and which I would do, a generation after that, as his son's son -- working in the lambing sheds, herding, wrangling in the shearing pens.

There can't have been much money in the ranch jobs which drew my father's father in those first years. But there would have been all the chance in the world to learn about sheep -- and sheep in their gray thousands were the wool-and-meat machines which had made fortunes for the lairds of the Scotland he had come from. What was more, this high Montana grassland rimming the Big Belts had much of the look of the home country, and had drawn enough Scots onto ranches and homesteads that they counted up into something like a colony. The burr of their talk could be heard wherever the gray tides of sheep were flowing out onto the grass. Between the promise of those grazing herds and that talk comfortable to the ear, it was a place for staying.

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

Those homesteading Scots families of the Basin -- Doigs, Christisons, Mitchells, a few who came later -- could not know it at first, but they had taken up land where the long-standing habits and laws of settlement were not going to work. The homestead staked out by Peter and Annie Doig lay at an elevation of 5700 feet. At first, the hill country did pay off with its summers of free pasture. In the bargain, however, came Januaries and Februaries -- and usually Marches and Aprils -- of hip-deep snowdrifts. There was no help in law for the blizzards which bullied through the Tierney Basin. Then with the stroke of a government pen which decreed the high summer pasture into a national forest, ~~the~~ all that nearby free range ended. Allotments for grazing began to go to ranches which already were big, and getting bigger. No foothills homestead you built for yourself, even if you outlasted the weather, could head off a future of national forest boundaries and rich cattle companies.

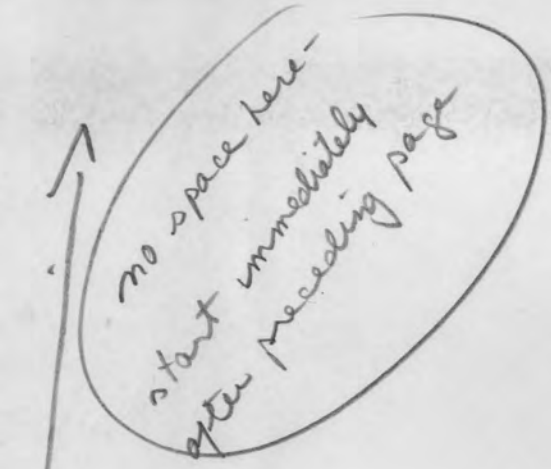
All this was coming, but unseen, when Peter and Annie Doig took up land in the Basin. They had other things in their heads than the days beyond tomorrow. The young wife could hear the howling of wolves and coyotes -- and worse, the splitting cracks of thunder when lightning storms cut down on the Big Belts. To the end of her life, she claimed she never had gotten over those unruly sounds of the Basin, nor its isolation. The young husband was more the one for staying. He built a house of pine logs from a nearby timbered slope and filed papers for the 160-acre site -- which qualified best under a law for the taking up of

"desert land." Over the next dozen years, they managed to make a start in the sheep business and to add six more children to the family.

Then, on a September day in 1910, a little past noon, Peter Doig stepped outside the log house. He had been spending time on errands -- to the county fair the day before, where he had won prizes for his lambs and rewarded himself with a fine thorough drunk, this morning to his nearest neighbor's house on some small matter -- and the ranch chores were piling up. He strode down the path to the garden to begin digging the potato crop. Going through the gate, he clutched at his heart, fell sideways, and died. He was four months short of his 37th birthday.

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

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



Charlie Doig

~~He~~ was ten when his father died, made old enough in that instant to help his mother and his brothers carry the body in from the dark garden dirt. It must have been the first time he touched against death. And touched ahead, too, somewhere in his scaredness, to the life he was going to have from then on in that lamed family, on that Basin homestead.

In several ~~respects~~ ways, his boyhood would go along opposite routes from the one I would live at his side thirty years later. Five brothers and a sister crowding all his home hours; the one of me, alone and ~~liking~~ treasuring it that way. His school years which, shying from those Basin winters, began with spring thaw and then hurried hit-and-miss through summer; all my summers ending in earliest September quick as the bell at the end of a recess, school

creeping on then through three entire seasons of the year. My classmates were town kids, wearing town shoes and with a combed town way of behaving. Some schoolmates of his came from families drawn back so far into the hills and their own peculiarities of living that the children were more like the coyotes which watchfully loped the ridgelines than like the other Basin youngsters. One family's boys, he remembered, started school so skittish that when someone met them on an open stretch of road where they couldn't dart into the brush, they flopped flat with their lunchboxes ~~flung~~ dropped in front of their heads to hide behind.

Dad on horseback every chance he had, on his way to being one of the envied riders in a county of riders; me reading every moment I could, tipping any open page up into my eyes and imagination. He grew up small, temper fused as short as he was, but with estimates of himself considerably more generous than that; maybe because I held in all my temper and dreams, I filled out like a prize calf, bigger and solider and more red-haired every time anyone glanced in my direction.

To me now, looking at my father's growing up is like ~~seeing for~~ the first ~~time~~ glimpse ever into a stone-rippled reflection in a pond, and wondering how it can be that the likeness brimming there repeats some of what I know is me, along with so much that is only waver and blur. Another wonderment follows that, like a stone hurled harder into

the pond. On his way to growing out of boyhood, my father came very near to dying. It would happen to him time and again that he would draw alongside death, then be let live. Why, if what is so far from having answers is even askable, was his life so closely stalked this way? And how was it that he lasted as he did?

The costs my father paid in all the surviving he had to do, I know much about; but about why life had to dangle him such terms, nothing.

That first time, in 1918, the planet was dealing in death ~~in such a way~~ so plentifully that perhaps Dad simply happened onto some of the surplus. The flu epidemic ripped at families, World War One gutted open entire nations. Dad was hired by neighbors whose son had been plucked away by the draft board. That job, on a tatter of a ranch near the canyon where the railroad snaked through, was a youngster's ~~bad~~ worst dream. All day, for one square meal, the privilege of an apple at bedtime, and a few dollars a week which he had to pass along to his mother, Dad did a man's share of ranch work; then mornings and evenings, he slogged through the chores of chicken-feeding and hog-slopping and kindling-splitting which a country child grows up hating.

It got worse. The soldier son was put on a ship to France, and now every day Dad was sent off on the mile and a half trudge down the railroad track to the Sixteen

post office, to fetch a newspaper so the fretful parents could read through the list of battle casualties. One footsore trip after another, Dad cussed to the crossties that he hoped to hell the so-and-so would be on the casualty list today so this everlasting walking could stop.

But the soldier son survived, and it was Dad who nearly died in that last year of World War One. It was like him to call down bad luck on somebody else, then go through worse himself. In the early winter of 1918, he had set out on a day of deer hunting with a cousin, one of D.L.'s strapping sons.

Both came down with pneumonia. For weeks they lay delirious in the ranch houses their fathers had built a mile apart. On the first night of December, Dad's fever broke, and the cousin died.

Those two had started out even when they put their first footprints in the snow on that hunting trip. Why death for one, and not the other? No answer comes, except that even starts don't seem to count. If that was what saved Charlie Doig then, he was going to need several such bylaws of fate before he was done.

That first siege on his health behind him, Dad went back to the hired work which each of the young Doig brothers started at just as soon as he was old enough.

For years, their wages had had to be the prop under the family homestead, which at last was beginning to pull itself up into a ranch. By the autumn of 1919, all their cowboying and sheepherding and scrimping together had financed a herd of 200 fat cattle and 40 head of horses. Livestock prices were firm, Annie Doig inherited a few thousand dollars from a relative in Scotland, the world war had not clawed into her family. Luck could hardly wait to follow on luck. Then, weeks ahead of the calendar, winter set in.

It became the winter which the Basin people afterward would measure all other winters against. The dark timbered mountains around them went white as icebergs. The tops of sagebrush vanished under drifts. And up around the bodies of bawling livestock, the wind twirled a heavy web of snow. Day upon day, hay sleds slogged out all across the Basin to the cattle and horses as mittened men and boys fought this starvation weather with pitchforks.

By late January, the weather was gaining every day. The Basin's haystacks were nearly gone, and the ranch families shipped in tons of slough grass which had been mowed from frozen marshes in Minnesota. Fifty-five dollars a ton: the price was higher than they had ever heard of, and there was no choice in the world but to pay it. The wiry bales had to be chopped apart with an axe before they could be pitched to the livestock, and sometimes an entire

muskrat house of sticks and mud would fall out of a bale. Down to this brittle feed, the country began to feel winter fastening into the pit of its stomach. Dad helped to load into boxcars a neighbor's sheep so crazy with hunger they gnawed the wool off one another in the loading pen. Cows struggled to stay alive by eating willows thick as a man's thumb. And still the animals died a little every day, until the carcasses began to make dark humps on the white desert of snow.

It was early June of 1920 before spring greened out from under the snowdrifts in the Basin. The Doig family by then had 60 surviving cattle, half a dozen horses, and was sunk back in debt.

The losses killed whatever hopes there had been that the Basin ranch would be able to bankroll Dad and the other brothers in ranching starts of their own. Like seeds ~~on~~ flying the Basin's chilly wind, they began to drift out one after another now. Dad and his friend Clifford Shearer talked each other into heading west for the coast. What they were going to do there, they had no idea at all, but probably it would be more promising than home.

The night before they left, the Basin people threw a farewell dance at the Sixteen schoolhouse. "Women were bawling and carrying on," Dad remembered, "you'd thought the world was coming to an end." It was starting to.

more

The Basin could never be the same when its youngsters began to go.

Out in the world as job seekers, Dad and Clifford fizzed with more imagination than their first bosses allowed for. They had stopped in Washington's Yakima Valley long enough to try the apple harvest. The idea, they were told the first morning, was to pluck each piece of fruit with care, --give it this little twist so the stem don't come off, see? -- so it would go into the box unblemished for the market. Before noon, they were fired for shaking apples down into their boxes by the whole battered treeload. They headed west some more through the state of Washington. The Pacific Ocean stopped them at Aberdeen, where they hired on as pilers in a lumber yard.

When the first rain of the Aberdeen winter whipped in, the pair of them slopped through their shift wondering to one another how soon the yard boss would take pity, as any rancher back home would decently have done, and send them in out of the downpour. By the end of that wettest day of their lives, they still were in the rain but had stopped wondering. Clifford slogged uptown and talked a dry-goods merchant out of two sets of raingear on credit. But a drier skin didn't ease Dad's mind entirely. He toughed it out in Aberdeen for a few months, told Clifford he was so homesick he couldn't stand it and headed back to Montana.

He couldn't have thought, when he came home shaking

off the Aberdeen damp, that he was heading into the job he would do for most of the rest of his life. But now the valley, which could always be counted on to be fickle, was going to let him find out in a hurry what he could do best. Sometime in 1920 or '21, Dad said his goodbyes to the Basin again, saddled up, and rode to the far end of the Smith River Valley to ask for a job on the Dogie.4/ More than any other ranch, the Dogie had been set up to use the valley's advantages and work around its drawbacks. Wild hay could be cut from its miles of prime bottomland meadows, livestock could be grazed over its tens of thousands of acres of bunchgrass slopes along the east fork of the Smith River -- and ~~the any~~ the hard years could be evened out with the wealth of the Seattle family which owned the ranch. Dad was hired on, but that was the most that could be said for the job: he was made choreboy, back again at the hated round of milking cows and feeding chickens and hogs and fetching stovewood for the cook.

But he had come to the Dogie just when the owners were signing into a partnership with a sheep rancher from near Sixteenmile Creek. The "Jasper" at the front of his name long since crimped down to "Jap" by someone's hurried tongue, Jap Stewart had arrived out of Missouri some twenty years before, leaving behind the sight in one eye due to a knife fight in a St. Joe saloon but

bringing just the kind of elbowing ambition to make a success in the wide-open benchlands he found several miles east of the Basin. Drinker, scrapper, sharp dealer and all the rest, Jap also was a ranchman to the bone, and he prospered in the Sixteen country as no one before or since. Now he was quilting onto the Dogie holdings his own nine thousand head of sheep and the pasture for every last wooley one of them. He also moved in to kick loose anything that didn't work. This included most of the Dogie's crew.

Jap began by giving them a Missouri growling at -- most of you sonsabitches've worked here so goddamn long all you know any more is how to hide out in the goddamn brush -- and ended by sacking every man on the ranch except Dad and a handful others. While Jap's new men streamed in past the old crew on the road to town, Dad, at the age of 21, was made sheep boss, in charge of the Dogie's bands grazing across wide two ends of the county. In another six months, he was foreman of the entire ranch.

What one-eyed old Jap Stewart must have seen, watching Dad as he grew up in those ranch jobs which Annie Doig's sons were always pegging away at, was that he would know how to work men. Skill with horses and cattle and sheep were one thing; Dad had those talents, but so did every tenth or twentieth young drifter that came along. The rare thing in the valley was to be able to handle men.

Ranch crews were a hard commodity, a gravel mix of drifters, drinkers, gripers, some not a few mental cripples, and an occasional good worker. No two crews were ever much alike, except in one thing: somebody was going to resent the work and any foreman who put him to it, and sooner or later ~~would make~~ trouble would be made.

This could happen in all kinds of ornery zigzag ways. When I was about the age Dad was in his first days on the Dogie, I worked in bewilderment ~~alongside~~ beside a man ~~who kept~~ brooding ~~on~~ over the bunkhouse run-in he'd had with the foreman. "That sparrowheaded sonofabitch," he fumed over and over. "That goddamned sparrowheaded sonofabitch." We'd been sent out that morning, just the mismatched pair of us, to build fences around haystacks. Every half hour, my partner flung away his tools, sat down -- glowered me into sitting down, too -- and cussed through his argument with the foreman one more time. Then he would jump up and we would build fence at a pace as furious as he was.

no ¶ The entire day jerked along like that, half loafed away for the sake of spite which the foreman would never know about and the other half spent slamming down fence posts as if the sparrowheaded sonofabitch's toes were underneath. ¶ Anyone who had spent time on a ranch crew had such stories to tell -- of a herder who sneaked the stovepipe off his own sheepwagon while camp was being moved so he would have something to be mad about and could quit, or of a tireless hay stacker who packed up

and left on the first rainy day because he couldn't stand the hours of being idle. Darker stories, too, of a herding dog bashed to death with rocks in some silent coulee, a haystack ablaze in the night when there had been no lightning.

It would have been something to mutter about, then, for ranch hands who came onto the job to find this kid foreman barely five and a half feet tall parceling out orders in a soft burred voice. Plainly Dad was too short and green to handle a crew. But there was the surprising square heft across his shoulders and down his arms; 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 work over that fence along the creek. Tony, if you'd ... " That soft "if" of his seemed to deal each man into the deciding, and it was a mark of Dad's crews that they generally went out of the bunkhouse to the school section and the creek fence and a dozen other jobs just as if the work had been their own idea all along.

