers were over for my father. Forty-four years old, a ranch hand, now a widower, Charlie Doig had a son to raise by himself. He needed work which would last beyond a quick season. He had to get us under a roof somewhere, choose a town where I could go to school, piece out in his own mind just how we were going to live from then on. It tells most about my father over the next years that I was the only one of those predicaments that ever seemed to grow easier for him.

Some homing notion said to bring us back to old ground; his mood, maybe, that we were lost enough without braving places he had never been. Beginning when his legs were long enough to straddle a horse's back, Dad had spent all but a few years of his life riding out after cattle and sheep across the gray
sage distances of the Smith River Valley and the foothill country
hunkered all around it. Any ranch in sight could start a story:
The winter of 'twenty-one, I helped that scissorbill feed his
cattle. He worked a team of big roans on the hay sled. Oh,
they were dandies... Diamond Tony was herding there on Grassy
Mountain, and this one day he had a Wyoming scatter on the band,

sheep from hell to breakfast... It was just up over that ridge, the two
of us were ridin' fence. We started working over that mare with his quirt
again. Damn ye anyway,' I says to old mister Pete. 'Beat up on a horse
like that, would ye?' I cussed him up one side and down the other, don't
think I didn't... Into that remembered countryside, the two of us came now
like skipping rocks shied across a familiar pond.

In the years beyond, when we would talk through that time and try
to find ourselves there in the early lee of my mother's death, our tellings
ended up......athwart one another, like the stories of two survivors, each of whom
had come to at a different moment and in a different corner of the scene.
Such of each story, that is, as we allowed out of ourselves, for there too
a difference sloped between us. It was my father's habit to say and re-say
a version as it had first taken shape in him. It has been mine to mull
and prod away at all versions. Yet between us, we could summon a kind
of truth about that fierce season of bewilderment.

Angus wasn't done with his haying yet, you remember. After your mother's
funeral, he asked me to come help out. Yes. The first weeks, the first act
of rescue: Angus, my father's favorite brother, brought us to live with him
and his family. We tucked ourselves into an upstairs room of the ranch house
there. While Dad worked in the hayfield, I was left at the ranch
buildings to play with my three cousins.
The children are in a
From birth on, our
grown-up clip
and our old ones
objects that pass into
away from to repair,
are cheaper to throw
physical objects that
Technology leads to

New York is a
world of money. It is possible to
the city's principal product is not paper.
block. It is a cross roads junction
the entire block remains an open space
laboratory, a blackboard or a blank.
it is a possible
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are possible. It is a grid of shopping
to the grid of shopping. The grid
urban environments around us. The
urban environments around us. The
neighborhoods at a
mind-numbing rate.

motion, rather than anything remotely
resembling progress. And if this churning,
mindless, self-contradictory, continuously accelerating change—forcing the
pace of life to pathological levels, attacking the preconditions of rationality
—is permitted to continue, it will destroy us. We must somehow capture control of
the basic change processes in the urban environment, decelerating some of
them while we intelligently accelerate others.

We are going to need, therefore, a
to play with my cousins. This was something new and unfair in my life. Before, the aloneness of the way we lived, out on a foothills ranch or in the Bridger peaks, had spread open my days for whatever I could think up. If I wanted to spend half the day face down over the creek trying to scoop my hand under tadpoles, I did it. If I wanted to play a pretend game of flipping rocks at a tree and making the kchew sound of shooting with my mouth, I did that. But now such pleasures were crowded away. Now, just as my mother had, my aloneness was dying, and I mourned that loss mourned hard in me, too.

Then, when Clifford came up with the idea of us moving in there with him so you could start to school. More easily can I imagine my father's life without me in it than without Clifford.

The two of them had been friends since before they could remember, left home together as teenagers to go off to a lumber town away out on the coast, knew and liked each other in the easy way that happens only a time or two during life. Clifford had come out of a homestead family as poor as the shale slopes crowding in on their shanty. He had never flinched from anything for very long ever since,

and he did not flinch now to take in his saddlefriend and a bereft boy.

Well, hell, y'know, me an' Charlie was like brothers. Closer, maybe. I seen your dad was havin' a hard time gettin' over your mother's passin' away. I don't think he ever did get over it, in a way. Clifford's ranch lay a few miles from the valley's town, White Sulphur Springs, where I now began school. Each morning
with college degrees were being hired for $2000 a year -- now stood frozen year after year. Then in July, 1932, annual vacations were scrapped and the "Hoover holiday" was instituted -- two days off each month without pay.

For all that, a belt-tightened job was infinitely
came a too-quick trip to the schoolyard and the trudge up a broad flight of stairs to a classroom where I would be cooped for the day with twenty small strangers, not one of whom had ever ridden a sawbuck packsaddle or shot an arrow in the Bridger Mountains. Those early weeks in the first grade, there were only two little bursts of excitement. We went through a drill about how to line up and quick-march out of the old brick building if it caught fire, which gave me hope that maybe it would.

And one morning when we were fanned out around the teacher for reading, the blond girl sitting next to me peed her pants and set up a sobbing howl as the rest of us backed off from her puddle and watched to see how school handled something like this. The teacher's hankie ended the tears, and a janitor with a mop sopped up the other. I sat with my feet up on the chair rungs for the next few days of reading lessons.

Those first weeks of school, they were a kind of a tough time for ye, weren't they? They were. Even before the alarming peeing, I was unimpressed with lessons, which seemed to be school's way of finicking around with things I could do quicker on my own. Already I could read whatever the surprised teacher could put in front of me, and add or subtract numbers as fast as she chalked them on the blackboard. How this had come to be, I was unsure; I only knew that I could not remember when I hadn't been able to read, and that the numbers sorted out their own sum before I had to give them real attention. School seemed to me a kind of job where you weren't allowed to do anything; I had free time in my head by the dayfull, and spent it all in being lonesome for ranch life and its grownups and its times of aloneness. To keep what I could of myself, I moped away alone every recess and lunch hour, then sulked in some corner of the playfield after school until I could see Dad or Clifford driving up the street to fetch me.
...It is impossible to understand what is happening to human relationships in America unless we examine their duration...

neighborhoods and put up new ones at a mind-numbing rate.

A few years ago my wife sent my daughter, then 12, to an A & P supermarket a few blocks from our East Side apartment. Our little girl had been there only once or twice before. Half an hour later she returned, perplexed. "It must have been torn down," she said. "I couldn't find it." It hadn't been. New to the neighborhood, Karen had merely looked on the wrong block. But she is a child of the Age of Transience, and her assumption—that the building had been razed and replaced—was a natural one for a 12-year-old growing up in New York at this time.

That the duration of our ties with the physical environment is shrinking is also underscored by the rise of the whole throwaway economy. Technology leads to physical objects that are cheaper to throw away than to repair, so that a child growing up in America today, especially New York, finds himself surrounded by all kinds of things that pass into and out of his life at a rapid clip. Diapers, bibs, paper napkins, Kleenex, towels, non-returnable soda bottles are all used up quickly in the home and ruthlessly eliminated. The child quickly learns that home is a processing machine through which objects rent gowns, crutches, jewels, TV sets, camping equipment, air conditioners, wheelchairs, linens, skis, tape recorders, champagne fountains and silverware, and the East Side is dotted with "swinging pads" filled with rented furniture.

Just as we are speeding up the turnover of things in our lives, we are also ephemerizing our connections with places. The average rural person, even the average New Yorker in the past, used to stay very much put. Today most of us are moving around at high speed, like particles in an accelerator, so that our psychological and physical ties with any one place grow less and less durable. New York is filled with executive "high-mobiles" for whom repeated residential relocation is simply an accepted part of the job. The Wall Street Journal refers to "corporate gypsies" in an article headlined HOW EXECUTIVE FAMILY ADAPTS TO INCESSANT MOVING ABOUT COUNTRY. It describes the life of M.E. Jacobson, an executive with Montgomery Ward. He and his wife, both 46 at the time the story appeared, had moved 28 times in 26 years of married life. "I almost feel like we're just camping," his wife tells her visitors. Their case is atypical, but in 70 major U.S. cities, including New York, If the typical New Yorker is making and breaking his ties with things and places more rapidly than, say, a typical resident of Springfield, Missouri, he also is making and breaking ties with people at a faster clip. Urban sociologists from Weber to Wirth have talked about the impersonality of urban ties in the city. Contemporary behavioral scientists worry about crowding. The problem, however, may not lie in urbanism or in population density, as such. If we want to understand impersonality and alienation in the city, it may be we ought to focus on the rates of turnover involved. For the shortening duration of our ties has a hidden, powerful impact on the emotional quality of these ties. Indeed, it may be impossible to understand what is happening to human relationships in America—and New York in particular—unless we examine their duration.

The fact is that the average urban person today deals with more people in the course of a month than a feudal peasant dealt with in a lifetime, and, as the number of different people we deal with grows, the average duration of a relationship shrinks. This doesn't mean that city people don't have old friends, college buddies, or long-lasting ties of other kinds. But these are no longer...
I guess ye'd have to say that spell was none too easy for me, either. A tiny plopping sound of surprise, made by clucking his tongue against the roof of his mouth, might come from my father when he suddenly remembered something, or felt a quick regret of some sort. This time, the soft salute meant both those things. Godamighty, Ivan, I did miss your mother. That cannot begin to tell it. If it was Dad instead of Clifford who came to take me from the schoolyard, I stepped from the shadows of my mood into the shadows of his.

Years afterward and hundreds of miles from the valley, I was with him when he met a man in the street, backed away, and stared the stranger out of sight in wordless hatred. The man had worked at the ranch where my mother died, and a few days after her death had told Dad bluffly: Hell, you got to forget her. That's the only way to get on with life: don't let a thing like this count too much. All that time and distance later, Dad still despised him for those clumsy words. Not until that moment did I entirely understand how hard a time it had been when he came for me after school in those earliest weeks after my mother's death and we would drive back to a borrowed room in a pitying friend's house. Day by day as autumn tanned the valley around us, now with bright frost weather, now with rain carrying the first chill of winter, Dad stayed in the dusk of his grief. That sandbag I can understand now, can only have been a kind of battle fatigue—the senses blasted around in him by that morning of death and the thousands of inflicting minutes it was followed by. He might go through the motions of work, even talk a bit with Clifford, but any time his eyes could brim and he would lapse off, wordless, despairing. I never knew, either, when some sentence I would say, or some gesture I would make in the way my mother had, would send him mournful again.
The electric refrigerator was 34 years old, the production of peak performance for years, even shorter.

The lead time for new discoveries has now been cut to new levels. In fact, the electric refrigerator was 34 years old, the production of peak performance for years, even shorter.

The prospects for faster and faster adaptation, an increase in the cost of living, and the need for new labor-saving devices are now possible. The older, more efficient labor-saving devices are becoming less efficient, and the need for new labor-saving devices is increasing. The older, more efficient labor-saving devices are becoming less efficient, and the need for new labor-saving devices is increasing.

The situation is similar in the field of transportation. For example, the use of steam engines for transportation purposes is now possible. The use of steam engines for transportation purposes is now possible. The use of steam engines for transportation purposes is now possible. The use of steam engines for transportation purposes is now possible.

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Then coaxing began to finger through to us. My turnabout must have come first. Some one instant--the giggles from a game of tag, or the arc of a swing going so high it looked good and risky--must have tugged me at last toward the center of the school playground and into friendships. Several of my classmates carried a black tin lunchbox to school as I did; we had to congregate to see which sandwiches or cookies could be swapped, and whether anybody had been lucky enough to get chocolate milk in his thermos instead of white. And when a too-early first snow came, draping across a few days of early autumn, all the rocks I had thrown at trees in the pretend games paid off: I could chunk a snowball hard enough to make even the sixth-grade boys flinch. Whoever chose up sides for the game we played of attacking a snow fort began to choose me first.

Suddenly the schoolyard no longer was a jail to me. And by luck, the teacher in that coop of a classroom was crafty. She was a small, doll-like woman who, after she had done her first weeks of sorting, somehow could push twenty beginning minds at their separate speeds. For me, she began to get out extra books, [illegible] me to helping others with their alphabet and first words--anything to bring my eyes down into the pages, and all of it telling me that here, in as many words on paper as I could take in, stretched my new aloneness.

At the same time, Clifford was nudging Dad out of his sour haze. He heard of a small ranch for rent at the south end of the valley, and somehow drew Dad into saying he would look it over.
To accommodate the new urban millions, we would have to build a duplicate city for each of the hundreds that already dot the globe. A new New York, Tokyo, London, a new Rome and Rangoon—all in 11 years.

Bensonhurst, if you will. And we are doing it so fast that we are creating culture shock in our own society—future shock.

Three powerful forces are changing New York, altering the psychological landscape of the city. Until we learn to recognize them, we won’t be able to make sense of, let alone solve, our urban crises. These three powerful forces are: acceleration, novelty, and diversity.

The first of these, the accelerative thrust, has to do with the pace at which we New Yorkers live our lives, which is to say, faster than anyone else. All of us know in the pit of our stomach that the pace of life is quickening. We seldom stop, however, to correlate this fact with some of the larger-than-life forces loose in the world as a whole.

In 1850 there were only four cities on earth with a population in excess of 1 million. By 1900, the number had increased to 19. By 1960, it had skyrocketed to 141. World urban population has been estimated to be rising since then at a rate of 6.5 per cent annually. This doesn’t seem like much, unless you happen to be familiar with the compound interest tables, in which case you know that anything increasing at that rate doubles in 11 years.

