

Pete's rich ration of talk wasn't done for the business of it. In White Sulphur Springs there was ~~plenty of~~ ^{steady} thirsty commerce no matter how a bartender behaved. Pete simply had made it a hobby to size up people, and to work out a routine of friendship with ~~those~~ ^{anybody} deserving. He had a tribute for the few best men he knew. Glancing off into the glass hodgepodge behind the bar, Pete would say slowly: He's a nice fellow. Slow nod, and slower again: A real nice fellow. ^{When that was said,} ~~And~~ you knew the fellow must be a prince of the world.

And plainly enough, Pete deemed this wry-smiling father at my side a real nice fellow.

Only now do I understand how starved my father was for that ~~diet of~~ listening and gossip from Pete McCabe. Nowhere else, never in the silences of the life we led most of the time on the ranch, could he hear the valley news which touched our own situation, and in a tone of voice which counted him special. Nowhere else, either, did Dad's past as a ranchman glow alive as it did in the Stockman. Just then in its

history, White Sulphur was seeing the last of a generation of aging shearers and ^{cowboys and other,} ~~ranch hands~~. Several of them, I remember, had nicknames of a style which would pass when they did: Diamond Tony, who had a baffling Middle European name and an odd, chomping accent to go with it; Mulligan John, called so for the meal which had become a habit with him in

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ing a Santa Ana is to get very close to what it is about the place. The longest single Santa Ana period in recent years was in 1957, and it lasted not the usual three or four days but fourteen days, from November 21 until December 4. On the first day 25,000 acres of the San Gabriel Mountains were burning, with gusts reaching 100 miles an hour. In town, the wind reached Force 12, or hurricane force, on the Beaufort Scale; oil derricks were toppled and people ordered off the downtown streets to avoid injury from flying objects. On

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I / Seven Places of the Mind

in the night troubled not only by the
he olive trees but by the eerie absence
urreal. The sky had a yellow cast, the
called "earthquake weather." My only
me out of her house for days, and
night, and her husband roamed the
One day he would tell me that he had

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goes up during the *foehn*, and in the courts of some Swiss
cantons the wind is considered a mitigating circumstance for
crime. Surgeons are said to watch the wind, because blood
does not clot normally during a *foehn*. A few years ago an
Israeli physicist discovered that not only during such winds,
but for the ten or twelve hours which precede them, the air
carries an unusually high ratio of positive to negative ions.

of sheep camps;
 the aloneness, George Washington Hopkins, the little Missourian who insisted he was from Texas, and insisted too on being called ~~just~~ simply Hoppy; a dressy little foreigner who had been dubbed Bowtie Frenchy; other immigrant herders who rated only ~~the~~ Swede, ~~the~~ Bohunk, Dutchy; towering Long John and silent Deaf John. Maybe

half a hundred of these men, gray and gimpy and familyless, making their rounds downtown, coming out for a few hours to escape living with themselves. Any time after dusk, you ^{began to find} found them in the saloons in pairs or threes, sitting hunched toward one another, nodding their heads wise as parsons as they reheard one another's stories, remembering them before they were spoken.

no # Just waitin' for the marble farm, Pete McCabe said of them with sorrow, for he enjoyed the old gaffers and would set them up a free beer now and again, you know they'd like to ~~have~~ have one and don't have the money for it and I never lost anything doing it for 'em. Dad had worked with most of these men, on the Dogie or elsewhere, and their company seemed to warm him from the cold agony he had been through.

Other valuable friends could be met in the Stockman. The two I remember ^{above the rest} ~~best~~ were as alike and different as salt and sugar. Lloyd Robinson was the unsweetened one. Some time before, he had pulled out of his saloon partnership with Pete McCabe, but he still strolled in at least once a day like a landlord who couldn't get out of the habit of counting the lightbulbs. Lloyd was a non-drinker, or at least a seldom-drinker. He came by the saloon ^{just} to give his tongue some exercise. His wolfish style of teasing kept me wary, but also taught me how to put in sharp licks of my own. Usually a mock uproar broke out between us. When Lloyd glared down the slope of his belly at me and rumbled that if he had been unlucky enough to have Scotch blood in him he'd have cut his throat open to let it out, it was my cue to chirp back

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ailroad ties, pale appliqued muslin cur-

AMERICAN EVES IN AMERICAN EDENS

dishes and two gentlemen who muffle[d] themselves up in the stormy and freezing weather, and work[ed] hard in the unaccustomed business of hanging out clothes, to save women" as an act "more chivalrous than Raleigh's throwing his cloak in front of Elizabeth."

All in all, the Brook Farmers seem to have seen their community as a veritable Eden, "a true life," as Elizabeth Peabody wrote, "which aims beyond the highest star, [yet] is redolent of the healthy earth."

Bronson Alcott went further than his colleagues at Brook Farm as regards the relationship of the sexes. He considered women to be spiritually superior to men. Sex was unimportant to women, he believed, and therefore they lived on a plane of existence close to the gods. [That Alcott sounds more like Ann Lee than like Emerson is not so surprising as one would think, for the believed Mother Ann

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that he might as well, because a Missourian like him was nothing but a Scotchman with his brains kicked out anyhow. He would glower harder and I would try to squint back through giggles, until our truce came with Lloyd's grump that he might as well buy me a soda pop as argue with a redheaded Scotchman.

~~Nels Nelson~~
~~Carl Christiansen~~ had ^a spread of belly to challenge Lloyd's, but the disposition of a kitten. ^{Nellie} ~~Christy~~ drove the grader, the huge bladed machine which scraped down the ruts or cleared the snow from the county's hundreds of miles of dirt roads. He handled machinery with the touch my father had for livestock, and ^{it may have been} ~~maybe~~ this turn of skill they ^{recognized} ~~liked~~ in each other ^{that made} ~~did much to make~~ them friends.
 Nellie

This big open man ~~Christy~~ had almost all that a small town could offer: a job he liked and did as if born to it, ^{of shellacked logs} a pretty home, looking across the end of the valley to the Castle Mountains, a wife as handsome and spirited as the palomino horses which she pastured behind their house. He also had an almighty thirst.

It was said in admiration that ^{Nellie} ~~Christy~~ was a happy drinker. Each fresh head on a glass of beer delighted him more, until it seemed the next spigot's worth would send him delirious. He would parrot dialects, spiel jokes, greet any newcomer as if the fellow were his long-lost twin, spread every generosity he could think of into the knot of friends

around him--and of course was destroying himself. Something we all laughed about when it happened was instead the worst kind of omen. One midnight, ^{Nellie}~~Christy~~ wobbled home, lost his footing on the kitchen linoleum, and passed out where he crashed. As he went down, one forearm flopped into the slop ^{beside the sink.} bucket. He came to in the daylight to see that forearm still dangling into the curdled gray swill of greasy dishwater, potato peelings, and table scraps. A man who could wake up ^{the very evening again} to that in the morning and be back downtown ~~drinking the~~ ^{the story on himself--} ~~very evening--~~ and worse, telling about it-- was a man doomed.

Side by side with a friend splintering apart this way, I suppose my father was ^{in a mood} ~~simply accepting~~ that life is fatal to us all, one way or another. If he ever tried to warn off ^{Nellie}~~Christy~~ from the fierce drinking, I never heard it. The flow of ^{booze}~~beer~~ into his best friend or the behavior of anybody else in the Stockman, ^{Dad}~~he~~ took without a blink of judgment. I ^{cannot} ~~don't~~ know ^{whether} ~~that~~ he ever thought it out ^{entirely,} ~~this~~ ^{I believe that in him was the notion that} ~~way,~~ but anyone who began his night along the bar with us must have been tussling life in his own right, just as we were. Pete McCabe's Stockman offered a few hours of neutral ground, ^{, even wise ones,} and the wrong words might snap that truce.

Three more saloons elbowed into each other on the same block with the Stockman. Next door stood the Melody Lane, with a neon cheeriness about it which probably was supposed

to go with the name. Only about a third the size of the Stockman and with plump booths where couples might be sitting and cooing, the Melody Lane seemed always to be showing off its manners more than we liked. It was the kind of a place ^{enterprise} better suited to mixed drinks than beer, and Dad and I seldom invested much time there. But next on the block came a favorite of ours, the Maverick, hard-drinking and ^{rollicking} ~~noisy~~. ~~Always crowded, the Maverick made a good sociable stop for Dad after the first few beers at the Stockman.~~ Under ~~the~~ its low ceiling the air hazed into a murky blue, probably as much from accumulating cusswords as cigarette smoke. ~~But if you~~ Opening the door was like finding yourself in a sudden roaring fog. But if you

had lungs and ears for it, the Maverick was the ^{inevitable} ~~logical~~ place to find one old friend or another bellied up sometime during the night, and it made a good sociable stop for Dad after the ^{warmup} ~~first~~ beer at the Stockman.

For a time, the Maverick even offered gambling. Other saloons ^{might slyly slip in} ~~had~~ a poker table or two, but the Maverick set up an entire side room. If you could wedge your way in, your money might change hands ^{several} ~~lots~~ of different ways. ^{In my memory is} ~~I remember~~ ^{of} all ~~one~~ evening spent perched on a corner of the roulette table, boosted kindly by someone who noticed me teetering on tiptoe as I tried to ^{see across to} ~~watch~~ the white marble whirl ^{ing} around the wheel. Roulette impressed me. I liked the ^{practiced} ~~flip~~ of the wheel man's thumb as he sent the marble whirring around its rim of circle, the hypnotic slow fan of the wheel moving

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"what lovely things they (the 'feebler sex') may become, if they will only be good, quiet, and gentle, attend exclusively to their domestic duties, and the cultivation of religious feelings, which the other sex very kindly relinquish to them as their inheritance." The writer attacks this poetic vision of a spiritualized creature whom "no true woman could or would become" and applies the Brook Farm concept of individual uniqueness to the female sex:

All adjusting of the whole sex to a sphere is vain, for no two persons

the opposite direction, the surprise drop and glassy clatter as the marble fell onto the wheel and skittered for a slot. I probably liked to watch the stacks of silver dollars being pushed bravely onto the hunch numbers, too. It was noticeable even to me that roulette players suffered out loud, and hard, while the poker players farther back in the side room spoke only to raise, call, and ask whether everybody had ~~anteed~~ ^{put in the ante.}

You can see that the Maverick could take up all of a person's night, if you would let it. But there were six more saloons in town, and Dad liked to keep on the move.

Across a rutted alley from the Maverick stood a big square-fronted saloon which had earned a ~~bad~~ ^{hard} name even in this ~~open~~ ^{damnless} town--the Grand Central. Generally, only ~~sheepherders~~ ^{spreeing} and the most derelict of drunks drank at the Grand Central, and you could catch a case of brooding ~~just~~ ^{glumness} by being around them. It's a stiff's outfit, Pete McCabe said down his nose. The upstairs floors served as the town's flophouse. The bleary way of life there was beyond the understanding of anybody who hadn't sprawled into it, and the ragtag men of the Grand Central were known to the rest of us only by the stories which ~~came~~ ^{reeked} out of the place like the stink of vomited wine. It was told, and thoroughly believed, that one time the undertaker had been called about a body lying head down across the stairs leading up to the flop rooms. He was baffled to find the corpse wedged hard in the stairwell, stiff as a side of frozen meat and apparently dead ~~for a day or more.~~ ^{at least the past twenty-four hours.} He was

exactly right. Thinking the sprawled victim was only drunk and sleeping it off upside-down, the other inhabitants had been lurching carefully across him on the stairs for the past day and night.

Even without ~~stories~~ ^{tales} of this sort, the Grand Central made me uneasy. Almost anything else we might meet up with while I was downtown at Dad's elbow, ~~I could go along with.~~ ^{had its excitement for me.} But not the hopeless sag of those sour-smelling men. We ~~went~~ ^{deigned} into the Grand Central only when Dad had to find someone to herd sheep or do the lowest ranch chores for a few days, and that was often enough for me.

The saloons went quicker after the Grand Central, as if we were hurrying on from its sights and smells. The place on the next block, the Mint, was the first new saloon in town in years, ~~and stood out like a salesman in a white suit.~~ It took up half of a long white stucco building, side by side with the dry goods store under a single square front as if they were the facing pages of an ^{argument in an} open book. The Mint was inky inside, ~~--which must have been thought to be modern--with~~ the light for the entire saloon ^{washing} ~~coming~~ pale and thin from a few tubes of fluorescence behind the bar. The owner was a three-chinned man in a white shirt, which always looked milky-bluish as he bulled around carrying glasses in the squinty light. This was the one saloon in town besides the uppity Melody Lane where drinkers used the booths almost as much as the bar stools. Some Saturday nights the Mint would have two or three people

as we had always known it would be in the end. Los Angeles could drive the Harbor Freeway and see the city on fire, just the imagination most indelibly were the fires. For days one Locust, and at the time of the 1965 Watts riots what struck of itself: Nathanael West perceived that, in *The Day of the Imagination*. The city burning is Los Angeles's deepest image to realize how radically the Santa Ana figures in the local It is hard for people who have not lived in Los Angeles break.

people died violently, and on the third the wind began to ing eighty miles an hour. On the first day of December four fire was still out of control, and the wind in town was blown thrown from a moving car. On November 30 the San Gabriel 27 a South Gate divorcee, twenty-two, was murdered and and killed his wife, their two sons, and himself. On November a prominent Pasadena attorney, depressed about money, shot

plinking music at the back of the room, and couples would crowd into the booths to sit with their sides snuggled into one another from knee to shoulder.

The Mint made a start toward the politer behavior across on the south side of Main Street, ~~where there were~~ ^{which counted} only four saloons to the north side's five. Politest of any in town was the saloon tucked away at the rear of the big brick hotel. Always near-empty, it seemed to have given up to the pack of busy competition down the street, and simply forgotten to tell the bartender to stay home. Dad and I ~~went there~~ ^{dropped in} only when he wanted to telephone long distance to a livestock buyer in Bozeman or Great Falls. The hotel lobby had the only phone booth in town, and it did a business ^{steadier than} ~~which put the house saloon to shame.~~ ^{ever seemed to have done.}

A block or so from there ~~was~~ ^{stood} a mix of saloon and short-order cafe, as if the owner was absent-minded about just what the enterprise was supposed to be. The town long since had supposed that the size of his stomach meant he really preferred the cafe side, and so had nicknamed him Ham and Eggs. Ham and Eggs' shacky little building stood almost squarely across from the Grand Central, and seemed to have caught a pall from over there. Night in, night out, there never would be anyone on the bar side of this place except Ham and Eggs himself and a few blank-eyed old sheepherders as unmoving as doorstops, and the short-order side made your stomach somersault just to glance in through the fly-specked

window at it. Dad and I ^{generally} steered clear, as did anybody who had standards about saloons.

Close by, but a mile further up in likeableness, stood the Pioneer. Oldfangled but not coming-apart-at-the-heels like the Grand Central, earnest enough but not as hard-drinking as ~~the Stockman or~~ the Maverick, the Pioneer felt and looked most like a cowtown saloon. Its enormous dark-wood bar and breakfront had been carved and sheened like the woodwork for a cathedral, and at the back, poker tables caught the eye like pretty wheels of green velvet. A small, sad-faced bartender stood on duty at the row of beer taps. Hullo, Charlie; hullo, Red, he would murmur as we stepped in, silently pull a glass of beer for Dad, and say no more until a quiet Take it easy, Charlie; take it easy, Red, as we went out the door.

Perhaps because of the stony bartender who had nothing else in the world on his mind except what somebody happened ^{recite} to ~~speck~~ into it, the Pioneer served as the town's hiring saloon. Ranch hands looking for a job would leave word with the bartender. Knowing this, ranchers would stride in to ask about a haying hand or somebody who knew how to irrigate. The ranch hand might have his bedroll right there along the back saloon wall, and minutes later be in the rancher's pickup on his way to the new job.

The Pioneer did its businesslike chore for the valley,

and the last saloon of all, the Rainbow, did a ~~more~~ ^{darker} malicious one. The Rainbow gathered in the hardest drinkers of the valley and let them encourage one another.

The middling-sized saloon seemed innocent enough at first, ^{glimpse.} Next door was one of the town's two cafes, also named the Rainbow, and in back, ~~was~~ a large hall where dances were held every month or so. A sizeable portion of the country's social life took place inside the two Rainbows and the hall behind them. But soon enough, you noticed that the drinkers who came to the Rainbow night after night did not take their beer slowly and with plenty of talk, as most of the Stockman's regulars did. The Rainbow crowd--several of the town's professional men, some big ranchers, some of the showy younger cowboys--tossed down whiskey shots and quickly bought one another a next round.