It helped, too, that whatever chore he put a man to had a logic behind it. Doing whatever job he'd singled

out seemed right, felt as if that was what most needed doing on the ranch at that particular point of the year. Knowing the rhythm of the ~~country~~ valley and its tasks this way wasn't common ~~,~~ at all. Up and down the Smith River ~~valley~~, you could watch people who called themselves ranchers but never did learn the cadence of the ~~place~~ country. They were the ones perpetually surprised that it already was the raw start of autumn while the calendar still was showing early September. They were the ones, too, who forever had their crews jammed off on the wrong jobs -- hay crops going to hell while they worked the cattle, cattle going to hell while everybody was in the hayfields. One thing the hardscrabble Basin homestead had done for Dad and his brothers was to teach them how a ranch ought to operate; the Doigs couldn't help but learn from having had to take that homestead apart and put it together time and again as they tried to make it go. Out of that way of growing up and an unhaltered shrewdness all his own, ~~Dad~~ then, this young cowboy who would become my father had a feel for the valley's seasons and all their chores, and it made him a reputation early.

But as quick as he was making his name as a foreman, a reputation of another sort almost cost him his life again. Each summer Sunday, the best riders in the county would gather at a ranch and try to ride every bucking horse they had been able to round up out of the hills. It was the kind of hellbending contest young Charlie Doig was

good at, and he didn't ~~miss~~ pass up chances to show it.

The hill broncs which would be hazed in somewhere for this weekend rodeoing -- the Doig homestead had a big stout pole corral which was just right -- were not scruffy little mustangs. They were half again bigger and a lot less rideable than that: herds grown from ranch stock turned out to pasture, with all the heft of workhorses added to their new wildness. Some broncs would weigh more than three-quarters of a ton and measure almost as tall at the shoulder as the height of a big man. A rider would come away from a summer of those hill horses with one experience or another shaken into his bones and brain, and Dad's turn came up when the last two horses were ~~s~~hooped into the Doig corral at dusk one of those Sunday afternoons.

Neither horse looked worth the trouble of getting on -- a huge club-hoofed gray, and a homely low-slung black gelding. Someone yelled out, "That black thing looks like a Goddamned milk cow!" Dad called across the corral to the other rider, "Take one of those crowbaits, Fred, and I'll take the other." The gray was ~~chosen~~ 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 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 ~~little~~ quick running start and slammed the fence again and 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. ~~He~~ blacking out, ~~and~~ 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 kind of 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 horses and rode up the slope of Wall Mountain to find the coyote den and dig out the pups.

When they ~~pulled~~ reined up in a clearing in the timber where the yips were coming from, Dad stepped off his horse and walked ahead a few steps to look for the den. The boy tossed down the shovel he was carrying. It bounced at the heels of Dad's horse. Whirling in a circle, the horse kicked Dad in the back with both rear hooves, splintering ribs and driving two of the jagged bones into his lungs.

Dad hunched on the ground in pain like a shot animal. When he tried to straighten above a crouch, his breath would cut off. Staying on all fours in a red fog of pain, he gasped out to the choreboy to lead his horse beneath a small cliff nearby. Dad crawled to the cliff, climbed off the ledge into the saddle. Then, crumpled like a dead man tied into the stirrups, he rode the endless mile and a half to the ranch.

Getting there only began a new spell of pain -- the pounding car ride across rutted roads to town and the doctor. By then, Dad's breathing was so ragged and bloody that the doctor set off with him for the hospital

in Bozeman. Two gasping hours more in a car. At last, by evening, he was in a hospital bed. He always healed fast, and a few weeks later, he was climbing stiffly onto a horse again.

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 a world away from the pinched midwestern background she had been born into twenty-two years before. Come, what's more, for forever and with no regret ever said aloud. Her people were German stock, abrupt and gloomy as their family name--Glun. In the memories which ran back along the rails to the farmstead life there in central Wisconsin's cut-over pine country, that name mocked itself into a queer rhyme. It had happened because school dismayed Bessie, and in her unhappiness one day whispered ~~something~~ to the girl seated beside her. The teacher ~~had~~ thundered it then. Picking up his ~~wicked switch~~ 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, were 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

tan land running and running past her two-year-old eyes. She is plump and pretty, and with her straight-cropped dark hair looks like a small jolly version of a much older person. A version, in fact, of Bessie, who not many years before had herself not long before?

One the wall by me is a studio portrait of Bessie when she had reached sixteen or so, She is 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. Beside

no ¶ 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 instead of taking

it on chin-first. She must have had so much to wonder at, raised as so apron-stringed a 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 could taunt a daughter of his, and after the third grade, 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 left her unsure of herself, but guessing that the world must have something else to offer.

no ¶ 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 to the camera eye. It is, all in all, an offering glance for the world, which she might

yet have had a ~~trace~~ strong gleam of ~~six~~ four years later as she held her daughter 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 ~~him. Tom was twice~~ the man.

no ¶

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 utmost charity--and half those who speak of Tom Ringer do give a rough affectionate forgiveness, while the other half call him a sour-minded ~~little whelp~~ reprobate--the knack of caring ~~much~~ steadily for anyone beyond himself ~~was not~~ 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 ~~not being~~ nothing like being alone, and there ~~was~~ came the consequence which Bessie declared in the shortest and angriest of her verdicts on this husband: Tom drank. It made a ~~poor~~ 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. ~~This, too: even~~ Darn his ~~hisn~~ 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. The one feat of finance they ever managed was this train trip, uprooting themselves ~~to~~ half a continent westward ~~to~~ to where a relative had homesteaded--a blind jump to the strange high country of sage and silence.

At Three Forks, where the tilts of this new country suddenly tumbled three moseying rivers into one another to make the headwaters of the Missouri, they left the train. In every direction around them, ranges of mountains hazed to a thin blue, as if behind smoke. Mountains and mountains and mountains, Bessie would remember. The promise of a housepainter's job awaited Tom in this first town of the new life. But that job, or any other, wasn't to be had. What did present itself was the rumor of work at a small logging camp eastward in the Crazy Mountains. See, Tom had been in the some woods back in Wisconsin. We went off up there near Porcupine Creek in the Crazies, and Tom cut in the timber until winter come. Then, into the teeth of the mountain weather, Tom and Bessie and their tiny daughter climbed higher into the ~~Crazies~~ Crazy Mountains, to spend the winter cutting small trees for fence posts. ~~A mile and a half~~ Some thousands of feet higher than they had ever been in their Wisconsin lives, they set up a peaked photographer's tent in the dark pitched of forest, banked the outside walls with snow for warmth, fired up ~~two~~ a long box stoves which would be kept blazing all winter long, and

known if they might bring on higher taxes? ~~Eventually,~~ So, the Experiment Station agreed that all private timber cruise data would be kept confidential and that compilations would not be released in any form that would disclose the timber holdings of any single private owner. No

Once that rift with the lumbermen had been ~~papered over,~~ resolved, the staffing and plans for the forest survey, ~~were set.~~ accelerated. Yes Early in January, 1930, Horace J. "Hoss" Andrews, a forester who had directed a forest land and economic survey

to a modern reader less enthused about sameness everywhere he looks, More's ideal municipalities sound much like the suburbs of Detroit. Some form of locality, either a city-state or a small congenial commonwealth about the size of England, was featured in utopian

whacked down timber from first light to last. No, it wasn't so bad a winter. We got by good, there was lots of firewood.

Through that timberline winter, isolated and snowbound, Bessie and Tom chopped down and unlimbed the 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 in the snow. When he unhitched the load, the horse would turn and head itself back up the mountain for the next piece of work. That pattern of trudge was much like what lay ahead for Bessie herself, for if I am to read beginnings in these lives which twin behind my own, my grandmother's knack for ploughing head-down through all hardship surely begins here in these first lean Montana years.

Then the kid's dad--she banished him to that in later years, 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 a lot of years.

Moss Agate was a small ranch at the southern reach of the valley, on an empty flat furred with sage and a few hackles of brush along the Smith River, and walled in at every point of the horizon by buttes and mountains. The one vivid thing about the place was its name. The rock called moss agate is a daydreamer's stone, a milk-gray hardness with its trapped

writing to reform Athens, to inject Sparta's sterner strengths into his own wobbling community. His prescriptions were severe: no private property or other needless luxuries, no dangerous ideas from abroad, a ruling class of philosophers, rigorous education and training for children of the elite. Plato's purging of society down to what he saw as the basics of the sound life set a tone we will find throughout utopian writing. If not downright drab and cheerless, utopias often tend to sound as sober as cloudy afternoons in a hospital ward. Spartan through and through, this durable notion that utopia must be shaped by discipline and sacrifice.

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 ~~the ranch~~ Moss Agate asked if he was finding any prize ~~agates~~ specimens in the hills there. One, he grinned. She's about five feet tall, with black hair.

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 ~~put~~ 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 ~~off~~ out the sage ticks which pincered onto the children, ~~mended fence~~, mucked out the tidal flow of manure-and-urine after the eternal cows. ~~I even wore bib overalls in haying time, but~~ silly thing, I'd put a dress on if I seen anybody coming. And all of it in a growing simmer against Tom.

I can see her, in those Moss Agate years, being made over from almost all that she had been before: toughening, the salt of sweat going into her mind and heart. ~~Without~~

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 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--a newcomer who has firmed into what she will be all the rest of her life.

full house during the winter another small room was engaged.... McArdle has spent practically the entire month supervising and helping with the computations for the Douglas-fir yield study.... Westveld was on the Whitman Forest all the month studying brush disposal practices on private lands and on government sales.... Isaac spent practically the entire month in the field. The measurement of a series of Snoqualmie plots completed the biennial examination of the Douglas-fir seed study plantations .... Simson has been at Wind River throughout the month engaged chiefly in

One of Isaac's first assignments was to test the seed storage theory of his predecessor at Wind River, J. V. Hofmann. Several years earlier, Hofmann had concluded that Douglas-fir seed lived in the duff, the decaying organic material of the forest floor, for a number of years before it began sprouting. He cited as evidence the appearance of seedlings nearly a decade after the Yacolt fire swept over an area near Wind River.

Hofmann's theory held great consequence. If it was correct, the forests of the Northwest should regenerate themselves after fire or logging. But Munger and other skeptics pointed out vast cut-over areas in the Douglas-fir regions which were remaining treeless year after year. Isaac set to work. He began germination tests on seeds in

Early in 1926, the inventive researcher hit on the method he had been seeking to measure the distance and patterns of seed flight. He turned kite-flyer. From that World War One job of inspecting airplane wingbeams, Isaac remembered the strength and lightness of Sitka spruce wood. "I got a piece of spruce and made my struts and frame... I got light balloon silk sailcloth and stabilized and covered

who had been District Forester of the Pacific Northwest, was appointed national director of the forest survey, and moved his office the several blocks to the Experiment

¶ 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 meat ~~tight~~-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 was the height my mother had been--scant inches over five feet--but where my mother had been a wand of a woman, this grandmother was an oak stump. ~~She was~~ chunky as she had grown--at times weighing more than 150 pounds, and long since locked into an everlasting lost battle against pastries, snacks and second helpings--she somehow seemed stout without being overgirthed; steady without being stolid. In this odd way, her very stockiness then made her look taller than she really was, and a neighbor's memory at last explained this: The first time I remember seeing Bessie Ringer was at the Caukins 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 both senses of the saying, Bessie Ringer was stiff-backed--erect pride and unbending notions to go with it. The first of her iron beliefs was family. This had started early, when my mother from her first breaths was seen to be an asthma victim ~~sufferer~~ and Grandma 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 Wallace--and were given whatever sacrifices she could that they would be able to go through the schooling she had not, make it adept out into the world whole and able. That the family thinned off too 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 ~~most~~ much thinking--her slim school years and that tethered girlhood had robbed her mind there, and she knew it--but doing came to her 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 say, 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. She was a worker, comes the valley's echo of her again and again. So much a worker, it may be, that items such as a wrong husband fell away behind the pace of task and chore.

Family, work--and the clinch across both of them, steadfastness. Life was to be lived out as it came. If it came hard, you bowed your neck a bit more and waited. ~~[illegible]~~ So without thinking it through--not ~~really~~ entirely knowing how to--she had ~~determined~~ set her mind not to be afraid of that spare land, that won ranch life.

Leo Isaac's perceptive powers. Thornton Munger, himself a veteran woodsman, noticed that Isaac "was an exceedingly sharp observer. He could see little one year old seedlings when the ordinary person would pass them by...."

After the stint in the north woods, Isaac went to the University of Minnesota for a degree in forestry. World War One intervened, and he was shipped with a number of other forestry students to Fort Vancouver, Washington, where they would learn to inspect the wooden wingbeams then used in military planes. Finishing up his college work after the war, Isaac returned to the state of Washington to start with the Forest Service in the Okanagan National Forest. After four years came the chance to transfer to the Wind River Experiment Station, and Isaac gladly took it. He arrived on the job in early May, 1924, just before the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station came into being and absorbed the Wind River facility.

to jot directives on scraps of paper. His mystifying scrawl became an office legend, yet he was an exacting man with the language; correspondence not up to standard would be fired back to the unfortunate staffer for rewriting, with an abrupt Munger comment attached.

Munger would put funds into expensive items which were essential -- the $500 calculating machine, the little fleet of cars and trucks needed for Station work -- but preached Yankee frugality in operating them. McArdle, who spent much time on the road dealing with the mysteries of gasping fuel lines, recalled that Munger had the front seat of the Station's first car "remodeled with hinges so it could be

rind of determination,
In this she was not like many of the valley women, or most
Down through the valley's history, such settlers had
of the men either. ~~Such settlers~~ expected something of
their work, and sooner or later uprooted themselves if it
chored
didn't come. Bessie just ~~pushed~~ on. In her unschooled way,
she was more fearless about making a fresh life in Montana
Those newcoming homesteaders had
than my father's family had been. ~~They~~ allied themselves,
formed a kind of trestle of relatives and fellow Scots into
the Basin. Compared with them, Bessie was as alone as a
tumbleweed. Indeed, her stories of life at Moss Agate and
any number of other hardscrabble spots in the valley most often
began with the aloneness: The one time, I was alone by
myself on the place--the kids' dad was off again somewhere--
and it rained and it rained until the creek started to come
up around the cattle in the corral. It kept coming and kept
coming until I had to saddle our old roany horse and ride
through it to let those cows out. The water was up over the
stirrups and of course that old roany made it his habit to
stop dead whenever you tried to hurry him. But I got him
through the water and tied one end of the rope to the pole
gate and the other end to the saddle horn, and the cows could
follow me out then. A person can do a lot of things like
that when you're in a corner.

But another corner was where Tom loomed in his private furies, and
and the ranch life,
if steadfastness held her into the marriage, it did not overcome the pains
them
of ~~it~~. Gone to
Tom
town for groceries, ~~he~~ might not return to days. When he
did come back from such sprees, he came rasping at the way

who have gone through that area since then," Munger mused later, "have been surprised to discover once in awhile an eastern oak or a European pine of some kind and have wondered how in the world it got there."