One way to grasp the meaning of change on so phenomenal a scale is to imagine what would happen if all existing cities—including New York—were to retain their present size. If this were so, in order to accommodate the new urban millions we would have to build a duplicate city for each of the hundreds that already dot the globe. A new New York, Tokyo, London, a new Rome and Rangoon—all in 11 years.

If we look at rates of population-increase and knowledge-acquisition, the same powerful accelerative trend is evident. The pace at which new chemical elements are discovered, the pace at which books and scientific papers are published, are both curving up and off the graph. The figures for consumption of energy, for speeds of transport, for explosive power—all, once more, show exponential rates of increase.

Even more dramatic is the escalation of the pace at which new technology
The ranch never could amount to much—too little water, too many scabbed hillsides of gum rock—but it could carry several dozen head of cattle and maybe a few hundred sheep if a man knew what he was doing. And the true gold to be gained from the place, Clifford knew, was that the work demanding to be done there would elbow the grief out of Dad's days.

Somewhere in himself my father steadied enough to decide. I didn't much want to do it, ye know. But Clifford got hold of me and took me down there to see the place and gave me a talkin' to, and I couldn't find a reason against it. He shook hands on the deal for the ranch. For the third time in a dozen weeks, the pair of us bounced across the Smith River Valley.

Little by little, and across more years than I want to count, I have come to see where our lives fit then into the valley. If Dad ever traced it at any length for himself, he never said so in more than one of his half-musings, half-jokes: As the fella says, a fool and his money are soon parted, but ye can't even get introduced around here. Yet I believe he too came to know, and to the bone, exactly where it was we had stepped when we left Clifford's sheltering. On the blustery near-winter day when we left the highway and drove onto the gray clay road of our new ranch, the pair of us began to live out the close of an unforgiving annal of settlement which had started itself some eighty years earlier.

It is not known just when in the 1860's the very first white pioneers trickled into our area of south-central Montana, into what would come to be called the Smith River Valley. But if the earliest of them wagoned in on a day when the warm sage smell met the nose and the clear air lensed the details of peaks two days' ride from there, what a glimpse into glory it must have seemed.
Mountains stood up blue-and-white to the horizons. Closer slopes of timber offered the logs to new homestead cabins from. Sage grouse, nearly as large as hen turkeys, whirred from their hiding places. And the expanse of it all: across a dozen miles and for almost forty along its length, this home valley of the Smith River country lay open and still as a gray inland sea, held by buttes and long ridges at its northern and southern ends, and east and west by mountain ranges. A new county had been declared here, bigger than some entire states in the East and vacant for the taking. More than vacant, evacuated: the Plains tribes who had hunted across the land by then were pulling north, in a last ragged retreat to the long-grass prairies beyond the Missouri River. And promise of another sort: around Helena were flushing gold out of every gravel gulch. With the Indians vanished and bonanza gold drawing in the town builders, how could this neighboring valley miss out on prosperity? No, unbridle imagination just for a moment, and it couldn't help but checker all these seamless new miles into pasture and field, roads and a rail route, towns and homes.

Yet if they had had eyes for anything but the empty acres, those firstcomers might have picked clues even from the pretty uplands that were a peculiar run of country, and maybe treacherous. Hints begin along the eastern skyline. There the Castle Mountains poke tall thin turrets of stone out of black-green forest. From below in the valley, the spires look as if they had been engineered up from the forest floor whenever someone took the notion, an entire mountain range of castle-builders' whims, until the fancy stone fingers wore too thin in the wind and began to chink away, fissure by slow fissure. Here, if the valleycomers could have gauged it in some speed-up of time, was a measure of how wind and storm liked to work on that country, nubbing down boulder if it stood in the way.
Even before the surprise peeing, I wasn't thrilled with whatever lessons. I already could read anything the surprised teacher could put in front of me, and add or subtract numbers as fast as she chalked them on the blackboard. I had so much free time in my head that I could spend most of the day being lonesome.

Every recess and lunch hour I moped off by myself, then sulked some more after school until Dad or Clifford drove up for me. I was my own pet poodle. I could do anything I wanted, and nobody could stop me. I could do anything I wanted, and nobody could stop me.

The story of the girl who couldn't count, or the boy who couldn't read, are too much of the Roman Catholic, of a New Orleans story, to be told.

The Romans liked the story of the child with a sheep. It's a sort of story that appeals to the Romans.

Almost everyone passed out paper bags with the words, "Wax Camps" on them, and filled them with sugar, candies, cookies, and other things. And even though I didn't like sugar, I knew that I should eat it.

And so I did, and I kept on eating it, until one day I realized that I was becoming fat.
While the Castle Mountains, seen in the long light of time, make a goblin horizon for the sun to rise over, the range to the west, the Big Belts, cast some unease of their own on the valley. The highest peak of the range—penned Grand on maps as Mount Edith, but always simply Old Baldy to those of us who lived with mountain upon mountain—thrusts up a bare summit with a giant crater gouged in its side. Even in hottest summer, snow lies in the crater like a patch centered on a gaping wound. Always, then, there is this reminder that before the time of men, unthinkable forces broke apart the face of the biggest landform the eye can find from any inch of the valley.

Nature's crankiness to the Big Belts did not quit there. The next summit to the south, Grass Mountain, grows its trees and grass in a pattern tipped upside down from every other mountain in sight. Instead of rising out of bunchgrass slopes which give way to timber reaching down from the crest, Grassy is dark with timber at the bottom and opens into a wide generous pasture—a brow of prairie some few thousand feet higher than any prairie ought to be, all the length of its gentle summit.

Along the valley floor, omens go on. The Smith River turns out to be little more than a creek named by a near-sighted optimist. Or, rather, by some frontier diplomat, for as an early newspaperman explained in exactly the poetry the pawky little flow deserved, the naming took notice of a politician in the era of the Lewis and Clark expedition—"Secretary Smith of the Navy Department/The most progressive member of Jefferson's cabinet/...thus a great statesman, the expedition giver/Is honored for all time in the name of "Smith River." The over-named subject of all that merely worms its way across the valley, forever kinking up three times the distance for every mile it flows and delivering all along the way more willow thickets and clay-greased outbanks than actual water. On the other hand, the water that is missing from the Smith River may arrive in some surprise gush anywhere
quietly, without the brush of a single wing tip against stone in that high, eerie place, they were taking over the spires of Manhattan. They were pouring upward in a light that was not yet perceptible to human eyes, while far down in the black darkness of the alleys it was still midnight.

As I crouched half asleep across the sill, I had a moment’s illusion that the world had changed in the night, as in some immense snowfall, and that if I were to leave, it would have to be as these other inhabitants were doing, by the window. I should have to launch out into that great bottomless void with the simple confidence of young birds reared high up there among the familiar chimney pots and interposed horrors of the abyss.

I leaned farther out. To and fro went the white wings, to and fro. There were no sounds from any of them. They knew man was asleep and this light for a little while was theirs. Or perhaps I had only dreamed.
else. A hot mineral pool erupting at the north end of the valley gave the name to the county seat which built up around the steaming boil, White Sulphur Springs.

But whatever the quirks to be discovered in a careful look around, the valley and its walls of high country fitted the one firm notion the settlers held: empty country to fill up. Nor, in justice, could the eye alone furnish all that was vital to know. Probably it could not even be seen, at first, in the tides of livestock which the settlers soon were sending in seasonal flow between the valley and those curious mountains. What it took was experience of the weather to remind you that those grazing herds of cattle and bands of sheep were not simply on the move into the mountains or back to the valley lowland they were traveling between high country and higher, and in that unsparing landscape, the weather is rapidly uglier and more dangerous the farther up you go. The country's arithmetic tells it.

The very floor of the Smith River Valley rests one full mile above sea level. The homesteads were set into the foothills, many of them hundreds of feet above that. The cold, storm-making mountains climbed thousands of feet more into the clouds bellying over the Continental Divide. Whatever the prospects might seem in a dreamy look around, the settlers were trying a slab of lofty country which often would be too cold and dry for their crops, too open to a killing winter for their cattle and sheep.

It might take a bad winter or a late spring to show this unseeable fact, and the valley people did their best to live with it. But over time, the altitude and climate added up pitilessly, and even after a generation or so of trying the valley, a settling family might take account and find that the
translucent as the glass that would soon be moving in continuous sheets over semi-automatic rollers. Here as at Highland Park ("a department is a little factory in itself") men and machines would be perfectly synchronized, in an organization in which "one part is so dependent upon another," the men would move in a tightly disciplined, coolly impersonal pattern. No stubborn Dionysius stood in the way of realizing this industrial Republic. On the farmland at Flat Rock its logistical precision of work and technique would presently be emerging, clean and clear as a mathematician's dream, on the foundation of economic and moral certainties. It would be a world complete and self-contained, a rational homestead.

Cut out useless parts and simplify necessary ones. In the Engineer's homestead there was nothing that did not reduce to the great One of production, to making and transporting things. This was the dam that supplied the power, the machines that, like books, gave men ideas; the awesome precision of symbols; the continuity of assembly—"a lever to move the world"; the main-spring of integration. There were moments when the Engineer seemed to see human nature itself as a creative power. A man's "personality" had little to do with whether he had "been in Sing Sing or at Harvard," whether he had come from Chicago or Czechoslovakia; its essence was his "rate of production." This was his guide in his work, his status in the shop, the ratio of his intrinsic value. Symbols, too, whatever their original shade, took on the same productive coloration: "time is money," money is a "part of our transportation system," an "engine of production." Even the necessary parts had been simplified in the industrial homestead at Flat Rock.

The elements of the Engineer's Republic now building here were meticulously tooled: they were interchangeable with Flat Rock or Highland Park plants anywhere—or even, the Engineer thought, with the structure of society itself. He could see the nation tooled on the pattern of Flat Rock: "We want those who can mould the political, social, industrial, and moral mass into
most plentiful things around them still were sagebrush and wind.

By the time I was a boy and Dad was trying in his own right to put together a life again, the doubt and defeat in the valley's history had come down into a single word. Anyone of Dad's generation always talked of a piece of land where some worn-out family eventually had lost to weather or market prices or both as a place. Not a farm or a ranch or even a homestead, but as a place. all those empty little clearings which ghosted that sage countryside—the McLoughlin place there by that butte, the Vinton place over this ridge, the Kuhnes place, the Burkey place, the Winters place, all the tens of dozens of sites where families lit in the valley, couldn't hold on, and drifted off. All of them epitaphed with that barest of words, place. One such place was where our own lives were compassed from, and where the story we were living out together had its first murmuring. Southwest out of the valley into the most distant foothills of the Big Belts, both the sage and the wind grow wilder and stronger. Far off there, beyond the landmark rise called Black Butte and past even the long green pasture hump of Grassy Mountain, a set of ruts can be found snaking away from the country road. The track, worn bald by iron wagonwheels and later by the hard tires of Model T's, scuffs along Shale bluffs and up sagebrush gulches and past trickling willow-choked creeks until at last it sidles across the bowed shoulder of summit ridge. Off there in the abrupt openness, two miles and more to a broad pitch of sage-soft slope, my father was born and
grew up.

This sudden remote bowl of meadow is called the Turner Basin—or would be, if any human voice were there anymore to say its name. Here, as far back into the foothills of the Big Belt Mountains as their wagons could go, a double handful of Scots families homesteaded in the years just before this century. Two deep Caledonian notions seem to have pulled them so far into the hills: to raise sheep, and to graze them on mountain grass which cost nothing.

A moment, cup your hands and look down into them, and there is a ready map of what these homesteading families had in mind. The life lines in your palms make the small gulches and creeks angling into the center of the Basin. The main flow of water, Spring Creek, drops down to squirt out there where the bases of your palms meet, the pass called Spring Gulch.

Toward these middle crinkles, the settlers clustered in for sites close to water and, they hoped, under the wind. The braid of lines, now, which runs square across between palms and wrists can be Sixteenmile Creek, the canyoned flow which gives the entire rumpled region its name—the Sixteen country.

Thumbs and the upward curl of your fingers represent the mountains and steep ridges all around; cock the right thumb a bit outward and it reigns as Wall Mountain does, proving its rimrock out and over the hollowed land below. And on all that cupping rim of unclaimed high country, the Scots families surely instructed one another time and again, countless bands of sheep could find summer grass.

Exactly what had plucked up the Doig family line from a village outside Dundee in Scotland and carried it into these gray Montana foothills this way, there is no account of. Dad wrote it off to Scots mulishness:
The novelty level rises too high however, when you can no longer count on certain regularities, when you cannot run today, or the power will not have to be evacuated, or the mail arrive and

"neutral points" on the earth's surface from the

Palestine she named first and California second, Where she stopped and her listeners asked

With a

piece of land belonging to distant and transfigured expression, she slowly
Scotchmen and coyotes was the only ones that could live in the Basin, and pretty damn soon the coyotes starved out. I only have the rough list of guesses from the long westering course of this country's frontier: poverty's push or the pull of wanderlust, some word of land and chance as heard from those who had gone earlier to America, or as read in the advertisements of booking agents. Perhaps some calamity inside the family itself, the loss of whatever thin livelihoods there had been in laboring on a laird's estate. Or it may truly have been as simple as the family vein of stubbornness. Some unordinary outlooks on life seemed to creep out in my grandfather's generation, attitudes which might not have set well with a narrow village way of life.

Three Doig brothers and two sisters are known to have gone off from Dundee to risky futures, and at least two of them clearly went about life as if it was some private concoction they had just thought up.