The Rainbow was the one place ^{of this night route} which made me uneasy for Dad. Whenever I got sleepy in one of the other saloons, I would go out to our pickup, clutch the gearshift ^{up away from} into low to the edge of the seat, and ~~the~~ curl myself down, the steering wheel over me like a hollowed moon, beneath Dad's winter mackinaw. If even that didn't keep me warm or something woke me, I would blink myself up again and hunt down Dad to start asking when we were going

home. Most times his answer was, We'll go in just a minute, son and three or four of these automatic replies later, we ~~probably~~ would be on the road. But the rule didn't ^{seem to} hold at the Rainbow. Whatever he told me there about how soon we would be leaving, the drink buying would go on, and time stretched ^{longer} ~~farther~~ and ^{longer} ~~farther~~ into the night.

gratulates herself that it is man's business, not hers, to look at all. . . . Is this woman's destiny?

Accounts of how much freedom women had in community life at Brook Farm vary. In his firsthand account of the community, John Codman states that women had a great deal more freedom there than they had known in the outside world. They worked cheerfully, he says, because work was never overburdening and was a matter of choice. Emerson commented good-naturedly: "The washing days and it was ordained that the

calls that all domestic duties were generally performed by the younger females and were often monotonous, but that "a more willing set of workers could hardly be found." Ora Gannett Sedgwick, echoing Emerson, remembers "young men helping with tea

Yet not even the Rainbow became the peril to us that it could have. Dad never enlisted as one of its night-after-night drinkers; he must have seen the risk clear. Every fourth or fifth trip to town, he might ~~be~~ end up there and we would be in for a later stay, but otherwise the routine which carried us through the other saloons and their attractions was enough for him.

For me, this span of episode at my father's side carried rewards such as few other times of my life. I cannot put a calendar on this time--more than a year, less than two--but during it, I learned an emotion for the ranchmen ~~and~~ of the valley which has lasted far beyond their, and my, leaving of it. Judging it now, I believe what I felt most was gratitude--an awareness that I was being counted special by being allowed into this blazing grownup world, with its ~~shimmer~~ diamonds of mirror and incense of talk. I knew, without knowing how I knew, that there was much to live up to in this.

Past ~~Through~~ those first hard-edged months after my mother's death, ^{then,} and on into my father's wise ^{instinct} ~~notion~~ of treating me as though I already was grown and raised, my sixth-seventh-eighth years of boyhood ~~became~~ lit with the lives we found in the Stockman and the Maverick and the others. The widower ~~Charlie Dole~~ and his son had ~~started~~ begun to steady. ~~But~~ But one more time, something turned my father's life, our life. A woman stepped inside the outline where my mother had been.

America, after a brilliant career
verses went:

#1

She beat Jemima Wilkinson
Joana Southcote quite,
E'n Mother Lee was nothing to
Our little Fanny Wright.
For she had gold within her purse
And brass upon her face;
And talent indescribable
To give all thoughts new grace.
And if you want to raise the wind,
Or breed a moral storm

of the week the Los Angeles Times
ore of traffic deaths. On November 26
attorney, depressed about money, shot
ir two sons, and himself. On November
orcée, twenty-two, was murdered and
car. On November 30 the San Gabriel
ontrol, and the wind in town was blow-
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nd y were the fires. For days one
Freeway and see the city on fire, just
n it would be in the end. Los Angeles

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Sex for the Secretary creature...
tainly isn't contributing anything to the morals in this coun-
try. It's pathetic. Statistics show."

"It's *Sex and the Office*, honey," the disc jockey said.
"That's the title. By Helen Gurley Brown. Statistics show
what?"

"I haven't got them right here at my fingertips, naturally.
But they *show*."

"I'd be interested in hearing them. Be constructive, you
Night Owls."

"All right, let's take *one* statistic," the voice said, trucu-
lent now. "Maybe I haven't read the book, but what's this
business she recommends about going out with married men
for lunch?"

So it went, from midnight until 5 a.m., interrupted by
records and by occasional calls debating whether or not a
rattlesnake can swim. Misinformation about rattlesnakes is
a leitmotiv of the insomniac imagination in Los Angeles. To-

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place, Ripley explained to Emerson and Margaret Fuller, where
"we could gather and show the world how to live." Emerson enthu-
siastically endorsed it as "a substitute for our failing churches. . . .
Your community will be open all the time . . . where the tired way-
farer can come in and be soothed by the thought of a better world
when he is weary of this one." [These were the men and women who

italic ✓

The great river of my childhood flowed in the sky. Not that ~~no~~
~~other~~ threads of current ^{never took} ~~found~~ their way past my eyes. The valley's
own dab of stream forever nosed and dithered along the flanks of the
mountains, like a puppy shadowing its mother. And beyond the Big Belts
and across a second valley from ours came coiling the storied Missouri,
but so new and narrow from its headwaters that it too lacked the
proportion to touch and turn a life. But overhead: there, mountain
rim to mountain rim and stopless as the ~~seasons~~ day-night blink of
the earth's turn, ran the course of might beyond any other I ~~would~~ wanted to
imagine--the tidal force of weather shoaling in across the ranges
of blue-black peaks, in blizzard and thundersquall and chinook and
trembling heat.

The skewed rhythm of the year whirled down on the valley this way,
I remember as if watching coastal waves comb in before me. Winter,
long white winter. Then a pale quick sprig of spring. Then uneven
too-hot-too-damp-too-dry summer. Next an overnight autumn, and
suddenly the breadth of winter once more. And remember, too--such
is the eddying but detailed power of memory--precisely the crinkled
dance of air as July's sun snaked moisture up from green windrows of
hay. And the dour slapping push of a gray afternoon's wind, which I
dread to this day. And, more indelible even than the family storm
breaking under our roof at the same time, the scenes out of the relentless
ninth winter of my life, with its shadowless smothering snow across all
the hills of the Sixteen country. And, do those currents of the sky
drum on and on in me, and, and...

At the Cartwrights, I was living for the first time with other children. There were two boys and a girl, thin copies of one another. The older boy, Eric, homely and giggling and friendly as a puppy, was my age, and we slept in the same bed and snickered at each other's jokes in the dark. Dad had left me pocket money and told the Cartwrights to let me go around town as I wanted, go to a movie any time, even on a weekday night. Sometimes that winter, my few dollars of pocket money probably were more than Fred and Harriet Cartwright themselves had on hand, and my habits clearly were looser than anybody else's in the household. It could not have been easy for Harriet Cartwright to have me come blearing home in the cold dark with a headful of celluloid scenes, long after her own children were safely asleep. They weren't, of course; they were lying up there in the dark waiting to hear me retell the movie.

Worst of all, I seemed to thrive on such loose living. I never had any homework to do, while her own children stared away their evenings into schoolbooks. I could do arithmetic in my head faster than she or her husband could on paper, and the worry lines over her eyes went into new wrinkles of puzzlement when this happened.

The winter weeks went on. I learned to like to use honey for sweetening, the way the Cartwrights did; sugar was a luxury they never bought. Eric and I walked to school together through the snow, came home for snowball wars with the boys

FLIP

Let me call her Ruth here.

She came to the ranch on one of the first pale, ^{chilly,} days
~~an autumn,~~ ^{for a few months,}
~~of spring,~~ hired to cook for us ~~during calvin~~ ^{some} time, and
stayed on in our lives for almost three years. Her time
with us is a strange season all mist and dusk and half-seen
silhouettes, half-heard cries. There is nothing else
like it in the sortings of my memory. Nor is there
anything now to be learned about why it happened to be
her who became my father's second wife and my second
mother, for no trace of Ruth--reminiscence, written
line, photograph, keepsake--has survived. It is as if
my father tried to scour every sign of her from our
lives.

Doig/61

But ^{not} even scouring cannot get at the ^{deepest} farthest crevices of memory, and in them I glimpse Ruth again. I see best the eyes, large and softly brown with what seemed to be some hurt beginning to happen behind them-- the deep, trapped look of a doe the instant before she breaks for cover. The face was too oval, plain as a small white platter, but those madonna eyes graced it. Dark-haired--I think, brunette; slim but full breasted; and taller than my mother had been, nearly as tall as Dad. A voice with the grit of experience in it, and a knowing laugh twice as old as herself. # Not quite entirely pretty, this taut and guarded Ruth, but close enough to earn second looks. And the mystery in her could not be missed, the feeling that being around her somehow was like watching the roulette wheel in the Maverick make its slow, fan-like ambush on chance.

Even how Ruth came to be there, straight in our path ~~just~~ after Dad turned our lives toward the valley, seems to have no logic to it. Never before or since did I see anyone like her on a ranch. Ranch cooks ^{generally} ~~always~~ were stout spinsters or leathery widows, worn dour and curt by a life which gave them only the chore of putting meals on the table for a dozen hungry men three times a day. So alike were cooks usually that the hired men ^{seldom} ~~didn't~~ bother ^{ed} to learn their names, simply called each one Missus. But Ruth didn't fit Missus, she was Ruth to everybody. Those eyes were the kind which caught your glance on

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the streets of Great Falls or Helena, where young women went to escape to a store job and the start toward marriage and a life they hoped would be bigger than the hometown had offered--city eyes, ^{restless} ~~unrested~~ eyes. Yet here Ruth was in the valley, passing the syrup pitcher along the table, and for all anyone could tell, she seemed ready to stay until she came upon whatever she was looking for.

Her first reach had been badly out of aim--a marriage, quickly broken, to a young soldier. He was home on a furlough one time, a voice from his family tells it, and met her and married her in such short time, really they weren't even acquainted. Dad must have known about that jagged, too-quick marriage; the valley kept no such secrets. But living womanless had left us wide open for Ruth. To me, an eight-year-old, she was someone who might provide some mothering again. Not much mothering, because she kept a tight, careful mood, like a cat ghosting through new tall grass. But the purr of a soft voice, fresh cookies and fruit added to my lunchbox, even a rare open grin from her when I found an excuse to loiter in the kitchen--all were pettings I hadn't had. And for Dad, Ruth must have come as a sudden chance to block the past, a woman to put between him and the death on the summer mountain.

It happened faster than any of us could follow. This man who had spent six careful years courting my mother now abruptly married his young ranch cook.

Ruth, Dad. They were a pairing only the loins could have tugged together, and ^{as with} ~~like~~ many decisions taken between the ^{thighs} ~~legs~~, all too soon there were bitterest afterthoughts. All too soon, the drumfire of regret and retaliation echoed between them.

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Thus, the "visible head of the Church of Christ on earth" was vested in a ministry of equal numbers of men and women (generally two of each), and likewise each "family" (usually of thirty to ninety persons) had two elders, male and female, "to teach, exhort, and lead the family in spiritual concerns," as well as deacons and deaconesses "who provide for the support and convenience of the family." At the top of the spiritual pyramid, of course, was Mother Ann Lee. She was succeeded after her death by James Whittaker, Joseph Meacham, and then by another woman, Lucy Wright.

(BE) The Mormons

With their polygamous marriages, the Mormons were at the other end of the sexual spectrum from the celibate Shakers. Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1830, declared that "Monogamy exalted one woman and left others—sweet-hearts, mistresses, prostitutes, spinsters, unexalted; polygamy exalted all women equally. Polygamy made it possible for all women to be married and bear children. It also enriched and irradiated the family institution and gave new possibilities to personality development among children." He did his best to fulfill this prophecy: before he was murdered he had about twenty-five wives (accounts vary) from the ages of sixteen to fifty. His successor, Brigham Young, had twenty-seven wives, fifty-six children, and countless grandchildren.

Amazingly, many Mormon women (or at least those whose written testimony we have) did not seem to feel degraded, dominated, or subjugated by the Mormon doctrine of male supremacy, but saw in polygamy the potential elevation of their sex. "The principle of plural marriage is true," one such woman stated, "and if properly lived, would redeem woman from slavery and put her on a higher plane than she has ever occupied before. There would be no prostitution in the world, and every normal woman would have a husband and children." Another Mormon wife avowed that "a Congress composed of polygamic men who are true to their wives would confer a far higher honor upon a nation, and would perform better service to this country than a Congress composed of monogamic, unreliable husbands." (The point seems to be the overt, as opposed to the covert, unreliability of men rather than the

4

I remember that the two of them began at one another before we moved from the ranch in early 1948, only months after the wedding. The ranch itself had plenty of ways to nick away at everyone's nerves. Any sprinkle of rain or snow puttied its road into a slick gumbo; it was like living at the far end of a mile-long trough of mud, the pickup wallowing and whipping as Dad cussed his way back and forth. Yet the place also was too dry for good hay or grain, and too scabbed with rock up on the slopes where the cattle and sheep had to graze. Dad had begun to call it this-goddamn-rockpile, the surest sign that he ~~hadn't started~~ was talking himself into dropping the lease. For her part, Ruth likely was ready to leave after the first night of howling coyotes, or of a cougar edging out of the Castles to scream down a gulch. Working as a cook on the big ranches out in the open expanse of the valley was one thing, but slogging away here ~~hard~~ under the tumbled foothills was entirely another. Her mouth could fire words those soft eyes seemed to know nothing about, and the ranch primed her often. I can hear her across the years:

Charlie, I don't have to stay here, I didn't marry this hellforsaken
~~place~~ ranch...I got ~~other~~ other places I can go, don't you doubt it...
Lots of places, Charlie!...

And Dad, the jut notching out his jaw as it always did when he came ready for argument:

AMERICAN EVES IN AMERICAN EDENS

shipped separately. They were not allowed to pass one another on the stairs, or to converse with one another save in the presence of a third person older than ten years of age. They never touched one another, not even to shake hands. Women cleaned the men's rooms after the men had left them—though men emptied their own chamber pots, these being suggestive of sex. Each brother was assigned a sister to care for his clothing, tell him when he needed a new garment, and reprove him for disorderly behavior. In general, women did the cooking, washing, and ironing and, except for such light work as picking berries, did not work in the fields or shops.

The behavior and dress of the Shaker woman were rigidly prescribed. Her gown was pleated and her cap, according to one visitor, "so completely hides the hair, and so encroaches upon the face, that a stranger is at first unable to distinguish the old from the young." She was commanded to "go on the toes, left arm folded across the stomach, right hand at the side, tips of fingers touching the thumb."

Occasionally the women would visit the men. The two sexes would sit in rows opposite one another, each with a clean white handkerchief spread on his or her lap, to indulge in an hour of small talk and singing. One man recorded that the visits were dull because "There was nothing to talk about, particularly since the women had little understanding of the affairs of men."

Yet in the Shakers' communes power was vested equally in men and women, and their insistence on absolute equality between the sexes was revolutionary. Elder Frederick Evans, who had been a radical journalist before joining the Shakers, wrote:

¶ To the mind of the simple, unsophisticated Shaker it seems marvelously inconsistent . . . that more than one half the citizens should be disfranchised because they happen to be females, and compelled by the sword to obey laws they never sanctioned, and oftentimes in which they have no faith, and to submit to taxation where there has been no previous representation. . . . And when this . . . unjust and unequal administration is confirmed and carried out in the most popular religious organisations of Christendom, the Shakers think the climax of absurdity, tyranny, and oppression well-nigh attained. (u)

Damn it, woman, d'ye think we can walk away from a herd of cattle and
a band of sheep? We got to stay until we get the livestock disposed of.

You knew what you were

getting into . . . And always at the last, as he would ~~rush~~ hurl
from the house out to another of the ranch's endless chores:

Will-ye-forget-it? Just-forget-it?

But nothing was forgotten, by either of them. ^{Instead,} They both
~~had the habit of storing things~~ ^{ed matters} up against one another. The
time that you . . . I told you then . . . There ~~was a calendar~~ ^{came to be a full litany}
of combat, and either one would refer as far back as could
be remembered.

If they had fought all the time, the marriage might have
snapped apart ~~quickly~~ ^{before long} and neither would have been severely hurt.
But they bickered in quick seasons. Weeks, maybe a month,
would pass in calm. Saturday nights, we went to dances in the
little town of Ringling. Dad and Ruth whirled there by the
hour; often my Uncle Angus called the square dances, and I
~~would watch~~ ^{would watch} Dad in a circle of flying dancers while a ^{burring} voice so close
to his cried: Promenade all! Sometime after midnight, I
would stretch on a bench ^{along the dancehall wall} with a coat over me and go to sleep.
I would wake up leaning against Ruth's shoulder as the pickup
growled down the low hill to the ranch buildings. The ~~low~~

to trigger something in Dad. One evening, after he had been silent most of the day, he told me a woman would be coming into our lives again.