But other projects were tidier and more productive. Munger did some early planting to slow the drifting of sand dunes along the southern Oregon coast. He made reconnaissance

Bessie had done the ranch chores or was raising the children. Gosh sakes, times you wouldn't know he was a man you'd ever met. Ornery old thing him, anyhow.

She fought back at him with silence, and she could be as grimly silent as oblivion.

Then the rancher who owned Moss Agate died, and passed from the valley with a storied funeral where the reek of whiskey oozed through the flower smells, and the drunken pallbearers nearly dropped the coffin at the graveside. Whiskey had poisoned Bessie's life at Moss Agate, and now whisky closed it. She and Tom and the four children moved to another ranch; that job lasted no time, and soon they were in the tiny rail-line town of Ringling, in a ragtag house which at least put shelter atop their heads. Sometime then, Tom left Bessie alone again with the children, this time for several days without food or money, and at last she broke the marriage. She never bothered with a divorce. Going to law for something which she had ended in her own mind did not seem needed. But Tom had passed from the family as surely as if he had been tumbled into the grave with the whiskyfied rancher.

That life done, Bessie was soon adrift. There was no income, and the last of the children were heading off on their own. In the Shields River valley, near the Crazy Mountains where she had started in Montana twenty-five years before, she found a job as cook for an elderly farmer named Magnusson. He was prosperous but lonely, a widower, feeling old and trying to dilute his days with drink. When Bessie came, the drinking and the self-pity tapered away. He came to rely on her, and they became a familiar pair in the Shields River Valley beneath the Crazies, him driving her country, he driving her

in his pickup to a meeting of her women's club or off to the town of Wilsall for the week's groceries, she ruling in his kitchen and handling the farmyard chores for him. Surely the sight of them set tongues clanging--it took less than that--but they confounded the gossips considerably. No one ever managed to hear them call each other anything but Mr. Magnusson and Mrs. Ringer or to see them more than correctly cordial with one another, an arms'-length household it was hard to read anything further into. Apparently the effort at last was given up, because Bessie became friends with some of the sternest neighboring wives, a well-regarded member of the Shields River community. which left just one person on a moral high-horse against her: my father.

The resentment between Dad and my grandmother must have circled in darkly from the past, all the way from his earliest courting of my mother. Lessons of lineage were not something Bessie ordinarily gave much thought to, but as she watched this only daughter, the first child and the favored, being wooed by a showy young cowboy, surely her own too-young marriage to Tom Ringer came to mind, and probably too her mother's too-young marriage to the stern silent John Glun. # What was said there in the years of my father's courtship as Bessie tried to stave off the past's rhythm, I have never heard hinted. But the broad line of time tells much. It was only a few months before my mother's twenty-first birthday, when by law she would have been free of family consent, that she and my father were married, after six entire years of courtship.

importantly, that early seed study project foreshadowed the extensive research efforts which would focus on the Douglas-fir to this very day.

In 1915, a revamping of the District Six office made Munger an assistant chief of the Division of Silviculture. Technically he remained in charge of the Wind River Experiment Station, but the bulk of his work for the next several years was spent on timber survey and timber sales. Then in mid-July, 1924, funding became available for the new regional Experiment Station, and Munger was drawn into research again. "...As a surprise to me, District Forester

of January 7, 1910, Munger was at the Washington home of his brother-in-law, a Yale classmate of Pinchot. Pinchot, invited for dinner, came in a bit late, but with the apology that a White House messenger had handed him a letter just before he left home. As the party sat down to dinner, Pinchot coolly read aloud his dismissal for taking the Alaskan lands argument to the public. Munger remembered the "awful blow" that "our leader and really our hero was gone." awkward No

But if Pinchot was gone, the Yale cadre of foresters he had inspired still was at work on the remaining American woods -- with younger men such as Thornton Munger ~~eyed~~, as who would emerge No he served as sort of a "roustabout" in the job, handling technical questions from the public. Research ventures into the field could be hit-and-miss. Once when directed to establish some test plantings of trees from the American east coast and Europe, a pet project of then-Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, Munger found himself on the western slope of Mt. Hood with two companions, five horses, and a worsening snowstorm. As the snow piled up around them, Munger and company ~~quickly flung~~ were forced to abandon the tree seeds ~~out on onto~~ to the snowbanks and scurried for lower climes. "People No

not Your mother would ~~have~~ of wanted me to raise you instead of your Grandma doing it. She said...she said just as much. She talked about it sometimes, after she'd had one of her bad spells. We always knew she might go during one of those spells--Christamighty, how she suffered with those. Times I would drive her to the hospital in Townsend thinking every breath was gonna be her last. She went through hell on this earth, your mother. And she never would want me to give you up, I'm here to tell you. Silence from him, then the next veer from fear to spite: Hell, we'll get by somehow, sonny. We don't need that old woman running our lives. Look at her there, living with old Magnusson that way and never marrying him. She needs to run her own life more pert, I'd say. Then this, the rest of the secret told: She'd take you from me in a minute if she could. But there's no way on this green earth I'm gonna let her.

But there was a way, and it came with a slow fierce sear inside Dad during the summer of 1950 at the cattle camp along Sixteenmile Creek. He began to suspect that he might be dying. The ulcer which had embered in him for so many years became a steady burn. It was a rare day when he didn't throw up a meal. Everything the doctors gave him seemed to make the stomach worse. He lost weight, his nerves jumped. For the first time, death was crowding Charlie Doig slowly enough that he could think it through, and it brought the greatest change of mind he could make.

Dad had much to gulp back, then, when he set out to make truce with this phantom grandmother of mine. I can hear, as if in a single clear echo, the pivoting of our lives right there: Dad beginning his desperate phone call in the lobby of the Sherman Hotel, spelling out her name in an embarrassed half-shout to the operator, staring miserably at the cars nosing off around the prow of the hotel as the long-distance line hummed and howled in his ear. Then: Hullo, Bessie? This is Charlie. Charlie, Charlie Doig. Ivan's fine, he's right here. Say, are you gonna be home on Saturday? We could, uh, come over and see you. All right. All right then. G'bye.

The Magnusson ranch was in the county south of us, in what we called the Norskie country--a coverlet of farmed slopes and creek bottoms coming down from the icy snaggled peaks of the Crazy Mountains. It was better farming country than our valley--lower, milder--and the Norwegians were exactly

the thrifty and stubborn people to make it pay. After her years at the sage flats of Moss Agate, my grandmother's job at Magnusson's must have seemed almost silken. As we drove to his ranch, the furrowed fields were ruled straight and brown on one side of the road, the green flow of hayfields curving with the creek on the other.

Magnusson's house, brown as the plowed earth, sheered up from the creek's slim valley. A high set of stairs stilted along an outside wall to the kitchen door. As we went up, a man and a woman came onto the porch and looked at us with curiosity. Magnusson proved to be a steady-eyed, stocky farmer in his seventies, with white eyebrows and a mustache stained less than white. His rumbled accent came like a growl against Dad's burr, but he said we were welcome in his house always, then withdrew to the front room with his newspaper from Norway. That left us with my grandmother, whom I barely remembered from four or so years before. She gave Dad a thin Hello, beamed down at me and said, Where's a kiss for your ~~grandmother~~ gramma? I pecked her cheek and husked a Hello as close as I could to the tone she had given Dad. The three of us bunched ourselves at the table in the vast kitchen, which was where serious visiting was done in that country. As she and I munched our way through a plate of cookies she brought out, Dad lit cigarettes nervously and between puffs chewed away at the inside of his cheek. In a ~~way, fasion~~ fashion, he was courting this wary woman much as he had courted her

daughter twenty years earlier, but with grimness instead of love. What was unspoken but being said more plainly than anything in the careful chatter was this: We need you. I may die soon. Ivan must have someone to raise him.

How much the old rift between them was mended that day, I do not know. But ~~prickly-tempered~~ tetchy as both of them could be about the past, that first visit surely undid some of the anger just by not becoming a brawl.

I remember that in the late afternoon I went with her to feed the white geese in the ~~barn~~farm yard, and that they hissed and flounced around us until her dog, Shep, came barking, delirious to have an excuse to scatter the bullies. Shoo 'em, Shep! Shoo 'em good! I remember her encouraging. Sic 'em out of here! I remember too that by the time Dad and I left, I was calling her Grandma.

n Dad seemed not to know what to call his own mother-in-law; he had avoided calling her anything during our kitchen stay. But from the bottom of the stairs, he said up to her: Goodbye, Lady. We'll come again next Sunday.

Almost every weekend after that, we would go back to Magnusson's to visit her. The bargain Dad needed ~~had been~~ was being struck. It would take effect sooner than ~~we~~ even he dreamed, because one among us in that odd group was dying, all right, but it was not my father. It was Martin Magnusson.

Just before old Magnusson slumped into the series of hospital stays which saw him decline to death, Dad bluntly asked my grandmother further into his plan. The doctoring in Montana was not helping him; his stomach flamed more and more now, he felt himself growing weaker. He was going to a place in Minnesota called the Mayo Clinic, and he wanted not to go alone, to have me with him--and her. Would she come?

In a week, the three of us stepped up into the ~~train~~ eastbound train at Ringling. I remember of the trip only that Dad slept and slept, and that when Grandma drowsed, she sometimes snorted herself awake with a long kkkhhhh of a snore. At the place in Minnesota, Dad could hardly carry

a suitcase into the hotel where we would stay. He checked into the clinic, and immediately the doctors began days of tests on him. ~~For a few days,~~ Grandma and I watched the people below from our hotel room far above the street, and spent time with Dad at the clinic whenever he was not in tests. On the fourth day, we were startled by a telegram ~~came~~ for Grandma. Tom Ringer ~~was dead~~ had died. His last torment of my grandmother was that she still felt something for him which made her want to return to Montana for his funeral. Dad agreed there was no choice, although it seemed to me there was ~~plenty.~~ all the choice in the world. She and I took the train back to Montana, leaving Dad to the doctors' ~~proddings and samplings.~~ solemn tests.

After the funeral, I went to Ringling to ~~m~~ stay again with Dad's brother Angus and his family, Grandma went back to Magnusson's farm.

~~It was~~ now several weeks dragged by before ~~he~~ Dad followed us home to Montana, and when he came, he was a bony ghost with only a third of a stomach. ~~Only~~ severe surgery alone kept ~~could keep~~ him alive, the doctors had told him, and it would be a narrow life at that: he would ~~never be able~~ not dare to eat more than a few mouthfuls at a time, and he would not be able to work for many months. There the doctors had it backwards. Staying away from work, from knowing what ability was left to him, was what he was not able to do. Within a few weeks, he had hired on at a ranch at the western edge of the valley and there, pale and retching if he ate a spoonful too much, my father began slamming away at the job as he always had.

And he arranged a second matter. Grandma and I now were to live in Ringling, in the shambled small house where she had managed to put her own children through school and out into the world. From there I would ride the ~~school~~ bus to school in White Sulphur Springs; that part of life changed little. But under a new roof with this new grandmother, almost all else would ~~did~~.

Down from Wind River in two truckloads came the makings of the new Experiment Station headquarters in Portland -- files, library, and some odds and ends of furniture. Four rooms had been leased in the Lewis Building at Fourth and Oak. June H. Wertz was transferred from the Forest Service's District Six office several blocks away and put onto "the big task of going through the ten years of Wind River files, throwing away the inconsequential stuff and retaining the remainder, and then supplementing that with whatever the Experiment Station files should have from the District files." Promptly a "Monroe electrically driven calculating machine" was bought for use on statistical studies—as Station Director Munger reported with chagrin, "Price $500!"

The staff assembled by late 1924 was both new and young. The Wind River personnel, Leo A. Isaac and A. Gail Simson, had been transferred to the Station. Richard E. McArdle was

, twenty miles to the south of White Sulphur Springs,

Ringling lay on the land as the imprint of what had been a town, like the pale outline on grass after a tent has been taken down. When the roadbed of the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was diked through the site early in the century, Ringling built up around the depot: three hotels, several saloons, a lumber yard, stores, a two-storey bank, a confectionary, even a newspaper office. But late in the 1920's, most of the businesses burned in a single wild night of flame. It was said, and more or less believed, that a Ku Klux Klan cross had blazed just before the lumber yard caught fire and spewed the embers that took half the town to the ground. A few years later, another fire even less explainable than the first mopped up most of what was left. By the time Grandma and I moved there, Ringling stood as only a spattered circle of houses around several large weedy foundations. The adult population was about 75 persons, almost all of them ~~unimaginably~~ undreamably old to me, and the livelihoods were ~~the depot,~~ a saloon, a gas station, a post office, ~~and~~ Mike Ryan's store, the depot, and

Exactly through the middle of ~~Ringling~~ town, the railroad tracks, which glinted and fled instantly in both directions. Mornings, an eastbound passenger train tornadoed through, then came one tearing westward; afternoons, as people said, it was the same except opposite. My first days there ~~Sometimes~~ I wondered about the travelers who could be seen as tiny cutouts against the pullman windows--what they were saying when they looked out at us and our patchy, sprawled town-that-was-less-than-a-town. If they looked out.

Passenger trains ~~came~~ whipped in and went off like kings and queens, potent and unfussed, ~~stately,~~ on the dot. But freight trains banged through at all hours, and for a

few weeks in autumn, Ringling made its clamoring own rail traffic as box cars of sheep and cattle jerked back and forth from the loading pens at the edge of town. Otherwise, the town dozed, kept alive by the handful of people who lived there out of habit. Mike Ryan's store, which I lost no time in visiting, was Ringling's one live tendril to its past.

Mike Ryan was a very ancient man by then, near-blind, looming in his goggling spectacles and flat cap amid a dim avalanche of hardware, harness, ~~a few~~ stray dry goods, and stale groceries such as the bakery goods his cats liked to sleep on. The second words Mike spoke to you, after a broguey Hello and learning what it was you wanted, always were: Now it's here if I can just find it.

And it ~~was~~ would be, for Mike Ryan's had been a ~~wonderful~~ perfect store in its time, a vast overstocked bin of merchandise behind its ~~square~~ high false-front and under its roof with the yellow airplane signals painted hugely on. But now, as if the years were caving in on it, ~~Mike Ryan's~~ the enterprise was becoming more and more muddled, dimmer, mustier. At times Mike himself would ~~not~~ no longer see a person come in the door, and you could stand for moments, watched only by his brindle cats, and hear him breathe an old man's heavy breathing.

Just as Mike Ryan's was the fading memory of a general store and Ringling itself the last scant bones of a town, Grandma's house turned out to be the shell of a ~~place~~ to live in. It ~~had a~~ counted up, all too rapidly, into a

kitchen, living room and ~~one~~ bedroom, each as narrow as a pullman car and about a third as long. The rooms had stood empty for more than ten years--empty of people, that is, for the flotsam of Grandma's earlier family leaned and teetered everywhere. Diving into the dusty boxes and dented metal suitcases, I came up with a boomerang sent by the son who had ~~moved~~ been in the war, to Australia, a lavender-enameled jewelry box which had been my mother's, albums of strange people in stiff clothes. The place was stacked with dead time, and the first few days Grandma could not move in it without tears brimming her eyes. When at last she could, she called me into the bedroom and wordlessly began to dig down through the stacks and piles atop a low reddish

efficient uses of wood. But not until 1915 did the full-fledged Branch of Research emerge within the Forest Service -- an administrative unit to direct all federal forestry research, headed by Assistant Chief Earle H. Clapp.