The first remembered for doing entirely what she pleased was the sister Margaret, the one in the family who launched off from Scotland into the British Empire, alighting on some remote flood plain of India as a teacher or missionary, no one now is quite sure which. She is at the outermost edges of the family memory, glimpsed and gone in someone's reminiscences as remembered by someone yet again. The rememberers lament he alone, spinsterly, old and odd, entire. She spent the rest of her life in India--died there, was buried there--and in her own way must have been bemused with the existence she had worked out somewhere under the backdrop of the Himalayas, as her brother was with his champion chickens.
New York Herald but a wider swath of comment, too. From time to time, Marquis would consider the prospects for human uplift -- the ruminations on what he called the Almost Perfect State.

Utopia always has been somewhat short of humor. We could do worse than to end with the Marquis blend of satire and affection:
The other original spirit was the eldest brother among those who packed up for Montana—

David Lewis Doig, called D.L. The one clear fact about the route from Dundee is that a number of Scots came in succession, like a chain of people steadying one another across a rope bridge. Whoever arrived first, his letters talked the next one into coming to file on a homestead, and the one persuaded after that was D.L.'s own brother-in-law. Of course, D.L. was next. By 1890, he had followed on with his wife and two children to work in Helena as a tailor until he could size up the country.

He sized it up entirely backwards to the way his heirs have wished ever since, passing over rich valleys to the west to climb up into the Turner Basin, where a homesteader who was giving up would sell him his claim. D.L. settled into his new site on Spring Creek, by long workdays and clever grazing made his small sheep ranch begin to prosper, and fathered hard until the family finally numbered nine children.

As promptly as he had enough offspring and income to keep the ranch going, D.L. devoted his own time to the hobby of raising brown leghorn chickens. He proved to be one of the world's geniuses at chicken growing. Before long, he had a bloodline of brown leghorns which were sleek glosses of feather and comb, and renowned as prize breeding stock.

He went to the big shows in California and all over the East, a son tells it. Beforehand he'd bring in his show cages into our front room and he'd have his chickens in there, and he'd prune 'em and pick at 'em with a pointer stick, make 'em stand certain ways and train their combs and everything like that, y'know. He had the best anywhere. When he was at the Coliseum Show in New York, the Russian government paid $1,000 for three or four of those chickens. Something like that happened just a numerous lot of times. I didn't like no part of 'em—we all had to pitch in to take care of these blasted chickens—but he was one of the best hands in the world with his birds. The trophies won at fairs and expositions covered most of one wall of the house, and D.L.'s wife sewed a quilt from the prize ribbons. Until the Depression
Trudging Toward the Almost Perfect State

Don Marquis, from The Almost Perfect State

Don Marquis (1878-1937) had a talent for sharp whimsy which has lived on in his best-known characters, archy the poetry-

In Hurley as a foster uncle he caring little at the county civic

Prison Reform Commission. He planning to be in Hurley as a foster uncle he caring little at the county civic

Informal on General Topics, Huron in French and Italian, and

Prance was thoroughly versed in the literature of her day, well

Orthoind an an early age, and brought up by breastfeeding relations

Prance Wiltshire and her sister Carrie, he caring little at the county civic

Cottonseed, At this hour the city was heaves and

Capas passed the white-winged birds on their ways. After the sun rose, the open city in the windows in white sheets were beginning to their varied were in white sheets were beginning to their varied
and old age at last forced him out, D.L. could be found there in the Basin, fussing over his prize chickens, sending someone down to the Milwaukee Railroad tracks to fetch the jug of whiskey consigned for him every week, and asking not one thing more of the world.

D.L. was followed into his chosen Montana foothills by two of his brothers. Another of the faintest of family stories has it that the brother named Jack came to D.L.'s ranch on a doomed chance that mountain air would help his health, and there quietly waited out the year or so it took him to die. The other, His would have been the first Doig grave to be put down amid sagebrush instead of heather. The other brother, Peter Doig, somehow made his way from Scotland in the spring of 1893, just after his 19th birthday, after his 19th birthday. He had been a tailor's helper, and in the new land at once began a life as far away from needle and thread as he could get. For several years, he did the same jobs on sheep ranches that his son would do a generation later, and which I would do, a generation after that, as his son's son—working in the lambing sheds, herding, wrangling in the shearing pens.

There can't have been much money in the ranch jobs which drew my father's father in those first years. But there would have been all the chance in the world to learn about sheep--
2 The Awakening

advancing cholera, with the guilty knowledge field that awaited the plague in New York's d the conscience of the community into action the close of the war. A citizens' movement re- organization of a Board of Health and the the "Tenement-House Act" of 1867, the first remedial legislation. A thorough canvass of the d been begun already in the previous year, but first, and next a scourge of small-pox, delayed ile emphasizing the need of it, so that it was t got fairly under way and began to tell. The fell under the ban first. In that year the Board cutting of more than forty-six thousand win- dor rooms, chiefly for ventilation—for little or to be had from the dark hallways. Air-shafts in. The saw had a job all that summer; by early the orders had been carried out. Not without obstacles were thrown in the way of the officials by the owners of the tenements, who saw in to repair or clean up only an item of added diminish their income from the rent; on the other tenants themselves, who had sunk, after a gen- vailing protest, to the level of their surround- at last content to remain there. The tene- their Nemesis, a proletariat ready and able wrongs of their crowds. Already it taxed the or the support of its jails and charities. The

Points of tension also show up in a scanning of this

broadly-noticed of the many publications which flowed out of

The Isaac-Neather study was perhaps the most

11
and sheep in their gray thousands were the wool-and-meat machines which had made fortunes for the lairds of the Scotland he had come from. What was more, this high Montana grassland rimming the Big Belts had much of the look of the home country, and had drawn enough Scots onto ranches and homesteads that they counted up into something like a colony. The burr of their talk could be heard wherever the gray tides of sheep were flowing out onto the grass. Between the promise of those grazing herds and that talk comfortable to the ear, it was a place for staying.

Beyond the facts that he had countrymen and relatives in the new land and that he was medium height, slim, red-mustached, and had the throaty lowlands way of speech, nothing can be known now of what young Peter Doig was like. Not a scrap of paper from his own hand, not a word from those who would have known him then, not one thing to show him head-on and looking out at the world. What he did for himself is likewise known only in scantest outline: he met and married D.L.'s sister-in-law, Annie Campbell, a young woman who had come from Perthshire by that chain of relatives and their relatives, and who now cooked for ranch crews. A year or so after the marriage, one son born, the young couple took up land a mile west of D.L.'s small ranch in the Turney Basin.

Those homesteading Scots families of the Basin—Doigs, Christisons, Mitchells, a few who came later—could not know it at first, but they had taken up land where the long-standing habits and laws of settlement were not going to work. The homestead staked out by Peter and Annie Doig lay at an elevation of 5700 feet. At first, the hill country did pay
Early in the season of 1877 the writer visited

the position held by a number of a day that is happily

left unalloyed after himself with

the present day, though the hopes of

have been

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off with its summers of free pasture. In the bargain, however, came Januaries and Februaries—and Marches and Aprils—of hip-deep snowdrifts. There was no help in law, for the blizzards which bullied through the Therney Basin.

But there was little help, either, where law supposedly was shoultering its share of the load. Simply, it came down to this: homesteads of 160 acres made no sense in that vast and dry and belligerent landscape of the high-mountain west. As well try to grow an orchard in a window-box as to build a working ranch from such a patch. Quilt more land onto the first? Well and good—except that in an area of natural boundaries, such as the Basin, a gain for one homestead could come only with someone else's loss. Simply summering the livestock in the shared open range of the mountains, as the Basin people did at first? Well and good again—except that with the stroke of a government pen which decreed the high summer pasture into a national forest, all that nearby free range ended. And promptly—so fast it'd make your head swim, Dad would have said of such promptness—the allotments for forest grazing began to pass to the corporate valley ranches which already were big, and getting bigger.

Even if you somehow outlasted the weather, then, no foothills homestead you built for yourself could head off a future of national forest boundaries and powerful livestock companies. Like much else in the wrestling of this continent, the homestead laws were working to a result, right enough, but not to the one professed for them. The homestead sites my father could point out to me by the dozen—place upon place upon place, and our own family soil in almost all cases, among them—turned out to be not the seed acres for yeoman farms amid the sage, nor the first pastures of tidy family ranches. Not that at all. They turned out to be landing spots, quarters to hold people until they were able to scramble away to somewhere else. Quarters, it could be said, that did for rural America what the tenements of the immigrant ghettos did for city America.
Reformer Turns Opportunist

damages. There were as many opportunities for favors as there were functions of city government.

As a platform speaker at political meetings Ruef learned to capture the most hostile and unruly audience with a combination of humor, courage, and tact. Once, when he arrived at a rally, the platform was already dotted with "uncooked omelettes," and more were obviously being reserved for him. "Throw all the rest of those eggs at one time, so that we can get down to business," Ruef suggested. "They look like good fresh eggs. That egg man cheated you if you bought them for rotten ones." The audience laughed and cheered, and a deluge of eggs soared to the platform, splattering against posts, onto coats, and even into the band's brass horns. "Are they all in?" They were. Then, without interruption, Ruef managed a speech that ended in goodnatured applause.

Boss government in San Francisco, as elsewhere, needed revenues as well as votes. In the 'eighties and early 'nineties, some of its largest levies came from public service corporations which, in turn, depended on their prosperity and even their existence on the cooperation of politicians. The board of supervisors, the legislative body of the city and county of San Francisco, had the power to grant franchises and privileges to street railroads, for example, and also to fix the rates to be charged the public by gas and water companies. The Democratic boss, Chris Buckley, was believed to have accepted large payments from these corporations in the guise of attorney's fees. Payments to a boss who was not an attorney could be called campaign contributions, or given no name at all. Such payments were not bribery in the legal sense, because, technically, the boss held no public office. Conspiracy to pass some of the money on to persons who were legally public officials was always extremely hard to prove.

There was a basis for the general belief, however, that bribery of the supervisors was systematically practiced. The boss's ability to command the largest payments from the corporations depended on his control of a "solid seven," a majority of the twelve supervisors, able to pass an ordinance, or a "solid nine," able to override a veto by the mayor. Martin Kelly's memoirs describe several instances in which he managed the bribery of the "solid seven" supervisors whom he had succeeded in electing in 1890.
But that is my telling of it, a second generation after Peter and Annie Doig took up land in the Basin. They had other things in their heads than the days beyond tomorrow. The young wife could hear the howling of wolves and coyotes—and worse, the splitting cracks of thunder when lightning storms cut down on the Big Belts. To the end of her life, she claimed she never had gotten over those unruly sounds of the Basin, nor its isolation. The young husband was more the one for staying. He built a house of pine logs from a nearby timbered slope and filed papers for the 160-acre site—which qualified best under a law for the taking up of "desert land." Over the next dozen years, they managed to make a start in the sheep business, then used the profits to buy cattle, the easier livestock to pasture. As well, they added to the first son five more, until the names in the family began to sound like the roll call of a kilted regiment: Edwin Charles, Varick John, Charles Campbell, James Stuart, Angus McKinnon, Claude Spencer.

Then, on a September day in 1910, a little past noon,
a time. It is one of the curses of the tenement-house system that the worst houses exercise a levelling influence upon all the rest, just as one bad boy in a schoolroom will spoil the whole class. It is one of the ways the evil that was "the result of forgetfulness of the poor," as the Council of Hygiene mildly put it, has of avenging itself.

The determined effort to head it off by laying a strong hand upon the tenement builders that has been the chief business of the Health Board of recent years, dates from this period. The era of the air-shaft has not solved the problem of housing the poor, but it has made good use of limited opportunities. Over the new houses sanitary law exercises full control. But the old remain. They cannot be summarily torn down, though in extreme cases the authorities can order them cleared. The outrageous overcrowding, too, remains. It is characteristic of the tenements. Poverty, their badge and typical condition, invites—compels it. All efforts to abate it result only in temporary relief. As long as they exist it will exist with them. And the tenements will exist in New York forever.

To-day, what is a tenement? The law defines it as a house "occupied by three or more families, living independently and doing their cooking on the premises; or by more than two families on a floor, so living and cooking and having a common right in the halls, stairways, yards, etc." That is the legal meaning, and includes flats and apartment-houses, with which we have nothing to do. In its narrower sense the typical tenement was thus described when last arraigned before the bar of public justice: "It is generally a brick building from four to six stories high on the street, frequently with a store on the first floor which, when used for the sale of liquor, has a side opening for the benefit of the inmates and to evade the Sunday law; four families occupy each floor, and a set of rooms consists of one or two dark closets, used as bedrooms, with a living room twelve feet by

The Organization

He possessed an easy affability that enabled him to speak their valued remedies. As they repeated among themselves the numerous stories that circulated about Crump's timely intervention in the affairs of one of their number to set aright some fearful problem, they developed an ineradicable faith in "Mr. Crump."
Peter Doig stepped outside the log house. He had been spending time on errands—to the county fair the day before, where he had won prizes for his lambs and rewarded himself with a fine thorough drunk, this morning to his nearest neighbor's house on some small matter—and the ranch chores were piling up. He strode down the path to the garden to begin digging the potato crop. Going through the gate, he clutched at his heart, fell sideways, and died. He was four months short of his 37th birthday.

A few mornings later, a lumber wagon with a casket roped in place jolted out of the Tietney Basin and set off on the day-long trip to the cemetery at White Sulphur Springs. Behind the rough hearse coiled a dusty column of riders on horseback and families in spring wagons, neighbors and kin. They buried Peter Doig, tailor's helper in Scotland and homesteader in Montana, and rode their long ride home into the hills.

Charles Campbell Doig was ten when his father died, made old enough in that instant to help his mother and his brothers carry the body in from the dark garden dirt. It must have been the first time he touched against death. And touched ahead, too, somewhere in his scaredness, to the life he was going to have from then on in that lamed family, on that Basin homestead.
and the machine was a creation of the master of Highland Park. He had the vision and the drive to turn the park into a model of the future. The machine was a testament to his belief in the power of progress and innovation.