It was an astonishment. Ruth had come and gone without much lasting effect, except for the scalded mood Dad showed whenever he had a reason to mention her. But this time the woman was my mother's mother, and our lives were going to

more

murmurs I heard then between Dad and Ruth would go on for a day or two. But eventually, a blast of argument, then no talking, sulking. Sometimes Ruth would leave for a ~~few days~~ ^{day or two.} Sometimes Dad told her to leave, and she wouldn't. At last, one or the other would make a truce--never by apology, just some softened ^{oblique} sentence which meant that the argument could be dropped now. Until Ruth felt restless again; until Dad's ^{unease} ~~despair~~ twisted in him once more.

I watched this slow bleed of a marriage, not yet old enough to be afraid of exactly what might happen but with the feeling creeping in me that the arguments in our house meant more than I could see. ~~Joking with me as she sometimes did.~~ ~~Alone with me,~~ Ruth would grin and her face come down close to mine: If your hair gets any redder, you're gonna set the town on fire, you know that? Dad talked in his usual soft burr when I rode in the pickup with him: Son, let's go fix that fence where Rankin's cows got in. There's not enough grass on this place for our own without that honyocker's cows in here, too. Hold on, I'm gonna give her snooze to get up this sidehill . . . But when they were together, I most often heard a hard edge in what they said to each other, a careful evenness as they talked over plans to leave the ranch as soon as they could. ~~and for a while,~~ ~~calves were sold and shipped in the autumn.~~

minutes I heard then between Dad and Ruth would go on for a day or two. But eventually, a blast of argument, then no talking, snoring. Sometimes Ruth would leave for a day or two. Sometimes Dad told her to leave, and she wouldn't. At last, one or the other would make a truce--never by apology, just some softened sentence which meant that the argument could be dropped now. Until Ruth felt restless again; until Dad's twisted in him once more.

I watched this slow bleed of a marriage, not yet old enough to be afraid of exactly what might happen but with the feeling creeping in me that the arguments in our house meant more than I could see. ~~Joking with me as she sometimes did,~~ Ruth would grin and her face come down close to mine: If your hair gets any redder, you're gonna set the town on fire, you know that? Dad talked in his usual soft burr when I rode in the pickup with him: See, let's go fix that fence where Rankin's cows got in. There's not enough grass on this place for our own without that honeycreeper's cows in here, too. Hold on, I'm gonna give her a noose to get up this sidehill. . . . But when they were together, I most often heard

ber of the community. Although Owen and Fourier his joint-stock system on business principles, the home and Fourier his joint-stock system on business principles, the main idea of both was the enlargement of the home, the extension of the family from the little man-wife circle to the larger corporation.

For what was happening, I can grasp now, was the misjudgment greater by far than their decision to be married: their mutual refusal to call it off. Each had a fear blockading that logical retreat. Dad would not admit to his mistake because he wanted not to look a fool to the valley. He was entirely wrong there; the only mystification anyone seemed to have was why he kept on with a hopeless mismatch. I couldn't see that, going on with that marriage, with that little child you in the midst of it, a woman of the valley once cried to me. Ruth thought everything should come in a cloud for her. But she had hate in her, she was full of hatefulness... What was Charlie thinking of to let that go on? For her part, Ruth would not face up to another split, would not let another broken marriage point to her as an impossible wife. Since neither could see how to call a logical halt ~~to~~ to the mismarriage, it somehow was going to have to halt itself. But before it did, the pair of them ^{would make} ~~would~~ two mighty exertions to ~~make~~ stay together.

highway, which doubled briefly as the main street, a few dozen houses and buildings lined away, like a Ringling which had been ordered to close in its ranks and spruce up its sidings. The first business we came to had one sign advertising it as a gas station, and another calling it a cafe, as if the enterprise hadn't entirely been able to make up its mind and decided to tackle both jobs. While Dad and I searched out someone to put gas in the pickup, Grandma marched into the cafe side of the building and asked the woman behind the counter if she knew anyone who would board a high school boy. The woman stood in front of her and thought, until finally she said, No, nobody comes to mind. I guess most people aren't willing to take in someone they don't know like that. Grandma locked the stranger with her steadfast look: Well, how about you then?

arrival of Ruth in our lives

Perhaps because this ~~is~~ a riffle of time which everyone around me later tried to put from ~~the~~ mind, memory hovers stubbornly here; memory, or the curious nature, perhaps, that keeps asking exactly what the commotion was about. For on the edge of this fray between Dad and Ruth I begin to see myself, and here at the age of eight and nine and ten I was curiosity itself. If I inscribe myself freehand, as Dad did with ~~him~~ the unfading stories he told me of his own young years, the words ^{might} ~~would~~ be these: I was a boy I would scarcely know on the street today. Chunky, red-haired, freckled-- the plump face straight off a jar of strawberry jam. Always wearing a small cowboy hat, because I seared in the sun. Under that hat, and inside a name like no one else's. Ivan: EYE-vun, amid the Frankie-Ronny-Bobby-Jimmy- Larry-Howie trill of my schoolmates. Dad was amazed with himself when he at last discovered that he had spliced Russian onto the Scottish family name; he and my mother ^{simply} had known someone named Ivan and liked the sudden soft curl of the word--and besides wanted to show up Dad's least favorite brother, who had recently daubed 'Junior' onto a son. The name, along with the hair and freckles, gave me attention I wasn't always sure I wanted. At Dad's side in the saloons I sometimes met men who would look down at me and sing out: 'Now the heroes were plenty and well known to fame/Who fought in the ranks of the Czar/But the bravest of all was man by the name/ Of Ivan Skavinsky Skavar!' I consoled myself that it was better ^{being dubbed} than Red or Pinky, which I also heard sometimes in the saloons. And once in a great while, in his thoughtful mood as if remembering a matter far away, Dad would call me 'Skavinsky.' It made a special moment, and I prized it that way. People who remember me at this age say I was something of a ^{small} ~~little~~ sentinel:

We came up over the crest to a steel-blue army of mountains, drawn
in battalions of peaks and reefs and gorges and crags south to north
as far as could be seen. The view rocked us to a stop. The Smith
River Valley had had mountain ranges all around; this high-set horizon
twenty miles to our west thrust itself as if all those past ranges had been
tumbled together and then armored with rimrock and icefield. Across
the clear ^{gape} ~~lens~~ of distance, we could read where forests wove in under
~~upland forest~~
~~a doghouse~~

even not
in the
mountain
range

'You always were such a little sobersides.' 'You was always so damned
 bashful it was hard to get a word out of you.' All right, but how jolly
 was I supposed to be, with ^a~~one~~ mother dead and the next one in a sniping
 match with my father? I believe that much of what was taken to be my
 soberness was simply a feeling of being on guard, of carefully watching
 life flame around me. Of trying not to be surprised at whatever else might
 happen. I can tell you a time, ~~just~~ as my father storied so many of his
 into me: Dad and Ruth and I are walking toward the movie house,
^{some}~~one~~ night of truce in the family. We are at the end of the block from
 the building when I notice Kirkwood coming down the street. Kirkwood is
~~in my~~ ^{class} a school ~~class~~mate, but a forehead taller than I am, and with that
 head round as a cannonball and atop square shoulders you could lay bricks
 on. Kirkwood can never be counted on to behave the same from one minute
 to the next, and now he bears down on us, yelps 'Hullo, Ivy!' and takes
 a swipe at my hat. The worst prospect I can think of is coming true: the
 great given rule of boyhood is not to make you look silly in front of
 and Kirkwood is toe-dancing all over it. ^{Now he}~~your grownups~~, ~~Kirkwood~~ has put on a hyena grin and falls in step with
 me. He glances toward Dad and Ruth, then skips at me and knocks the hat
 from my head. 'Kirkwood-I'll-murder-you!' I rasp as lethally as I can
 and clap the hat down over my ears. It sends his delirium up another notch,
 and he skips in for another whack at the hat. Dad and Ruth no longer
 can pretend not to notice and begin to glance back at the sniggering and
 muttering behind them. Kirkwood giggles; this time when I hear him
 scuffling close, I swing around with my right arm stiff in what I now
 understand was a right jab. Kirkwood runs his round jaw into it and bounces
 flat onto the sidewalk. He wobbles up, looks at ~~me~~ me dazedly, then trots
 off in a steady howl. I hustle ~~forward~~ toward the movie house where Dad
 and Ruth are waiting and watching. Both are grinning ^{as if} like they have mouths

the cliffs and back into the plummet of canyons, we could make out the rough

^{beds} ~~spills~~ of scree beneath the ^{marching} ~~columned~~ walls of rimrock. And along the

uncountable summits, all the eighty miles of gashing skyline, ^{we could see} ~~new snow~~

~~The two of us~~ ^{was} draping down. Dad and I had lived our lifetimes beneath ~~weather-~~ weather-

making mountains, none of which had tusked up into ~~the~~ storm clouds

^{mightily as} as this Sawtooth Range of the Rockies would. Both of us knew what cold hell

might be ahead when winter ^{poured} ~~came~~ down ^{off} ~~out of~~ ^{north} ~~these~~ mountains, yet for

the moment, to have ^{come upon} ~~grandness~~ anywhere near this spavined ranch, neither of us cared.

it turned out, this north country stretched

~~Out~~ ^{Down} from the mountains as well, ~~this~~ was a land of steady expanse,

We need beliefs and principles on which to base our acts and practice. If we do not have this, we can be superficial, or a technician, or unpredictable. We will also find little personal meaning and satisfaction in what we do. However, if we have convictions and beliefs there then is a risk that we may judge others and ourselves in terms of our own attitudes. We may become ideological and believe only in the rightness of our cause and conversely, may believe that others are wrong. We may not see, or may deny, that situations have changed and could hold rigidly to behavior and procedures that are no longer appropriate and may even be contradictory to reality. It seems we must first consider concepts and beliefs for what they are. By its very definition a concept is a theoretical belief which we feel is correct and which is the basis for practice. A concept may change or develop as we gain new information or knowledge, however, beliefs are not based on knowledge. We do not always have correct knowledge. We are often not able to obtain sufficient

full of marshmallows.

But I was less sure of my feelings. It was as if I had been through a dream that I knew was going to happen. Not in every detail--who could foresee even Kirkwood gone that batty?--but in its conclusion: that from the instant Kirkwood rambled into sight, he was aimed onto my fist. It somehow seemed to me there ought to be an apprehension about such certainty, some questioning of why it had to be inexorably so. But it was a questioning I could not handle, and what I felt most was the curious intensity of having seen it all unfold, myself somehow amid the scene as it swept past me. Somehow a pair of me, the one doing and the one seeing it done.

It was exactly that twinned mix--apprehension and interestedness--that I felt ^{all during} ~~throughout~~ Ruth's startling time in our lives.

dirt. When the bronc had all four feet under him, he sunfished 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.

Dad was pounded onto the corral poles until he could get a grip to pull himself off the cyclone of horse. He had made it onto 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. The running-over fractured Dad's left collarbone and ripped most of the skin from one side of his face, and the gelding would have hollowed him out like a trough if the corral crew hadn't managed to snake him out under the fence. By then, someone already was sprinting for a car for the 45-mile ride to a doctor.

That was one stalking by death; Dad himself had invited most of the risk that time, although in the homely black gelding it came by odd means. But the next near-killing hit him as randomly as a lightning bolt exploding a snag. It began with the yip of coyote pups on a mountainside when he was home in the Basin on a visit. Coyotes, sheep killers that they were, were hated as nothing else in that country, especially on the lean foothill ranches where any loss of livestock hurt like a wound. Dad and his mother's young choreboy saddled their

Now the awaited ^{move} time, when we at last would put the ranch and its zone of combat behind us. Put them behind us, in fact, in a way as wondrous to me as it was unexpected, for Dad and Ruth faced toward White Sulphur Springs and undertook the last livelihood anyone could have predicted of either of them: they went into the cafe business.

The Grill, across the street from the Stockman, had come up for rent. It was the third and smallest eating place in a town which had not quite enough trade for two. There was the barest smidgin of reason to think of Ruth taking on such an enterprise; with her years of cooking for crews, she at least could handle a kitchen. But for Dad, the notion had all the logic of a bosun's mate stumping ashore to open up a candy shop. Yet somehow Dad

and Ruth, this pair who had never been around a town business of any sort and who already were finding out that they flinted sparks off one another all too easily--somehow they talked one another into trying to run a cafe together, and somehow they turned out to have a knack for it. ~~With her years of cooking~~

The knack, of course, was nine-tenths hard work. Those two took on that place like a house afire. ^{But} ~~and~~ when Dad sorted through his savvy, there was ^{use} ~~help~~ there, too: ~~he~~ from all the ranches behind him, he knew enough about purchasing, and better yet,

he knew the valley and its people. He put up new hours for the Grill: it would stay open until after the last saloon had closed.

of the few we have seen too modest about. It took the communes of the 1960's to remind us that this continent has a long and rich past of experimental colonies. Even yet, we too quickly shrug off such communities as crackpot or worse. Some lack of enthusiasm is explainable enough. For one thing, utopians can make hard neighbors. The loudest are outright banshees, wailing that the old society -- the society most of us live in -- is doomed, and the new shall be built atop the grave just as soon as we stumble into it. A large proportion of our utopias have been religious, often trying by good example or recruiting to enlist the rest of us -- an effort more likely to make us back off angrily. Another considerable utopian group, dating from the Shakers of distant yesterday to the hippie enclaves of the past ~~few~~ ^{several} years, has announced sex habits different from 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.

The gelding was so feisty they had to flop him flat and hold him down to cinch the saddle on. Dad swung into the stirrups while the horse was uncoiling up out of the

← its creek; off from either side of the highway, which doubled as the south. Dupuyer lay tucked along a broad band of brush which marked a briefer route than the bramble of roads we had come in by from the It did, and we drove the nine dirt miles north to Dupuyer, luckily Dad full in the face. Don't it to you? oughtn't we? Criminally, that seem to me how to do... Now she looked Well, we oughta go into what's-its-name, Dupuyer, and see what's what, we ought to do? The perpetual problem of basing me somewhere roused her. to drive every day when winter sets in this country. What do ye think

12 ✓

There at the last of the night and the first hours of morning, The Grill found its customers--truckers on their runs through the pitchy ~~night~~^{dark}, ranchers heading home from late business in Helena or Great Falls, some of the Rainbow crowd trying to sober up on black coffee and T-bone. Steaks and hashbrowns covered Ruth's stove, and Dad dealt platters of food until his arms ached. Saturday nights I was allowed to stay up as late as I wanted--on Dad's principle of fathering, that I might as well have a look at life sooner than later--and I ~~watched~~^{looked forward to} the pace of that last night of the week like a long, long parade coming past.

Just at dusk, ranch hands would begin to troop in for supper, minutes-old haircuts shining between their shirt collars and hat brims, because Well, I gotta go in and get my ears lowered was the standard excuse to come to town for a night of carousing. As the dark eased down and the ki-ys from the crowds in the Maverick and the Grand Central came oftener, the cafe would begin to receive the staggerers who had decided to forget the haircut after all and get right on with the drinking. They were a pie crowd, usually jabbing blearily at the fluffiest and most meringue-heaped possibilities in the countertop case. Sometime in mid-evening, Lloyd Robinson would arrive, suspiciously fingering down a coin for a cup of coffee and demanding to know if my freckles weren't from a cow's tail having swiped across me. Soon after him, as if the town's two prime bellies couldn't be long apart, it would be Nellie crashing in, chortling with delight and spinning a joke off the first item he spotted: That jam jar, now--did you hear about the Swede at

ordinarily true to what the human race proved capable of at the ~~concentration~~
~~camp~~ of Buchenwald and ~~Berlin~~ Auschwitz.

Fortunately, not all is terror and brooding. It is a characteristic moment in Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance when the farmer who runs the rural utopia asks which of the newcomers can go to the fair to buy pigs, and the foppish hero thinks to himself: "Pigs! Good heavens, had we come out from among the swinish multitude, for this?" Or there is the gentle utopian retaliation recorded in Kathleen Kinkade's diary of ^{her} ~~the~~ Walden Two commune: when the political activists droned on too much, the apolitical folks had nightly readings of Winnie the Pooh as a counter influence.

↑ The language of utopia, then, is more than gray social tract. People are shown in it, drugged on dreams and incredibly hard-working, passionate and sullen, brimfull of idealism and selfishly rigging power, humorless and of good cheer -- people like the rest of us.

