theWeekly's
READER
Seattle's Book Review *December 1980*



Winter Brothers
By Ivan Doig
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich $10.95

by Geoffrey Cowley

Ivan Doig forges a link with the Northwest past

A STRIKING CHARACTERISTIC of Northwest Indian art is that it often lets two or more figures occupy the same space simultaneously. Haida artists, for example, have no qualms about carving four animals into the same piece of stone, or portraying one creature as both a wolf and a whale. Ivan Doig's new book, *Winter Brothers*, is an attempt to craft a narrative on a similar principle; it incorporates two men's diaries into one essay with the hope of forging their lives into a single image. The two diarists who thus become "winter brothers" are Doig himself, and James Gilchrist Swan, one of the first white men ever to spend a lifetime in the Pacific Northwest. *Winter Brothers* is a curious blend of historical investigation and personal confession—a book intended not only to reconstruct a 19th-century pioneer's experience of the Northwest, but also to give Doig a fuller understanding of his own. It generally succeeds at both; by using the landscape to link his own experience to that of the pioneer, Doig gives new currency to the past and discovers new ways of perceiving the present.

The book is structured as a daily record of Doig's three-month journey through Swan's diaries. One of the things Doig does during those three months is to tell us Swan's life story as it emerges from the thousands of handwritten pages he is reading. The process by which Doig reconstructs Swan's experience is interesting in itself, for it involves actively reimagining, and not simply recounting, what happened during the fifty years recorded in Swan's diaries. Swan is a prolific assessor of his surroundings, but he rarely says anything about himself; figuring out what was really on his mind on a given day becomes, for Doig, a matter of interpreting the tone in which he records something else, or assigning significance to a silence.

Doig manages to turn Swan's journal entries into an engaging and readable story, but that is only half of what he attempts. His interest in visiting the past is not simply to observe it; he also wants to participate in carrying it forward. So rather than devoting himself entirely to telling Swan's stories, he incorporates them into his own.

Doig's own story is about learning to see his surroundings as they must have appeared through Swan's pioneer eyes. He retraces Swan's steps up and down the Olympic Peninsula to see what remains unchanged. He also looks for tangible signs of Swan's existence, and he finds a few. Near Neah Bay he finds a swan that Swan spent an afternoon carving into a sandstone cliff in 1859. In Seattle, he finds Washelli Cemetery. When the City of Seattle established the cemetery, Swan suggested naming it "Washelli," a Makah word that means "west wind" and suggests "region of the hereafter." The name glows to this day from a pink neon sign facing Aurora Avenue.

We're told that Doig's attraction **continued on page 3**

Geoffrey Cowley writes for Seattle's The Weekly.

A talk with Ivan Doig

BRANDT MORGAN conducted the following interview with Seattleite Ivan Doig shortly before the publication of *Winter Brothers*, his second book.

Morgan: *This House of Sky* received high praise all over the country, including reviews in *Time*, *The New York Times*, and a nomination for the National Book Award. Did you expect this kind of critical acclaim for your first book?

Doig: No way!

Morgan: What were your expectations?

Doig: Well, certainly not very much at first. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich was the thirteenth publishing house that looked at the sample. But in the end things took care of themselves far beyond my expectations. And a lot of it was just absolute, sheer, golden luck as far as I can see. The editor who took it on, Carol Hill, very much liked the manuscript as she received it, suggesting only a few changes. And then there was an editorial bloodletting at Harcourt Brace about two months after the manuscript came in. Out of that shuffling around, Carol Hill emerged as editor-in-chief and took the book up with her.

Morgan: How did the book get to *Time*?

Doig: I think through Carol Hill, although I've never been entirely sure. She took the step you only take every so often of sending books and cover letters around to a few selected editors saying, "This is a book we don't want you to miss."