The machine could be powered by the machine intelligently [could be powered by the machine intelligently]. It gave strength to the park and brought it to life. It was a symbol of progress and a beacon of hope.

The machine was a symbol of Highland Park's commitment to the future. It was a reminder of the importance of progress and innovation. It was a testament to the power of the human spirit.

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This is as much as can be eked out--landscape, settlers' patterns on it, the family fate within the pattern--about the past my father came out of. I read into it all I can, plot out likelihoods and chase after blood hunches. But still the story draws away from the twinings of map work and blood-lines, and into the boundaries of my father's own body and brain. Where his outline touched the air, my knowing really begins.

He was, as I have said, not more than five and a half feet tall, and he had the small men's jut of jaw toward heaven about that. I never saw anybody so big I couldn't take him on in a fight, anyway. That would have been said from his declaring stance, standing flat-backed as if a strut had been stopped in mid-stride. Then the grin would have worked at the handsome straight mouth and the wryness come: He might of cleaned my clock when I took him on, too, but that didn't matter. Oh, as the fellow says, I'm awfully little but I'm awfully tough. As the fellow says. That signal began seven of every ten of his jokes, the Dutch fellow or the Chinese fellow or the Irish fellow intoning one jape or another--and inevitably performed in Dad's dialect tries, all hopelessly but happily lost in his own heathery burr. My father had a humor unusual in a nervous man, a gift of storying which paid no attention to the twanging nerves in him. This may account for the way people sometimes tell me of him as if he were two separate men. I remember Charlie could spiel with the best of us knotheads, one will say, had a story ready whenever he remembered to look up from his work. And another, he knew sheep ranchin', that feller did, but you know he could kind of get excited workin' cattle, he's too nervous to be the best cowmen. He divides like that in my own memory. Here, the natural pace of story which would have me listening without a blink. There, his marks of worry or tension on, the tongue-click against the roof of his mouth or the spaced rhythm which began to parcel his words: Damn-it-to-hell-anyway...
The myth was complete—a sound and square one.

...
Too, I somehow see him in different sizes at once—the box-jawed man so far above me as a boy, the banty of a fellow beside me when I had grown. But at whatever version, a remarkable slenderness of line about him. As if making it up to him for the shortness and a weight of only about 135 pounds, Dad’s body went wide and square at the shoulders and then angled neatly down, like a thin but efficient wedge. His arms were ropy with muscle, yet not large; it was a mystery where the full strength of him came from, for he was as strong as men half again his size in lifting hay bales or woolsacks or wrestling calves down for the branding iron.

The quick parts of his brain, and they were several, had to do with such ranchcraft. This came both from that Basin upbringing and from riding himself out of it. He was just pretty catty about anything to do with a ranch. And I knew when he wasn’t much more than dry behind the ears, out and riding for these stock spreads...

So to me now, looking at my father’s early life is something like the first glimpse ever into a store-rippled reflection in a pond, and wondering how it can be that the likeness there repeats some of what I know is me, growing up at his side thirty years later, along with so much more that is only waver and blur and startlement, and so can only belong to some other being entirely. Crowding all his home hours in that log cabin beneath the Big Belts, five brothers and a sister, born after Peter Doig’s death;
to blow, a hot wind from the northeast whining down through the Cajon and San Gorgonio Passes, blowing up sandstorms out along Route 66, drying the hills and the nerves to the flash point. For a few days now we will see smoke back in the canyons, and hear sirens in the night. I have neither heard nor read that a Santa Ana is due, but I know it, and almost everyone I have seen today knows it too. We know it because we feel it. The baby frets. The maid sulks. I rekindle a waning argument with the telephone company, then cut my losses and lie down, given over to whatever it is in the air. To live with the Santa Ana is to accept, consciously or unconsciously, a deeply mechanistic view of human behavior.

I recall being told, when I first moved to Los Angeles and was living on an isolated beach, that the Indians would throw themselves into the sea when the bad wind blew. I could see why. The Pacific turned ominously glossy during a Santa Ana
his home hours in that log-house beneath the Big Belts;

hours: the one of me, alone and treasuring it that way.

His school years which, shying from those Basin winters,
began with spring thaw and then hurried hit-and-miss through
summer; all my summers ending in earliest September quick
of one kind or another, as the bell at the end of a recess, school creeping on then
through three entire seasons of the year.

Some schoolmates of his came from families drawn
back so far into the hills and their own peculiarities of
living that the children were more like the coyotes which
watchfully loped the ridgelines than like the other Basin
youngsters. One family's boys, he remembered, started school
so skittish that when someone met them on an open stretch of
road where they couldn't dart into the brush, they flopped
flat with their lunchboxes propped in front of their heads
to hide behind. Thought we couldn't see 'em behind those lunchboxes,
can ye imagine that? I barely could; my classmates always were town children,
writing town shoes and with a combed, town way of behaving.

Dad on horseback every chance he had, on his way to
being one of the envied riders in a sea of riders; me
reading every moment I could, tipping any open page up into
It took long years of weary lab-
inig for the death march by the hundred and fifty cells. South
last in casting the “cave-dwellers” tenement
by the owner of the property, he increased his property which he inherited at the United States
in which he became a tenured worker. Os
naturally he forgot to eat and drank. He
without the regular pay. The
impatient at being out of the regular
promoting his claims. He
the mood of the public office. He
observed, "a man of poor
office holders were subject to emolument and.
the community," influence with the judges, etc.,
and opposition, that one special, legal, and the community
the circumstances entered in a report relating to the
the accused, but that on appeal, the time
the accused could modify the circumstances. The
the accused could enter a plea of nolo contendere, which
the accused could enter a plea of not guilty.
my eyes and imagination. He grew up small, temper fused as short as he was, but with estimates of himself considerably more generous than that; maybe because I held in all my temper and dreams, I filled out like a prize calf, bigger and solidier and more red-haired every time anyone glanced in my direction.

Another wonderment at once follows this one, like a stone hurled harder into the pond. On his way to growing out of boyhood, my father came very near to dying.

Then time and again after that, it would happen that he would draw alongside death, breathe the taste of doom, then be let live.

I have had to think much about how death has touched early into my family. It touched earliest of all toward my father. Why, if what is so far from having answer is even askable—why was his life so closely stalked this way? And how was it that he lasted as he did? The costs of this father of mine paid in all the surviving he had to do, I know enough about. But about why life had to dangle him such terms, not nearly enough.

That first slash at him, in 1918, came when the planet was dealing plentifully in disaster. World War One had gutted open entire nations, the influenza epidemic now was ripping at one family after another. Dad barely missed the war; he was 17½ years old when the armistice time. But only days later, he was closer to death than if he had been in the frontmost trenches.

The last year or so of the combat, Dad had been hired by Basin neighbors whose son had been plucked away by the draft board. That job, on a tatter of a ranch near the canyon
on the deck. Scared, she clung to her skirt. "It's all behind us now. I made a mistake."

"Well, it's all over for the first time," she said, "and I want to be cheerful."

"A fine taste!" said the man who turned his back on her and looked over the rail. "A fine taste!"

They were silent. The man's thick brown hair was slapping against his face, and the men on the lower deck were lifting a small load from the water. Bells clanged, a hoarse bellow of her captors. She was facing her prow rising from the green water, and as she crossed the quay skinned across her face, leaving behind the ship the white island grew longer, ravening and green. On one side curved the low spars and masts on the water, and on the other side was Brooklyn, flats and towers of the harbor. And before the pedestal of the statue of Liberty from the scaling swarm in to the west, Liberty. The ship rose up behind her, sun slanted behind the ship, her features were charred to the depths, her masses into the luminous sky the spires of the darkness roweling in. The sun rose over a black cross and hilt of a broken sword. Her mother stared again at the man.

The ship curved around Manhattan, her bow sweeping the bridges whose cables and piers spanned the East River. The clouds blew fresh and clean over its veerings. It whipped the hat straight out behind the child's eye. "Where did you find that colored man?"

Startled by his sudden question, she answered, "A friend of his mother,"

CRITICS are far less yieldng. Don Vandervert is he editor of the Scenic Hudson Conference, a group of highly influential environmentalists who have seen in Con Ed's power-plants for six years. Vandervert is a forceful, articulate, staccato that he considers the evils of "primitive" electric utility. He might possibly be trying, he says. "But the only real achievement at Con Ed trucks are now on the way out. The company's fossil-fuel generating stations are now using lower-sulfur fuels that are in anticipation of regulations."

Both because of his success-
where the railroad snaked through was a youngster's worst dream. All day, for one square meal—oh, and they'd give me an apple to eat at bedtime, the honyockers—and a few dollars a week which he had to pass along to his mother, Dad did a man's share of ranch work; on top of that, mornings and evenings, he slogged through the chores of chicken-feeding and hog-slopping and kindling-splitting which a country child grows up hating.

It got worse. The soldier son was put on a ship to France, and now every day Dad was sent off on the mile and a half trudge down the railroad track to the Sixteen post office, to fetch a newspaper so the fretful parents could read through the list of battle casualties. I tell ye now, it didn't take me long to be wishin' that the son-of-a-buck would be on that list, so I wouldn't have to fetch that damn newspaper.

It was like my father to call down exasperation of that sort on somebody else, then undergo worse himself. The soldier son survived. But in mid-November of 1918, Dad set out on a day of deer hunting with a cousin, one of D.L.'s strapping sons, and the pair of them came down first with pneumonia, and then influenza. For days they lay delirious in the log ranch houses their fathers had built a mile apart. On the first night of December, the cousin died, and Dad's fever broke.

Those two had started out even when they put their first
In the Midst of Plenty

shall see, they areunnourished by their native so they have become refugees in the cities are hidden from their own countrymen, sus- selfare payments that keep them fed and for the most part without hope of deliverance. a city which once demonstrated for the world r masses of penniless newcomers and from a generation of productive citizens seems to now it did it.
footprints in the snow on that hunting trip. Why death for one, and not the other? No answer comes, except that even starts don't seem to count. If that was what saved Charlie Doig then, he was going to need several such bylaws of fate before he was done.

That first siege on his health behind him, Dad went back to the hired work which each of the young Doig brothers started at just as soon as he was old enough. For years, their wages had to be the prop under the family homestead, which at last was beginning to pull itself up into a ranch. By the autumn of 1919, all their cowboying and shepherding and scrimping together had added up: We'd got our debts paid off, and built up quite a little bunch of cattle. Sold 90 head that fall, put the money in the bank, put in a winter's supply of groceries, bought a tremendous amount of oat straw a guy had there—it was just like hay, y'know. So we started in that winter with 190 head of cattle, and about 10 head of dandy horses. And also my mother just had inherited five thousand dollars from a relative that died in Scotland. Luck, it seemed, could hardly wait to follow on luck. Then, weeks ahead of the calendar, winter set in.

It became the winter which the Basin people afterward would measure all other winters against. The dark timbered mountains around them went white as icebergs. The tops of sagebrush vanished under drifts. And up around the bodies of bawling livestock, the wind twirled a deadlier web of snow. Day upon day, hay sleds sloggg out all across the Basin to the cattle and horses as mittened men and boys fought this starvation weather with pitchforks.
By late January, the weather was gaining every day. The Basin's haystacks were nearly gone, and the ranch families shipped in trainloads of slough grass which had been mowed from frozen marshes in Minnesota. Fifty dollars a ton. Fifty-five. Then sixty. We never heard of prices that high. And there was no choice in the world but to pay them. Godamighty, it was awful stuff. You had to chop the bales to pieces with axes. Sometimes out of a bale would tumble an entire muskrat house of sticks and mud. And reeds and brush and Christ knows what all. Down to this brittle ration, the country began to feel winter fastening into the very pit of its stomach. I helped load what was left of a neighbor's sheep into boxcars there at Sixteen. Those sheep were so hungry they were eatin' the wool off each other. And even the desperation hay began to run out. If we could of got another ten ton, we could of saved a lot of cattle. But we could not get it. Cows struggled to stay alive by eating willows thick as a man's thumb. And still the animals died a little every day, until the carcasses began to make dark humps on the white desert of snow.

It was early June of 1920 before spring greened out from under the snowdrifts in the Basin. We had about 60 head of cattle left, and about half a dozen horses, and not a dime.

The losses killed whatever hopes there had been that the Basin ranch would be able to bankroll Dad and the other brothers in ranching starts of their own. Like seeds flying on the Basin's chilly wind, they began to drift out one after another now.

Dad did not neglect to savor his earliest drifting. An autumn came when he and his brother Angus went
woman and that it would take the liberty of referring to her as "a
female monster." The Evening Post advocated that any half rented
new regime with at least tolerant suspi-
cion. It was grand theater to watch some-
one try to humanize Con Ed.

Luce, as a personality, is as straight as
a Seneca arrow—serious, unflashy, stolid.
But, for a Con Ed chairman, he is thor-
oughly unconventional, almost eccentric at
times.

At lunch he and Angie stop the execu-
tive Chevy at busy Manhattan street cor-
er and eat hotdogs at an umbrella stand.
On Sundays he often hops on a bicycle at
his Bronxville home and pedals off for sur-
prise visits to isolated Con Ed installations.

Even if the substance of his changes is
yet to be seen, Luce's maneuverings, his
economies, his almost messianic effort to
restructure Con Ed have won him at least
beguiling admiration from some of the
utility's longtime critics.