Perhaps the greatest wonder of utopia has been that anyone is nervey or naive enough to try bringing it to life. Utopia turns into an awfully serious proposition when you choose a site and set to work on those glittering ideals. No more fancied realms beyond the sea, the staunch citizenry mastering chores and shouldering duties without a mutter of doubt. Instead, buildings must be muscled up to hold out the weather. The broad scarf of tilled ground around the settlement must be coaxed into a strong harvest year after year. As Hawthorne and countless other colonists found out, somebody has to be in charge of the pigs (and such.)

omit?
yes

the breakfast table? 'Yiminey,' he says, 'I yoost learn to call it yam
and now they tell me it's yelly.' Then if there was a dance in the hall
 behind the Rainbow, the night would crest with two tides of customers: one
 which filled the cafe as ~~it~~ soon as the dance ended, and a second made up of
 those who had gone off to drink some more until the first wave clear^ed out.
 And at last, sometime after two in the morning, would come the phone call
 from Pete McCabe thirty yards across at the Stockman: Save us three, Charlie.
 Dad would put aside a trio of T-bone steaks, and before long, Pete and his
 night's pair of bar help would be straddling in to the counter and trading
 the night's news with Dad. A few hours before Sunday dawn, the Grill would
 close and we would step out the door into the emptied town.

A quieter flow of eaters presented themselves too, I was to notice--the
 town's oldtimers, the pensioners, the sheepherders and cowpokes hanging on
 from yesteryear. As I have told,

mod The Stockman, where Pete McCabe was known to be the kind
 of a fellow who would set up a drink even when the pension
 check hadn't yet come to pay for it, drew most of these oldtimers,
 sometime in the night, sometime through the week. Now, over

across the street, Dad was good for an emergency meal as well. How many times I heard one or another of them, joking so as not to seem begging, ask ^{Dad} for a meal on account--on account, that was, of being broke. Weeks and months and even years afterward, ~~one or another of them~~ ^{him} a man might stop Dad on the street and say, Charlie, here's that Grill money I've been owing you.

Ruth, I think, never objected to those meals Dad would jot on the tab. They might fight over a spilled holder of toothpicks, but not ~~the accountants~~ ^{that long apologetic rank of 'accountants.'} Out on the valley ranches, she had seen in the crews clopping in to her supper table the men who were growing too old for the work they had done all their lives, and soon too old for anything but those lame rounds of the saloons along Main Street. Age was making that same wintry push on the one person Ruth seemed steadily to hold affection for, too. She had been raised by her grandmother--her family so poor and at war with itself it had shunted her off there--and regularly she went across the Big Belts to the next valley to see the old woman. Several times, ^{on an afternoon off from the cafe,} she took me on those visits. Creased and heavy, stiff in the knees and going blind, the grandmother was the most ancient woman I had ever seen, and her house the shadowiest and most silent. The grandmother spent her days entirely in the dim kitchen, finding her way by habit through a thickening haze of cataract webs. When we stepped in past the black kitchen stove and the drab cabinets lining the wall, the grandmother would peer toward us and then begin to talk in a resigned murmur, eyes and legs giving way above and below a body not yet quite willing to die, and Ruth, listening, would be a different person, softer, younger, seeming to feel the grandmother's aches as her own.

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AMERICAN EVES IN AMERICAN EDENS

The radical doctrine of this "Battle Axe" letter—so-called because it was published in Harrison's paper, *The Battle Axe and Weapon's of War*—became the core of the Perfectionists' way of life, first in Putney, Vermont, where in the early 1840s Noyes established his first community, and later at Oneida, New York, where they moved in 1847. There every member stood in relation to every other member as a partner in what Noyes called "complex marriage." So strongly was this community of love insisted upon that two people who seemed to be exclusively devoted to one another were chastised by group "mutual criticism" and urged to abandon their selfishness. Noyes tells of one young couple who were deeply in love and wanted to have a child, but were rebuked for their selfishness. Each was encouraged to have a child with another partner, which they did. The young man, far from showing resentment, frequently cared for his wife's child so that her courtship with another man could go on uninterrupted. Thus the Perfectionists abolished sexual inequality by getting rid of the notion of woman as property—both as the property of a single man and as the conduit for private property—but the price of their sexual and economic communism was often the denial of intimacy.

For Noyes, the variety and multiplicity of sexual expression possible for the Perfectionists outweighed the advantages of personal intimacy—perhaps because of all those young girls with whom he, as senior member of the community, shared both amative and propagative love. Or perhaps it was the spirit of the times; for in language similar to Whitman's, Noyes elevated love in complex marriage not only to a commandment—"The new commandment is that we love one another, and that not by pairs, as in the world, but *en masse*"—but to the highest of the art forms. "Indeed," he wrote in *Male Continence*, "it will rank above music, painting and

*

But whatever Ruth took from those visits ^{seemed to} might stop at our own doorsill. Time and again, she and Dad faced off, and ^{would go} then the ~~house went~~ full of silence for a day or more. Or worse, one would be silent and the other would claw on and on.

If nothing else set them at each other, there always was the ^{had kept after all when we left the ranch and which he} argument about our small herd of cattle, which Dad ^{was} pasturing now in the foothills of the Big Belts. He drove out each morning to pitch hay to the cattle, then came back to work in the cafe from mid-afternoon until closing. On weekends, I went with him to the cattle, and only then would hear ^{out of him} the few tiny snatches of music he knew, ^{his absent-minded sign of contentment.} A forkful of alfalfa to the cows, then But the squaws along the Yukon are good enough for me; a tuneless minute of whistling and looking out across the valley to the pinnacles of the Castles, then When it's springtime in the Rockies . . . Whether or not Ruth knew he was out there singing and whistling amid the cows, she did suspect that Dad had not given up ~~all~~ intentions of ranching. Dad suspected, just as rightly, that neither of them could keep up the ^{day-and-night} pace of the cafe work for long, and that our ^{income} ~~living~~ soon was going to have to come from livestock again.

In the meantime, we ^{had become} ~~were~~ town people, and I had ~~all~~ the time to myself to roam White Sulphur. Once, in one of the off-balance tributes I would get used to in the valley, someone beside Dad in a saloon caught me studying up at him and blurted: That kid is smarter than he knows what to do with. Which was right enough, and yet I did know enough to keep my eyes moving through the town, reading whatever of it showed itself. The remembrings from that have lasted as a kind of casing which ^{splines} goes into place over the earlier ^{with Dad} ~~odyssey~~ through the saloons, a second and wider circle across undefined territory, ^{and this time on my own.}

The plainest fact I found, so ^{totally} plain that it seemed to me then it could never change, was that White Sulphur ^{lived} on livestock. All the places I liked best had the sounds and smells and feels which came one way

America, with its growing industrialization and urbanization, less than Edenic and was searching for workable alternatives. Despite wishful thinking—to be found in marriage manuals, gift books, ladies' magazines, medical reports, and sermons—a sexual revolution was taking place through these decades. Compare the observations of Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic treatise, *Democracy in America* (1835), with those of James Bryce in *The American Commonwealth* (1888) half a century later. Tocqueville wrote; "In America, more than anywhere else in the world, care has been taken constantly to trace clearly distinct spheres of action for the two sexes, and both are required to keep in step, but along paths that are never the same." Women took no part in business or politics according to Tocqueville; they never managed "the external relations of the family," but were confined to "the quiet sphere of domestic duties." The duties of men were carefully separated from those of women "so that the great work of society may be better performed." Fifty-three years later Bryce could report (perhaps

In experimenting with alternative modes of living, communarians attempted to create a new role for the American woman. They released her from her "sphere" of doll, wife, and mother by

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or another from the herds and flocks out on the ~~leathered~~ slopes of ~~tan~~ grassland. ~~grass.~~ In the creamery where Dad bought milk and butter for the cafe, the air hung so heavy with the dampness of processing that it was like walking against pillows, and everyone talked loudly out of the sides of their mouths to be heard over the rumble of churns. Nearby, the grain elevator took a noise like that and tripled it, the roaring clank of conveyors carrying off wheat and barley and oats somewhere into the ~~high box of~~ tower. At the railroad shipping pens, the noises came directly from the livestock. In their best of times, Sheep go through life in a near-panic, ~~anyway,~~ and their frenzied bleating as they were wrangled up the chutes into boxcars grew to a storm of sound. ~~And~~ The cattle, ~~could be heard all over town~~ when they were pastured near the pens a day or so before shipping, could be heard all across town -- a constant choir of moaning, like wind haunting into ten thousand chimneys at once.

White Sulphur was as unlovely but interesting as the sounds of its livelihood. A teacher who had arrived just then to his first classroom job would remember: The town didn't look too perky. It had been through the Depression and a world war, and obviously nobody had built anything or painted anything or cleaned anything for twenty years. Sited where the northern edge of the valley began to rumple into low hills--by an early-day entrepreneur who dreamed of getting rich from the puddles of mineral water bubbling there, and didn't--the town somehow had stretched itself along the design of a very wide T. awkwardly

mod Main Street, the top of the T, ran east and west, with most of the town's houses banked up the low hills on either side of the business area street at its eastern end. To the west lay the sulphur slough, the railroad and shipping pens, and the creamery and grain elevator. The highway, in its zipper-straight run up the valley, snapped ~~came~~ in there like the leg of the T onto Main Street.

flourished chiefly in western New York and often spawned free-love communities. Whitney Cross asserts in *The Burned-Over District* that reformers Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Susan B. Anthony, Antoinette Brown Blackwell, the Grimké sisters, and others soon to lead the woman's rights movement served their apprenticeships as crusaders for temperance, abolition, and moral reform. All these movements were led largely by women because women had always played an important role in matters of morality and religion. On the other hand, social scientists like R. Palme Dutt argue that the struggle for the emancipation of women and the struggle for socialism are inextricably connected. The conditions of a private property society, he maintains, "of the individual household, of economic dependence, of the exploitation of the weakest, of the conflict between the social needs of motherhood and of the care of children and the individualist laws of property and the antisocial conditions of the wage system all underlie the oppression and servitude of women, and can only be overcome through social organization—through, in other words, a communist form of society."

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Much of the ^{countryside} traffic, then, was aimed to this west end of town, while all the saloons and grocery stores and cafes--and the ^{post office and the} druggist and the doctor and the two lawyers, since it took two ^{fight out} to ~~make~~ a court case--did business at the east end.

This gave White Sulphur an odd, strung-out pattern of life, as if the parts of the ^{community} town had been pinned along a clothesline. But it ^{also} meant there was an openness to the town, plenty of space ~~to roam and~~ ^{and to roam toward.} to see on to the next thing which might interest you. ^{helped with} Even the school gave off this sense of open curiosity, because it had been built down toward the base of the T where two of the town's main attractions for a ^{also} boy had ~~always~~ ended up--the county jail, and the sulphur slough.

Since the nine saloons downtown fueled a steady traffic of drunks, the jail was kept busy, and most schooldays we had a fine clear view of the ritual there. It was only a few dozen yards from the diamond where we played work-up softball to where the brick jail building ^{perched} ~~stood~~ atop a small embankment. Just in from the edge of this embankment, a wire clothesline had been looped between two fat posts. Right there, the prisoners ^{took} ~~had~~ a morning recess at the same time as ours. They were sent out to pin their bedding on the clothesline and beat some cleanliness into it--and, I suppose, to huff some of the alcohol out of themselves. Shepherders who had come in from the mountains for their annual binge, the regular winos from the Grand Central who were tossed in jail every few months to dry

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out, once in a while a skinny scuffed-up cowboy from ^{one of the} the big Rankin ranch ^{before us} --there they would be, on the embankment ^{like} like performers on a stage.

Most of the men I could recognize from my nights downtown with Dad. But one morning a single inmate came out, a slender man I didn't know but whose face I seemed to have seen before. The softball game stopped as we all puzzled at that strange familiar face. The instant before any of us figured it out, one of my classmates rushed to get his words into the air first: Hey, that's my dad! His face was the ^{replica of} same as the man's, all right, but skewed into a pleading grin, his eyes sick as he looked from one to another of us. One more time he said it-- That's my dad! --before we faced around, shame heavy in the air, toward the next batter.

At the bottom of the slope from the school grounds, as if it had seeped down from the overflow off the prisoners' bedding, lay the sulphur slough which gave White Sulphur its name. On cold days, the slough steamed and steamed, thin fog puffs wisping up from the reeds, as if this was where the entire valley breathed. Any weather, the water stewed out an odor of ^{like} rotten eggs. At the slough edge nearest the school stood a ^{tiny} tiny gazebo, a rickety scrap from the town's days when it had tried to be a resort. Either as decoration or a roof against bird droppings, the gazebo sheltered a small hot spring. A corroding cup hung on one pillar of the gazebo, and if you dared to touch

it, then you could dare the taste of the sulphur spring water.

One of my classmates, ~~Kirkwood~~ ^{--of course, Kirkwood--} downed the water as if it were ~~free~~ lemonade. His grandfather, a nasty-faced character who indeed gave every sign that he might live forever, had convinced ~~Kirkwood~~ ^{him} that the stuff was an elixir for a person's insides.

After Kirkwood had slurped down a cupful, I would reluctantly sip away. What bothered me even worse than the taste was the rancid look of the spring. ~~The~~ ^{had} Sulphur water ~~has a way of layering~~ ^{ed} its minerals into a kind of putty on stones and clay and even the underwater strands of grass, and the spring always was coated with this sickly whitish curd, as if something poisonous had just died ~~in it~~ ^{there.} And yet, nowhere else had anything like this ^{steaming} place, and so the slough and its ugly water drew us.

White Sulphur had other lures I thought must be the only ones of their kind in the ~~world~~ ^{universe}--the giant carcasses of buildings to be poked into. Late in the last century, when the town had figured it might grow, a few ~~grand~~ ^{grandiose} buildings had been put up, and they had not yet fallen down entirely. Near the sulphur slough stood the remains of the Springs Hotel, a long box of gingerbread-work and verandas which had been built for resort-goers who came to take the waters. I seem to remember that whatever was left of this building was so treacherous none of us would go out on its floor more than a few feet from the wall; you could fall through the sagging floorboards to some black awfulness below. Another awfulness clung to the Springs

Hotel's past. The story was that someone had been killed diving into its swimming pool, that White Sulphur dwindled away from being a resort after that. The public death of that diver was epitaphed in the hotel's blind gape of windows, ^{2nd} the broken spine of ridgepole. A boy stepped uneasily here, and stepped away not ^{quite} knowing what it was that brought him back and back.

Across town loomed a huger wreck, cheerier and much more inviting. This one was called the Old Auditorium--a sharp comedown from its original name, The Temple of Fun--and it had been built in the 1890's by an earnest group of local businessmen--a magazine writer who happened through town described the type as exerting every nerve to prosper-- who

totally misjudged the town's need for a structure of that size.

Probably there never had been enough people in the entire county to fill the place, even if they all had been herded in ^{at gunpoint} for culture's sake. ~~at gunpoint~~ Built of brick, with a shingled dome rising from the middle of the roof ^{like a howdah on the back of a great red elephant,} and a forest of chimneys ^{teetering} ~~unevenly~~ around the edge, the temple had never been finished by its exhausted backers, although it was complete enough to use for school recitals and graduation ceremonies by the time the 1925 earthquake shook it onto the condemned list. A ^{dozing dinosaur} ~~great red elephant~~ of a building, it had been collapsing little by little ever since the earthquake, now the remains stood over us, roofless, ghost-like, magical, as a wizard's abandoned castle.

I think it must have been not only the size and gape of the place, but the glacial spill of red brick that attracted ^{me} us. Oddly, since in the early days the town had its own brickyard and a number of substantial buildings besides the Temple of Fun had been put up, White Sulphur had come through the years into a clapboard, take-it-or-leave-it appearance which made brick-built respectability seem very rare,

of Ann Lee, representing the female Christ.
Shaker brethren and sisters lived in separate dormitory-type
rooms, ate separately, worked in different areas, and even wor-

condemning sexual pleasure as impure, or by abolishing monogamous marriage, or by doing away with private property. In the case of the Shakers, the most notable example of celibate living, the concept of a bisexual God made the equality of the sexes logical and reinforced the belief that any attempt of one sex to dominate the other could only prove disastrous. The revivalist movement

of brick, and here was the largest stack of the reddest brick ~~I~~ we could imagine. ~~We~~ ^I could prowl in--windows and doors had vanished long since--and amid the clattering emptiness walk the old stage, study out from the dilapidated walls where rooms had been. Echoes flew back to ~~us~~ ^{me} as if the auditorium had stored all the sounds from its prime years. It stood as a kind of cavern of history for a few of us, a place where you could ~~go~~ ^{off} into an expanse of both space and time.