Morgan: OK, I can see how luck had a hand in getting it off the ground, but obviously the book has something special. What do you think it is? **continued on page 4**

Brandt Morgan is the author of Enjoying Seattle's Parks, *and is currently working on a book of essays about nature in the Northwest.*

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IVAN DOIG'S 'WINTER BROTHERS'/
continued from front cover

to Swan stems from a desire to understand the force that drew him westward. Doig is impressed by the fact that, as a young man, Swan willfully abandoned a comfortable life in Boston in order to spend the rest of his days in the untamed Northwest, "rimwalking its landscape and its native cultures."

Swan's story begins in 1850, as he leaves his wife, two children, and a way of life unsuited to his spirit, to head west on a schooner bound for San Francisco. Following a year of San Francisco dockside life and a brief trip to Hawaii on a potato boat, Swan joins a small band of madcap oysterers and moves north to Shoalwater Bay, where he spends three years "stretching ever more distance between himself and the 220 years of New England rectitude in his family line." During the years at Shoalwater, Swan befriends the Chinook and Chehalis Indians, drinks a good deal of rye whiskey, and eats not only salmon and crab but also beaver, crow, owl, and skunk.

By 1859 he has moved up the coast, further north, further west, to the tip of the Olympic Peninsula. Except for occasional travels, Swan spends the rest of his life, the next forty-one years, on the north shore of the peninsula between Neah Bay and Port Townsend. He lives among the Makah Indians—a hearty seagoing people who hunted grey whales from hand-crafted canoes—learning their customs and their language, collecting their art, and recording their legends.

A westcomer himself, though only from Montana, Doig regards his own decision to settle here as evidence of a quality he has in common with Swan. He quotes himself from an earlier diary:

> Perhaps the choice of place is in our body chemistry simply as other patterns of taste are, regulating me to dislike brussels sprouts, the color pink, and square miles of pavement. . . . The west of America draws some of us not because it is the newest region of the country but because it is the oldest, in the sense that the landscape here—the fundament, nature's shape of things—more resembles the original continent than does the city-nation of the Eastern Seaboard or the agricultural factory of the Midwest.

This shared impulse toward the west provides a significant link between two men separated by a century, but Doig's attempts to link himself to Swan on the basis of shared personal qualities often seem overly self-conscious. The observation that he and Swan are "bearded watchful men both" is, for instance, one that we could have been left to make for ourselves. And when Doig quotes a review of his first book (*This House of Sky*) from *The New York Times Book Review* in order to suggest that he, like Swan, is one of those people who are "never part of the time they were born into" and who "walk their generations as strangers," he begins to sound a bit self-indulgent. Doig's sentimentality about his beard and his temperament would be less distracting if he weren't addressing us in his own person. But he is, and when he falls into these modest but romantic characterizations of himself he inevitably subverts whatever connection he seeks with the less self-conscious Swan.

Fortunately, though, Winter Brothers does more than sentimentalize the personal similarities between its two main characters; it also leads to a new apprehension of the geography they share. When Doig surrenders himself to the task of reconstructing Swan's life, and to reimagining the Northwest in light of Swan's experience of it, he leads us to a new understanding of what it means to live here. The Indian lore recorded in Swan's diaries leads us back to a world where the sun rises every morning by bouncing stars off his head and trampling darkness under his feet, where rainbows are anchored to the earth by potentially dangerous claws, and where meteors manifest the luminous spirits of dead chiefs.

In the Northwest that emerges from Swan's diaries, no detail of the landscape is insignificant—everything is charged with life and meaning. A wet rock exploding in an Edinso campfire is evidence of an angry spirit. When the aurora borealis glow in the northern sky, the Makahs know that their Alaskan relatives—"a race of little men, very strong, who are dressed in skins" and "can dive down into the sea and catch a seal or a fish with their bare hands"—are building bonfires to keep warm. The crown on the blue jay links humanity to the birds, and links the Makahs to their past:

> The Makahs explained to Swan that the blue jay was the mother of a rascally Indian named Kwahtie. She had asked him to fetch some water, saying that she wished he would hurry, because she felt as if she were turning into a bird. Kwahtie ignored her and went on making the arrow he was at work on. While she was talking she turned into a blue jay and flew into a bush. Kwahtie tried to shoot her, but his arrow passed behind her neck, glancing over the top of her head, ruffing up the feathers, as they have always remained in the head of the blue jay.