Ben Nerzberg is a tough Manhattan
lawyer who represents Con Ed's largest
customer, the City Housing Authority
which runs up a $10-million-a-year light
bill. No large customer (perhaps no small
one, either) can be too happy with Con Ed.
The utility's electric rates run 17 per cent
higher than the national average, twice as
high as Seattle's. Nerzberg's voice is like
grinding gravel, the first hint that he is a
rough adversary, and he is an avowed op-
ponent of new rate increases. But he likes
off to the Chicago stockyards with a cousin's boxcars of cattle. For every carload of stock, see, you were entitled to your fare both ways. We were a pair of punk kids, out for a big time. So we took off to see Chicago. On the cattle train with them was a rancher who celebrated such Chicago trips by spending his cattle profits and then papering the city with overdrawn checks. He took the young cowboys in tow, and the three of them sashayed through Chicago. One morning after several days of high living, they were sprawled in barber chairs for the daily shave which would start them on a new round of carousing. The policeman on the beat—a helluva big old harness bull—paused outside the window at the sight of three pairs of cowboy boots poking out from under the barber cloths. He sauntered in, lifted the hot towel off the rancher's face, and said: Hello, White Sulphur Springs. When you get that shave, I want you. Their financier on his way to the precinct station, the Doig brothers caught the next train home back to Montana.
The indifference is no unique callousness among Americans. Americans, in fact, are less inured to the suffering of others than most established peoples. They still long, happily, to do something about tragedy. But poverty has never been pleasant to look at and the average citizen, even of a humane society, does not actively seek it out. When cities were mixtures of differing economic groups, living cheek by jowl, and a man going to work walked by the poor, or perhaps saw them at the downtown employment office, or had his children sit next to their children in school, there was no choice. The middle-class citizen knew there was poverty because it was in the next block, or he saw it from the trolley, or he saw men selling buttons or repairing umbrellas in the street. The middle-class man may have protected himself with a smug explanation of why this happened, but he knew it existed. Today the middle-class American lives in the suburbs or in an entirely different part of the city. He does not usually have to go daily through the central city, or at least not through the littered streets behind the big hotels. He is much more apt to move outward to the fringes for working and shopping. He and his children may go for years without ever seeing a slum. (Indeed, the socially conscious parent in the city has been known to take his children on a deliberate tour of the slums to open young eyes to what exists in his own community.) His highways loop around or leap over these distant anonymous blocks at sixty miles an hour.

Thirty years ago two-thirds of the population of the United States was in serious economic trouble. Today a smaller proportion of Americans is poor, not so small as the affluent seem to think, but small enough to drop below the threshold of national consciousness. Because they are miserable out in the distant farmlands and mountains or in their cramped slums in the abandoned cores of cities, the poor are poor all by themselves.

Besides, the poor used to look poor and very often they don’t any more. For centuries the literature of poverty was filled with words like “rags” and “faded” and “torn.” This was the state of clothing among the poor until American poverty became the best-dressed in the world. In recent years clothes have become casual and dyes have become perfect.

It was possible recently to watch a girl at a dance in a Chicago community house, in a pink cotton dress with a bright blue bow at the collar; she could have been picked up by a parent in a big car and gone home to an apartment with a doorman. A boy in chinos and sports shirt walked down a San Francisco street with books under his arm; he might have entered a hillside villa without raising eyebrows. It would be an imprudent man who bet on the income level of the children’s families. The Chicago girl went to a dark and uninviting stairway beside a gin mill and walked into her tenement where drunken adults yelled at her and babies in cribs cried to be changed. The boy in San Francisco went up a back fire escape to a dingy pair of rooms where his husbandless mother fed her children from cold cans. The dyes in American clothing do not fade and in their fidelity they have removed from the streets one of the historic clues to poverty.

Paradoxically, the poor in America of the 1960’s are materially better off than the impoverished of the past, but they are poor nonetheless and they may be poorer in
And some other autumn—it seemed to be his migration time—Dad and his friend Clifford Shearer talked each other into heading west for the Coast. What they were going to do out there, they had no idea whatsoever, but probably it would be more promising than the spot they were standing on at the moment.

Clifford and Dad made, as a valley man has said it to me, a pair of a kind. They both were under medium height, wiry, trim, Clifford with his own good looks more sharply cut than Dad's square steady lines. Both were what the valley called well thought of.

The night before they left, the Basin people threw a farewell dance at the Sixteen schoolhouse. Women were bawling and carrying on, Dad remembered, you'd thought the world was coming to an end. It was starting to. The Basin could never be the same when its youngsters began to go.

Out in the world as job seekers, Dad and Clifford fizzed with more imagination than their first boss allowed for. They had stopped in Washington's Yakima Valley long enough to try the apple harvest. The idea, they were told the first morning, was to pluck each piece of fruit with care—now, you young fellers, give it this little twist so the stem don't come off, see?—so it would go into the box unblemished for the market. But quality was not what they were being paid for; quantity was. Their orchard career hardly had got underway before they were caught morbidly shaking apples down into their boxes by the whole battered treeload, and were sent down the road. We had five dollars apiece to show for it, anyway. They headed west some more through the state of Washington. The Pacific Ocean stopped them at Aberdeen, where they hired on as pilers in a lumber yard.
tion, whose youth had been passed in the most refined circles of private life, should present herself to the people as a public lecturer, would naturally excite surprise anywhere, . . . but in America, where women are guarded by a seven-fold shield of habitual insignificance, it has caused an effect which can scarcely be described. ‘Miss Wright, of Nashoba, is going to lecture . . .’ sounded from street to street, from house to house.”

Frances Wright was aware that even the women for whom she was trying to secure property rights, free universal education, divorce reforms, and birth control were hostile. She wrote her sister from “a cabin crowded with ladies who perhaps feel in my company as in the presence of a new importation from the South Seas, and I most certainly in theirs as some unfortunate antipodean to whom the surrounding minds and manners are as uncongenial as the bonnets.”

The most vigorous attacks on her were in the press. The New York American declared that Frances Wright had ceased to be a

on quarter-acre plots at regular intervals within the timber strips.

Sculpin, who had charge of the linear survey experiment,
Charlie and I didn't know what a stick of lumber was, hardly--this from Clifford, with his drawling chuckle--we thought everything was made out of logs, y'know. But they asked us if we knew anything about lumber, and we said, 'Well, sure.'

When the first rain of the Aberdeen winter whipped in, the pair of them slopped through their shift wondering to one another how soon the yard boss would take pity, as any rancher back home would decently have done, and send them in out of the downpour. By the end of that wettest day of their lives, they still were in the rain but had stopped wondering.

Well, hell, we need the job, y'know. It was November and the streets were lined with men, and we was a long ways from home. So I said to Charlie, by gollies, I'm goin' uptown and see if they won't trust a feller for some rain clothes. Clifford slogged off and talked a dry-goods merchant out of two sets of raingear on credit. But a drier skin didn't ease Dad's mind entirely.

He got homesick, y'know. You never saw a guy got so homesick as Charlie. Dad toughed it out in Aberdeen for some months, told Clifford he couldn't stand it and headed back to Montana. That Aberdeen winter was the longest one in my life, and godamighty, the rain.

When he came home shaking off the West Coast damp, Dad was less interested in the world beyond the valley. He did some cowboying, and some time on sheep ranches; three seasons, he sheared sheep with a crew which featured a handsome giant shearer named Matt Van Patton. The best
Different classes and cultures. Even circumstances, a few irrepressible visions and unmistakable, from all school, a phenomenon that has contributed to the basic national ethic of the individual rather than children of the affluent, this has conscious, social lesson. Further-middle and upper classes to combat drift in the complace of inherited position. The continuing owes much to this demonstration schools. For the children of the association in the classroom has grudging, for the possibility of the affluent, and, more immost helpful clues to academic it has been the greatest single question and despair. But the spread the children from the slums holds, loses that function. a greater role to play than in neighborhood, for it is the most find new directions after the kids' past, rise above deficiencies of the unsettled migrant. 

The schools rededicate to individuals. When they are impressive, they inspire the neighborhood to adjust. How, the schools confuse, and the whole school adjusts to this world. But often
looking guy I think I ever remember seeing. A sheep shearing 
he could really knock the wool off of 'em, went over 200 ewes on his tall 
sonofagun, too; he went over 200 ewes every day. And a drinking 
sonofagun. The last time Dad saw him was when the crew finished 
its season and broke up. Old Matt, he started hittin' the 
booze, he had a jug somewhere, along the middle of the afternoon. 
By suppertime he was so drunk he couldn't walk. The crew had 
a dead-ax wagon to haul its outfit in, and he was layin' in 
the bottom of that with his head hangin' out over the tailgate.

When Clifford returned from the Coast, there was serious roistering to be 
cought up on with him, too. I remember that me an' Charlie might get a little 
bit on the renegade side now and then, y'might say. This once, there was three 
of us--me an' Charlie and D.L.'s son, Alex--caught the train from Sixteen 
up there to the Ringling dance at Ringling one night.

One night. We got our room from Mrs. Harder, the old German lady who run 
the Harder Hotel there. Then went on down to the bootleg joint and bought 
a gallon of moonshine. So of course we got pretty well loaded off of it, 
and full of hell. Anyway, the next morning Mrs. Harder, she called up the 
'sheriff's office and said for the sheriff to get down there: 'Dere's 
boys from Sechsten, and dey're wreckin' my hotel!' Well, hell, there was 
only three of us, but I guess she thought we was as bad as six.
In the Midst of Plenty school applicants may seem wiser to the earlier bureacrats as the mother rapidly-uttered get around unassisted. But few are a glossary of mine, “ability to fill it out” or, better with me? The problem of difficulty is the painful moment for the child that he

residents, they crowd into whole blocks and entire neighborhoods that have emptied out their original residents en masse, sometimes in a matter of a few months. This process has broken the chain of inheritance by which the accumulated experience of civilized urban living was normally passed on to the newcomer. Conformity, a curse to those who have learned the crucial mechanics of living, serves its purpose in the struggle to master a new environment. A vital part of this learning process is the urge of the newcomer to adjust to the prevailing standards and to the expectations of his neighbors. But now there was no prevailing standard, no expectation by anyone, no model to follow, nothing to adjust to.

Many of the rural migrants had never before lived under the same roof with another family. Certainly they had never conducted their total family ritual within chambers that were only a few feet away from a dozen other chambers where other families were living out their lives, all without the cleansing action of open land and sun and wind. The almost automatic conditions of city-life cooperation—embodied in the commonplace concept of “the people downstairs” or, also alien to the rural family, “the people next door”—is slow to come to families who for generations had space and open fields for neighbors. The mechanics of tenement living can be awesome; its integration into the unconscious skills of day-to-day living can take a long time. For many, modern plumbing—the toilet bowl and water closet, the kitchen sink drain—seems governed by principles as arcane as those for a nuclear reactor. Plaster walls seem made for graffiti or for drilling
But the deep ingredient of my father's adventuring in those years of his early twenties was horses. It was a time when a man still did much of his day's work atop a saddle pony, and the liveliest of his recreation as well. And with every hour in the saddle, the odds built into catastrophes ahead. Built, as Dad's stories imprinted in me, until the most casual swing into the stirrups could almost cost your life: I'll tell ye a time. I was breakin' this horse, and I'd rode the thing for a couple of weeks, got him pretty gentle—a big nice tall brown horse with a stripe in his face. I'd been huntin' elk up in the Castles, and I'd rode that horse all day long. Comin' home, I was just there in the Basin below the Christison place, and got off to open a gate. My rifle was on the saddle there, with the butt back toward the horse's hip, and it'd rubbed a sore there and I didn't notice the rubbin'. When I went to get back on, took hold of the saddle horn to pull myself up, y'know, the rifle scraped across that sore. Boy, he ducked out from under me and I went clear over him. I caught my opposite foot in the stirrup as I went over, and away he went, draggin' me. He just kicked the daylights out of me as we went. It was in a plowed field, and I managed to turn over and get my face like this—cradling his arms in front of his face, to my rapt watching—but he kept kickin' me in the back of the head here, until he had knots comin' on me big as your fist. And he broke my collarbone. Finally of my boot came off, or he'd dragged me around until he kicked my head off, I guess.

The accident of flailing along the earth with a horse's rear hooves thunking your skull was one thing. Courting such breakage was another, and it was in my father not to miss that chance, either. Most summer Sundays, the best riders in the county would gather at a ranch and try to ride every bucking horse they had been able to round up out of the hills. It was the kind of hellbending contest young Charlie Doig was good at, and he passed up few opportunities to show it.
The hill broncs which would be hazed in somewhere for this weekend rodeoing—the Doig homestead had a big stout notched-pole corral which was just right—were not scruffy little mustangs. They were half again bigger and a lot less rideable than that: herds grown from ranch stock turned out to pasture, with all the heft of workhorses added to their new wildness.

Eventually there came to be a couple of thousand such renegades roaming the grassed hills around the valley. Some would weigh more than three-quarters of a ton and measure almost as tall at the shoulder as the height of a big man. A rider would come away from a summer of those massive hill horses with one experience or another shaken into his bones and brain, and Dad's turn came up when the last two horses were whooped into the Doig corral at dusk one of those Sunday afternoons.

Five or six of us were ridin', all had our girls there and were showin' off, y'know. Neither of the last horses looked worth the trouble of climbing on—a huge club-hoofed bay, and a homely low-slung black gelding. Someone yelled out, That black one looks like a damned milk cow! Dad called across the corral to the other rider, Which one of those do you want, Frankie, the big one or that black thing?

The gray was saddled, and thudded around the corral harmlessly on its club hooves. Then the corral crew roped the black for Dad and began to discover this one was several times more horse than it looked. Oh, he was a bearcat. I'm here to tell you.