One other large brick building graced White Sulphur, and if the old auditorium was a cave to be sought out, this next was a man-made mass you could not avoid. You came to it--the Sherman Hotel--as you walked up Main Street: three massive stories of brick and cornicework snouting out into the thoroughfare as firmly as a thumb crimping into a hose. At the very start of White Sulphur's history there had been a dispute about where Main Street ought to run. The doctor who held the land at the west end of town banked too heavily on the notion that some judicious slough drainage and timber road-bedding would draw the route along his holdings. A rival laid out a plat to the east of him, complete with a 25-foot jog away from the direction of the slough and directly ~~into~~ ^{out} into the path mapped out for Main Street. In some wink of confusion or bribery, the

the rival survey was accepted by the authorities, the ~~town~~ ^{town} grew up along the misjointed plat lines, and for the next sixty years, the big brick hotel built at the boundary of the muddle squatted halfway into Main Street. In

ing pledge, cited by Robertson:

1. That we do not belong to ourselves in any respect, but that we belong first to God, and second to Mr. Noyes as God's true representative.
2. That we have no rights or personal feelings in regard to child-bearing which shall in the least degree oppose or embarrass him in his choice of scientific combinations.
3. That we will put aside all envy, childishness, and self-seeking and rejoice with those who are chosen candidates; that we will, if necessary, become martyrs to science, and cheerfully renounce all desire to become mothers, if for any reason Mr. Noyes deem us unfit material for propagation. Above all, we offer ourselves "living sacrifices" to God and true Communism.

the hotel lobby, a wide high window had been installed near the outer edge of this prow-like jut to take advantage of the outlook. Sitting there in a ~~big~~ leather chair you could watch the cars come, straight as fence wire, until suddenly they had to angle off. Old men hobbled into the hotel to lobby-
~~the afternoon hours away~~ ~~do their surprised/~~
 sit ~~by the hour~~ and watch the cars ~~swerve around them~~. It made a pastime, and the town didn't have many.

For some reason I can't summon back, once in these years Dad and I checked into the Sherman Hotel for a night. The room was worse than we had expected, and worse even than the hotel's run-down reputation. A bare lightbulb dangled over a battered bed; I think there was not even a dresser, nightstand, or chair. The bedsprings howled with rust. Sometime in the ~~skreeking~~
~~rattletrap~~
 night, Dad said: Call this a hotel, do they? I've slept better

in wet sagebrush. And yet dismal as it was, the cumbersome hotel did some duty for the town. The teacher arriving to his job stepped from the bus there and went in to ask the clerk if there ^{were} lockers for his baggage for a day or two. Just throw it there in the corner, he was told. But I'd like to lock it away, everything I own is in there... The clerk looked at him squarely for the first time: Just throw it in the corner there, I said. When the teacher came back ~~for it~~ in a day or so, all was in the corner, untouched.

One last landmark from those years, the gray stone house called The Castle. It speared up from the top of the hill behind the Stockman, a granite presence which seemed to have ~~loomed~~
~~been~~ there before the rest of the town was ever dreamed of. Actually, a man named Sherman had built it in the early 1890's, ~~bonanza~~
~~with the money from a silver lode.~~ in the Castle Mountains. He had the granite blocks cut and sledded in by ox team from the ~~Castle Mountains~~, and from a little distance, the three-story mansion with its round tower and sharp roof peaks looked like one of the sets of fantasy pinnacles which poke up all through that range.

positions of leadership and responsibility, equal to those of men. Yet there was something childlike about her dependence upon a charismatic leader like Mother Ann, and something self-defeating about the denial of her own sexuality. Mormonism, on the other hand, which gave free rein to the polygamous sexual desires of men, could hardly be said to improve the status of women. John Humphrey Noyes, also a charismatic leader, combined Mother

So in name and material and appearance, all three, old Sherman built for himself an eerie likeness of the ~~mountains~~ ^{Castles} which had yielded up his fortune.

If the outside was a remindful whim, the inside of the Castle ~~was~~ ^{showed} Sherman's new money doing some prancing. It was said he had spared nothing in expense--woodwork crafted of hardwoods from distant countries, crystal dangles on every chandelier, a huge water tank in the attic which sluiced water down to fill the bathtubs in an instant, a furnace which burned hard hot anthracite coal shipped all the way from Pennsylvania. All this was known only by rumor as I would circle past, because Sherman had been ~~dead~~ ^{in his grave} for twenty years and the Castle ~~stood~~ ^{now} with boards across its windows and swallows' mud nests clotted onto the fancy stonework.

Those were the relic faces of White Sulphur, the ~~profiles~~ ^{fading} of what the town had set out to be. Other features ~~stayed~~ ^{presented themselves} in ~~my~~ ^{to} memory, too, off the faces of the thousand people who lived in White Sulphur then, and a second thousand dotted out on the ranches from one far end of the county to another. Of all those twenty hundred living faces, the one clearest to me ever since has been ~~a~~ ^{our} madman's.

What had torn apart Virgil's ^{Hendrik's} brain--defect of birth, some stab of illness or accident--I have never known. But he ~~was~~ ^{hung} everlastingly there at the edge of town life, ^{gaping and leering.} His parents, old and made older by the calamity which had ~~twisted~~ ^{ripped} their son's mind, would bring ~~Virgil~~ ^{Hendrik} to town with them when

formation into a supernatural being and watch her shoulders for signs of wings. Her unhappy marriage to Abraham Stanley, a blacksmith like her father, and the death of her four children probably had a great deal to do with her religious fervor and her exaltation of celibacy. Ann Lee came to view procreation with horror, and encouraged spiritual impulses over physical. In the eyes of one of her followers, she became "as free from carnal desires as a new born infant." She taught that lust in Eden was the original sin and that no soul could follow Christ while receiving "gratifications of lust."

"Whoever yields enough to the evil tempter to gratify in the least the sensual passions—either in deed, word, or thought," the Shaker creed reads, "shall confess honestly the same to his elders ere the sun of another day shall set to announce a day of condemnation and wrath against the guilty soul. These vile passions are—fleshly lusts in every form, idolatry, selfishness, envy, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, and their kindred evils."

The Shakers believed, according to their creed:

I. That God is a dual person, male and female; that Adam was a dual person, being created in God's image; and that the distinction of sex is eternal, inheres in the soul itself; and that no angels or spirits exist who are not male and female.

II. That Christ is a Spirit, and one of the highest who appeared first in the person of Jesus, representing the male, and later in the person of Mary, representing the female.

change as if a new planet had come under our feet.

Doig/101

Doig/82

Their faces were unlined, not crinkled at the corners of the eyes as Dad's and the other ranch men's were. And their voices chimed amid the burrs and twangs of everyone else downtown.

Taylor ^{Gordon} was a singer. Every so often he would perform at the high school auditorium, singing the spirituals he had heard from his mother as she worked at her wash tubs. His *tenor* voice could ripple like muscle, hold like a hawser across the ~~bass~~ notes: Swiing low, sweet chaaaaroit . . . The strong, sweet sound had carried him to New York once, where he sang ^{and} been declared by a national magazine as "the latest rival to Paul Robeson." in concert halls and on the radio. He also had gone through money as if he were tossing confetti into the streets of Harlem, and when the Depression hit, he ^{promptly} ended up back in the valley herding sheep. ^{But} He brought with him New York stories such as no one in the valley had ever heard or dreamed of. Of his writer friend Carl Van Vechten:

no 4 He was a big Dutchman, he had very buck teeth, rabbit teeth like, and weighed about two hundred pounds, let's say, and was six feet tall. But he wasn't what they called a potbellied six . . . He liked sometimes to wear a phantom red shirt, reddest red I ever saw. He wore rings, y'know, exotic rings, something that would stand out, or a bracelet, somethin' like that. Bein' a millionaire he could do those things. I remember one night we went to a party. Carl and I was dressed as in Harlem, dressed in kind of satire. Some man gave both of us sam hill. He said, 'You got somethin' to offer the world. You don't have to do anything out of the

ordinary, just be yourselves. Carl laughed and said, 'Well,
can't we have a little fun?'

Of a black man he said had a magic with words and deeds:

When everybody was broke, a lot of people would go to
Father Divine and get the best meal in the world for thirty-
five cents, see. And you'd be surprised--white, black, blue,
green and the other, they'd eat in Father Divine's because
you could get a meal you couldn't pay two dollars for downtown
for thirty-five cents, including ice cream dessert. And he
had 'em lined up, you'd thought a baseball game was goin' on.

mod Of how people in Harlem could tell where a man was from^{just}
by the scar on his face:

By the brand that was on him, y'see. They could tell
where he'd been in a fight. If you were shootin' craps, you
more or less would be bendin' down when you got cut and that
way you'd get it across the forehead here. Whereas if you
were playin' poker, you were more apt to be settin' up, then
you'd be apt to get this one here across the cheek. Then if
you were playin' what they called 'skin,' why you'd apt to
get this other. So y'see, if a fella was cut here, he was
from Geechyland, if he was cut this other way he was from
Selma, Alabama, and so on and so on.

Now, either Taylor or Bob owned the building the post
office was in, and the pair of them lived on the second floor.
Taylor came and went in a bold erect style, always with some
new plan for singing in New York again or making a fortune

from some gadget he had invented. He also took pride in being the one writing man the valley had ever had. Taylor was a talented storyteller--it was as if his voice could put a rich gloss on anything it touched--and while he ^{had been} was in New York singing at society parties, he met white ^{such as Van Vechten} writers who urged him to make a manuscript of his stories of early-day White Sulphur. They steered him to a publisher and illustrator, and shepherded his guesswork grammar into print as a memoir with the title Born to Be. The book with his name on it naturally impressed Taylor into thinking he could do another. This time there was no help, and no publisher. The failure must have worked on his mind for years; eventually he saw conspirators. The man who published his first book had become John Steinbeck's publisher as well, and for the rest of his life, Taylor told anyone who would listen that Steinbeck and the publisher had pirated his second book idea and made it into The Grapes of Wrath.

While Taylor built that phantom ^{swindle} scheme in his mind, ^{Gordon} Bob crashed back and forth between street and room, a desperate drinker even by White Sulphur standards. I would see him sometimes when I went ^{to the post office} for the mail, off somewhere in his plodding stagger. I remember that he wore suspenders, one of the few men in town who did, and the straps made a slumping X across his big back as they slid down his

shoulders. Brothers indeed, Taylor and Bob, in desperation as well as in skin, the one daydreaming of New York and second fame, the other fumbling for his next bottle of whiskey.

Rose Gordon lived apart from her brothers, in both place and behavior. She was the one in the family who had chosen to be jolly toward the white faces all around, and a time or two a week she came along Main Street, a plump dark fluff of a woman, with her constant greeting, How do you do? And how are you today? Rose had extreme faith in words and manners. The death of any old-timer would bring out her pen, and a long letter to the editor, Meagher County News extolling the departed. She was especially fond of two groups in the valley's history, the Scots who had homesteaded in the and elsewhere in the valley, Basin, and the Indians who had worn away before the tide of settlement.

Her passion for the Indians, fellow sufferers for the dusk of their skin, was understandable enough. They were the first ladies of this land, she would declare of the Indian women she had seen when she was a girl, and the saying of it announced that Rose Gordon knew ladyship from personal experience. But the transplanted Scots, my father's family and the others who had never seen black faces before and in all likelihood didn't care for them when they did? It was their talk. The lowlands burr, the throaty words which came out their mouths like low song, captivated Rose. She was as entranced with the spoken word as Taylor

was with the written, and the oration she had given when she was valedictorian of her high school class of eight students--that oration given from a rostrum in the old auditorium, a large American flag fastened square and true along the back stage wall--had been the ^{summit} peak of her life. When I had become a grown man, she astonished me once by word-for-word reciting the climax of that oration sixty years before:

I gave my address on the progress of the Negro race. I ended, I said: 'The colored soldiers have earned the highest courage, and they won unstinted praises by their bravery, loyalty and fidelity. They have indeed been baptized into full citizenship by their bloodshed in defense of their country, and they have earned the protection of that honorable emblem, the Stars and Stripes!'

While Rose held those words in her memory as if they were her only heirloom, other ^{street} voices plaided White Sulphur life ^{for me as well.} the way I remember it. The twang which gritted out of Lloyd Robison and the other Missourians: You could of talked all day long and not said that . . . Seen anything of that long-gearred geezer who was gonna break that gelding for me? . . . That Swede don't know enough to pound sand in a rat hole . . . In June, mosquitoes would come in a haze off the Smith River, and the mosquito stories would start; Bastards're so big this year they can stand flatfooted and drink out of a rainbarrel . . . saw one of 'em carry off a baby chick the other day . . . yah, I saw two of 'em pick up a lamb, one at each end . . . Any time of year,

the muttering against Rankin and his vast holdings in the valley: That goddamn Rankin's so crooked he couldn't sleep in a roundhouse . . . so tight he squeaks . . . so mean the coyotes wouldn't eat him . . . One rancher or another proud of a new woven-wire fence: Horse-high, bull-strong, and hog-tight . . . Another, defending himself against the notion that his saddle horse was the color and quality of mud: No, by God, she's more of a kind of tansy-gray, the color of ^a cat's paw . . . ~~Nellie~~ ^{Christie} in The Grill, shaking over early morning coffee: I got lit up like a church last night . . . Went home and threw my hat in the door first. It didn't come back out, so I figured I was safe . . .

And always, always, the two voices which went at each other just above my head. Ruth, where the hell you been? If you think you can just walk off and leave me with the cafe that way, you got another think coming . . . Mister, I didn't marry you to spend all my time in any damn cafe. Where I go is my business . . . The look in my direction, then: Better leave us alone, Ivan . . . But the voices would go on, through the walls, until one more silence set in between my father and my second mother.

When the will of God is done on earth, as it is in heaven, there will be no marriage. The marriage supper of the Lamb is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarreling, have no place there, for the same reason as that which forbids the guests at a Thanksgiving dinner to claim each his separate dish, and quarrel with the rest for his rights. In a holy community there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be—and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the other. . . . The guests of the marriage supper may have each his favorite dish, each a dish of his own procuring, and that without the jealousy of exclusiveness. I call a certain woman my wife—she is yours, she is Christ's, and in him she is the bride of all saints. She is dear in the hand of a stranger, and according to my promise to her I rejoice. My claim upon her cuts directly across the marriage covenant of this world, and God knows the end.

This is interesting language. Despite his stated aims—full sexual equality—what Noyes is actually arguing for here, much like Joseph Smith, is the dominance of woman not by one man but by many. A woman is a “dish” to be consumed at a “feast.” Notice the

The silences stretched tauter until a day sometime in the autumn of 1948, when The Grill and our town life came to an end. Dad and Ruth could agree on one thing: tremendous the hours of cafe work were grinding them down. They gave up the lease, and now bought a ~~few~~ thousand head of sheep and arranged to winter pasture them at a ranch on Battle Creek, in the Sixteen country, not far from the Basin where

Dad had grown up. There seemed to be no middle ground in the marriage; not having managed to make it work while under the stare of the entire town, now the two of them decided to try a winter truce out what was in the emptiest corner of the county,

just as it had been when Peter and Annie Doig came there to homestead and as it is now return now to whenever I drive its narrow red-shale road, now. Gulch country, spare, silent. Out there in the rimming hills beyond the valley, 25 35 miles from town, Dad and Ruth would have time alone to see whether their marriage ought to last. could last.

And I began what would be a theme of my life, staying in town in the living arrangement we called boarding out. It meant that someone or other, friend or relative or simply whoever looked reliable, would be paid by Dad to provide me room-and-board during the weekdays of school. It reminds me now of a long visit, the in-between feeling of having, with the freedom to wander in and out but never quite garnering any space of your own. But I had some knack then for living at the edges of other people's existences, and in this first span of boarding out--with

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liberation of women.) Susa Young Gates, one of Brigham Young's daughters, went so far as to glorify the Mormon point of view as the key to the "woman question"—in language not unlike that of the antifeminists in the profane world:

The Mormon women are working grandly at the sex problem of the

Doig/38

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.

Go to town he would, and in a day or so on to the next job, because the bedrock fact under my father's life was that Take one of those crowbats, Fred, and I'll take the other. milk cow; Dad called across the corral to the other rider, Someone yelled out, That black thing looks like a Goddamned a huge club-hoofed gray, and a homely low-slung black gelding. Neither horse looked worth the trouble of getting on-- Sunday afternoons.

whereby "the woman keeps the house and the man labors abroad separates the sexes entirely. Instead, in "vital society," men and

friends of Ruth, the Jordan family--I found a household which ~~almost~~ teemed in its comings-and-goings ^{almost} as the cafe had. We call it the short-order house around here, Helen Jordan said as deer season opened and a surge of her out-of-town relatives, armed like a guerrilla platoon, swept through. Ralph Jordan himself came and went at uneven hours of the day and night, black with coal dust and so weary he could hardly talk: he was fireman called Sagebrush Annie, on the belching old locomotive which snailed down the branch-line from

White Sulphur to the main railroad at Ringling. Ralph with a shovelful of coal perpetually in hand, Helen forever up to her wrists in bread dough or dishwater--the Jordans were an instructive couple about the labor ^{that} life could demand. And under their busy roof, I was living for the first time with other children, their two sons and a daughter. The older ~~boy~~ boy, Curtis, thin and giggly, was my age, and we slept in the same bed and snickered in the dark at each other's jokes. Boarding out at ~~Living with~~ the Jordans went smoothly enough, ^{then,} except at the end of each week when Dad was ^{to} arrive and take me to the ranch with him. Friday night after Friday night, he did not arrive.