Even after forest research came into its own on the organization chart, it took another decade for the present system of regional experiment stations to evolve. As early as 1913, the Pacific Northwest had been granted the Wind River Experiment Station, south of Mount St. Helens in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. A Forest Service tree nursery already existed at Wind River, and the diversity on the site -- virgin forest, second growth, cut-over land, and even a burn scar from the great Yacolt fire of 1902 -- made possible a variety of planting experiments. But all in all, the Wind River station and its works were modest. Leo Isaac recalled that when he was transferred there in 1924, "it was then a sad affair," with languishing tree plantations and with most of the station files "piled two feet high on one big open table."

Within the next few years, however, a pair of long-awaited legislative moves bolstered the research concept. The Federal Appropriation Act for the fiscal year 1925 allotted $26,000 to establish the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station -- a new facility which would keep Wind River for its field work. Next came a vital piece of legislation wheeled into place by Sen. Charles L. McNary of

chest just larger than a seaman's trunk. As I watched, she propped the lid, looked down into the tumble of old clothes and ancient bedding inside, and snuffled. Then a quick honk into her handkerchief, and she began talking in a tone angrier than I had yet heard from her: This here was your mother's hope chest. The kids' dad made it for her back at Moss Agate, when she first started going with Charlie. With your dad, I mean. He worked on this at nights for the longest time. See, he didn't have anything to make it from but some pieces of flooring, but he wanted her to have a hope chest of some kind. He did a good job with it. He could when he wanted to. It's sat here all these years. I want it to be yours now. The back of my throat had filled and tightened as she talked. I gulped, managed to say All right, and walked carefully from the room so as not to run.

Life with her proved to be full of squalls of emotion of that sort. For one thing, she had a temper fused at least as short as Dad's. But where he would explode into words, she would go silent, lips clamped. If she could be persuaded to say anything, the words were short and snapped, and you discovered you were better off to let her be wordless. I know now that such silences came out of years of having no other defense: of being alone on a remote ranch, nowhere to go, no other person to unbend to, when a stormy husband went into his own black moods. But I did not understand it then, and found myself suddenly in a household which could change as if a cloud had gone across the sun. 9 Other unexpectednesses

kept ~~cropping up~~ tumbling out. Among the surprises she carried in her was a full-sail version of my childhood I had never heard. When she had visited my father and mother so often in the first three or four years of my life, ~~and I came to see that~~ it had been ~~her~~ she who spent many of the patient hours to teach me to read, the words fastening in my mind as I sat in her lap and watched her finger move along with her reading. And much else: Oh, how you used to coax me to sing. 'Ah-AH-ah! SING, gramma!' you'd say. So I'd have to hold you in the rocker and sing by the hour. . . 'Poor me,' you'd say when you didn't get your way, and you'd pooch out your lower lip so sad. . . Lands, you used to scare me half to death, the way you ran down that hill at the Stewart Ranch. There was a big tree way up on slope, and you'd take your dog up there and here the both of you would come, straight down. I used to hold my breath . . .And back beyond all that, she had the news of how I'd ~~come~~ arrived in White Sulphur, it's that world: You were born in Dr. McKay's hospital, building just up the hill from--oh, what's the name of that ~~place~~ joint? Hmmpf. The Stockman, just up the hill from the Stockman. When you were born, you had two great big warts right here in front of your ear, and your right foot splayed off like this, and ~~had red~~ you had the reddest hair. You were something grand to see, all right . . .

At times she talked a small language which must have come from those two islanded times of childhood, her own growing up on the Wisconsin farm and her children's years at Moss Agate.

Words jigged and bellied and did strange turns then: I'll have a sipe more of coffee, but if I eat another bite, I'll busticate....

Get the swatter and dead that fly for me, pretty please?...Hmpf, I been settin' so long my old behinder is stiff....Her sayings took their own route of declaring it was time to get a move on: Well, this isn't buying the baby a shirt nor paying for the one he's got on. Or to take a doubtful chance: Here goes nothin' from nowhere. ~~Neighbors~~

Or when she did not understand something I read to her from one of my books: ~~Too~~ Like the miser man's well, too deep for me, boy. Or when she did understand: I see, said the blind man to his deaf wife. Neighbors were tagged with whatever they deserved: He's so crooked he couldn't sleep in a roundhouse....That pair is ~~as~~ close as three in a bed with one kicked out....

That tribe ~~They~~ must never heard that patch beside patch is neighborly, but patch upon patch is beggarly. Anything which lay lengthwise was longways to her; the stanchions of a milking barn were stanchels, the cows themselves were a word of my mother's as a child, merseys. When she was irked, she had her own style of ~~swear~~ not-quite-cussing: Gee gosh, god darn, gosh blast it....Every time the wind ~~blew~~ swirled her dress, there would be said: Hmpf! Balloon ascension! ~~And~~ at least one meal of the day, she would pause between forkfuls and pronounce: I hear some folks say they get so tired of their own cooking. By gee, I never have. And always the stories, such as the one of an early Moss Agate neighbor, a homesteader, who had a head huge and twisted as an ogre's. After a lifetime of ~~dismay with~~ despair over his ~~own~~ ugliness, the man began rethinking it all and soon before he died proudly willed his skull to medical science. As I ~~squirmed~~ shivered a bit at the tale, Grandma chuckled and said in her declaring style: Headless man into heaven, think of that.

To my surprise, dogs and cats fully counted into her conversations. Dad spoke to dogs only to send them around the livestock, and he likely had not glanced in a cat's direction since the last time my mother had scratched Pete Olsen's gray ears. But Grandma loved dogs, and held a standard they could not live up to: their natural post-sniffing and leg-lifting infuriated her. Shep! Don't be so sappy. Get away from there, you darned fool. There had been one Shep or another almost always in her households ever since a huge woolly sheepdog back on her parents' Wisconsin farm, and the last of that name moved to Ringling with us.

> A fine white-and-tan with a hint of collie about him, Shep had gone old and as lazy as my grandmother would allow anything to be.

He panted as he walked and spent most of life stretched under the kitchen table, where he filled all the space there was. Several times a day Grandma would shift her feet as she sat at the table playing solitaire, and there would be an explosion of pained howling and outraged sympathy: Well, you shouldn't be there right under my feet, that's what you get! Serves you right, you aren't hurt, big baby. Come here, let me pet it, pretty please, that's all right, there, you're all better now...

And she fed wayfaring cats as if they were famished but naughty orphans, scolding and huffing over them all the while she filled the dish with milk and bread: What do you mean bumming around here? Why don't you stay to home where you've got good grub? I ought to let you go hungry, sappy old thing! Here, eat! The only creatures in her world which got no affection with their scoldings were magpies. She hated their scavenging habits, and when she saw one within range of her voice, she

cut loose: GIT! Git yourself out of here, god darned old thing, there's nothing gonna die here for you to peck on. Git! GIT!

We settled in, if living amid such salvoes could be called settling in, by somehow coaxing the tiny Ringling house to stretch and once more make way for people. When the single closet was full, we stashed boxes and suitcases under the bed and davenport as if ballasting the place. All the time we lived there, Grandma grumbled things in and out from under the bed, vowing someday she'd not have to do so. The ironing board went in with a tangle of fishpoles behind a door, my mound of paperback books covered the hopechest at the foot of the one bed. My bed, for I learned at once that living with my grandmother always meant that she claimed the worst accommodations for herself, and the dreariest chores. This inside-out chivalry she must have formed in the Moss Agate years, when she found that she minded the drudgeries there less than did her edgy husband or my frail mother or her frisky sons and so took most of them upon herself. In our Ringling household, she slept on the davenport in the living room, and also climbed out first in the chilly mornings to light the kitchen stove and did every other chore the place needed, until it occurred to her that it might do me some good to have duties of my own. How do you feel about that? I think it wouldn't hurt you none, do you?

The main chore that came to mind at once was the water bucket, because the house had no well and a neighborhood pump had gone rusty from years of disuse. Our water would have to be pumped next door--I paced it at seventy steps in one of my earliest trudges--at the house of Grandma's old friends, the Badgetts. And that perpetual bucketing carried with it something new and rich, for necessity's water was the least of what this ancient pair could add to our Ringling life.

There were enormities about Kate and Walter Badgett which somehow seemed to bolster us simply by so near at hand. These began with size and age, and went on through manner. Side by side, the two of them loomed like ~~silo~~ barn and silo. ~~and barn.~~ Kate was pillowed in fat, so wide that she seemed to wedge apart the arms of the huge easy chair where she spent her days. ~~But~~ atop that crate of a body was ~~a small~~ an owlish face, and a swift tongue that could operate Walter all day long and still have time to tell what the rest of Ringling was doing. On her desk by the front window which looked across the tracks to the gas station and post office-store, Kate kept her pair of field glasses. Who had come to town, for how long and maybe even what they bought--it all came up the magnifying tunnel of vision to Kate, then went out with new life, as if having added to itself while re-echoing through that bulk of body.

Then in some mid-sentence of hers, Walter would appear from one or another of his chores, in his pauseful way looming tall as a doorway, and nearly as still--a rangy silent sentinel with great hands hung on poles of arms. His face was more an eagle's than any other I have seen on a man: the spare lines of brow and cheek and the chisel of nose, and beneath it all, somehow with the hint of a beak, the mouth which turned down at its corners not from mood but just the decades of pursing around a cusp of chewing tobacco. Walter's eyes were a pale, flat blue. Once I heard someone tell of seeing him angry, which I never had. He was tending bar for the day at the saloon there in Ringling, and one of Rankin's ~~men~~ cowboys came in with a load on. He was helling around up and down the bar, and Walter told him, "Better settle down a bit." The Rankin man cussed him and said, "Who the hell're you, old feller?" Walter came leaning across that bar, those blue eyes snapping sparks. "I said you'd better settle down, or I'll settle you." The Rankin man never

Both coming onto eighty years old, the Badgetts were in the kind of outliving contests which very old couples sometimes seem to have, each aging only against the other instead of against time. Naturally, Kate was going to win, and she did, by nearly ~~ten years~~ a decade. But at this point they both seemed as little changing as glaciers, and Walter in particular had slowed life to the exact amble he wanted.

Mid-mornings, ~~Walter~~ he would stroll to his woodpile halfway between his house and ours, and begin chopping with giant strokes: the axe easily high, then down in a slow arc, a whunk! as the wood blasted apart. Walter would straighten, loose a long splatter of tobacco juice, look around town for anything to report to Kate, reach with one hand to set another piece of wood on the chopping block, then whunk! again. ~~Adding~~ Multiplying ~~to~~ that woodpile, which would have kept half the county warm for a winter, spent his mornings. After lunch, he could be seen, in his slow angular stroll, headed for the post office to bring Kate the day's letters and any ~~stray~~ capturable gossip.

Even his responses to her could ~~to Kate were~~ come slow as a measuring ~~worm~~ because he had a fitful mild deafness which gave him the excuse to answer an innocent Hnnnh? while he mulled the latest of her constant orders.

Theirs was a household at once curt and courtly. Knock on the door, ... and Kate's voice boomed a single word like an empress's: COME! I was puzzled that she had the habit of calling other women only by their last names. ~~Gramma~~ nd always was Ringer to her. But the brusqueness had an odd gap in it. Over the years Kate had ironed every thinkable vice out of Walter except for his habit of chewing tobacco. For that, he was permitted a coffee can behind the stove to spit in. Yet when she talked to him for any reason besides an order, the tongue that banged bluntly on every other life in town suddenly went soft and ~~said~~ crooned, of all words, Hubby.

Walter had drifted north from Texas as a young cowboy, and I would learn from men who had worked with him in the valley that he was a storied man with horse and rope. ~~He was nearly~~

The stories included the hint that he had departed Texas after a scrape against the law. Here too, Kate matched him: out of her background wafted the whisper that in Prohibition times she had been one of the area's most reliable vendors of bootleg whiskey. # These two serene old outlaws, then, gifted us with pasts of almost burning dazzle. Gramma, after her long life of silent ranch houses, tirelessly listened to Kate's years of accumulated gossip, encouraging the reports every so often with a Land's sake! or Gee gosh! They played canasta together, traded baked goods back and forth like bartering tribes, puzzled out patterns for their crocheting, and, as simply and purely as the word can be used, neighbored.

~~a Land's sake! or Gee gosh!~~ # For me, there were Walter's gently scary tales of cowboying, parceled out in his steady flat drawl. Time was, I was riding for the Higginses, coming back off some pasture up under the Castles. . . . Walter's as big as my face ~~A huge~~ hand begins rubbing ~~the~~ his high cheekbones as if sharpening them even more. ~~He~~ I just no more got out those shanties at here to Old Dorsey than a spring blizzard come up. The hand ~~reaches~~ descends for the spit can, a long brown Pttt! I was riding a chestnut ~~horse~~ Pony we called Red. He had a coat just about like ~~Ivan's~~ your hair there, Ivan. I looked down and I couldn't tell what color he was, the snow was sticking to us so. The voice steady as the sage horizon, soft as spring wind. I got us in the old store building there at Dorsey. Red didn't like going

through that doorway, but I made him. All the windows were out and the wind whooping in, but it was better than outside. Another Pttt, the hand rasping the cheekbone again. It was close midnight before it let up and we finally got to the ranch. I went in the bunkhouse and the foreman asked me, Where you been, Walt? Well, I said, I was just out checking on the weather . . .

When Grandma and Kate went to White Sulphur ~~a few times a year~~ every so often to ~~buy new dresses~~ shop together, I would walk ~~over~~ down to eat supper with Walter. The meal ~~never varied:~~ was forever the same: fried mush with dark ~~Karo~~ corn syrup, and bread which Walter first toasted and then dried in the oven. When we bit, it shattered and crashed in our mouths, and the more we ate, the fuller our plates grew with the shrapnel of crumbs. After the last roaring bite, Walter would sit back tall as two of me and ask down: Well, reckon we can make it through to breakfast now?

In all their ways, then, the Badgetts put forth a steadiness, a day-upon-day carol out of the valley's past, and for all I knew, out of the past of all the world. Up the slope from our house, the other regular chimes in our Ringling life,

spoke ~~[illegible]~~ weightier accents, graver outlooks. Mr. and Mrs. ~~Morten and Mary~~ Brekke both had been born in Norway, and both come young to the new life in America: they met and married, found a small ranch beyond Ringling where they endured through to prosperity, and now, their family long grown, the pair of them lived at the top of the tiny town like gentlefolk slightly surprised at their new courtliness. Each early afternoon, Mr. Brekke's ~~Morten's~~ serious singsong--HEL-lo--would sound on our porch, and he would hand in the mail he had brought from the post~~office~~ office, already backing away with a gentle smile from our thanks and invitations to come in for a moment. ~~Mary~~ Brekke did come, at least once a day either to our house or to the Badgetts', to hear the doings of the town with a steadily astonished Ohh, myy! Leaving, she always turned and urged: Why don't you come up sometimes for ice cream and cake?