The gelding was so feisty they had to flop him flat and hold him down to clinch the saddle on. Dad swung into the stirrups while the horse was uncoiling up out of the
Children Are Not To
dirt. When the bronc had all four feet under him, he
s unfished for the corral poles and went into them as if he
were plunging off a cliff. Horse and rider crashed back off
the timbers, then the bronc staggered away into another quick
running start and slammed the fence again. And then again.

He like to beat my brains out on that corral fence. Then, he threw me
off over his head upside down and slammed me against that log fence again, and
still he kept a-buckin'. I jumped up and got out of his way and tried to climb
the fence. He had made it onto the top of the fence when the battering caught
up with him. Blacking out, he pitched off the corral backwards, into the path
of the gelding as it rampaged past. The horse ran over him full length, full
speed. One hoof hit me in the ribs here, and the other hit me in the side of
the head here, and just shoved all the skin down across off the side of my
face in a bunch.

The gelding would have hollowed him out like a
trough if the corral crew hadn't managed to snake him out under
before the horse could get himself turned.
the fence. By then, someone already was sprinting for a car
for the 45-mile ride to a doctor. I was laid up six weeks that time,
before I could even get on crutches.

That was his third stalkling by death; Dad himself had invited most of
the risk that time, although in the homely black gelding it came by the
sneakest of means. But the next near-killing hit him as randomly as
a lightning bolt exploding a smg. It began with

the yip of coyote pups on a mountainside above the Basin. I was workin' for
near
Bert Plymale, and we lambed a bunch of sheep over there at the D.L. place.
Coyotes, sheep killers that they were, were hated as nothing else in that
country, especially in the lean foothill ranch country where any loss of livestock
eatin' hurt like a wound. They were getting the lambs just about as fast as we could
turn 'em out. And we could hear these coyotes in a park up on the side of
the mountain, yippin' up there early morning and evening. So I had a young
kid workin' with me, and we decided we'd go up there and find that den.
horses and rode up the slope of Wall Mountain to find the coyote den and dig out the pups.

When they reined up in a clearing in the timber where the yips were coming from, Dad stepped off his horse and walked ahead a few steps to look for the den. The boy tossed
I was carryin' the pick and the kid was carryin' the shovel—in case we found the den, we could dig it out. I'd stepped off of this bay horse, dropped the lines and walked several feet in front of him, clear away from him. That sap of a kid, he dropped that shovel right at the horse's heels. And instead of kickin' at the shovel like a normal horse would, y'know, he jumped ahead and whirled and kicked me right in the middle of the back. Drove two ribs into my lungs.

Dad hunched on the ground like a shot animal. I couldn't get any breath at all when I'd try straighten up, when I was down on all fours, I could get enough breath to get by on. The kid, he was gonna leave me there and take off to find everybody in the country to come get me with a stretcher. I said no, by God, I was gonna get out of there somehow. Spraddled on my hands and knees in a red fog of pain, he gasped out to the choreboy to lead his horse beneath a small cliff nearby. Dad crawled to the cliff, climbed off the ledge into the saddle. Then, crumpled like a dead man tied into the stirrups, he rode the endless mile and a half to the ranch. That was one long ride, I'm here to tell you.

Getting there only began a new spell of pain—the pounding car ride across rutted roads to town and the doctor. By then, Dad's breathing was so ragged and bloody that the doctor set off with him for the hospital in Bozeman. Two gasping hours more in a car. At last, by evening, he was in a hospital bed. He always healed fast, and a few weeks later, he was climbing stiffly onto a horse again.
NYC were not New York, per se, problems of Con Ed would have no final interest beyond the Hudson River, as the world’s largest private company serves an area of less than two square miles. During a Con Ed power failure, dim in less than one per cent, but New York, bleak and as it is in the 1970s, still is the nation’s financial and even social hub.

The result of its close relationship to any of New York City, Consolidated-Edison, as from some standpoint, at least, in the socioeconomic map of the United States and other parts of the world,” a Federal Power Commission study said recently, “the man in New York City may well be the most powerful in the country. He is the first man to feel the effects of economic events far beyond the confines of his own state. New York power shortage has, in the past, while as horrible as the Great Blackout has occurred, brownouts (voltage reductions) Con Ed electricity demands have outstripped supply’ are on the rise. Concern, if all goes well, should be that Luce must unsell some companies to make the future in Ed — and for New York. These problems, peculiar to the city, are beyond solution. The Hudson is a tax burden. Con

On July 21, 1970, across the fens of the East River from the executive suite, Allis groaned and stopped. Big Allis is bulging-blue bulwark of The Consolidated Edison Co. — Big Allis, a million-dollar generator, biggest in the retinue of the company. But Big Allis was dead, dead in September. With Allis gone, The Source was without reserve power as New York braced itself for the heat storms of July and August. In the executive suite chairman switched off his air-conditioning. The summer looked long and hot, long hot indeed.
He couldn't have thought, when he was being battered around from one near-death to the next, that he was heading all the while into the ranch job he would do for most of the rest of his years. But the valley, which could always be counted on to be fickle, now was going to let him find out in a hurry what he could do best. Sometime about 1925, when he was twenty-four years old, Dad said his goodbyes at the Basin homestead another time, saddled up, and rode to the far end of the Smith River Valley to ask for a job at the Dogie ranch.

More than any other ranch, the Dogie had been set up—which is to say, pieced together of bought homesteads and other small holdings—to use the valley's advantages and work around its drawbacks. Wild hay could be cut by the mile from its prime bottomland meadows; a crew of three dozen men would begin haying each mid-June and build the loaf-like stacks by the hundreds. Cattle and sheep—like many ranches of the time, the Dogie raised both—could be grazed over its tens of thousands of acres of bunchgrass slopes along and above the east fork of the Smith River, and sheltered from winter blizzards in the willow thickets along the streambed. And the trump card of it all: hard years could be evened out with the wealth of the Seattle shipping family who owned the enterprise and ran it, in a fond vague style. The Dogie gladly put Dad on its payroll, but that was the most that could be said for the job. He was made choreboy, back again at the hated round of milking cows and feeding chickens and hogs and fetching stovewood for the cook.
I May Be Wrong, but I Doubt It

people who complained to him about all those old people hanging around the lobby.

Life just happens to be different in a high-rise than, say, in a bungalow or three-flat neighborhood.

And High-Rise Man sees things—himself included—in a different way.

High-Rise Man is like his building—soaring, lean, modern, gracious, cool, handsome, push-button, filter-tipped, a symbol of today and today's young, calorie-free living.

In the morning, he can leap out of bed and stand there in his shorts, looking out of his sweeping glass window at the sun rising over Lake Michigan.

At night, with the lights dimmed, he might stand there sipping something-on-the-rocks, listening to something tasteful on his stereo, gazing down at the twinkling lights on the park strip.

But when High-Rise Man and his High-Rise Mate step out of the cab, nod to the doorman's respectful greeting and stride through their lobby, it can be jarring—shocking—to see a bunch of old people sitting around, dozing, knitting, cackling, or even, heaven forbid, coughing.

Not in their lean, young, soaring world.

Children are just as distasteful. When you see a child, you think of runny noses, scabby knees, diapers, boisterous behavior—none of which belongs in the world of muted
But he had come to the Dogie just when the owners were signing into a partnership with a sheep rancher from near Sixteenmile Creek. The "Jasper" at the front of his name long since crimped down to "Jap" by someone's hurried tongue, Jap Stewart had arrived out of Missouri some twenty years before, leaving behind the sight in one eye due to a knife fight in St. Joe saloon, but bringing just the kind of elbowing ambition to make a success in the wide-open benchlands he found several miles east of the Basin. Drinker, scrapper, sharp dealer and all the rest, Jap also was a ranchman to the bone, and he prospered in the Sixteen country as no one before or since. Now he was quilting onto the Dogie holdings his own nine thousand head of sheep and the pasture for every last woolly one of them. He also moved in to kick loose anything that didn't work, such as kick loose... This included most of the Dogie's crew.

Jap began by giving them a Missouri growling at--most of you sonsabitches I've worked here so goddamn long all you know any more is how to hide out in the goddamn brush--and ended up sacking every man on the ranch except Dad and a handful of others. While Jap's new men streamed in past the old crew on the road to town, Dad, at the age of 24, was made sheep boss, in charge of the Dogie's bands grazing across two wide ends of the county. In another six months, he was foreman of the entire ranch, with Jap Stewart looking on as manager.
What one-eyed old Jap Stewart must have seen, watching Dad as he grew up in those ranch jobs which Annie Doig's sons were always pegging away at, was that he would know how to work men. Skill with horses and cattle and sheep were one thing; Dad had those talents, but so did every tenth or twentieth young drifter who came along. The rare thing in the valley was to be able to handle men. Ranch crews were a hard commodity, a gravel mix of drifters, drinkers, gripers, not a few mental cripples, and an occasional good worker. No two crews were ever much alike, except in one thing: somebody was going to resent the work and any foreman who put him to it, and sooner or later trouble would be made. Anyone who had spent time on a ranch crew knew the stories—of a herder who sneaked the stovepipe off his own sheepwagon while camp was being moved so he would have something to be mad about and could quit, or of a tireless hay stacker who packed up and left on the first rainy day because he couldn't stand the hours of being idle. Darker stories, too, of a herding dog bashed to death with rocks in some silent coulee, a haystack ablaze in the night when there had been no lightning, a man battered in an alley after an argument with a broody crewman.

It would have been something to mutter about, then, for ranch hands who came onto the job to find this kid foreman barely five and a half feet tall parceling out orders in a soft burred voice. Plainly Dad was too short and green to handle a crew. But there was the surprising square heft across
his shoulders and down his arms—more than enough strength to be wicked in a fight, and I never saw anybody so big I couldn't take him on. But along with muscle and feistiness, Dad had a knack of handing tasks around in a crew reasonably, almost gently: Monte, if you'd ride up to

the school section and salt those cows there. Jeff, if you'd work over that fence along the creek. Tony, if you'd . . .

That soft if of his seemed to deal each man into the deciding, and it was a mark of Dad's crews that they generally went out of the bunkhouse to the school section and the creek fence and a dozen other jobs just as if the work had been their own idea all along. Oh, he could handle us 'rargutangs, all right—this from a Dogie man, a half century on—no ructions on a crew of your daddy's.

These years when my father began, ramrodding crews were amid the era when the homesteaders' valley was dimming away, and the lustrous wealth of big new ranch owners had begun to show itself. President Woodrow Wilson's son-in-law toyed with a ranch on Battle Creek for awhile. A family named Manger began to quilt together vast sprawls of grassland for its sheep. John Ringling put some of his circus fortune into buying 75,000 acres of range, erected a mammoth dairy barn near the White Sulphur stockyards, and financed the twenty-mile railroad which squibbed down the valley to connect with the main track of the Milwaukee line. John's railroad may be only twenty miles long, but it's just as wide as any man's railroad, the other Ringling brothers joshed, but John Ringling was serious as any squire about his sagebrush empire. He held to his investments
Dear Mr. Jones,

I have just returned from Louisville the morning succeeding the evening upon which I wrote

Will they ever see a part

which is the subject of my remarks.

Brother, how long will it be

before I can send you a note? However, in writing this morning to a

My dear Father and Mother,

friend of mine, I have been so much impressed with this letter, that I

Mr. Charles C. Jones, Esq. to Rev. and Mrs. C. C. Jones,

Your ever affectionate son,

John W. Jones, Sr.

I remain

to you both, Aunt Susan, Sister, Cousin Laura, Brother, and all relations and

be up at tuck at tuck, untuck, and all.

Yours ever affectionate, etc.

John W. Jones, Sr.
in the valley for several decades, and the valley people talked casually about the Ringling family, as if they were neighbors who had happened to come into a bit more flash and fortune than anyone else.

But one name was beginning to be spoken most often in the valley: Rankin. It would be spoken in contempt nearly all of my father's remaining years there, and through my own boyhood and beyond. Wellington D. Rankin was a lawyer in Helena, a courtroom caricature with flowing silver hair and an Old Testament voice. And, be it said, a pirate's shrewdness. When the Depression began to catch up with John Ringling's indulgences, Rankin was there to buy the every acre—the so-and-so got that Ringling land for a song, and did his own singing—and then further ranch after ranch in the hills hemming the Big Belts, until an ominous new style had come into the valley.

Rankin poured in cattle by the thousands—his herd eventually was said to be ten thousand head—and then skimmed every expense he could think of. His cowboys were shabby stick figures on horseback. The perpetual rumor was that most of them were out on prison parole or some other work release somehow arranged by Rankin; Old Rankin's jailbirds, the valley people called them. More forlorn even than the cowboys were the Rankin cattle, skinny creatures with the huge Double O Bar brand across their ribs like craters where all the heft had seeped from them.

These wolfish cows roved everywhere: That bastard of a Rankin always has more cattle than country....I tell you, I'm afraid of 'em. A storm'll come and here Rankin's cows'll come up the road from Rock Creek, and they reach through your fences eatin' weeds and willows, and if they break in they can eat you out in one night. Another of the rumbles against this new duke of the valley was the supposition that he was responsible for Montana's lack of a law requiring fencing along the state highways. How ever it had come to be, the legislative gap kept the valley wide open to Rankin's pillaging herds, and they grazed along the highway shoulders and regular as the dark of the moon were smashed by cars cresting the valley highway's inky little dips.

As the giant ranches took more and more of the country, then,
Be Wrong, but I Doubt It

No People Need Apply

Mike Koyka

The manager of a high-rise building on Lake Shore Drive recently sent this letter to his tenants:

"Dear Tenant:

"We have been receiving numerous complaints on the misuse of the lobbies by adults as well as children.