Whatever Dad or Ruth or I had expected of this testing winter, the unlooked-for happened: the worst weather of thirty years blasted into the Sixteen country, and Dad and Ruth found themselves in contest not so much with each other now, but with the screaming white wilderness outside.

As bad winters are apt to do, this one of 1948-49 whipped in early and hard. Snow fell, drifted, crusted into gray crystal windrows, then fell and drifted and crusted gray again. Dad and his hired man pushed the sheep in from the pastures to a big shed at the ranch buildings. Nothing could root grass out of that solid snow. The county road began to block for

among perfectionists, they only look more alike, but also look younger, fresher, and more dynamic. Thus, for all his concern with sex, he at least verbally exalted the spiritual over the physical in both men and women. "We do not believe in the equality of men," he wrote in the *Handbook of the Oneida Community*, "but we do believe that every man, woman and child should be surrounded by circumstances favoring the best development of heart, mind and body, and that no one should be excluded on account of age, sex or color from any occupation for which he or she is adapted by nature or culture."

In traditional society, Noyes pointed out, the division of labor

than that: herds grown from ranch stock turned out to pasture, mustangs. They were half again bigger and a lot less rideable pole corral which was just right--were not scruffy little this weekend redoing--the Doig homestead had a big stout The hill broncs which would be hazed in somewhere for

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back from feeding the cattle. As he talked, Dad watched a large snowdrift on a sidehill near the house. Suddenly was on his feet and shouting: he shouted: It's broke! It's broke, it's broke!

At last, the winter had broken; a chinook was warming the air and melting the snowdrift even as Dad burst into the yard. The men of the Keith ranch had gone out on the haysled that morning thickly bundled against 20 degrees below zero, and now they were coming home in shirt sleeves, with their mittens off.

before where he'd been given so damn few men to put up the hay. days with no Sundays off, or that he'd never been on a place down equipment, or that he'd had enough of daylight-to-dark that he'd never worked on a haywire outfit with such broken-- This was Dad's cue to tell him with all barrels blazing--

beJesus' sake why, what was wrong?

Unbelieving, the rancher would begin to stammer: For Dad would reply that he meant he was quitting, that's what. Puzzled, the rancher would ask what he meant.

more on triumph - 7

weeks at a time. Winter was sealing the Sixteen country into long gray months of aloneness, and I was cordoned from the life of Dad and Ruth there.

At last, on the sixth Friday night, long after I had given up hope again, Dad appeared. Even then He couldn't take me to the ranch with him; ~~there~~ he had spent ten hours fighting his way through the snow, and there was the risk that the countryside would close off entirely again before he could bring me back to town Sunday night. Tell ye what we'll do, Skavinsky. Talk to that teacher of yours and see if you can work ahead in your schoolwork. If she'll let ye, I'll come in somehow next Friday and you can come spend a couple of weeks out at the ranch.

All week, ~~in my room in the mess hall~~ whenever the recess bell rang I stayed at my desk and flipped ahead in one text or another, piling up ~~pages~~ lesson sheets to hand to the bemused teacher. Before school was out on Friday, Dad came to the door of the classroom for me, cocking his grin about clacking in with snowy overshoes and a girth of sheepskin coat. The highway down the valley was bare, a black dike above the snow, as he drove the pickup to the turnoff toward Battle Creek. Then the white drifts stretched in front of us like a lake whose waves had suddenly stopped

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. Wellington D. Rankin was a lawyer in Helena, a courtroom wonder with flowing silver hair and an Old Testament voice. When he began buying ranch after ranch in the hills hemming the Big Belts, a flinty new style came into the valley.

Rankin bought cattle by the thousands--his herd eventually was said to be ten thousand head--and then skimmed on every possible expense. His cowboys were shabby stick figures on horseback. The perpetual rumor was that most of them were out on parole or work release arranged by Rankin. The Rankin cattle were more forlorn even than the cowboys, skinny creatures with the big Double O Bar brand across their ribs like craters where all the heft had seeped from them. Rankin's wolfish cows roamed everywhere; another of the rumors about the man was that he was responsible for Montana's lack of a law to require fencing along the highways. However it had come to be, the legislative gap threw the valley wide open to Rankin's herds, and they grazed along the highway and regularly were hit by cars cresting a dip in the road at night.

As these big ranches took more and more of the county,

motion to hang in billows and peaks ~~against the sky~~ where
the wind had lashed them ^{against the sky.} The very tops of fenceposts, old
gray cedar heads with rounded snow caps, showed where the
road was buried. Between the post tops, a set of ruts had
been rammed and hacked by Dad and the few other ranchers who
lived ^{in the Sixteen country.} ~~near Battle Creek.~~

Dad drove into the sea of snow with big turns of the
steering wheel, keeping the front wheels grooved in the ruts while
the rear end of the pickup ~~fittered~~ ^j jittered back and forth spinning snow
out behind us. Sometimes the pickup growled to a halt. We
would climb out and shovel away heavy chunks like pieces of an
igloo. Then Dad would back the pickup a few feet for a running
start and bash into the ruts again. Once we went over a
snowdrift on ~~the~~ twin rows of planks another of the ranchers
had laid for support, ^{a bridge in mid-sea.} Once we drove entirely over the top
of a drift without planks at all. ⁴ Where the road led up to
the little ridge above Badger Creek, we angled between cliffs
of snow higher than the pickup. Near Battle Creek, with our
headlights ^{past} ~~fingering out into the dark~~ ^{into the white blankness.} Dad swerved off the
road entirely and sent the pickup butting through the smaller
drifts in a hayfield. It had started to snow heavily, the
wind out of the Basin snaking the flurries down to sift into
the ruts. I watched the last miles ^{roll} ~~come~~ up on the tiny numbers
under the speedometer as Dad wrestled the wheel and began his
soft Scots cussing: Snow on a man, will ye? Damn-it-all-to-hell-
anyway, git back in those ruts. Damn-such-weather. Hold on, son,
there's a ditch here somewhere . . . The twenty-fifth mile,

the last, we bucked down a long slope to the ranch with the heavy wet flakes flying at us like clouds of moths. Dad roared past the lighted windows of the ranch house and spun the pickup inside the shelter of the lambing shed. Done, ~~damn ye!~~ he said out into the storm. Done, damn ye!

To my surprise, Battle Creek was not living up to ~~its name~~ ^{less edgily} and Dad and Ruth were getting along ~~better together~~ ^{cold-weather} ~~than they ever had.~~ there. It may have been that there simply was so much work to be done, feeding the sheep, carrying in firewood, melting snow for water ~~when~~ ^{because} the pump ~~froze~~ ^{had}, that they had ~~no~~ ^{little} stamina left over for argument. Or perhaps they had ~~each~~ ^{simply was} decided that the winter had to be gotten through, there ~~would be~~

no route away from one another until spring. Whatever accounted for it, I slipped into its bask and warmed for the days to come.

Each morning,

Ruth stood at the window sipping from a white mug of coffee, watching as Dad and the hired man harnessed the team to the hay sled. then, if Dad had said they needed her that day, she would ~~go out~~ ^{pull on heavy clothing and} and take the reins while the men forked hay off to the sheep. Dad helped her in the house, the two of them ^{together} working better at the meals and dishes than they had when they were feeding half the town in The Grill. The pair of them even joked about the ~~cold~~ ^{icy} journey to the outhouse which started each day. Whoever went first, the other would demand to know whether the seat had been left good and warm. It damn well ought to be, the other would say, ^{half} ~~part of my~~ behind is still out on it. Or: Sure did, I left it smoking

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organized Shaker community was established in New Lebanon, New York, in 1787, three years after the death of Ann Lee.

She had come from proletarian English stock: her father was a blacksmith; she went to work in a cotton factory at an early age and never learned to read or write. She had, says V. F. Calverton, a Joan of Arc complex, starting with childhood visions in which she saw herself as a divine spirit, an angel in human guise. Believing she was not her mother's child but God's, "conjured from the loins of the Almighty," she would stare into the mirror to detect her trans-

for you.

The ranch house had been built with its living quarters on the second floor, well above the long snowdrifts which duned against the walls. A railed porch hung out over the snow the full length of the house, and from it the other ranch buildings were in view like a small ^{anchored} fleet seen from a ship's deck. The lambing shed, low and cloud-gray and enormously long, seemed to ride full-laden in the white wash of winter. Most of the time, the sheep were corraled on the far side of the shed, their bored bleats coming as far as the house if the wind was down. Not far from the lambing shed stood the barn, dark and bunched into itself, prowling up out of the stillness higher than anything else in sight. A few small sheds lay with their roofs disappearing in drifts, swamped by this cold ocean of a winter. Battle Creek flowed just beyond those sheds, but the only mark of it was a gray skin of ice.

In this snow world, Dad and his hired man skimmed back and forth on the hay sled, a low wide hayrack on a set of runners pulled by a team of plunging workhorses. I rode with the men, hanging tight to the ^{hayrack} framing above where the horses' hooves chuffed into the snow. When the men talked, their puffs of breath clouded ^{fatly} out in front of their faces. Our noses trickled ^{steadily}, Dad put a mitten against my face often to see that my cheeks weren't ~~being~~ frostbitten.

The winter ~~swiped~~^{fought} at us again and again. Our dog crashed through the ice of Battle Creek, and the wind carried the sound of his barking away from the house. We found the shatter where he had tried to claw himself out before the creek froze him and then drowned him. A blizzard ~~pushed~~^{yammered} against the back wall of the house for two days without stop. Outside the snow flew so thick it seemed there was no space left between the flakes in the air, just an endless crisscross of flecks the whiteness of goose down. When Dad and the hired man went to feed the sheep, they would disappear into the storm, swallowed, thirty feet from the window where Ruth and I watched.

An afternoon ~~after that~~^{when the weather let up briefly,} I climbed the slope behind the house, to where a long gully troughed toward Battle Creek. Snow had packed the gulch so full that I could sled down over its humps and dips for hundreds of feet at a time. Trying out routes, I flew off a four-foot shale bank and in the crash sliced my right knee on the end of a sled runner as if I had falled against an axe blade.

That moment of ~~memory~~^{recall} is dipped in a hot red ooze. The bloody slash scared out my breath in a long uhhhhh. A clench ran through the inside of me, then the instant heat of tears burned below my eyes. The climb from the gulch was steep. Now the burning fell to my leg. Blood sopped out as I hobbled to the house with both hands clamped over my wound, and Ruth shook as she snipped away the heavy-stained pants leg. The cut, ~~she~~ she quickly told me,

community principles in regard to 'Woman's Sphere' have governed in this movement," states the *Oneida Circular*. "We do not believe that motherhood is the chief end of woman's life; that she was made for the children she can bear. She was made for God and herself"—and, of course, Mr. Noyes. "In association with man she was not made first of all to be the mother of his children, but to be his companion and lover." "Women are capable of development in a thousand ways apart from maternity," states another issue. "If they are to be educated and act in the mental sphere, they cannot devote their life wholly to childbearing." Little girls even burned their dolls so they would not learn to be mothers before they were educated as persons.

Noyes was not only interested in freeing woman in the erotic and economic spheres, but he wanted to adopt all possible measures

did not live up to its first horrific gush; it was, ^{easily} long but shallow and clean, and dressings took care of it. In a few days, I could swing my leg onto the hay sled ^{again} and ride with the men above the horses' white-frosted heels, ^{again}.

The two weeks passed in surges of that winter weather, like tides flowing in, ^{long and hard.} On the last morning, no snow was falling, but Dad said so much had piled ^{by then} up that we could get to town only by team and sled. Ruth said she wanted to go with us. Dad ~~nodded~~ looked at her once and nodded.

Dad and the hired man ^{took lifted} had taken the rack off the hay ^{fixed a seat of planks onto the front} boat and ~~put on a cutter seat which fastened above the rear~~ pair of sled runners. Inside that seat, blankets piled thickly onto the heavy coats we wore, we sat buried in warmth, almost down in the snow as the horses tugged us along ^{on the running bob.} Harness buckles sang a ching-tink, ching-tink with every step ^{of the horses.} ~~the team took.~~ Dad slapped the reins against the ^{team's} horses' rumps and headed us toward the hayfields along Battle Creek. The ~~clogged~~ road would be no help to us, drift humped onto ^{there} drift by now. We would aim through meadows and bottomlands where the snow lay flatter.

The greyness stretching all around us baffled my eyes. Where I knew hills had to be, no hills showed. The sagebrush too had vanished, from a countryside forested with its clumps. One gray ~~the~~ sheet over and under and around, the snow and overcast had fused land and sky together. Even our sleigh was gray and half-hidden, weathered ash moving like a pale shadow through ashen weather.

did not live up to its first horrific crash; it was
long but shallow and clean, and drowsiness took care of
it. In a few days, I could swing my leg onto the hay sled
and ride with the men above the horses' white-frosted heels.
The two weeks passed in surges of that winter weather,
like rides flowing in. On the last morning, no snow was
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go with us. Dad ~~looked~~ looked at her once and nodded.
Dad and the hired man ~~took~~ took the rack off the hay
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thickly onto the heavy coats we wore, we sat buried in warmth,
almost down in the snow as the horses trudged us along
Harness buckles sang a ching-tink, ching-tink with every step
Dad slapped the reins against the horses' necks.
rumps and headed us toward the hayfields along Battle Creek.
The ~~sluggish~~ road would be no help to us, drift humped onto

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and will stretch its brain to find it. Utopia is a valuable and durable
expression of this need. It is the alternative, even if only as slight
as the addition of a single tiny m, to T.S. Eliot's dire line about us
ending not with a bang but a whimper; through one hopeful expectation or
another, we are reassuring ourselves "this is the way the world mends."

In terms of your own behavior, it comes down to this. Perhaps, and
even probably, you ^{may} never ~~will~~ enlist in a work party for some specific
ideal commune or for ~~a~~ ^{a paradise} nation. Those, whether literary or

Dad headed the team by the tops of fenceposts, ~~when~~
~~he could see them~~, and where the snow had buried even them,
 by trying to pick out the thin ^{besieged} hedge of willows along the
 creek. I peeked out beside Ruth, the two fogs of our breath
 blowing back between us as the horses found footing to trot.
 More often, they lunged at the snow, breaking through halfway
 up their thick legs. Dad talked to the horses every little
 while: Hup there, ^{luck,} get your heft into it... Pull a bit, damn ye, ~~Blackie~~. Bess...
Up this rise, now, get yourself crackin' there... Their ears would jab
 straight up when they felt

the flat soft slap of the reins and heard Dad's voice, and
 they would pull faster and we would go through the snow
 as if the sled was a running creature carrying us on its
 back.

The twin cuts of our sled tracks, the only clear lines
 the snow had not yet had time to ^{seize and} hide, traced away farther
 and farther behind us. Except for the strides of the horses
 and Dad's words to them, the country was silent, held so under
 the weight of the snow. In my memory that day has become
 a set of instants somewhere between life and death, a kind
 of eclipse in which hours did not pass and sound did not
 echo, all color ~~had~~ washed to a flannel sameness and distance
 swelled ^{ing} away beyond any counting of it. We went into that
 fog-world at one end of Battle Creek and long after came
 out at the other, but what happened in between was ^{as} measureless, ^{as a float through space.}
 If it was any portion of existence at all, it did not belong
 to the three of us, but to that winter which had frozen
 all time but its own.