The Brekkes owned the one house in all of Ringling that looked as if it truly had been built to live in rather than just to hold boards up off the ground. A white-fenced yard ~~went~~ rulered ~~squarely~~ neatly around it, framing ~~a green lawn and~~ a few tidy small trees--the only ones in town--and a many-windowed sun porch which opened the entire front of the house. The first owners were a husband and wife who had been the local schoolteachers, a couple of storied learning, and their books and ~~a few~~ some decades of magazines came to the Brekkes with the house. These ~~were the piles~~ I mined day after day, carrying home six or eight old magazines at a time, reading them lying on my bed with the hot ~~lamp~~ bed lamp at my ear, going back the next morning to trade for another batch. The Brekkes admired education almost as if it were magic. When their own children were growing up and one or another would protest not knowing the answer to something, Mary Brekke had a single iron reply: Well, you better learn. Now they encouraged me--Done with that batch? Come in, come in for some more! Mr. Brekke would cry; And sit a minute for some ice cream and cake! Mrs. Brekke would ~~echo--delivering a fresh printed~~ cry after.

Those endless magazines and books became a second school for me, more imagination lit from it than from the one I rode the bus to in White Sulphur Springs each weekday--and always a fresh printed trove from the Brekke house as soon as I had finished the last one.

Ringling was a good place to ~~work on~~ tinker at imagination, because ~~much~~ little else about ~~it~~ the town was in working order any more. Here too, Grandma came up with ~~fresh~~ lore ~~for~~ new to me. She told me that her sons once set up a lemonade stand and took turns shouting across town the advertising ~~slogan~~ she taught them: Lemonade, lemonade, stirred by an old maid with a spade! I thought it over, but couldn't see myself in ~~business.~~ commerce; the cost to privacy would be too high. But another idea she remembered had the right feel. the same enterprising sons had sent

Donna Lawson, from Brothers and Sisters All over This Land

Of all the never-neverlands in the history of American utopianism, Brook Farm radiates a special charm. With the support of Unitarians and Transcendentalists, writers and educational reformers, the enterprise bobbled through the early 1840's as a cross between a dairy farm and a resort for intellectuals -- all of it an agreeable nine miles from Boston. The young author Nathaniel Hawthorne tried Brook Farm life briefly, sputtered that "a man's soul may be buried and perish under a dung heap just as well as under a pile of money," and

away for free mailings they came across in magazines and, since Ringling had no street names, awarded themselves whatever elaborate addresses they could think of. I got out paper and envelopes and gave it a try. Soon offers for stamp collecting kits or pleas for me to get rich selling salve were pouring into the post office in care of I. Clark Doig, Sagebrush Avenue or Jackrabbit Boulevard or Gopher Gulch or whatever other elegancy I'd been able to dream up. Gramma much admired my gaudy mail; I much admired her for the lode of boy-raising behind it.

That exact lore, I began to find, came ready more and more as adolesence perked ~~[illegible]~~ in me. Together, she and I pondered the pale frizz of hair appearing on my upper lip. At the precise age when other boys were praying for some hint of whiskers, I badly wanted to be rid of that downy white shadow. Grandma of course had been through it before: she came up with a ~~[illegible]~~ salve called a depilatory which erased the fuzz, right enough, and felt as if my lip were searing away with it. She was as handy with other disquiets, such as my endless tinkering with sports. She would toss a rubber ball for me back and forth across Ringling's emptinesses. If it rained, we played catch inside the house, bouncing the ball between us the scant twenty feet from the kitchen door to my bedroom. All else failing, she was even willing to wrestle, and we would tussle stiff-armed against one another until we both ~~giggled~~ giggled to a halt and she panted herself down into a chair saying Whoof! Nosir Nope, you're just too tough for your old gramma, I can't keep up with a wildcat like you. And in half a minute, she would be up and in the kitchen, into the making of the next batch of bread or cinammon rolls or butter cookies.

such as Upton Sinclair's Helicon Hall colony were ridiculed in the press -- a lengthy record extending up to the latest neighbor irate against a commune across the fenceline from him.

But if antagonism against utopian thoughts and deeds has gone on a long time, the most chilling of anti-utopian literature is fairly recent in history. For whatever reasons, the modern classics which are so broadly known that their titles have become catchwords have both been anti-utopias -- Brave New World and 1984. Admittedly, both are well-written, which has not always been the case with sincere but plodding utopian novels down through the years; but the real tribute must go to the precise targeting of each novel. Aldous Huxley's Brave New World features the potentialities of science, George Orwell's 1984 the possibilities in government. Such topics have in them exactly the powers utopia has had to rely on. From Francis Bacon

Amid our 20th century lessons that science and government can affect our lives much more than we may want them to, Huxley and Orwell have given us the scenes of what tomorrow's terror could be. Their

But one affliction of that growing time, not even she had come up against before. A bulge the size of a robin's egg appeared on my right leg, just below the kneecap. It was tender as a burn, and after some weeks of wincing almost to tears whenever the knee came against anything, I at last showed her the bulge. She scowled. Hmpf! We'll better get that looked at when your dad comes.

The doctor in Livingston sat me on the end of a metal table, pressed the bump and watched me lift in pain. X-rays showed what he already knew: the knob of the long bone in my leg had cracked away, a hairline crevice now daggering through. The pull of the muscle across the kneecap could lift the bone cap away like a rope working across a pulley, he told us. To prevent that, I would have to keep the leg straight; have to bandage the knee constantly, keep pressure wrapped down onto the bone knob. If I did not, there was a chance the leg would wither.

Medical science has changed its mind about that, and considers now that my fiery knee--the textbook term for the ailment is Schlotter's Disease--was not permanently afflicting and in time would have calcified its own fracture line. But we walked from the doctor's office then with only the understanding that I must drag my right leg stiff for a few years if I were not to drag it all my life.

I was miffed that Grandma could be so matter-of-fact about all this--Wrap it snuglike and do what the doctor said and you'll get like new again--and kept me at the chores we had agreed on, the water bucket sloshing maliciously now as I swung my leg along. The first several times, I made a stoic show of circling the yards of elastic bandage around my knee and into a tight crisscross over the bone knob. And then it became simply a groove of habit, and I became interested in how much I could ask of the mummied leg: I still could run, if in an odd stilty style; could bat the ball thrown by Grandma, could wrestle her, could get on almost as before. My laming, it turned out, had happened in the best possible company--that which shrugged it off and silently told me I had better do the same.

La Reunion Dies in a Harsh Eden

Kalikst Wolski, from To America and In America

Kalikst Wolski was a Polish emigre with a keen curiosity about utopian experiments in America. In 1852, he visited the North American Phalanx at Red Bank, New Jersey, and came away impressed with the Fourierist community: "Those who arrived without money and only a willingness to work live today as only the wealthy can live in Europe..." Perhaps the ~~enthusi~~ enthusiasm he caught there propelled him to another colony, this one in Texas. The French socialist Victor Prosper Considerant had chosen a site on the Trinity River, just west of Dallas, and optimistically dubbed it La Reunion. In 1855 and 1856, some 300 Belgian, French, German and Swiss colonists arrived. Wolski served as guide and interpreter for one early group, and stayed on to help build La Reunion. The diary he kept is remarkable for its detail of the "utopian" life, and for the accumulating mood of despair as climate, illness and lack of experience wore away at La Reunion:

4 Grandma and I

We went into our first winter together. A small window faced west just above the head of my bed. Mornings, as the first sounds of day scuffed outside, I had been able to lift sleepily myself on an elbow and see which of the town's cows or horses or sheep were munching past. Now this window also told the weather, even without my looking all the way out; mewls of wind sneaked under the sash, and on blizzard mornings the sill would have tiny sifts of snow like spilled sugar. Our house, we learned at once, leaked wind everywhere on blowy days; we would stuff a rag rug along the crack under the front door, pull the blinds down over the whistling windows, and desperately fire up both stoves, and hope for the storm to ease away.

Shivery and caging as such blizzard weather was, Ringling looked its best in a storm. The bald gaps between houses became less stark with windows of snow coned between them. The very whiteness of a snowstorm came as a relief, a bright sudden paint over the worn town. Space danced itself along the wind into new distances. If we could not see the depot, a hundred fifty yards down the slope, the storm was a genuine shrouding blizzard, and we went around telling one another about it. The trip to Badgetts for water became a feat of walking with chin tucked into your coat and the filled water

Part Three: Monsters in the Garden

We left George Orwell's intimidated citizen of 1984, back many utopias ago in the Prelude, when a knock on the door surprised him in the midst of unlovely thoughts about Big Brother. Just so does the spectre of utopia-gone-crazy bang on our own trends into the future. Part Three is the dark side of Part One's shining realms -- the imagined results when changes in society turn out for the worst, an estimate of what utopia holds for the creative spirit, and some reporting on the woes of recent utopian ventures. In these latitudes described by modern writers, the utopian pilgrimage turns nasty.

Criticism and mockery of utopia is not new. Aristophanes parodied Plato's Republic with a play showing what would happen if a parliament of women took over Athens, an idea which seemed more hilariously absurd to him than it can to us. Thomas More was satirized time and again by authors of mock-paradises. In writing Gulliver's Travels, Daniel Defoe has been credited with both utopian and anti-utopian sentiments, but clearly most of Gulliver's wanderings took him to inhospitable lands whose residents were caricatures of English habits, scarcely a hopeful endorsement of utopian possibilities.

In real life, utopian ventures have been denounced and hounded, too. The Shakers were mobbed at New Lebanon, New York, during the Revolutionary War; the Mormons burnt out of Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1846; Frances Wright's interracial Nashoba colony was vilified by Southerners of the 1820's; syndicalists and anarchists were endlessly litigated against on the Pacific Coast; cooperative groups of intellectuals

bucket pulling you off-balance as you broke through the ~~snow~~ drifts. When the snowfall and wind at last stopped, the world's one noise would be the scrushing sound of boots on silk-dry snow. In the fresh calm, smoke climbed straight up from chimneys, until it appeared as if the fat gray ribbons were dangling all the town's houses down into a bowl of snow. The cushioned silence would last until the first pickup truck began the fast ratatatat of its chained tires. Throughout such weather, Shep would not be budged from under the kitchen table, and was stepped on by Grandma ten times a day instead of his usual half dozen.

And in this snow-scarfed weather as all other, once a week Dad would appear out of the night. The job he had taken after his operation was at the Camas ranch, fifty miles from us on the far side of White Sulphur Springs. He intended to bide through there until summer, when he would have the contract to harvest the ranch's big hay crop. But he had come up with an idea further: the Camas might be a place for Grandma and me as well.

I would wake at once those nights he arrived, and come intent as a hiding fox. The open doorways leading from the kitchen to the living room and on into my bedroom were aligned, and a panel of light came thrusting through them onto the foot of my bed, as if a square flame from the charged talk beginning across the kitchen table. The ritual I knew by heart. Dad would ask if there might be a can of beer in the house, just anything for a sip. This was high risk, a step out onto the swaying edge of Grandma's temper, but he always did it, as if answering some challenge. If Grandma pulled her mouth tight and her

long dipping No-o[illegible] came out, he was in fast trouble, no matter that he had fought blizzard roads across the night to spend time with her. But if not, if the moment came mellow enough in her, she would get out the beer for him and he would persuade her to take a tiny glass of it herself, the only ~~xhxxx~~ alcohol she would touch. I would let my breath out and curl closer toward the portal of light to hear what would come next.

~~own route.~~ # That old heifer of a cook, by God I can't see why McGrath keeps her on. The meal she put on the table this noon I wouldn't make ~~my~~ this dog ~~eat~~ here. Liver fried until you could use it for shoeleather, and a little dab of boiled ~~potatoes~~ spuds, and some store bread, and that was all. You can't keep a crew on grub like that.) ~~Mickey said in the bunkhouse, "McGrath always~~

Oh, the men aren't going to stand for it much more, they'll be asking for their checks. And Mrs. McGrath just sits there and lets her get by with it. McGrath is no better, he ought to know that a crew is only as content as its cooking. Funny damn way to run a ranch, or I'll put in with you...

The notion sheened a bit more each time out of his talk. If the cook at the Camas were to be let go, if the job could be Grandma's...There's a helluva big house there, plenty of room in the upstairs for the three of us. Ivan would have to stay some place in White Sulphur for school a bit of the year, but weekends and the summer we'd be all together...

A waiting, a beer bottle is set on the table, a small glass follows. What would you think of the idea, Lady? And now Grandma, who has been offering only hmpfs until now: I don't just know. Waiting. I suppose it would be good there. Waiting. For darn sure we could use the wages, and I'm plumb able to work.

Invisible in my half-dark--it is one of the mysteries of those times that no one ever caught on that I was a light sleeper and would hear anything said at any hour in that small house--I would listen to Dad once more ease out of his night of trying to talk the future around to his own route. Well, we'll just have to watch our chance. I'll put it to McGrath in a minute if that cook is let go. And you can see then what you think...The echo from Grandma: Yes, we can see then...His good night, hers. Then my father's body at bed edge. Ivan. Ivan! Move across a bit, son, I'm home. I sigh sleep up at him, and heavily shift across the bed, away from the eyelet of light.

Winter at last brawled itself out, and spring basted Ringling in mud for awhile. Near the start of summer, Dad brought about his notion. Grandma was offered the job as cook at the Camas ranch. Golly gee, I don't suppose it ought to be turned down, only I hate to break up housekeeping here again... and break it up we did, closing the house in Ringling, more boxes than ever stacked into it, driving with Dad in the pickup to the place where the three of us could be together, or at least less separate.

Chase that he had "already contracted for a controlling interest and sole Editorial Conduct of the only newspaper in the northern part of this Territory -- to be called the 'Port Angeles Herald,' devoted, of course, to the national recognition of Salmon P. Chase." Actually, Smith was daydreaming, as Chase must have divined if he looked around for the national recognition the nonexistent Port Angeles Herald was to garner him.

Not only did Smith's visions run away with his prospects; his gift for antagonizing people soon was arousing Puget Sound citizens at every turn. He riled Port Townsend by transferring its customs house to a new site, Port Angeles, where he was dabbling in land speculation. Then he tried to assert himself in the dispensing of minor patronage posts within the Territory. Finally, he had the habit of invoking Secretary of the Treasury Chase as his man in Washington, D.C., whenever a squabble came up.

Just when western Washington was working up a good grumble about Smith's appointment as customs collector, the new governor at last arrived, the first to spend any time in office at Olympia in more than two years. (A resident of the Territory,

If you want to cut a little on this piece, I'd cut this parenthesis. It only adds another name which isn't mentioned again.)