Needless to say, the Northwest has changed considerably during the 130 years since Swan first encountered it; concrete and steel have overrun the ground that was then alive with giant fir and spruce and cedar. But rather than mourning what has changed since Swan wrote his diaries, Doig learns to see what remains through the eyes of a pioneer. The west may be less western than it was, but westernness remains an accessible state of mind. Doig recovers it, and hence his fraternity with Swan, by reminding himself that in watching the gulls fly across the horizon he is witnessing life exactly as Swan saw it.

Swan's westernness, his capacity to live and think in relation to the immediate conditions of a place, is, as it turns out, not easily downed by chain saws and bulldozers. Whether our eyes are focused on a craggy western horizon or on a pink neon cemetery sign, it can govern what we see.□

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A review of notable national and regional books. The Weekly's Reader is published by the Weekly, Seattle's Newsmagazine.

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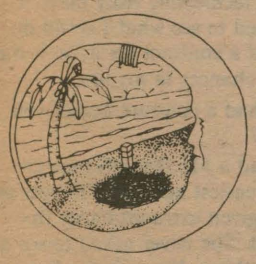

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AN INTERVIEW WITH IVAN DOIG/
continued from front cover

Doig: I wish I had little bottles of ingredients sitting all around me so I could pour them into every book. The late Robert Kirsch of the *L.A. Times* called my father an American hero. My father could never have dreamed of that sort of thing. And I was surprised by that, too. I don't think of it as a heroic book, and I certainly didn't set out to write it that way. But I did try to focus on the people and their language as closely as I could. It's a book I worked on sentence by sentence time and again across those years. If I did it right, there's something happening in just about every sentence, and I think that's what carries it.

Morgan: *Winter Brothers* is a very different book—a 90-day diary of your thoughts juxtaposed with the diaries of a 19th century West Coast pioneer. Isn't it an odd subject for you to have chosen?

Doig: It perhaps was. I have always been taken with James Swan's diaries, though—the sheer accomplishment of forty years of day-by-day notations on his life. And I wanted a chance to do some traveling and thinking back and forth between Swan's time and ours. So he seemed to me a kind of guide, a character by which I could try to get at some thinking about the West.

Morgan: Did you ever consider it a literary risk?

Doig: Yes, very much so. And the book wrote itself much differently than *House of Sky*. It kept changing and becoming, really, until February of this year. Twice after I thought I was finished with it, I found myself saying, "Well, this really doesn't belong here," and then I'd jerk things out. And other things got amplified. The problem I was most aware of was how not to lose the reader as I did all that shifting back and forth in time, to find a pace which would carry the reader along and yet not befuddle him. So I was seeking a tension and balance. It's a much more technically risky book, I know, but I wanted to see what I could do with it. And I had a contract for it, so it was one of those rare chances in my life.

'WINTER BROTHERS' is a much more technically risky book, I know, but I wanted to see what I could do with it. And I had a contract for it, so it was one of those rare chances in my life.

Morgan: You had a contract before you really got started?

Doig: Yes, I had a $15,000 advance on it—probably the easiest advance I'm ever going to get. I was given extraordinarily free rein by Carol Hill. She never asked to see a prospectus or anything. It was just a few sentences described over lunch. Eventually, out of conscience, I did her a one-page prospectus and then sent in the first 100 pages that were (as usual, with my manuscript samples) fairly shaky. Again, she sent more money and said, "Go ahead and finish it, then we'll talk about editing."

Morgan: Is there any indication yet as to how *Winter Brothers* will be accepted?

Doig: It's surprising me. It's gone through its first printing of 10,000. The size of that printing shocked me. Harcourt has done another 2,500 as a second printing. I got a call from the regional sales rep today who told me Pacific Pipeline here in town has taken 800 of those. It's still six days and some minutes till publication date yet; so the book is traveling rapidly through its first 12,500.