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4 Each woman who was chosen by Noyes as a partner in this experiment—though none of them were among the fifty-three who signed this pledge—felt honored at the privilege of having the patriarch, then a man in his sixties, as the father of her child. But even where Noyes was not directly involved in "propagative intercourse," as can be seen from the language of the pledge, he was involved in every case in a supervisory capacity. In fact, such phrases as "martyrs," "living sacrifices," and "Mr. Noyes, God's true representative" make one

After that ghostly trip, I went back to my boarding family and Dad and Ruth went on with the struggle against the winter. It was another month or so before Dad arrived to take me to ranch again. This time, we drove across the drifted world inside a plowed canyon, the slabs and mounds of frozen snow wrenched high as walls on either side of the thin route. We've had a D-8 'dozer in here, the government sent it out when it looked like we were all gonna lose ^{the} livestock out here. I had to get a truckload of cottonseed cake sent in for the sheep, the hay's goin' so damn fast. They put the bumper of that truck right behind the 'dozer and even so it took 'em sixty-six hours to make it to the ranch and back, ^{can ye feature that?} That load of cottoncake is gonna cost us \$2500 in transportation, but we had to have 'er. I looked at him as if he'd said the moon was about to fall on us; \$2500 sounded to me like all the money in the state of Montana. But Dad ~~grinned~~ grinned ~~and talked on~~ and talked on: You should of been out here to see all the snowplowin'. After they 'dozed out our haystacks, the crew was supposed to go up and 'doze out Jim Bill Keith's place. I was the guy that was showin' them the way, ridin' the front end of that Cat. Hell, ~~I~~ ^{we} got lost on the flats up here--same damn country I grew up in, y'know--and ~~'dozed~~ ^{we} 'dozed in a big circle before we knew what ~~we~~ ^{goin' on} was doin'. Plowed up a quarter of a mile of Keith's fence and didn't even know it. Blizzardin', boy it's been ablowin' out here, son. They came out in one of them snow crawlers to change Cat crews--changed 'em with an airplane when they first started, but the weather got so bad they couldn't fly--so here they come now in one of these crawlers, and the guy drivin' is drunker'n eight hundred dollars. I thought he was gonna bring that damned crawler through the window of the house....I laughed with him, but must have looked worried. He grinned again. We're doin' okay in spite of it all. Haven't lost any sheep yet, and that high-priced cottoncake gives us plenty of feed. If this winter don't last into the summer, we're even gonna make some pretty good money on the deal.

b

And that bit of jokery nudges another, because utopia is itself a pun on eutopia, the Greek combination for "good place". We can smile at Sir Thomas having a few clever chuckles to unlimber his penmanship, but his invented word has even improved its knack for multiple meanings. So serviceable has utopia been that we now use it, and the adjectival offspring utopian, both for ideal societies and for impractical schemes. Two opposing faces for the single word -- in this profile, heaven on earth; in the other, cloudcuckooland.

Beyond even that dual use, utopia has been the catchword for a broad spectrum of experimental communities, both real and literary. Seeking the family resemblance between the latest geodesic commune in New Mexico and, say, The City of the Sun as written by Tommaso Campanella in the early 1600's might turn up a high regard for sunshine as the only possible likeness between the two, yet we could call them both utopian.

In short, utopia has become one of the mirror tricks of our language. The writer or editor trying to make the word's images stand still begins to feel the giddiness which the linguist Mario Pei must have experienced when he deciphered the name of Torpenhow Hill, a ridge near Plymouth, England. Tor, he found, is the Saxon word for "hill", pen turned out to be Celtic for "hill", and how proved to be a derivation of a Scandinavian word for "hill"; translate it all, and you have a ridge named Hillhillhill Hill. Utopia echoes and re-echoes meanings within itself somewhat the same way except, worse luck, its meanings needn't be at all similar.

To keep a straight mind amid utopia's multiple meanings, the ground rules here will be these:

Then in the next weeks came an afternoon when Dad saddled a horse and plunged off through the below-zero weather to the neighboring Keith ranch. He came up here waiting to borrow some cigarettes, and some whiskey. Probably the truce with Ruth was wearing through by then. Dad idled in the kitchen, talking and drinking coffee with Mrs. Keith while waiting for Jim Bill and his hired man to come back from feeding their cattle. I remember, yes, your dad had ridden up on a little sorrel horse and he was sitting in the kitchen with Flossie, and he kept looking out at this kind of a red knob out here on the hill. He looked and he looked, and pretty soon he jumped up and yelled: 'It's broke! It's broke, it's broke!' and he ran outside. And that winter ~~was~~ WAS broke. The hired man and I came riding home with our earflaps rolled up and our coats off, and our mittens stuck in the forkhole of the saddle. Just like that.

The chinook which had begun melting the snowdrifts even as Dad watched did signal the end of that ferocious winter, and somehow too it seemed to bring the end of the long storm within our household. Before, neither Dad nor Ruth had been able to snap off the marriage. Now they seemed in a contest to ~~be the first to~~ do it, first, like a pair tugging at a ^{stubborn} wishbone. Near the start of summer, Ruth announced she was leaving, this time for all time. Dad declared it the best idea he'd ever heard out of her. Alone with Ruth sometime in the swash and swirl of all this, I asked why she had to go.

She gave me her tough grin, shook her head and said, ~~she had to leave.~~ Your dad and me are never gonna get along together, again. We're done. We gave it our try.

Why it was that the two of them had to endure that winter together before Ruth could at last go from Dad, I have never fathomed. Perhaps it was a final ~~last~~ show of endurance against one another, some way to say I can last at this as long as you can. But that ~~had~~ long since ^{had} been proved by both, and

--Part 1, The United States of Utopia, will look at utopia as actually ventured in America. There the word will mean an experimental community formed by a group trying to live its notion of the ideal society.

--Part 2, How Heavens Dawn, deals with the literary and philosophical visions of utopia -- that is, utopia closer to its original fanciful sense as contrived by Thomas More.

--Part Three, Monsters in the Garden, pictures the more modern fears of utopia gone loco. A nightmarish mutation of utopia sometimes is called an anti-utopia, or a dystopia.

So, More's prankish ~~little~~ word has survived, and grown far beyond his original use of it. A deft twist of language alone does not account for this. The second reason ~~why~~ utopia has remained with us is that the need for it has remained with us. The discontents of mankind endlessly call up a try to do better, and utopia in hundreds of forms has echoed a response.

tomorrow can be more worthwhile than today. Not will be, but can be.

It is an expectation which can shape almost any of our beliefs: about politics, sex, education, religion, lifestyle, property, status, any of the central notions we live by. Whenever you honor, in whatever action or thought, the prospect of an improved life ahead, you flash an impulse in the direction of utopia. The human is a creature which needs optimism,

~~It comes down to this. Perhaps, and even probably, you never will~~

it is one of the strangeresses of ~~the~~ ^{this} time that they had to go on ~~proving~~ ^{and on with} ~~the proof of~~ it. A last strangeness came down over these years even after Ruth had vanished from us, one last ^{un}relenting echo of it all. Dad no longer would even refer to Ruth by name.

mod Instead, he took up a ^{something} ~~taunt~~ provided by one of the onlookers to our household's civil war. Naturally, the ^{valley had not been able to} ~~town could~~ ~~not~~ resist choosing up sides in such a squabble, and a woman coming to Dad's defense reached for ^{anything} ~~something~~ contemptible enough to call Ruth. At last she spluttered: Why, that . . . that little flip! For whatever reason, that Victorian blurt ~~of disgust~~ rang perfectly with Dad, put him in the right in all the arguments he was replaying in his mind. From the moment ^{the surprising word} ~~that taunt~~ got back to him, he would talk of Ruth only as Flip, that damned Flip.

Ruth went, and Flip stayed, ^{one single} ~~a~~ poisoned word which was all that was left of two persons' misguess about one another. I have not seen Ruth for twenty years, nor spoken ^{with} ~~her~~ for twenty-five. But for a time after those few warring years with my father, her life straightened, ^{perhaps} ~~like~~ a piece of metal seethed in fire for the anvil. She married again, there was a son. And then calamity ^{anew}, ~~again~~ that marriage in wreckage, and another after that, the town voice saying more than ever of her She thinks everything should come in a cloud for her but she has hatefulness in herself, until at last she had gone entirely, disappeared somewhere out onto the Coast, nobody's cared to keep track of her. The son: I am curious about him. Was he

Where I knew hills had to be, ^{had gone, home} ~~there were no hills~~ ^{showed.} No
sagebrush, in a countryside forested with its clumps. The
cold overcast had fused land and sky together, one gray
sheet over and under and around. Even our sleigh was gray,
weathered ash moving thinly through ashen weather.

Most of the communitarians were concerned with sex and sexual roles. Those religious groups that enforced celibacy were often preoccupied with sexuality by default. In theory a woman fared better in celibate communities than in the profane world because she could no longer be considered a sexual object; instead of being confined to the sphere of home and children, she could hold positions of leadership and responsibility equal to those of men.

taken by Ruth to see the grandmother blinking back age and blindness?
Did Ruth stand with him, white mug of coffee in her hand, to watch snow
sift on a winter's wind? But the curiosity ^{at last} stops there. When Dad and
Ruth ^{finally} ~~at last~~ pulled apart, the one sentiment I could recognize within me--
have recognized ever since--was relief that she had gone, and that the
two of them could do no more harm to each other.

Once more Dad had to right our life, and this time he did it simply
by letting the seasons work him up and down the valley. He went to one
ranch as foreman of the haying crew, on to another to feed cattle during
the winter, to a third for spring and the lambing season. When school
started and I could not be with him, he rented a cabin in White Sulphur
and drove out to his ranch work in the morning and back at night. During
the winter and ^{in spring's} ~~the~~ busyness of lambing, I usually boarded with Nellie
and his wife in their fine log house. Nellie's wife was a world of
improvement from Ruth--a quiet, ^{approving} ~~handsome~~ woman, head up and handsome.
In the pasture behind ^{their} ~~the~~ house she raised palomino horses, flowing
animals of a rich golden tan and ^{with} ~~light~~ blonde manes ^{of silk.} The horses seemed
to represent her independence, her declaration away from Nellie's ^{life of} ~~drinking~~,
and she seemed to think Dad was right in letting me be as free and roaming
as I was. It ^{occurs} ~~seems~~ to me now that she might have given me her quiet
approving smile if I had come home from a wandering to report that I'd
just been down at the Grand Central watching a hayhand knife a sheepherder.
And ^{after} ~~from~~ her season of calm, Dad began one for us together. When the
summer of 1950 came, ^{he} ~~we~~ bought a herd of cattle,
and we moved them and ourselves to a cattle camp
along Sixteenmile Creek.

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he had euchred himself a bargaining point of some sort with the ^{ranch-owning} Jensen

family by allowing them to store their belongings in the front rooms

^{In alarm,} ^{urgently}
of the house. We studied the ~~old~~ living space left to us, and the

single narrow envelope of view out the kitchen windows--to a ~~dark~~ dilapidating

bunkhouse, the outhouse, and a bit of ~~the~~ brown treeless ramp of slope

^{sheering}
~~running~~ up to the benchland. # Grandma and I went out to peer in the

^{as if we needed}
windows of the denied rooms, to confirm McGrath's treachery. I glanced

around toward the silver-boarded sheepshed which squatted hugely across
the yard from us. At least, I tried in what I thought was an ~~admirably~~ entirely
grown-up way, old McGrath got us scads of room for the sheep. But
Grandma's attention had hit on the bleak benches

of land rimming above us in every direction. Hmpf. House in a hollow

makes the weather follow, she recited, slammed away into the back

^{be spoken to}
of the house, and wouldn't ~~speaking to~~ Dad for the rest of the day.

Dad and I walked around the outbuildings. The sheepshed was big
beyond belief, bunkered along the base of a slope for a full forty yards,
then elling off into the coulee for another forty, then closed around
with a high board fence like a stockade. Moose of a damn place, Dad
said as if trying to shrink it. # Weathered and dour as a fortress,
the sheepshed looked to have crouched on its site eternally.
Every other building in the ranch yard, however, reared from open

^{spilled} ^{hard,}
ground to open sky as though ~~they had been dumped~~ into place, only an

^{eyeblink} ^{greater}
~~instant~~ before. Nothing ~~larger~~ than a spear of grass, not even a ^{pitying}

^{entire}
fluff of sage, backed the buildings; the ~~only~~ two trees on the ~~entire~~

^{evidently}
ranch hunched at the front of the house, trying to cower in out of

There ~~held a simpler~~
~~Now~~ our life ~~was holding a steadier~~ pace than I could
 ever remember. The two of us lived in a small trailer house,
 the only persons from horizon to horizon and several miles
 beyond. Dad ~~taught me~~ ^{decided to teach me} to shoot a single-shot .22 rifle,
 using as targets the tan gophers which every horseback man
 hated for the treacherous little burrows they dug. We shot ^{by the hour,}
 rode into the hills every few days to look at the cattle,
 caught trout in the creek, watched the Milwaukee Railroad
 trains clip past four times every day. Then I had my eleventh
 birthday--five years since my mother had died--and it seemed

to trigger a decision in Dad. Something had been working at him, a ^{mist} ~~mix~~
 of despond and unsteady health which would take him off ^{into} ~~by~~ himself for
 hours at a time. One evening in the weeks after my birthday, after he
 had been silent most of the day, he told me a woman would be coming into
 our lives again.

His words rolled a new planet under our feet, so astonishing and unlikely
 was it all. Ruth had come and gone without much lasting effect, except
 for the scalded mood Dad showed whenever he had a reason to mention her.
 But ^{the person} ~~what~~ he had in mind now ^{cast} ~~would be~~ a shadowline across everything ahead
 of us, ^{stood forth as} ~~the one~~ ~~apparition~~ apparition I could not imagine into our
 way of life. My mother's mother.

the wind. McGrath had told us the Jensen ranch began as a homestead,
which meant that people had lived here ^{from} at least forty years ~~before~~ earlier,
how had they never managed to make the place look less stark? From where
we stood, a machine shed yawned with disuse on
one side of us, ~~and~~ a granary shed answered on the other. Between
the pair ^{bulked} ~~loomed~~ a barn built of notched logs, and its brown ^{mass} ~~bulk~~ only
made the sheds look all the more ^{cadaverous} ~~frail~~. Everything in sight--ground,
barn, sheds, a rusting windmill--was aslant, as if the impact of the

Giant sheepsheds at the bottom of the yard had teetered the entire ranch

toward it.

It was when Dad noticed that he hadn't yet found ^{one} place on the

ranch where he could stand without one foot lower than the other that

he pronounced the Irish fellow's lament on our new home. Then he said,

Skavinsky, we might as well

As the hell, ~~even~~ ^{let's} go see what the grass looks like, and the two

~~even to try a peace gesture toward in Grandma's direction yet--~~
~~of us--neither willing to approach Grandma for the moment--drove back~~

up the long face of benchland in front of the house.

Citolic ✓

. . . nine'y-seven, nine'y-eight, nine'y-nine, HUNNERD, IVAN!

~~Ivan!~~ one, two... The numbers build in my head with this first hot morning
of June, ^{and} ~~before I can sit~~ ^{seat myself} to write are thrumming me into being again

beside the gray-boarded corral as sheep plummet past. A fresh time, I am
twelve years old, and piping back at McGrath: a hundred! More quickly than
I can thumb down my jackknife twice to cut this

first marking notch in the green willow stick, ~~twenty~~ ^{a dozen} more
ewes whirl out the corral gate beneath McGrath's counting
hand. As he counts, McGrath flexes his right palm straight
as a cleaver, chopping an inch of air as each sheep pellmells
past him. His bulldog face moves a tiny nod at the same
time, as if shaking each number out through the heavy lips
onto the counted sheep. As always I am his tallyman, notching
a stick to record every hundred ewes as McGrath singsongs
the count to me. I know to stand soldier-still as I am now,
against the corral and a dozen ^{short} steps from the gate where
the sheep are squirting through, just near enough that McGrath
can hear me echo his tally, know that it is marked . . .

HUNNERD! . . . Again my jackknife--a hundred!--snicks softly,
again a fresh ^{tiny} diamond of wood falls from the stick. These
spring months, I have come to the ranch each weekend to
help Dad and McGrath with the lambing. Dad is the day man
in the long ~~dim~~ lambing shed beside Camas Creek. Inside
^{its} the dimness, I carry buckets of water to the ewes with new
yellow lambs at their sides, wait while the ewes nose the

these early pictures does not fit--the pet which is being stroked in my mother's hands. Those first summers of following the sheep, my parents kept with them in their daily sift through the forest a gray and white tomcat they called Pete Olson.