"We must ask, therefore, that 'Lobby Sitting' be discontinued.

"Please note under Rules and Regulations:

"Children shall not be permitted to loiter or play on the stairways, halls, porches or court areas or in public places generally used by the public or other tenants.

"The sidewalks, entryways, passageways, vestibules, halls and stairways outside of the several apartments shall not be used for any other purpose than ingress and egress to and from the respective rooms or apartments.

"We have been asked by many, why we have sofas and chairs in the lobby if we do not permit their use.

"It is the intention of the owners that seating be available for the FEW MINUTES that a guest may be waiting for a tenant, or that a tenant and guest be waiting for a taxi or driver to pick them up, and to enhance our lobby.

"We are sure you will agree that we are constantly extending efforts to maintain our lobbies and public areas in a manner that will be pleasing to you and reflect the prestige of our building. It is our sincere hope that you will co-operate with us.

The letter angered a lady who lives in the building. She said it was directed at the elderly people, who, during the great blizzard, had no place to go. So they sat in the lobby just to get out of their apartments for a few hours.

The lady sent it to me because she felt I would share her anger.

I can't get angry about the letter because I think I understand the feelings of the building manager and the peo-
men such as my father became more valuable as foremen. A few of them held the same job for decades, the seasons of haying and lambing and calving as steady and ceaseless in their lives as the phases of the moon. Dad was of the group more contentious than that. Ranches often were miserably mismanaged—few owners having the deftness it takes to graze thousands of animals across rough miles of sage country, in a chancy climate—and it was common for a foreman to give the place one last thunder-blue cussing, quit, and move on somewhere else in the valley.

Dad seared himself loose that way a number of times, even from the Dogie when the hand of ownership would get too clumsy there.

Dad's own quitting, as he told and retold them, would take on all the shape and pace of a pageant. It would begin with the rancher swaggering into the bunkhouse after breakfast to have his say about the work to be done that day. Dad would listen, never giving a sign, until the rancher had finished. Then he would casually answer, No, someone else could line out the crew on those jobs, he was through.

Puzzled, the rancher would ask what he meant.

Dad would reply that he meant he was quitting, that's what.

Unbelieving, the rancher would begin to stammer: For bejesus'sake why, what was wrong?

This was Dad's cue to tell him with all barrels blazing—that he'd never worked on a haywire outfit with such broken-down equipment, or that he'd had enough of daylight-to-dark days with no Sundays off, or that he'd never been on a place before where he'd been given so damn few men to put up the hay.
Auntie Lulule has been set by the older generation, the Saturday night pattern of getting drunk, getting a new piece of cunt, and getting real hard—carrying a knife in your pocket and ready to use it. In the hospital, the police officer—one of the morgue guards—had this scene of the intern who comes to Harlem and starts his internship around April. He's probably already tried to put intestines back in a stomach. Or somebody has his house at the wrong time and caught somebody else going out the window.
The rancher next would plead: Hell, he didn't need to quit, they'd fix it up somehow.

This was the trumping time Dad had been waiting for: No, by God, he wouldn't work on any ranch run the way this one was, not for any amount of money. Write 'er out, whatever salary he had coming; he was going to town.

That the event did not always happen in fashion did not matter; it held that shape in Dad's mind, and left him free to revamp his routine of life as promptly as he felt like it. Go to town he would, and in a day or so on to the next job as foreman—never for Rankin, I'd rather scratch with the chickens than work for that bastard—because the bedrock fact under Charlie Doig's life was that he knew nearly all that was worth knowing about ranch work in the valley. It came of an irony: the one thing that hardscrabble Basin homestead had done for Dad and his brothers was to teach them how a ranch ought to operate. From having had to take that homestead apart and put it together time and again as they tried to make it go, the Doig youngsters could not help but learn more than they could forget. Out of that way of growing up and some unhaltered ability all his own, then, this young ranchman who would become my father had a feel for the valley's seasons and each of their chores, and the crews needed to achieve them, and it made him some reputation early.
In the Midst of Plenty

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But the Rainbow never became one of its night-after-night

drinkers; he must have seen the risk clearly enough to back
off in time. Every third or fourth trip to town, he might
end up there and we would be in for a late stay, but most
saloons and all their attractions was enough for him.

of the time the routine which carried us through the other

Doig60
My father, now, at twenty-seven. Three times back from death's borderlines. A few years as foreman of the Dogie before pushing off for another of the valley's ranches, and others after that, whenever he was unfractured and in the saddle. Still putting a hand to the Basin homestead every so often with a couple of the other brothers, as if they couldn't quite let the sage hills take back that grudging patch of ranch. If he was headed nowhere in particular, at least he seemed not to mind the route. But now, as it had that way of doing, his life swerved hard. He met Berneta Ringer, my mother.

Some Saturday night in the spring of 1928, he danced with her in the community hall at the little town of Ringling, where John Ringling's branchline railroad wandered down the valley from White Sulphur Springs. Berneta was a slim high school girl, not much more than five feet tall, with a fragile porcelain look to her—pale skin set off by dark hair, a dainty way of arching her head forward a few inches as if listening to a whisper. She had a straight, careful smile, her lips just beginning to part with amusement. Her face was too round and the nose too broad to allow beauty, but a tidy prettiness was there. And she carried an admiration from anyone who knew her situation: her family, which skimped along in a life hard and poor even
gentle despite his rebuke. "You never wrote me. You're thin, Ach! Then here in the new land the same old poverty. You've gone without food. I can see it. You've changed."

"Well that don't matter," he snapped, ignoring her sympathy. "It's no excuse for your not recognizing me. Who else would call for you? Do you know anyone else in this land?"

"No," placatingly. "But I was so frightened, Albert. Listen to me. I was so bewildered, and that long waiting there in that vast room since morning. Oh, that horrible waiting! I saw them all go, one after the other. The shoemaker and his wife. The coppersmith and his children from Strij. All those on the Kaiserin Viktoria. But I—I remained. To-morrow will be Sunday. They told me no one could come to fetch me. What if they sent me back? I was frantic!"

"Are you blaming me?" His voice was dangerous.

"No! No! Of course not! Albert! I was just explaining."

"Then let me explain," he said curtly. "I did what I could. I took the day off from the shop. I called that cursed Hamburg-American Line four times. And each time they told me you weren't on board."

"They didn't have any more third-class passage, so I had to take the steerage—"

"Yes, now I know. That's all very well. That couldn't be helped. I came here anyway. The last boat. And what do you do? You refused to recognize me. You don't know me." He dropped his elbows down on the rail, averted his angry face. "That's the greeting I get."

"I'm sorry, Albert," she stroked his arm humbly. "I'm sorry."

"And as if those blue-coated mongrels in there weren't mocking me enough, you give them that brat's right age. Didn't I write you to say seventeen months because it would save the half fare! Didn't you hear me inside when I told you?"

"How could I, Albert?" she protested. "How could I? You were on the other side of that—that cage."

"Well why didn't you say seventeen months anyway? Look!" he pointed to several blue-coated officials who came hurrying out of a doorway out of the immigration quarters. "There they are." An ominous pride dragged at
for a country which had tumbleweeded so many families out of
desperate foothills ranches, had come west from Wisconsin a
decade years before, in the hope that the crisp Montana air
would ease her asthma. That dainty thrust of her head came
from breathing deep against the clutching in her lungs.

Probably Dad liked the grit Berneta showed against such
odds. More than likely Berneta was flattered by the attentions
of the clean-featured cowboy. Romance seems to have perked
fast in both of them, and a few months later, the first full
set of days they spent together brimmed with it.

It was the Fourth of July celebration in White Sulphur
Springs, and they took the town. In my mother's photo album,
tions of gladness had risen from her decks in a motley billow of sound. But now her decks were empty, quiet, spreading out under the sunlight almost as if the warm boards were relaxing from the strain and the pressure of the myriads of feet. All those steerage passengers of the ships that had docked that day who were permitted to enter had already entered—except two, a woman and a young child she carried in her arms. They had just come aboard escorted by a man.

About the appearance of these late comers there was very little that was unusual. The man had evidently spent some time in America and was now bringing his wife and child over from the other side. It might have been thought that he had spent most of his time in lower New York, for he paid only the scantiest attention to the Statue of Liberty or to the city rising from the water or to the bridges spanning the East River—or perhaps he was merely too agitated to waste much time on these wonders. His clothes were the ordinary clothes the ordinary New Yorker wore in that period—sober and dull. A black derby accentuated the sharpness and sedentary pallor of his face; a jacket, loose on his tall spare frame, buttoned up in a V close to the throat; and above the V a tightly-knotted black tie was mounted in the groove of a high starched collar. As for his wife, one guessed that she was a European more by the timid wondering look in her eyes as she gazed from her husband to the harbor, than by her clothes. For her clothes were American—a black skirt, a white shirt-waist and a black jacket. Obviously her husband had either taken the precaution of sending them to her while she was still in Europe or had brought them with him to Ellis Island where she had slipped them on before she left.

Only the small child in her arms wore a distinctly foreign costume, an impression one got chiefly from the odd, outlandish, blue straw hat oh his head with its polka dot ribbons of the same color dangling over each shoulder. Except for this hat, had the three newcomers been in a crowd, no one probably, could have singled out the woman and child as newly arrived immigrants. They carried no sheets tied up in huge bundles, no bulky wicker baskets, no prized feather beds, no boxes of delicacies, sausages, virgin-olive oils, rare cheeses; the large black satchel beside them was their only luggage. But despite this, despite their even less than commonplace appearance, the two overalled men, sprawled out and smoking cigarettes in the stern, eyed them curiously. And the old peddler woman, sitting with basket of oranges on knee, continually squinted her weak eyes in their direction.

The truth was there was something quite untypical about their behavior. The old peddler woman on the bench and the overalled men in the stern had seen enough husbands meeting their wives and children after a long absence to know how such people ought to behave. The most volatile races, such as the Italians, often danced for joy, whirled each other around, pirouetted in an ecstasy; Swedes sometimes just looked at each other, breathing through open mouths like a panting dog; Jews wept, jabbeted, almost put each other’s eyes out with the recklessness of their darting gestures; Poles roared and gripped each other at arm’s length as though they meant to tear a handful of flesh; and after one pecking kiss, the English might be seen gravitating toward, but never achieving an embrace. But these two stood silent, apart; the man staring with aloof, offended eyes grimly down at the water—or if he turned his face toward his wife at all, it was only to glare in harsh contempt at the blue straw hat worn by the child in her arms, and then his hostile eyes would sweep about the deck to see if anyone else were observing them. And his wife beside him regarding him uneasily, appealingly. And the child against her breast looking from one to the other with watchful, frightened eyes. Altogether it was a very curious meeting.

They had been standing in this strange and silent manner for several minutes, when the woman, as if driven by the strain into action, tried to smile, and touching her husband’s arm said timidly, “And this is the Golden Land.” She spoke in Yiddish.

The man took a breath as if taking courage, and tremulously, “I’m sorry, Albert, I was so stupid.” She paused waiting for some flicker of unbending, some word, which never came. “But you look so lean—Albert, so haggard. And your mustache—you’ve shaved.”

His brusque glance stabbed and withdrew. “Even so.”

“You must have suffered in this land.” She continued
that holiday's snapshots show up in a happy flurry; every scene has been braided to its moment by her looping writing. **Ready for the Big Day:** Dad and his brother Angus have doffed their black ten-gallon hats for the camera, grins in place under their slicked hair, and bandannas fluttering at their necks like flags of a new country. **The Wildest Bunch in W.S.S.---** seven of them from Ringling and the Basin are ganged along the side of a car, handrolled cigarettes angling out of the men's mouths, my mother and her cousin small prim fluffs in the dark cloudbank of cowboy hats. Angus, in showy riveted chaps, slips an arm around the cousin. Dad looks squarely as ever into the camera from where he has tucked down on the running board; the bridle dangling over his crossed arms must mean he is about to bronc-ride. My mother stands as close beside him as she can, tiny and very girlish in a flapper's dress. She is a few months past her fifteenth birthday.

Then one pose which didn't need her words: the two Doig brothers in the rodeo corral, the pair of them straddled onto Angus's star-faced roping horse. Angus sits the saddle deep and solid, the loose ready loops of his lariat held by a pommel strap. Dad straddles snug behind him, and as they both turn toward my mother's camera, all the lines of their bodies repeat one another in such closeness--down the two of them, the same crimped curves of hat, nip of sleeve garter, sweep of chaps, pointed lines of boot.
It is a picture which has caught, in this middle of a moment, how young they were, and how good at what they could do, and how ready they were to prove it. All this which paraded through those few quick days of celebration told my mother what she wanted to know about Charlie Doig. There is another photo taken soon afterward, in which my father grins cockily, hands palmed into hip pockets, dressy new chaps sweeping back from his legs as if he were flying. On this one is written: My Cowboy.

Yet marrying didn't develop. Berneta was too young, and her mother had doubts about cowboys. The courtship settled down to a slog. Dad would come horseback twenty miles along a rim of the valley and ease up to a ramshackle ranch house. Inside, with the three younger children looking on gap-mouthed, the mother telling him with cold eyes all the doubts there ever were about footloose cowpokes, and the talky father who could gabble by the hour, he did whatever wooing he could.

Plainly, in those days he had wells of determination deeper than any left in him when the two of us came back into the valley together all that time later. He needed them, because this slow courtship went on for six years. At last, just before when my mother turned 21 years of age in 1934, they married.