The ranch buildings stood out from behind the line of cottonwoods on the west bank of Camas Creek, just at the base of the ridges stairstepping up into the Big Belts. Nothing of the ranch seemed ever been thought into any order, the bunkhouse happening first along the road, its paint long vanished into a gray flecky scurf, next to it a small log shed with the wood dark and time-stained and the chinking bright between the long roundnesses. Next squatted a blacksmith shop, a lower log shed which seemed to have pilfered out at nights and brought home countless scraps of iron, trinkets of harness, tosses of wire. Then began an arc of acres of battered machinery, auto carcasses and skewed reaper reels and generations of hay rakes and mowing machines.

Out of the clutter stood a high square house, looming up from the shaley roadway, backdropped by a yellow shale hillside, like a giant crate absent-mindedly put down there. So overbig was this building that it could only be occupied, like a hotel, rather than lived in by the McGraths, even though one reach of room along almost the entire back of the house held only the long table where everyone on the ranch ate, had barely managed to habitate the first floor, and a central stairwell remorselessly marched on to another warren of rooms upstairs. Dad and I shared a

corner bedroom, Grandma had one across the stairwell, and the rest of the rooms yawned empty or were crammed with ~~what must have been Mrs. McGrath's belongings from her first marriage.~~ stray boxes.

The house was high-ceilinged and cold. The wind off the Big Belts slapped our corner room ~~even on summer nights.~~ It was chilly ~~living~~ quarters in more ways than one, only a few clothes hung starkly in the closet, our underwear and socks in a dresser drawer, all else stashed in the house ~~in~~ Ringling. We felt encamped rather than settled--Dad was still sizing up McGrath, deciding ~~whether to stay~~--and the flow of life through the house made it more so. There was a kind of tribal coming and going, the ~~men~~ crew men trooping in for breakfast, the chore boy hauling in ~~milk~~ pails of milk and buckets of eggs, me wandering in and out eleven dozen times a morning, McGrath and Dad coming in for a cup of coffee, the men trooping in for lunch, Grandma back and forth to her garden, McGrath arriving with ~~an unfed~~ a hungover sheepherder he was taking to a sheep camp, me wandering again, ~~the choreboy bucketing in more milk, more eggs,~~ Mrs. McGrath off to give McGrath some message she had forgotten at lunch, the choreboy bucketing in more milk, more eggs, the men trooping in for supper...People coming and going around here like chickens with their heads ~~cut~~ chopped off, Grandma sometimes muttered, even as she herself went, apron flapping, down the ~~rubberstamp~~ storebin

A different disorder ~~would go~~ went on during meals, when a dozen or twenty of us--it was one of Grandma's instant grumbles that she never knew what the total was going to be--might be lined along the span of oilclothed table.

not McGrath had a small, stinging sense of humor, like a popper on the end of his whiplike temper. His one favorite story, guffawed ~~time~~ mealtime after mealtime, was of the man he had seen fork in a mouthful of overhot potatoes, spit them into his hand, and hurl them back to his plate with the shriek: Now blaze, damn you, blaze! His other notion of fun was to single out one of the crew and fire questions about ~~his~~ the day's work, delaying the man in his eating until everyone else had finished. Then McGrath would rear out his chair and bray, Andy, from the looks of your plate you must not've been hungry. Well, let's go back to work. ~~Andy, you must not've been hungry from the looks of your plate.~~"

Somehow McGrath's swagger had attracted a demure wife, half his size and a fraction his conceit. They ~~cruised~~ whiffed past each other in life, McGrath in his steady gale of bluster and Mrs. McGrath eddying and zephyrlike. Her one mistake, which she made every week or so, was to try to edify the table talk above sheep ailments and butts of hay. Once she announced out of nowhere that she had just read in a magazine that every one of the sons of Franklin Delano Roosevelt was of ~~husky~~ strapping build, over six feet. McGrath looked at her, not unkindly but puzzled, and said: What in the name of Bejesus H. Christ does that have to do with anything?

to toil,

And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

--Alfred, Lord Tennyson, The May Queen

Early in 1929, Munger went to Washington, D. C., to meet with headquarters personnel about a prodigious new project. It had been prescribed in Section 9 of the McSweeney-McNary Act, that manifesto which was to steer the direction of U. S. Forest Service Research. The precise line read: "...a comprehensive survey of the present and prospective requirements for timber and other forest products in the United States, and ... of ways and means to balance the timber budget of the United States."

It meant a long-needed inventory of all American forest resources, both privately-held and public -- an accounting of whatever stands of timber we had left after many generations of colossal logging. This nationwide forest survey would begin with the Douglas fir region west of the Cascade Range in Oregon and Washington, the research heartland of the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station.

The Douglas fir country was no idle choice. Although totaling only about 30 million acres of forest land, a fraction of the national total, the region was known to

Company. In the autumn of 1827, just two years after Douglas was admiring the giant firs, the Company set up what seems to have been the first sawmill in the Pacific Northwest, some six miles up the Columbia from the Hudson's Bay post at Fort Vancouver.

The next three decades saw the wane of British influence as the course of American settlement took over the Pacific Northwest and halved it into the state of Oregon and the territory of Washington. Those tall forests loomed with

What anything had to do with anything on the Camas often was not clear, beginning with McGrath himself. With his cask of chest, the even grander gut beneath, and a great boxy head jowled like a bulldog's, he always looked roundly out of place on foot. Saddle years had bowed his legs wide, and he toed along in cowboy boots as if hating each touch of the ground. But on horseback, the legs pegged down into the stirrups as if into a socket, his swell of chest looked right, the ugly head somehow went against the sky like ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ the profile of a nested eagle.

McGrath could ~~slip~~ flip a lasso onto anything his horse could catch up with, and whooped his own cheers when he did. Within weeks after the three of us at last were living at the Camas, one of McGrath's new sheepherders who hadn't sufficiently dried ~~out~~ from a spell of boozing went out of his head and ran off naked into the hills. McGrath grabbed his lariat from the pickup, heaved onto the herder's surprised nag, and joggled away in pursuit. Dabbed it on him first throw, too, he brayed to us at the ~~later.~~ next mealtime. Had him snubbed down for the doc in no time.

Why this bred-in-the-bone ropehand had turned to sheep ranching, no one knew--although some made the guess that having been discovered searing his own brand on ~~someone else's~~ another party's cattle ~~may have~~ had something to do with it. On whatever wind of chance, McGrath had landed at the Camas, ~~bringing~~ put six thousand fat ewes and leased to put on its grass, ~~and collected my family as hirelings.~~

He's quite the McGrath, Grandma said soon after we arrived, and did not mean it in admiration. From Dad's stories, it came as no surprise to see that McGrath ran the ranch as if showing the world a trick from under his hat. Decisions were all ~~swagger~~ jangle and swash: at morning, everyone might be flung into fence mending as if every post on the ranch were going to crash over ~~it~~ within ~~moments~~ a minute; by lunch, McGrath would have ~~ricocheted~~ the entire crew ricocheting to some forgotten corner of the ~~ranch~~ range to shove sheep onto fresh pasture. Ye can tell this spread from half across the valley, Dad declared as he watched the agitation: it's the one with dust clouds going every direction at once. ¶ McGrath had a ~~it~~ quirk further. ~~He liked to hire some of the most hopeless of men, on the notion that~~

He hired some of the most hopeless of men, on the calculation that he could get by with ~~lower~~ paltry wages and yet bulldog them into doing the needed work. One of these apparitions was the ~~delirious~~ herder McGrath had had to rope when ~~it~~ the man ~~trotted~~ pranced off into the trees naked and delirious. More baffling yet, ~~when~~ McGrath ~~once~~ one day arrived from town with ~~a~~ another herder who was lurching out of several weeks of cheap wine. When he had sobered enough to ~~come~~ wobble to the supper table, it began to become clear that our newcomer had ~~only~~ barely enough English to ~~say~~ pronounce that he was from Finland; all else came out in some beyond-Helsinki gabble as if he were chewing glass.

Can't savvy what the hell his name is, McGrath said between ~~fuck~~ the splutters. We'll just call him Finnigan.

big trees. The cutting went on with little heed or forethought for the next half century. Lumbermen who had logged in New England now pioneered on the far side of the continent. An early logger recalled one of the spanking-new mill settlements on Puget Sound: "Port Gamble was a fine place. It was filled with State-of-Mainers, not just common Yankees ... We always had baked beans and johnny bread at Gamble, and plenty of codfish." As forests dwindled in the South and the upper Midwest, other logging entrepreneurs horizons.

Two of the crew had been with McGrath for years, beating along behind him through southern Montana from one leased ranch to the next. They had done so for so long that their names were hardly spoken separate on the Camas, simply splined into Mickey-and-Rudy as if they were twins. They were anything but. Mickey had a froggy face and build, one cheek forever wadded with tobacco and lifting his vast mouth into a disgusted smirk, his wide low shoulders always half-hunched as if for warding off the next bluster from McGrath. No one could quite decipher why Mickey stayed on and on with McGrath, but it must have fed a habit of disgracing himself. By every instinct in him, Mickey was a bunkhouse lawyer, grouser, something just short of a saboteur. He could go about his work for McGrath, as much of it as he did, in a slow huff and speechify inside himself about the misery of it all. McGrath, for his part, cussed Mickey elaborately at least once a week, with practice nips in between, and put him on the dreariest jobs that came up. Hornlocked together, they showed never a sign of value for one another, and every sign of going on with their blood feud until apoplexy truced it for one or the other of them.

different from what the rest of society professes; more ire starts simmering. Then there is the complaint, which goes back at least to Brook Farm of 1841-46, that the utopians next door don't work hard enough. As Ralph Waldo Emerson ever so gently put it, "The country people naturally were surprised to observe that one man plowed all day, and one looked out the window all day, and perhaps drew his own picture; and both received the same wages." Next to this comes the accusation, against say the modern Hutterites of the northern plains, that they work too hard, are embarrassingly diligent -- and worse, successful -- in supporting a hundred or so persons on lean land where a single nonutopian family had failed to prosper. Also, various utopians have been conscientious objectors against military service, and we forget in these days of a volunteer army how harsh an anger could be directed against those who "wouldn't serve their country."

The unpopularity list could stretch on. But we should pause to notice that in a way, the United States itself deserves listing just as much as the most eccentric commune in the boondocks. There

climate -- as some of the following selections show, sometimes the try is desperately hard. It survives or, more often, dies. Whatever their fate, American utopian ventures must be given this: they have been the real-life exertions, in stamina and coin and sometimes blood, on behalf of the glittering ideals.

But Rudy, the other longtime hand, would listen sharply to McGrath's orders, say in great agreement Right you are, Mac--then with perfect deftness go off and do whatever task he thought needed doing. As he marched off in his own directions, often with an irrigating shovel rifled on his shoulder, Rudy looked like a frontier trooper strayed from a Remington sketch: rod-straight backbone, all his striding motion from the waist down, noble white hair and a trimmed white mustache. And strange skills kept appearing from him. He could play the violin, and carve surprises from wood, and had built a tiny model cannon which could blast a ball bearing through a one-inch board. But the great startlement of this parade-ground knight was his eternal spitting of snuff juice. It squirted from him in abrupt brown blurts, punctuating his sentences, announcing a thought to come. Rudy was the one man on the ranch never beset by mosquitoes, and always claimed it was the snoose juice percolating through his bloodstream which kept them off.

The United States of Utopia

Ivan Doig

Born and raised in Montana, Ivan Doig traces his special interest in the American frontier to a homesteading grandfather and a ranching father. He lived for several years on a ranch which neighbored a colony of one of the most notable religious utopias, the Hutterite communities. As an author with a Ph.D. in history, Doig has written extensively on frontier topics, especially those of the Pacific Northwest where he now lives. His previous books have been News: A Consumer's Guide (co-authored with his wife Carol) and The Streets We Have Come Down. Here he examines utopian ventures in America, their failings and their small triumphs.

When Dad hired on at the Camas, it had been with the ~~agreement~~ contract that when summer came he would thread through the disorder of the place and get the ranch's rich hay crop harvested. Somehow a crew had to be held together through the mowing and raking and bucking and stacking of some 150 butts of hay, some 1400 tons of it when at last all the fields had been sickled and combed clean— and Dad's reputation in the valley said he was a man to do it. ¶ The first move he made was to ~~refuse~~ turn down McGrath's offer to include Mickey-and-Rudy in the haying crew: I'll have my own men, and I'll particularly not have that pair. He next left word with the bartenders at the Stockman and the Pioneer to ~~of customers~~ they sized men for him, he winnowed the candidates, and came back to the Camas one June evening with a complete haying crew of nine men. ¶ By summer's end, nearly three months of ~~difficult haying~~ tricky rain-delayed hay harvest behind him, he still had the same nine ~~men~~ in the crew, man after man among them asking to come back for the ~~next haying~~ season again next year. It was a matchless job of foremanning even for Dad, who perhaps ~~was proving~~ had needed to prove skill to himself ~~anew~~ after his desperate time of sickness. Whatever accounted for the silken summer of haying, McGrath put it against his own slapbang style of crew being hired and more promptly fired, and made Dad an offer to stay on at the Camas as--what? Not foreman, exactly, because McGrath wanted to be able to catapult Mickey-and-Rudy and a few other hands around the ranch as he pleased. Not entirely the sheep boss either, although taking on a share of the camptending would be part of the job. Dad was to be oh, hell, just generally in charge, Charlie, you know what's to be done on this spread. The lambing shed and the haying season would be his to oversee, the hay once again on a valuable ~~a profitable~~ contract of dollars-per-ton; beyond that, he would have direction of any of the crew not being reined around at the moment by McGrath himself. ¶ The wage was good, particularly with the haying contract added; Grandma would be ~~hired again as cook~~ when kept on as cook ~~during the busy seasons of spring and summer~~. Well, it's something to try, Dad said, and Grandma agreed. With what was beginning to seem our tendency for slightly askew arrangements, we stayed on at the big house on the Camas.

Above the forest floor and the camera's lens loom Douglas fir stumps the size of homestead cabins. Only the redwood forests of California held huger specimens, and they offered nothing like the variety of species and expanse of groves which marked the Northwest bonanza of wood.

served just as well. Western hemlock and Sitka spruce were generally scorned until they at last were found valuable for the pulp industry. Prime fir and cedar close to waterways, on the other hand, went down all too promptly; as early as 1881, a Seattle newspaper remarked that the best timber along the entire length of Hood Canal had been cut in a swath which now reached a mile and a half back from the shoreline. Whatever the species or locale, the customary logging practice was "cut out and get out,"

straight-boled species armored with thick furrowed bark, new significance. The lumber trade begun modestly by that Hudson's Bay mill grew gigantically both north and south of the Columbia. As early as 1847, a steam sawmill was clattering on the shores of Puget Sound, near the present site of Olympia. In 1853, more sizable sawmills were set up at Seattle, Port Ludlow, and Port Gamble. Oregon by

Pp 6-8 = too much on logging. Shorten. R&R absolutely no

U. S. Forest Service, which began in 1881 as the Division of

On behalf of forest research were inching along. The

While the trees toppled, legislation and administration

---Wallace Stegner, Beyond the Hundredth Meridian

and in Washington forged keys to open it with.