Somehow, amid the horses and dogs and sheep, and the coyotes and bobcats which ranged close to camp, Pete Olson rationed his nine lives out in prowl after nightly prowl. Then as camp was

italic ✓

suspiciously
bucket ~~fearfully~~ and at last drink. It is a relief to come
into the sunshine to drive small bunches of ewes and their
week-old lambs toward pasture or, better still, to help ~~with the~~
~~when~~ get their docking.
~~docking~~ the oldest lambs. I am quicker in the catch pen
than any of the men, snatching . . . HUNNERD! . . . snatching
--a hundred!--a lamb from the bleating swirl of lambs. I ~~will~~
pick up the caught lamb, clutch him to me with his slim back tight
against my breastbone, hold both his right legs in a crossed
grip in my right hand and both the left legs in my left,
present him butt forward to the dockers, waiting at the fence.
McGrath
~~Snider~~ reaches in between the legs, cuts the bag, squeezes
the testicles up out of the cut, brings his mouth to them
and nips the twin pale pouches out with his teeth, spits
them to the ground. Dad steps in, knives off the tail, swiftly
dark tarry
daubs ~~disinfectant~~ on the two oozing cuts. I turn the stunned--docked--
lamb right side up, drop him gently outside the pen. Turn
back to the swirl of lambs for another. . . HUNNERD! Four
notches--a hundred!--now. There must be ten when McGrath
has finished counting, or sheep are lost. That will mean
beating into the thick brush along Camas Creek and climbing
into the coulees beyond the water, work which always runs
slow and late. Worse, these are the final thousand ewes-
with-lambs of the ranch's six thousand head, and the trail
drive which will take them all to summer range must wait
on the search. Worse again, McGrath is, as Grandma says it,
a crazy old thing when he

so uneven, so gapped and blotted? 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

italic ✓

drives the ranch to look for lost sheep. Hurrying, he will aim the pickup across bogs which would swallow a train. Raging to have lost time, he fights free of the first bog and roars into the next. The story is told that when McGrath was a young cowboy, he rode his horse into a saloon in Greybull, Wyoming, and roped the mounted deer heads off the wall, scattering drinkers and poker players like pullets. Dad

says McGrath still has a hellion streak in him . . . HUNNERD!...

~~The notches begin--~~a hundred!--

~~X~~ to be a design on the stick, a stepway of bright slots against the ^{gray-}green bark. I hear Mickey cursing a sheep which has broken from the back of the band. Mickey dislikes ranch work, detests sheep, despises himself for knowing no job but sheep ranching, hates us all for seeing his life's predicament. He is a squat man with a crumpled face, and a jabbing tongue. Mickey it is who behind McGrath's back will call him Little Jesus, and who roared out to a Saturday night saloon crowd in White Sulphur Springs that McGrath was a gutrobbing son-of-a-bitch to have to work for. I watch Mickey at the back of the sheep. He has the mean orange dog named Mike with him, a good match. The runaway ewe is being nipped savagely by Mike, to Mickey's encouragement. McGrath would blister Mickey with swearing if he saw the scene, but McGrath is too busy with his count. Mickey knows by instinct ^{just} when he can get away with anything . . . HUNNERD! . . . The soft snick--a hundred!--and the sixth groove from the willow peels away to the ground. These

shards of wood, I notice, are the shape and size of the half moon at the base of my thumb nail. I look up from ~~the knife~~ ^{my hands} and see, at the far end of the sheep opposite Mickey, ~~the~~ ^{Karl} Swede standing quietly and saying soft words to his sheepdog.

~~Karl the~~ ^{Karl} The Swede is a pleasant man and a good worker when drink isn't tormenting him. He will herd these sheep in the mountains all summer, if he can last the drought in himself. Lately to get his mind off whiskey he has spent his spare minutes chopping firewood, and his woodpile is nearly as long and high as a small shed. Oho: a ewe jumps some imagined terror as she goes through the gate, and McGrath steps back as she sails past his chest. . . HUNNERD!. . . I giggle--a hundred!--because she was a special ewe, a hundredth and flying like an acrobat as well. McGrath has kept the count steady with his chopping hand. When Dad does the count, he stands half-sideways to the river of sheep, his right hand low off his hip and barely flicking as each sheep passes. I have seen buyers, the men in gabardine suits and creamy Stetsons, with other habits--pointing just two fingers, ^{or} pushing the of a hand toward flat ~~of their palm~~ at the sheep--as they count. The one end of an arm trick everyone has is somehow to pump the ~~hand~~ at each whizzing sheep, make the motion joggle a signal to the brain. McGrath says he knew an old-time sheepman who could count sheep as they poured abreast through a ten-foot gate. Could that be: could a person . . . HUNNERD!. . . keep such numbers--a hundred!--

scampering clearly in his brain? The sheep plunge past McGrath only one or two at once, because Dad is working the corral gate in a rhythm which sluices them through smoothly. He watches too for lame or sick ewes, to be singled out later and put in the hospital herd. A black ewe blurs past, a marker sheep. Dad can glance across a band of sheep for its markers--a black ewe here, over there one with a flappy ear, beyond one with a Roman nose--and estimate^{closely} whether the entire thousand sheep are there. The sheep don't look all alike to me, but neither do they look as separate as Dad sees them: each ewe is different as a person to him, and not even McGrath can sort them by eye that way.Now my yell--a hundred!-- HUNNERD! is louder, a signal to McGrath that we are near the end. Nine notches on the willow stick, a tight knot of ewes crowds the gate. If the count is right, no sheep lost, we will start trailing ~~the sheep~~ to the summer range in the Big Belts. Ten miles a day, two days of trail. Sheep are the moodiest of creatures. ^{moment} One ~~day~~ they may cruise down the road so fast you can hardly keep up; the next, you fight them mercilessly to make them budge at all, launching the dogs into them, banging them with the noisy hoops of tin cans strung on wire, cursing, kicking. Which will it be this time, race or battle? . . . HUNNERD! . . . The tenth hundred ewe--a hundred!--gallops away as I press the knife for the next, last notch. McGrath counts out the last straggle--twen'y-two, twen'y-three, that's them--

and whirls to me. I nod and say, a thousand and twenty-three, counting with the knife blade my ten notches, then doing it once again as McGrath looks on and Dad steps close to watch. They are pleased: the count is right, the trailing can start. I grin across from the me of then to the me of now. Another time, we have finished spring, begun summer.

LADY

Sitting up in a railroad coach seat for a day, a night, and another day, Bessie Ringer is jostled westward in the springtime of 1914. The Mississippi River lay several hundreds of miles behind, vaulted by a slim bridge which had made her flick scared glances down to ^{gliding} the water all the long way over. Minnesota had been crossed, and the Dakotas, where ^{the} homesteads of an earlier generation of journeyers nested in fat patches of turned earth. Rivers new ^{and wild} to her--the Little Missouri, the Powder, the Yellowstone--came looping widely beneath the roadbed, and now when the train made its wheezy stops in the middle of nowhere, the men who clomped aboard wore hats with swooping curled brims, and their women, she could not help but notice, looked leathered from the sun and wind. Where they stepped from, the arc of prairie flung straight and empty to the horizon, nothing could be imagined which might rule their lives except that sun, that wind. By the time, then, that her train was pushing out of the townless distances of eastern

Montana, Bessie had come ^{an entire} a world away from the pinched midwestern background she had been born into twenty years before. Come, what's more, for forever and with no regret ever said aloud. Her people ^{back there} were German stock, abrupt and gloomy as their family name--Glun. In the memories which ^{stretched} ~~ran back~~ along the rails to the farmstead life ~~there~~ in central Wisconsin's cut-over pine country, that name mocked itself into queer rhyme. It had happened because school ^{was caught whispering} ~~whispered~~ to the girl seated beside her. The teacher thundered it then. Picking up his pointer to threaten her, he brayed: Glun, Glun, don't have so much fun, or you'll have a swat of Jack Hickory's son! At home, life was no less startling and strict under her burly mustached father: I always remember my pa so stern. I was always scared of him. Now train tracks, hour upon hour, ~~where~~ leaving always to the past, to the land falling away behind the West.

On Bessie's lap a daughter dozes in the train's cradling motion--my mother, Berneta, waking now and again to see the land flying and flying past her six-month-old eyes. She is plump and pretty, and with her full dark hair ^{has begun to} ~~looks~~ like a small jolly version of a much older girl. A version, that would be, of Bessie herself not long before. On the wall by me is a studio portrait of Bessie when she had reached ^{the age of} ~~sixteen~~ or so, posed with the two Krebs sisters who were her best of friends. Out the oval window of photo, the sisters stare down

the camera and any lookers beyond it, mouths straight as Bible lines. You would not tease with this pair, nor dare their wrath without an open door behind you. They are iron and granite side by side, and are going to leave some bruises on the world. Beside them, Bessie's look is all the softer, the eyes more open and asking, her face wondering at ~~the world~~ ^{life} instead of taking it on chin-first. She must have had ~~so~~ much to wonder at, raised as ~~so~~ ^{such an} apron-stringed girl, snugged all the more firmly into the family by the one lapse in her father's strictness. John Glun had brooded against a way of schooling which even for an instant could taunt a daughter of his, and after her third year, Bessie was not made to attend again. She spent the rest of her growing years entirely at home. That upbringing of choring for her mother and edging past her father's ~~temper~~ ^{thunderhead} left her unsure of herself, but guessing that the world must have something else to offer. So that's the how of it, she would say whenever some new turn of life had shown itself, and she seems about to say it ~~now~~ ^{there} to the camera eye. It is, all in all, an offering glance for the world, of which she might yet have had a strong gleam ~~of~~ four years later as she held her ~~daughter~~ ^{prized} and watched the western Montana mountains begin to stand high ahead of the train.

Alongside Bessie, the train window shadowing his face close in beside hers, sits Thomas Abraham Ringer. Housepainter, handyman, wiry Irishman with a hatchet nose and a chin like an axe--last and least, husband. All three Glun children flew

as quickly as they could from that narrow home, but Bessie went with one last disfavor from her father. He singled out for her this seldom-do-well Tom Ringer and bent her, at the age of 18, into marrying the man. Gee gosh, a girl like I was who didn't know her own mind--I done it because my pa said it was my way to get by in the world. Tom was twice her age, nearly as old as her father himself, and the one thing he had done exactly right in all his life until then had been not to take on a wife and a family. In ^{fair} ~~utmost~~ charity--and half of those who speak of Tom Ringer do give a rough affectionate forgiveness, while the other half call him ^{something like} ~~a~~ sour-minded reprobate--the knack of caring ^{unswervingly} ~~steadily~~ for anyone beyond himself did not seem to be in this man. Alone, fussing a floorboard into place or stroking a paintbrush peevishly along a ceiling, that sharp face could simply prod all into tidiness and spear away whatever of life he did not want to see or hear. But being married was nothing like being alone, and there came the consequence which Bessie declared in the shortest and angriest of her verdicts on this husband. Tom drank.

It made a ^{dubious} ~~lame~~ marriage worse. The temper tamped inside Tom which he seemed to need to propel himself through life would turn ugly when whiskey touched it. Darn his hide. He'd be going along perfectly fine, then there'd be a big blow-up. This, too: even when his wages didn't trickle away in saloons, they shrank and vanished some other way. All their married life, Tom and Bessie Ringer would live close to predicament.

fingers-crossed
ind, jump to the

broad

Crazies,

Through that timberland ~~and~~ winter, isolated and snowbound, Bessie and Tom felled and unlimbed trees, then snaked the wood to a snow-packed skidway. She would clamber down the slope as Tom hitched their workhorse to the first pile of logs and looped the reins to the harness. The horse would plod down to her, the logs sledding long soft troughs behind in the snow. When she unhitched the load, the horse would turn and head itself back up the mountain for the next load of work. That pattern of trudge was much like what lay ahead for Bessie herself, for if I am to read ^{any} beginnings ^{at all} in these lives which twine behind my own, my grandmother's knack for ploughing head-down through all hardship surely begins here at the very first of these lean Montana years.

Then the kid's dad--she banished ^{Tom} ~~him~~ to that in later times, his name never crossing her tongue if she could help it--the kid's dad got us on at Moss Agate. The rancher ran a herd of cull milk cows there, and we milked all those cows and put up the hay on the place. We lived there, oh, a lot of years.

Moss Agate was a small ranch at the southern reach of the Smith River valley, on an empty flat furred with sage and a few hackles of brush along the south fork of the river, and walled in at every point of the horizon by buttes and mountains. The single vivid thing about the place lay in its name. The rock called moss agate is a daydreamer's stone, a smokey hardness with its trapped black shadow of fossil inside like a tree

dancing to the wind or a sailing ship defying fog or whatever else you could imagine from it. Later, after my father had begun to court my mother, someone who saw him saddling for his weekly ride to Moss Agate asked if he was finding any prize specimens in the hills there. One, he grinned. She's about five feet tall, with black hair, and blue eyes.

On that ranch where dreams were trapped in rock, Bessie and Tom milked cows year after year, toiled to keep the few sun-browned ranch buildings from yawning into collapse, and plodded out their marriage. There was a new child now every few years--three boys in a row. Each summer, Bessie held the latest baby in her lap as she drove a team of horses hitched to the sulky-seated hay rake. I wore bib overalls then in haying time. But silly thing, I'd run and put a dress on if I seen anybody coming. Throughout the seasons, she rode horseback after strayed calves, fed hogs, raised chickens, gardened and canned, burned out the sage ticks which pincerred onto the children, mucked out the tidal flow of manure-and-urine after the eternal cows. And all of it in a growing simmer against Tom.

I can ^{watch} see her, in those Moss Agate years, being made over from almost all that she had been before: toughening, ^{leathering,} the salt of sweat going into her mind and heart. Even her body now defied the harsh life; the single luxury of that milking herd was dairy produce, and as her cooking feasted on the unending butter and cream, she broadened and squared. But it

was her look to the world that had changed ^{most} ~~more~~, and in the few photos from about her thirtieth year, her tenth in Montana, a newcomer now gazes out from where the young bride had been-- ^{flinchless} a newcomer who has firmed into what she will be all the rest of her life.

Her face now was strongest, Almost mighty, at its center-- the careful clasp of a mouth which seemed always ready to purse with no relenting, and the thick nose which has monumented itself all through the family line to her great-grandchildren. A brief ball of chin, a fine square span of forehead beneath neat ^{ly} ~~waved~~ hair already gone gray and on its way to white. Blue eyes, paler and more flat in their declaring than, say, my father's mulling look.

She ^{stood to} ~~was~~ the height my mother had been ^{does in photograph--} ~~scant~~ inches over five feet--but where my mother ^{seemed} ~~had been~~ a wand of a woman, this grandmother was an oak stump. Chunky as she had grown-- at times weighing more than 150 pounds, and long since locked into an everlasting lost battle against ^{her own} ~~pastries~~, snacks and second helpings--she somehow seemed stout without being over-girthed; steady without being stolid. In this ^{strong} ~~odd~~ way, then, her very stockiness made her ^{appear} ~~look~~ taller than she really was, and a neighbor's memory at last explained: The first time I remember seeing Bessie Ringer was at the Caulkins schoolhouse, at a dance out there, and I just admired her so, she always carried herself so straight and dignified.

Of course: so straight, and the dignity of that. For in

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both senses of the saying, Bessie Ringer was stiff-backed--erect pride and the unbending notions to go with it. In a sense, the central ideas in her were lodged in place like the logs of a stockade--upright, sharply pointed, and as durable as they were wooden.

The first of her unattackable beliefs was family. This had started early, when

my mother from her first breaths was seen to be an asthma victim and ~~Grandma~~ ^{Bessie} began to raise her with a special blend of love and fuss. It went on as each of her three boys arrived--musical Paul and mischievous William and adept Wallace--and were given whatever sacrifices she could that they would be able to go through the schooling she had not, make it out into life whole and able. We had to get by sometimes on a lick and a promise, but there's others didn't do as good as we managed, ^{too.} That the family thinned off

markedly at Tom's end of the table simply redoubled her affections elsewhere; it was as if his portion of her commitment had to be put to use somehow, and into the children it went.

Next came work. Bessie was uncomfortable with much *depth of* thinking--her slim school years and that tethered girlhood had robbed her mind there, and she knew it ^{with regret--} but doing came to her ^{lovely} with ease. She worked, that is to say, as some people sing--for the pleasure in it, the habit of it, the sense that life was asking it specially of her. It gives me the willies, she would ^{recite} ~~say~~, ^{just} to be sittin' doin' nothin'. In her own retelling and all told about her, I can find her at almost every relentless ranch task of those years: stacking hay, teamstering horses in dead winter, pulling calves from breech births, stringing barbed wire onto fencelines, threshing grain amid the itching storm of chaff, axing ice from the cattle's watering-holes.

his shoulders and down his arms; work alongside him for an hour, and you found out he was as strong as men half again his size--more than strong enough to be wicked in a fight. And along with muscle, Dad had a knack for handing tasks around in a crew mildly, almost gently: Monte, if you'd ride up to the school section and salt those cows there. Jeff if you'd as remembered by someone yet again. Margaret was the one in the family memory, glimpsed and gone in someone's reminiscences was D.L.'s sister, Margaret. She is at the outermost edges of The other Doig remembered for doing entirely what she pleased the world.

consigned for him every week, and asking not one thing more of down to the Milwaukee Railroad tracks to fetch the jug of whiskey in the Basin, fussing over his prize chickens, sending someone and old age at last forced him out, D.L. could be found there wife sewed a quilt from the prize ribbons. Until the Depression