Morgan: Do you think much of that is a dividend from *This House of Sky*?

Doig: I'd say *House of Sky*'s skirts are broad and long and brocaded and everything else. Yes, it's traveling extensively on the strength of the first book.

Morgan: What are your long-range hopes for *Winter Brothers*?

Doig: There's an enormous "sophomore jinx" in this publishing business, and if there's any single major thing *Winter Brothers* can do for me, it would be to get me past that.

Morgan: "Sophomore jinx"?

Doig: Well, take a case such as mine where you write what is really your first trade book. It's a National Book Award nominee and probably the strongest emotional story I will ever have to tell. So people say, "That's a wonderful highwire act—what's he going to do next?" I've been a professional writer for twenty years now, and I was not really haunted by what I was going to do next. But the question was to try to beat the game if I could and have a second book which would not have reviewers moaning and groaning.

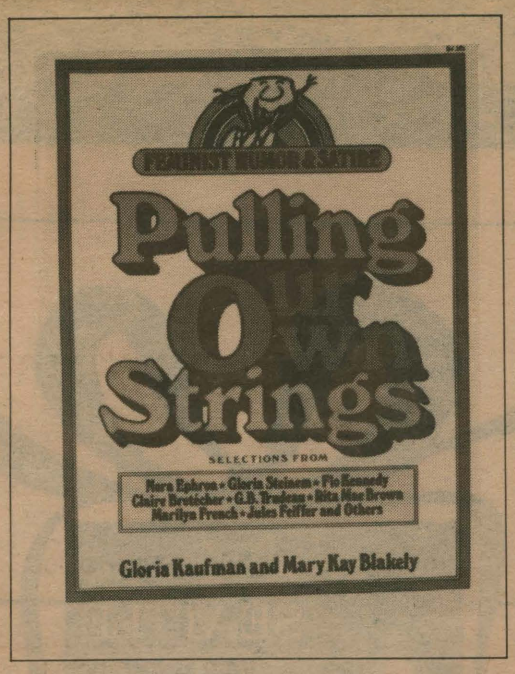
Morgan: How do you top *This House of Sky*—or how do you write something even comparable to it?

Doig: I hope whatever books I do will be notable for their language as much as anything else involved in them. In one sense, *Winter Brothers* was a dice shoot. If it didn't get me past the "sophomore jinx," then I had tried a book I wanted to try. And I can always rationalize that it was such a a hell of a wonderful technical job that none of those blind reviewers saw me pull all those cards out of my sleeve.

Morgan: You say you've been writing twenty years. What's your daily routine?

Doig: I start writing at 7:30 in the morning and work until about 11:30. I try to write between 1,000 and 1,200 words a day, five days a week. In the afternoons I will revise or do research. I don't let myself get more than a day or so off my quota. If I simply can't do more than 800 words one day, I'll hack out 1,200 the next. It turns out that the quality of the words the first time around is not all that important. The more vital thing is to get something down on paper.

Time out for laughter.



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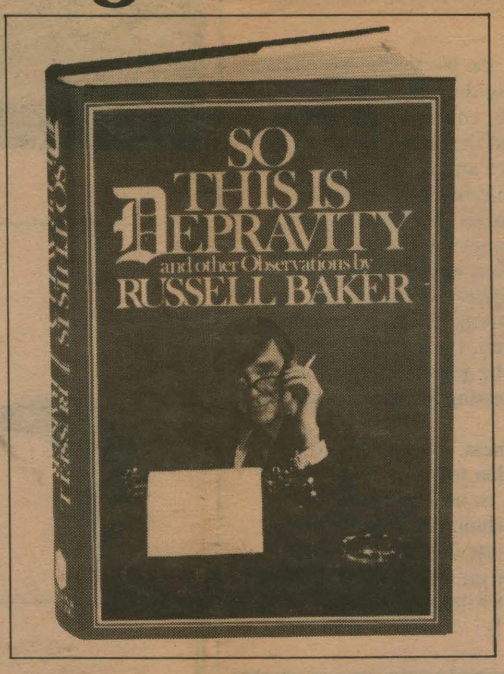

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Morgan: How did you develop the discipline?