From then, their story tells itself in a rush, just as Berneta Doig's life was hurrying to an end. Their first summers
of marriage were the quiet, wandering ones they spent herding sheep in the mountains. Other seasons, Dad hired on and moved on as he had always done. Old age and the Depression were dislodging his mother from the Basin homestead she had come to so doubtfully forty years before. The next years brought Annie Doig’s death, and the emptying of the Basin of its very last diehard settlers, the bowl of immigrants’ dreams now become the fenced pastures of a cattle company. Brought, too, another of the licks of death: Dad’s brother Jim, his closest in age, was thrown from a saddle horse and killed. The sale of the Basin homestead for a few dollars an acre closed the circle back to the landlessness the Doigs started off with. By then, Dad had found his way around that lack of footing. Notching up from the jobs as foreman, how he ran other men’s ranches on shares, all the responsibilities and decisions his, and the profits divided between him and the owner.

The South long and long has had its word for this system: sharecropping. Instead, Our West was edgier about that, and simply called it working on shares. But landless either way, the notion was that the landless man did the labor for the landed, said his prayers and prayed that the weather or market prices wouldn’t nullify his effort. For my father, going on shares was both an opportunity and an exasperation. He knew the work of raising livestock, and could do as much of it as any man in the valley. But even if he sweated for some shares of profit—and a number of times, he did—there was little bidding he could do for ranchland wanted by any of valley’s big ownerships. And I decided I’d be damned if I’d scratch along on a dab of a place like we did back there in the Basin.

By the time I was born in 1939, Dad had settled into managing, on shares, a cattle ranch owned by Jap Stewart’s brother, beneath the south slope of Grassy Mountain. The years there made steady money, but my mother’s asthma was clenching worse and worse. The final winter of World War Two, the three of us went to Arizona to try the climate for her there. Dad went to work in an aircraft factory, and almost at once was made a shift foreman. It may have been that my parents would have chosen Arizona for good, once the
New York is not, on the whole, the best place to enjoy the downright miraculous nature of the planet. There are, I do not doubt, many remarkable stories to be heard there and many strange sights to be seen, but to grasp a marvel fully it must be savored from all aspects. This cannot be done while one is being jostled and hustled along a crowded street. Nevertheless, in any city there are true wildernesses where a man can be alone. It can happen in a hotel room, or on the high roofs at dawn.

One night on the twentieth floor of a midtown hotel I awoke in the dark and grew restless. On an impulse I climbed upon the broad old-fashioned window sill, opened the curtains and peered out. It was the hour just before dawn, the hour when men seek in their dreams...
war was over and they could have had some time to talk themselves into a new direction of life. But they had arranged to run sheep on shares the next summer, and to give themselves one more season of the mountains. And so we came back to Montana and rode the high trail into the Bridger Range, one to her last hard breaths ever and the other two of us to the bruised time after her death.

This journey of life, then, my father had come by the autumn of 1945, when he and I began to blink awake to find ourselves with the stunted ranch he had managed to rent, and with my niche as the boy he now had to raise alone. It seems to me now that the ranch, even though it was our livelihood, counted for less in this time. A few thousand acres hugging onto the Smith River just in the saddle, through sage foothills into the southern place edge of the valley, had more to offer me than it did a man trying to make a profit from it. Its sheer gulches and slab-rocked slopes pulled me off into more pretend games alone than ever, more kchews of rock bullets flung zinging off boulders, more dream-times as I wandered and poked and hid among the stone silences. For Dad, the reaches of rock can only have been one more obstacle which cattle and sheep had to be grazed around, and my wandering games the unneeded reminder that he had a peculiar small person on his hands. It may have been that he thought back to what his own boyhood had been like after his father died, how quickly he had grown up from the push of having to help the family struggle through. It may have been only habit, out of his years of drawing the fullest from those reluctant crews. For whatever quarter it came, Dad took a decision about me. I was fit for anything he himself was the miniature of his boyhood would be the miniature of how he himself lived. The policy would cord us together.
to wander. The vagaries of the night, however; it is thus we torture

to in the night sky. Men, troubled

they build, may toss in their sleep

or lie awake while the meteors

head. But nowhere in all space or

time will there be men to share our

be wisdom; there may be power;

sence great instruments, handled by

organs, may stare vainly at our

back, their owners yearning as we

in the nature of life and in the

on we have had our answer. Of

beyond, there will be none forever.

THE JUDGMENT
OF THE BIRDS
Loren Eiseley

It is a commonplace of all religious thought, even the
most primitive, that the man seeking visions and insight
must go apart from his fellows and live for a time in the
wilderness. If he is of the proper sort, he will return
with a message. It may not be a message from the god
he set out to seek, but even if he has failed in that par-
ticular, he will have had a vision or seen a marvel, and
these are always worth listening to and thinking about.

The world, I have come to believe, is a very queer
place, but we have been part of this queerness for so
long that we tend to take it for granted. We rush to
That policy of his... 

That policy of his corded us together, twined us in the hours of riding to look over the livestock, the mending of barbed-wire fences, all the prodding tasks of the ranch. But more than that, Dad's notion that I was fit for anything he himself might do carried me, in this time when I was a six-seven-eight-year-old, on a journey which stands in my memory as dappled and bold as the stories I heard of in his own youth. For after our early months on the ranch, Dad had mended himself enough to enter the life of the valley again in full—and in the valley's terms, and his, this meant nights in White Sulphur Springs and its nine saloons.

Dad was not what the valley called a genuine drinking man. Although he could tip down a glass of beer willingly enough, alcohol stood a distant second to the company he found along the barstools. The pattern is gone now, even from White Sulphur Springs, but in its time it was as ordered and enlivening as a regimental trooping of the colors. I come to it yet, even as Dad with me at his waist did, a night or two a week and Saturday nights without miss, as a traveler into a street lit with festival.

The Stockman Bar started us for the night. Just walking through its door stepped you up onto a different deck of life. Earlier the lanky old building had been the town's movie house, and it stretched so far back from the sidewalk that its rear corners began to sidle up the hill behind Main Street. The builder could have scooped out a bit more at the back so the floor would have come out level with Main Street at the front. Instead, he saved on shovels by carpentering from back to front much the way things were, and when the floorboards came out at the street about the height of a man's waist, a little ramp was angled up through them from the doorway.
III / Seven Places of the Mind

In "out Tarzana way" called to protest.
no called earlier must have been thinking in the Gray Flannel Suit or some other
Helen's one of the few authors try-
really going on. Hefner's another, and
just working in, uh, another area."

Testifying that he "personally" had
snakes in the Delta-Mendota Canal,
the Helen Gurley Brown question.
the beeper to call things pornographic
he complained, pronouncing it porn-
get the book. Give it a chance." The
killed back to agree that she would get
'll burn it," she added.
laughed the disc jockey good-naturedly.
urned witches," she hissed.

On a Sunday afternoon and 105° and
frog that the dusty palm trees loom up
other attractive mystery. I have been
ers with the baby and I get in the car
cket on the corner of Sunset and Fuller
ing suit. That is not a very good
market but neither is it, at Ralph's on
Fuller, an unusual costume. None-
woman in a cotton muumuu jams her cart into
unter. "What a thing to wear to the

market," she says in a loud but strangled voice. Everyone
looks the other way and I study a plastic package of rib lamb
chops and she repeats it. She follows me all over the store, to
the Junior Foods, to the Dairy Products, to the Mexican Deli-
cacies, jamming my cart whenever she can. Her husband
plucks at her sleeve. As I leave the check-out counter she
raises her voice one last time: "What a thing to wear to
Ralph's," she says.

4

A party at someone's house in Beverly Hills: a pink tent,
two orchestras, a couple of French Communist directors in
Carolin evening jackets, chili and hamburgers from Chasen's.
The wife of an English actor sits at a table alone; she visits
California rarely although her husband works here a good
deal. An American who knows her slightly comes over to the
table.

"Marvelous to see you here," he says.
"Is it," she says.
"How long have you been here?"
"Too long."
She takes a fresh drink from a passing waiter and smiles
at her husband, who is dancing.
The American tries again. He mentions her husband.
"I hear he's marvelous in this picture."
She looks at the American for the first time. When she
finally speaks she enunciates every word very clearly. "He
... is ... also ... a ... fag," she says pleasantly.
came out at Main Street about the height of a man's shoulder, a ramp was angled up through them from the doorway.

It made a fine effect, the customers all at a purposeful tilt as they came climbing toward the long span of bar. Then, sitting up on one of the Stockman's three-foot stools, you could glance out and down through the street window at passers-by going along below your knees. In early evening, it was a chance to look out at the world as unseen as if you were hidden away on a roof, and Dad and I would settle in to watch the town's night begin to take shape.

The Stockman had other likable lines besides its lofty floor. From end to end, the wall behind the bar was almost held in regiments by a great dark-wooded breakfront. all mirror and whiskey bottles, Glass and liquor and liquor and glass reflected each other until my eyes couldn't take in the bounce of patterns. The label print and emblems would have added up to a book, and the ranks of bottles with their mirror images shouldering behind them seemed to crowd out toward us as we sat at the bar. But in gaps along the bottom shelf, saved for the clean glasses which sat mouth-down on white towels, were the curiosities I would pick out to look at long and often--the tiny cellophane packs of white salted nuts or smoked meat strips. Once every few weeks, someone might buy a packet and share it along the bar. Every time, the white nuts tasted as chalky as they looked, and the smoked meat let loose a seasoning which made us work each piece around in our mouths as if our tongues were gradually catching fire.
These samples would disgust us all for awhile, but eventually I would forget just what the tastes had been, and would start staring at the packets all over again and wondering what the snow-colored nuts or the blades of meat must be like.

Untasty as it was, the cellophane food was the harmless choice I could focus on back of the bar. What I would look at with a peeper's stealth a hundred times an evening was the nakedness of the calendar lady.

You could depend on it year after year: some passing salesman from a brewery would provide the saloon with a long calendar to put up next to the cash register, and on the calendar just above the brewery's name would be a naked lady with breasts coming out like footballs. The style then was to photograph the calendar lady under a bluish-purple light. The play of this cold tint onto her breasts shaded the nipples down to dark pointed circles like the ends of ripe plums, and tended to make a brunette—as the calendar ladies generally seemed to be—look as if she were only waiting for the shadows to deepen one more notch before lunging points-first right at you.

The one thing I knew about women was that I wasn't supposed to be seeing them in this condition. I had to resort to big casual sweeps of looking: start my eyes at a high innocent corner of the whiskey shelves, work like an inventory-taker along the bottle labels until the neighborhood of the cash register, loiter around the cellophane snacks
while trying to sense out of the corners of my eyes whether anyone was watching my peeping. Then straight and fast as I could, the peek right onto the glorious purplish-blue breasts. Hard-earned gazes, every one, but I was willing to work at it.

The Stockman had one more night-in, night-out attraction. Against the wall opposite the bar, a smeary rainbow of colors glowed out of the jukebox. Each shade slid in behind the fluted glass front as you watched, maybe a dim red followed by a tired green, a mild orange forever chased by a bruise-like purple which was likely to remind a person of the calendar lady again.

This slow spin of colors seemed to be the chief job of the jukebox, because it rarely put out a song. Music from it meant either there were strangers in the saloon, or one of Dad's friends had pressed a dime into my hand and steered me off to play a tune while he said something I shouldn't hear. Months on end, I spent each bonus dime on Good Night, Irene. The record would slide out of hiding and flip into place, I would press my nose against the jukebox glass to see the needle jab down, and then I would feel the sound strum out: Sometimes I live in the countreeee, sometimes I live in townnnn . . . A lot of times, men would turn sideways along the bar to listen as the sad chorus went on. Sometimes I take a great notionnnn, to jump into the river and drownnnnn . . . .
With its movie house length which made the trip back to the toilet a hazard for a drinker too full of beer—the Stockman at dusk would be as open and uncrowded as a sleepy depot. Like a depot, it had someone veteran and capable in charge when the clientele did start showing up. Always, Pete McCabe would be waiting, watching. His soft gray shirt and the long oval of his face seemed fixed behind the spigot handles which thumbed up at the center of the long bar. A dozen barrels of beer a week pulsed out of the spigots under his steady pull, and never a glass of it came along the bar without a good word from Pete McCabe. There are listening bartenders, who are the storied ones, and there are talky bartenders, trying to jaw away the everlasting sameness of their hours. Pete was better than either—a bartender who knew how to visit with his customers.

When the two of us straddled onto stools across the slick bar wood from him, Pete would push a schooner of beer in front of Dad, listen close as a minister to whatever he had on his mind, and in turn began quietly telling Dad who had come into town that day and what price they were getting for their lambs or wool or calves and how far along they were with the haying.

and on into bigger currencies: Hear they had a little flabby down the the street last night. Couple of fellows squared off and pushed each other around a little. I just don't care too much for that fightin', Charlie. I don't let it get 'pin' in here, just have to slap 'em a little before they start in on it...Hear a lot about turnin' this into a big gamblin' state. I don't want to see that. It's just a sharpshooter's game, that gamblin'; you'll see the crossreaders comin' in here like they were flies after a bunch of dead guts...Government trapper was through, said they got an early snow down in that Sixteen country. About six inches of wet, heavy as bread dough...
little while was theirs. Or perhaps I had only dreamed about man in this city of wings— which he could surely never have built. Perhaps I, myself, was one of these birds dreaming unpleasantly a moment of old dangers far below as I teetered on a window ledge.

Around and around went the wings. It needed only a little courage, only a little shove from the window ledge to enter that city of light. The muscles of my hands were already making little premonitory lunges. I wanted to enter that city and go away over the roofs in the first dawn. I wanted to enter it so badly that