Looking Backward detailed the efficiency of the Industrial Army in

and democratic citizenry. From its vantage point in the year 2000,

The author, earnest utopian that he was, put his faith in a dedicated

throughout the country to work for Bellamy's flawless visions.

In those earliest months at the ranch, ~~There at the Camas,~~ my grandmother and my father gingerly had begun ~~began~~ to put together something like a family life for us. The two of them being who they were, that life of course came at the side of hard work and had to pant as best ~~keep~~ it could to keep up. The one time of truce I could always count on was summer ~~evening~~ dusk. After her dawn-to-supper day of cooking and house chores and his ~~day in the hayfield,~~ as-long day of haying, and handling the crew, Grandma would go with Dad to the hayfield and help him repair machinery for the morning--shave a drawknife along fresh pine poles to make teeth for the buckrake, ~~grip a wrench onto a stacker~~ plop beside the stacker arm ~~bolt while he~~ to grip a wrench onto a bolthead for him, anything that needed doing on ~~that invalided~~ the downed equipment, all of it done with a ~~calm neither~~ certain declared calm between them. Yet those level evenings hardly ever held the pleasure for me they ~~might~~ ought to have, because Dad's style of mechanicking meanwhile would have started me gritting my teeth. He saw me, fair is fair, as his logical fetcher of tools during that repair work; My ailing knee excused me from all other work during the haying. What he did not see was that his notion of fetching had exactly the jittery, hoppity-skippety rhythm, or lack of it, which I was learning rapidly to dislike about ranch ~~work~~ life. If I was sent to the pickup to dig out a boxhead wrench for him, the next moment I would be sent again to pick up the chisel which lay beside the wrench. Nor was there any outguessing him--always some further gizmo to send me trudging again, or worse, dogtrotting all the way to the blacksmith shop.

Yankee frugality in operating them. McArdle, who spent much time on the road dealing with the mysteries of gasping fuel lines, recalled that Munger had the front seat of the Station's first car "remodeled with hinges so it could be folded back and make a bed. I was supposed to drive off into the bushes and use this instead of hotels. I did, too,

It was hard to know just what was up with Smith at any given time. Soon after he arrived, for instance, he confidently wrote Secretary of the Treasury

Delete. Otherwise he gets mixed in with the Wash. Territory office-holders (For those of us who are a little fuzzy on the Lincoln administration.)

his spending money. Then, just after Isaac graduated from

exception pointed out vast cut-over areas in the Douglas fir regions which were remaining treeless year after year. Isaac set to work. He began germination tests on seeds in forest soil, which eventually showed that Hofmann's theory did not hold up. But such meticulously repeated tests took years, and Isaac meanwhile had his own notion of what accounted for the "spontaneous" growth of seedlings in clearcut or burned areas. He set out to measure the flight of tree seeds on the wind.

Early in 1926, the inventive researcher hit on the method he had been seeking to measure the distance and patterns of seed flight. He turned kite-flyer. From that World War One job of inspecting airplane wingbeams, Isaac remembered the strength and lightness of Sitka spruce wood. "I got a piece of spruce and made my struts and frame... I got light balloon silk sailcloth and stabilized and covered

Six evenings might pass, then, with the pair of them gentled and me muttering behind my teeth, and on the seventh, the regular trip to White Sulphur Springs for groceries, and into trouble. This, as acute as if it is happening again now: this father of mine has parked the pickup in front of the grocery store and says, oh so much too offhandedly, Well, ye don't need me to get the groceries, do ye? I'll step over to the Stockman for a minute. At best, this grandmother of mine pushes out a level Well, all right, then, as if being reasonable might just fetch him back that much sooner. At worst, comes that flat snapped I suppose, which in truth means Yes and you're going to overstay and I'm going to take you to war about it.

All during the grocery shopping, I half-hold my breath wondering if he will be back at the pickup by the time we get there. Every once in awhile, surprise to us all, he is there, and the mood leaps up, the drive back to the Camas is full of chatter. Most often, he is missing. I look desperately toward the Stockman, hoping I can say in triumph, Here he comes now! That hope snuffed, I go on to the next one as we climb into the pickup: maybe he will arrive before Grandma she begins to mutter--no, too late, Darn his hide anyway, she steams, why doesn't he come?

By every evidence in my memory, and in the words of everyone I have

Cecil wanted to know if I would care for the job as Director and I thought I would." He held the job for the next fourteen years.

The thrust of research by the new Station was established in cooperation with an advisory committee drawn from other agencies, forestry schools, and the lumber industry in early February, 1925. Later that year, Munger's monthly reports would show how the general goals were being translated into specific research. For the month of October, 1925, he ran down this list of Station activities:

"October has been divided about equally between field and office work, though the weather has been perfect for the former throughout the region. In anticipation of a full house during the winter another small room was engaged.... McArdle has spent practically the entire month supervising and helping with the computations for the Douglas fir yield study.... Westveld was on the Whitman Forest all the month studying brush disposal practices on private lands and on government sales.... Isaac spent practically the entire month in the field. The measurement of a series of Snoqualmie plots completed the biennial examination of the Douglas fir seed study plantations .... Simson has been at Wind River throughout the month engaged chiefly in experimenting with meteorological instruments, taking static observations, and in various maintenance jobs.... Munger spent most of a week at Wind River helping on final jobs to close up the season there...."

find who knew him well, my father should not be called a cruel man. He tended opposite, fretful about a calamity on anyone he knew, trailing admiration for kindnesses I still happen onto in his wake: Knowed your daddy when I landed into this country in 'thirty-six, at shearing time at the Dogie. He staked me for my bedroll, I was so dead busted. Didn't have to do it neither, but he done 'er....But with those waitings, he inflicted a pain as sharp on my grandmother's mind as any that can be conjured: she had had one relentless stint of waiting around in life for the saloons to let a man go, and she seethed at the idea of another, even if it amounted only to minutes of casual beer. To Dad, that is exactly what it did amount to. The saloons and the men ranged along their barstools had been a heartbeat of him, and of the valley, all his grown life, a beer or two was simply a chaser for conversation. My own feelings were hopelessly complicated, tiered. I wanted Grandma not to be angry, even as I was more than half-angry at Dad myself. I would think up excuses for him: Why shouldn't he have a breather to himself, see his friends? The world won't end over a few minutes of that. I switched to the argument on our side: The hell, why do we have to stew in this pickup while he guzzles beer? It was frazzling, a crisscross of tensions cutting tight inside me. And everything would become worse, I knew, if Grandma

of January 7, 1910, Munger was at the Washington home of his brother-in-law, a Yale classmate of Pinchot. Pinchot, invited for dinner, came in a bit late, but with the apology that a White House messenger had handed him a letter just before he left home. As the party sat down to dinner, Pinchot coolly read aloud his dismissal for taking the Alaskan lands argument to the public. Munger remembered the "awful blow" that "our leader and really our hero was gone."

But if Pinchot was gone, the Yale cadre of foresters he had inspired still was at work on the remaining American woods -- with younger men such as Thornton Munger eyed as administrators of the future.

For his first several years in the Pacific Northwest, Munger was in charge of the one-man Section of Silvics -- forest research -- at the District Office in Portland. He served as "sort of a roustabout" in the job, handling technical questions from the public. Research ventures into the field could be hit-and-miss. Once when directed to establish some test plantings of trees from the American east coast and Europe, a pet project of then-Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, Munger found himself on the western slope of Mt. Hood with two companions, five horses, and a worsening snowstorm. As the snow piled up around them, Munger and company quickly flung the tree seeds out on onto the snowbanks and scurried for lower climes. "People

gave her final fidget and sent me to get him: Gee gods, see what he's doing in there. If he wasn't ready, pronto, to leave the ~~[illegible]~~ saloon, then I had the ~~dilemma~~ predicament of trudging back to try tell her so, or of hanging restlessly at his side until the spirit moved him, both of us now rooted in the Stockman while she simmered across the street.

When he finally came--all of this might have crackled for only twenty minutes or so--he generally would try an offhand Ready to go? She would give it back to him--We been ready for ages--and the silent battle would begin. Halfway to the ranch, one or the other might try to break it. But most often a trip which started in ice ended the same, and I would look aside out the window at my shoulder, touching cold on wordlessly crying a kind of prayer that the mood would get no worse, damning in my head the one or the other of these chilly warriors, or more often, the both.

Munger might have had his own initial research in mind when he insisted on carefully-plotted expenditure of time and effort. In 1908, not quite 25 years old, he had been somewhat offhandedly sent from Forest Service headquarters in Washington, D. C., to study the encroachment of lodgepole pine on Ponderosa pine in the Pacific Northwest. Since Munger's Forest Service career at the time amounted to the grand sum of two months and he had never laid eyes on either species of pine in his life, the assignment was, as Munger later understated it, "rather presumptuous." But it served to get the young New Englander to the Pacific Northwest; the brief project into the pines led to a full career in this region.

Trained at Yale, the academic hub of American forestry at the time, Munger knew the New Haven men who ran the U. S. Forest Service during the first quarter of this century. Henry S. Graves, Chief of the Forest Service from 1910 to 1919, had been one of his professors in graduate school. William B. Greeley, who headed the Forest Service from 1919 to 1928, earned his master's degree in the Yale forestry program a few years before Munger did likewise. And Munger not only knew Gifford Pinchot, the storied and flamboyant father of the modern Forest Service, but was on hand the night Pinchot was fired by President Taft. A public vendetta had erupted between Pinchot and Secretary of the Interior Richard A. Ballinger about Interior's plans to lease out coal and timber lands in Alaska. On the evening

Beneath it all was a harsh unsaid truth we all knew: ~~if~~ the three of us by then had been together long enough, and closely enough, that if my father and my grandmother parted ways, I now could have the choosing of which I would live with--and I would choose at once to go with him again. I felt love for her, she would bring me up more steadily and standardly ~~affectionately~~ than he could, ~~[illegible]~~ in countless ways would make sacrifices in her life for the sake of mine, in justice to us both--perhaps all three of us--she was the one to raise me most lovingly, if choice had to be made. But I would never choose so. By then, I had been shaped on the opposite side of the family from her, the side which indeed cared less for family than for friends and so suggested that if my father could not be ~~a complete~~ enough family for me, at least he was going to be a friend such as none other in the world. The side, too, which always had half a notion to hie off for opportunity rather than settle for endurance. In outlook and manner ~~[illegible]~~--and I suppose in inner murmurations ~~of the blood~~ which I would not hear until ~~[illegible]~~ now-- I had become more thoroughly Charlie Doig's son than Bessie Ringer's grandson. It lay as an iron fact amid us that she knew all this and that, a woman who long since had determined she was through putting up with bad bargains in life and longer since had earned such, she could only accept it.

Leonard I. Barrett, later a director of two Forest Service Experiment Stations and a research division chief; John McGinn, who would shift to a career as a successful lumber merchant; Robert Marshall, who in later years became a natonally known writer and eloquent advocate of wilderness

of tree species, grazing lands, climate, and topography. The vast cuts of lumber which had gone on unabated for more than six decades insured the need for all manner of research into the region's timber resources.

To this set of circumstances, the man in charge of the new Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station added utilitarian guidelines. As Thornton T. Munger later summed it up, "From the start, I was not interested in research for research's sake, but wanted to see research put into use...."

Yet if life at the Camas was unsettled, some of its eddies did take us from our [redacted] troubles. This house too held shelves of books, as the Brekkes' had; Mrs. McGrath had learned that reading kept her ~~out of~~ aside from her husband's ~~way~~ swoosh. But when I borrowed from the shelves, I found scenes never dreamed of in the Brekke books: They killed him in Spangle Valley. They waited hidden among the rocks on Buffaloback Mountain and when he rode below they shot him out of the saddle...She was right down there at my feet, her eyes shining, her breasts trembling, drawn up in tight points, and pointing right up at me. She was down there, and the breath was roaring in the back of my throat... [redacted]

When I had had enough of printed roarings for the moment, the ranch [redacted] could give me a silent place as well. For by greatest luck a gray ship, high-hulled and pinging with emptiness,

not technically correct, I think I am giving you substantial justice," Judge Wyche liked to reassure defendants.

Associate Justice Ethelbert P. Oliphant simply was glad to have any federal office he could get. When he begged recognition from Lincoln in March, 1861, on the basis of their service together in the Black Hawk War, Oliphant mournfully described himself as "past the medium of manhood without any important acknowledgment of my merits or any other respect."

Judge Oliphant was fat, Quaker, indecisive, and entirely new to frontier life -- qualities which so bemused the Washington Territory legislators that they assigned him to the judicial district in eastern Washington, a vast horseback circuit taking in the Territory's rough-tempered mining camps.

Although the Chief Justice, Christopher C. Hewitt, had migrated to Washington Territory from Illinois several years before, his fellow citizens knew him better as a mechanic than as a jurist. His term in office largely confirmed that first impression; Judge Hewitt displayed what one writer recalled as "a certain distaste for the exacting duties as a judge."

Nearly all of the new crop of officeholders

By greatest luck
~~magically~~ a gray ship, high-hulled and pinging with emptiness,
rode at the far end of the ranch buildings. A ship, at least,
imaginings.
to my ~~eyes.~~ In the years when the machine chomped ~~its wide path~~ broadly
through grainfields, it was called a combine. Now it stood,
in its tons of dulling metal and clusters of idle gearwheels, for
and with my bandaged knee tensed straight behind me,
me to climb into, all through: on careful hands and ~~knees~~ over
the floorful of threshing blades, past gearings fat with ancient
grease which, when I touched through its crust, still came away
slick in my hand; through rods of sunlight which drilled in around the gear
housings and shaft ports; at last to the ~~dim~~ dark maw which fell away in shelves
of teeth and gratings to the nose of the machine.
~~slick in my hand.~~ The toes of my shoes clouted on sheet metal
as I dodged under sets of spiky metal fingers and over driveshafts.
When I stopped, the only ~~noise~~ sound was the ringing ~~sound~~ echo of my own
listening. It was as if the old combine, the noisiest machine in
the world in full shuddering gulp across a wheatfield, had gone
quieter than anything else when it at last quit work.

Even the day's heat ~~was~~ changed ~~in~~ within its metal tunnels, flattened
and spread into a cooking sensation which came from everywhere
at once. I made a game of seeing how hot I could stand it in
the dim shaft. When the searing metal was too much for me, I
would climb, up and out, through a deft sliding panel in the machine's
top and into the hopper which hung high over the side. This
was ~~a~~ the lookout spot, with baffling slippery angles
which made me lodge my body across them and feel the tautness of
watching, eyeing the ranch.

The role of the ~~Experiment~~ Station in this rush report was to furnish data and office ~~manpower~~ help, then handle the publication and distribution. It ~~would be~~ was only the first of the Station's research projects ~~over~~ in the next several years ~~involving~~ to focus on the Douglas-fir industry and its part in the war industries of the Pacific Northwest.