Doig: It started back in journalism school at Northwestern. Then my first job was as an editorial writer for a chain of Illinois newspapers where I generally wrote four editorials a day and made up the editorial page in the afternoon. I also juggled magazine articles for almost ten years as a free lance, and I learned pretty rapidly that nobody is paying you to sit around—something you can get away with at least for a few minutes on most salaried jobs. I had to have things out by given days of the week.

Morgan: Were you able to improve the quality of your writing under those pressures?

Doig: Yes, I did an article at pretty much the same level of skill, I think, whether it was $35 for the *Seattle Times Magazine* or $350 for *Parents*. I was also doing my magazine freelancing at a time when Tom Wolfe and Gay Talese and John McPhee were reinventing magazine work. There was a greater freedom in what you could do with magazine pieces, and I think I learned a lot from that.

Morgan: When did you shift to writing books?

Doig: I was working on books at the same time. My wife, Carol, and I co-authored a journalism textbook and I put together two textbook anthologies in this same period. I was also beginning work towards what became *House of Sky*. January of 1972, I think, was the first conscious diary entry I have of building toward that book.

Morgan: How long did that project take?

Doig: It was six and a half years from the first diary entry. Within that span of time there was between two and two and a half years' worth of full-time writing.

Morgan: What is the appeal of the Northwest as a place to write?

Doig: Well, certainly a lot of it is landscape. I seem to need or at least want to live around mountains—and, as it's turning out, around coastline here as well. I greatly enjoy going back to Montana, and I think those visits will set off further writing in me. But for whatever reason—much of it climate—I prefer to live here. I get more work done here, feel more comfortable day by day.

Morgan: And yet you're cut off from the publishing industry out here. Are there advantages in that?

Doig: Yeah, I think there are vast advantages. I'm even told so by East Coast writers I hear from. I've been trying for a Guggenheim for the last three years in a row, so I've been in correspondence with people like Geoffrey Wolff, Michael Arlen, Edward Hoagland, and Peter Matthiessen—people who've agreed to recommend me. And there's a kind of chorus that comes from writers back there, saying, "You're really well off in Seattle, you're better off out of this." I find it personally more efficient—and I guess more efficacious as well—to be kind of holed up here.

Morgan: Is there a community of writers here you keep in touch with?

Doig: No, and I think that's individual idiosyncrasy. I know fewer writers in Seattle than I do in Missoula. Whatever real writing chums I have (the exception being Archie Satterfield, with whom I have lunch about every two months), the guys I'm in closest touch with are the "Missoula Gang," as they are called in the dedication of *Winter Brothers*: people like Richard Hugo, Jim Welch, Bill Kittredge, A.B. Guthrie, Norman Maclean. I see them once or twice a year, we have a hell of a good time together, an evening of gossip and catching up, and go back to our typewriters. And that's about right for me.

Morgan: So getting together with other writers is not that important?

Doig: For me it's not. I tend to wonder, though, if those of us who are writing out here don't tend to hole up a bit more. The climate gives us a chance to do that. You go to Missoula and it's the opposite. The energy flows thigh-deep in the streets back there, and it's dumbfounding to me how people get as much writing done as they do.

Morgan: Does the Western landscape also help to bring out the creativity?