Another special survey reported on the quantity of sawmill waste available for conversion to ethyl alcohol. (Late in the war, wood alcohol plants were started at Springfield, Ore., and Bellingham, Wash., with the Station providing data on sources of wood waste.) Breakdowns in the routines of lumber production inspired other research projects; one evaluated the wood supply needed to box agricultural products, another analyzed the problems of getting enough antifreeze to keep logging and lumber equipment at work, still another reported on the use of Port-Orford-cedar to make separation walls in ~~automobile~~ submarine batteries. At other times, the Station was called upon to determine the number of wooden barrels used to pack the Pacific Northwest's fruit crop, to see whether Douglas-fir bark could be used in making cork, and to estimate the supplies of hemlock bark as a source for tannin. →

What I found in the machine's silences, Dad perhaps found in the business of the ranch's chief chore--the raising of sheep. The Camas and its seasons were occupied by the gray thousands of them as if they were some daft breed of gypsies, helpless and demanding, their long clown faces staring out in sad alarm from ruffs of wool. The bands summered in the mountains, plump targets for coyotes and bears and snagging branches; spent autumn in mown hayfields where they could do their best to topple into irrigation ditches or Camas Creek itself; wintered near the ranch buildings where ~~they nightly could~~ in the nightly shed or corral they could try to huddle themselves into injury or suffocation. But it was the first fade of winter when the six thousand ewes drew the entire attention of Dad and everyone else on the ranch: springtime, and lambing time.

engineer; Lincoln's family doctor of many years before; and a down-in-his-luck Quaker who had been in the Black Hawk War with Lincoln.

It's hard to say whether Lincoln was moved by pique, amusement, or political loyalty when he parceled out jobs to them and a platoon of similar worthies. Whatever his inspiration, they became the Civil War government of Washington Territory, the farthest frontier from their old friend and benefactor, Abraham Lincoln.

Two thousand miles from the Civil War battlefields, these territorial officers kept the White house abreast of their quarrels and triumphs, hopes and intrigues. Somehow they functioned as a government as well, and not such a bad one at that.

In the middle months of 1861, the new officers began arriving and displaying their various styles.

U.S. District Attorney John J. McGilvra showed up with the notion, unusual to the frontier, that since there was a law against it, cutting timber on the public domain indeed was illegal. He started hauling surprised Puget Sound lumbermen into court.

what was his tie to Lincoln? Is he one of those mentioned in graph at top of page?

At Vancouver, the handsome and unkempt Associate Justice James E. Wyche slouched into office and soon stood out as a keen overlord of his court. "If I am

Do you really need Wyche? Do we cut him out and go on to Olephant. The quote is nice and all but Wyche doesn't really figure into the machinations you later describe. And I think cutting down on a few names (and # of words) would make this piece more saleable.

Lambing at the Camas was one long steady emergency, like a war alert which never quite ignites into battle but keeps on demanding scurry and more scurry. No ritual more frantic exists anywhere in the rearing of animals, and McGrath hounded everyone around in their jobs to make it all the more skittery. The season would begin reasonably enough: in middle March, a lamb or two, tiny yellow sprawls of life, would appear suddenly amid the several thousand ewes. Dad, as day man, would have had a helper or two readying the long low lambing shed on a knoll above Camas Creek. Inside it now stretched rows of boarded pens about four feet square, just large enough to hold a ewe and her lamb, since the pens were so like small cross-barred jail cells, they were called jugs, and once in the jug, the first few lambs and their mothers were coddled and fussed over like the original customers of a seaside inn. But one day soon, half a dozen lambs are born; and the next day forty; then a hundred at once, one lamb or another starting its slow glistening dive from the womb into life wherever you looked now. Then a sledge with half a dozen of the jug pens atop it and pulled by a team of horses would begin to shuttle day and night--the gutwagon, named for the placenta and accompanying muss from the newly-delivered ewes. Because Mickey was the worst choice for it and McGrath

then had at least three dozen sawmills, including big ones at Astoria and Milwaukie and Portland. And the boom was just beginning. The 1860 census would show 32 lumber mills in Washington Territory, 126 in Oregon.

By the outbreak of the Civil War, then, the Pacific Northwest lumber industry was cutting hard at the stands of big trees. The cutting went on with little heed or forethought for the next half century. Lumbermen who had logged in New England now pioneered on the far side of the continent. An early logger recalled one of the spanking-new mill settlements on Puget Sound: "Port Gamble was a fine place. It was filled with State-of-Mainers, not just common Yankees ... We always had baked beans and johnny bread at Gamble, and plenty of codfish." As forests dwindled in the South and the upper Midwest, other logging entrepreneurs followed the Maine men into the forests beside the Pacific. Cargo fleets breasted the waters of Grays Harbor and Puget Sound and the Columbia to carry the lumber away along Pacific routes. Railroads trundled in to freight lumber off to the markets of the Midwest and the Atlantic seaboard. A mining phrase can be borrowed to tell best what was happening: lumbermen had hit the timber equivalent of a mother lode.

We can read the bonanza mood even yet in logging camp photographs taken during the era. A lumberjack stretches full-length in the undercut of a giant cedar, while two of his mates stand casually in mid-air on their springboards.

wanted to miss no chance to ~~wrench~~ harass him into betterment, he was made the gutwagon driver. Like a duke dropped barefoot into a manure pile, Mickey would mince up to a fresh lamb, snatch it up and try half-heartedly to ~~lure~~ persuade the mother into one of the gutwagon jugs. When she wouldn't be ~~enticed~~ lured, he would have to grab her by the wool and wrestle her in or, worse, try to snare her by the hind leg with a sheephook and snake her in backwards.

was sent by the Royal Horticultural Society in London to study the forests of the Pacific Northwest. Of the dominant tree he found in the coastal region, a huge straight-boled species armored with thick furrowed bark, the naturalist ventured a mild prophecy: "The wood may be found very useful for a variety of domestic purposes." The Douglas fir did indeed prove useful, by the billions of board feet lumbered from those original lofty groves.

What was called the Oregon country, from California north to the present Canadian border, in those early days was held by Great Britain through the Hudson's Bay Company. In the autumn of 1827, just two years after Douglas was admiring the giant firs, the Company set up what seems to have been the first sawmill in the Pacific Northwest, some six miles up the Columbia from the Hudson's Bay post at Fort Vancouver.

The next three decades saw the wane of British influence as the course of American settlement took over the Pacific Northwest and halved it into the state of Oregon and the territory of Washington. Those tall forests loomed with new significance. The lumber trade begun modestly by that Hudson's Bay mill grew gigantically both north and south of the Columbia. As early as 1847, a steam sawmill was clattering on the shores of Puget Sound, near the present site of Olympia. In 1853, more sizable sawmills were set up at Seattle, Port Ludlow, and Port Gamble. Oregon by

Mickey's dour mauling was only the ewe's first welcome to maternity. As the gutwagon was unloaded, Dad or one of his helpers would tip each ewe onto her rump and hold her there while her teats were worked to be sure that milk would flow for the lamb. Then she was strongarmed into one of the jugs, and her lamb put in after. Sheep being sheep, not all ewes had the idea that they were ready to mother their lambs. More than a few saw it all as a bad joke, sniffing the tiny animal as if he were something sour and then, as often not, would butt him flat in the straw and begin walking on him. Dad would erupt, Damn ye, what the hell ye doin' to him? He's yours, old sister, just get used to the idea. Ivan, get in here and hold this goddamn pelter while I suckle the lamb.

With the lamb bulging with milk and the ewe more or less bullied toward motherhood, Dad would send me for his paint tray. Then ewe and lamb were each stamped, blotchy digits about three inches high, with a number which showed that they belonged to each other. It also gave them a kind of selfhood, like hospital patients known by the traceries of their charts: That 256 lamb has the drizzles... That ornery damned 890 ewe still won't take her lamb...

high school, occurred an extraordinary episode. His older brother was injured so severely in a train wreck that he needed absolute rest and quiet, and young Leo took over his care. The Isaac brothers withdrew to upper Michigan to a cabin which could be reached only by boat. For nearly two years, the pair of them roughed it there, canoeing and hunting and fishing as the brother's strength gradually became robust again.

Such a young manhood may have been the whetstone for Leo Isaac's perceptive powers. Thornton Munger, himself a veteran woodsman, noticed that Isaac "was an exceedingly sharp observer. He could see little one year old seedlings when the ordinary person would pass them by...."

After the stint in the north woods, Isaac went to the University of Minnesota for a degree in forestry. World War One intervened, and he was shipped with a number of other forestry students to Fort Vancouver, Washington, where they would learn to inspect the wooden wingbeams then used in military planes. Finishing up his college work after the war, Isaac returned to the state of Washington to start with the Forest Service in the Okanagan National Forest. After four years came the chance to transfer to the Wind River Experiment Station, and Isaac gladly took it. He arrived on the job in early May, 1924, just before the Pacific Northwest Forest Experiment Station came into being and absorbed the Wind River facility.

I then the Chelan N.F.
No Isaac see Isaac oral history, p. 23

The 722 lamb is a goner, I'm gonna have to jacket ~~another~~ a fresh one onto that ewe.

Jacketing was a magic I watched with wonder each time, and I have discovered that my father was admired among sheepmen up and down the valley for his skill at it: He was just pretty catty at that, the way he could get that ewe to take on a new lamb ~~,~~ every time. Put simply, jacketing was a ruse played on a ewe whose lamb had died. Another lamb quickly would be singled out, most likely from a set of twins. Sizing up the newcomer, Dad would skin the dead lamb, and into the tiny pelt carefully slit four small leg holes and a head hole. Then the substitute lamb would have the skin fitted onto it like a jacket on a poodle. The next step of disguise was to cut out the dead lamb's liver and smear it over the jacket. In its borrowed and bedaubed skin, the new lamb then was presented to the ewe. She would sniff the baby impostor endlessly, ~~distrusting its queer garb~~ distrustful but pulled by the ~~reassuring~~ blood-smell of her own, when in a few days she had made up her dim sheep's mind ~~and~~ to accepted the lamb, Dad would snip ~~off~~ away the jacket and ~~chortle~~ recite his victory: Like him, like hell, don't ye? See what a helluva dandy lamb I got for ~~you~~ ye, old sister? Who says I couldn't jacket day onto night if I wanted to, now I ask ye?

it... I attached an oatmeal carton (I saved them from the kitchen) bottom-side-up and tied the cover on with a thin, light thread."

The eerie result, then, was a six-foot box kite with black bat wings, trailing an oatmeal carton below as a bomb bay. ("I haven't seen a kite like it before or since," Isaac would recall with supreme satisfaction.)

Next, the inventor needed a field of fresh snow. With

bt - bay

measured on the string -- sometimes 150 feet, sometimes as

Lambing was the one stint of work on a ranch that I ever liked. There was a constant doing about it, none of the usual jerky pace of idling around one minute and rebuilding the world the next. A couple of times a day, all the ewes had to be fed and watered. I carried pitchforkfuls of hay to put in the little feed rack of each jug, hefted in a bucket of water for the ewe to have a long drink. The tasks were necessary, added up to something. And the lambing shed itself seemed a rare place in the world--a broad tunnel of a building which smelled of damp manure and iodine and warm wool and alfalfa, a fog of odors.

As soon as the lambs were big enough to travel, they and their mothering ewes had to be herded from the shed to the fresh grass of some nearby pasture. Moving the sheep was the one piece of work I could do better than anybody else on the ranch. McGrath moved sheep in a kind of bellowing brawl, setting the dogs on them like cossacks against lame cowards. Dad could do better, but eventually too would grow testy and begin to overpush the sheep. But I could simply shadow the bunch, sense a bit ahead of their jittery veers, head them off with a roaring Hyaw! or a tossed rock, until they settled into a flow, a constant push and swirl toward where I wanted them to go.

Part 2 Seekers in the Wilds

An elderly woman, enthusiastic colonist of a religious utopia, was once explaining the four "neutral points" on the earth's surface from which the salvation of mankind might emerge. Palestine she named first and California second, after which she stopped and her listeners asked eagerly where were the other two. With a distant and transfigured expression, she slowly answered, "No one knows."

--Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies

My talent for sheep and interest in them ended with lambing, but the herding season which began with summer swept me in anyway. If the meadows were too wet for haying, Dad would take a turn at camp tending, and we would drive off into the timbered slopes of the Dry Range with boxes of groceries, a full day to be spent chatting with the edgy herders and towing their wagons to fresh pasture. Or I might go when McGrath himself did the tending, if he managed to find me for it: I was quick at opening the fenceline gates on the road into the mountains, and he liked such saving of moments. Also, sonless himself, he seemed interested to talk to a boy, although in his heavy way was not always sure how it was done. Did I tell you of once I's workin' down at Greybull in Wyoming and seen a fella walk between a horse's hind legs? 'S a fact. This geezer was a real horse hand, and it was hayin' time and he was a mower man, drivin' a real skittish team, a big roan and a gray. He's the only one in the crew could git a harness on 'em. Rained us out of hayin' a couple a days, and we all went to town and good and howlin' drunk. The boss got us back out to the place, and this geezer is still Christamighty drunk and gits it in his head to show us how tame he's got this ornery roan horse. He had a fancy Stetson on, big wide brim on it out t' here. He tells us he's gonna get down on his knees, and he's gonna walk on his knees between that horse's hind legs with his big hat on. Show us how tame he's got that roan horse, see. So he goes down to the barn, everybody on the place followin' him. He starts going under the horse's tail down on his knees when the horse gives a Christamighty kick, catches that fancy hat and swipes it right off, sailed the damn thing plumb across the barn, see. That horse didn't miss his head a inch. So the guy is surprised as all hell, then he yells: WHOA, YOU BIG PINK SONOFABITCH, WHOA! Then you know, that goddamn horse just stood there and he goes right through his hind legs and out under his belly like he said he was gonna. Been you or me or anybody else, that horse'd have kicked him into the middle of next week, wouldn' you think? Hup, another gate for you...

to his country."

But debate has been one thing, and passport practices have been another. When Dean Acheson was U.S. Secretary of State, he recalled with a whiff of nostalgia his own earlier years of jaunting to Europe, when people "traveled perfectly freely, got on a boat and went where they wished to go." Ironically, it was during his tenure that a long series of legal battles began over the State Department's power to withhold passports from political dissidents. The U.S. -- and Britain, its forebear in legal matters -- was not alone in finding that the new ubiquity of the passport had bypassed its standing in law. When the United Nations looked hard at the issue in 1962, it found that a great majority of its member states lacked laws which thoroughly backed up freedom of travel. Of 90 nations surveyed, only 24 recognized in their legal code the right to leave and return -- in effect, the automatic right to a passport -- while a dozen others recognized it by judicial rulings.

Nor are nations likely to ease up much on their newly assumed power of the passport. Professor Daniel C. Turack, a scholar on passport regulations, has remarked: "National policies directing restricted travel do little to promote international understanding among the peoples of the world.... (But) regrettably, the practice of using the passport as an instrument to conduct foreign policy is gaining support."

...