Doig: Yes, in me it starts the language perking. Again, I'm kind of a technician about all this. I can't simply lie back and let it wash over me. For example, I just returned from Montana where I went out with a friend for three days under the Rocky Mountain Front. The Rockies were just looming over us—these mile-long reefs with dramatic canyons spiked in between each one of them. Stunning, enormous country. But while I indeed feel the enormity and grandeur of it, at the same time as a writer I keep thinking, God, how can I *catch* that?□

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1 *The Covenant*, by James A. Michener. (Random House, $15.95.) Historical novel of South Africa.
2 *The Key to Rebecca*, by Ken Follett. (Morrow, $12.95.) Spies wage Rommel's war in Cairo, 1942.
3 *Unfinished Tales*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. (Houghton Mifflin, $15.) The last words from Middle-earth.
4 *Firestarter*, by Stephen King. (Viking, $13.95.) "The Shop" and an evil scientist both want their astounding creation back.
5 *Rage of Angels*, by Sidney Sheldon. (Morrow, $12.95.) A mystery in which a young woman lawyer battles for right.

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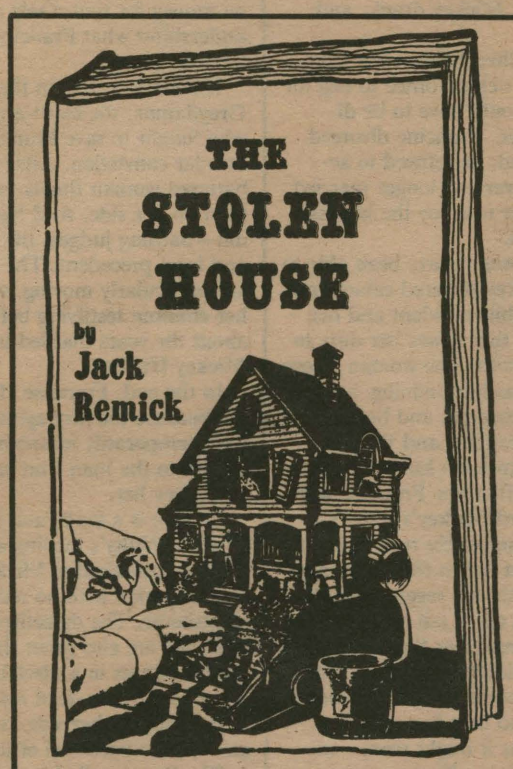

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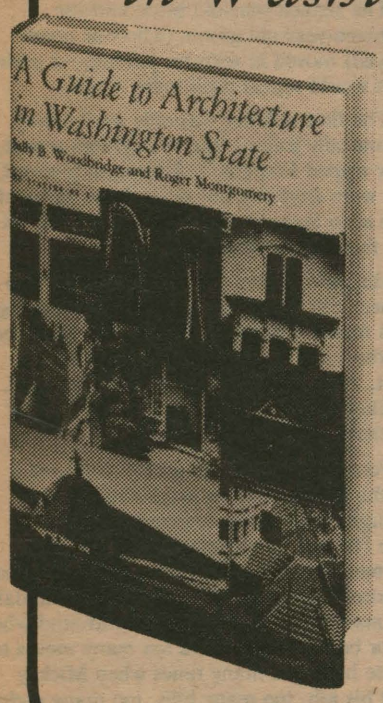

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Domestic nightmare: the punishment and crime of housewife Francine Hughes

The Burning Bed
By Faith McNulty
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich $12.95

by Ann Rule

THE BURNING BED evokes outrage, frustration, tears, and horror. Francine Hughes was twenty-nine years old when she killed her ex-husband, Mickey, by pouring gasoline on him as he lay in a drunken stupor and then tossing a match onto the bed. She has never denied her actions. And though it would seem, on the surface, that this was a "murder most foul," that nothing one human being might do to another warrants such a painful death, I found myself muttering halfway through Faith McNulty's chronicle of a battered wife, "Burn him! Do it now!"

A computer program couldn't have produced a more likely target for a wife abuser than pretty, slender Francine Hughes. Both Francine's mother and grandmother were products of a bitterly poor Kentucky-hills background. The women in her family learned early on that a wife stays home, cares for her children, and makes do with what little money a husband brings home after a stop in a tavern on payday. To the men of that clan, defeated by life too soon, to be masculine was to dominate women; there was no one lower in the pecking order. And the women accepted it as their only reality.

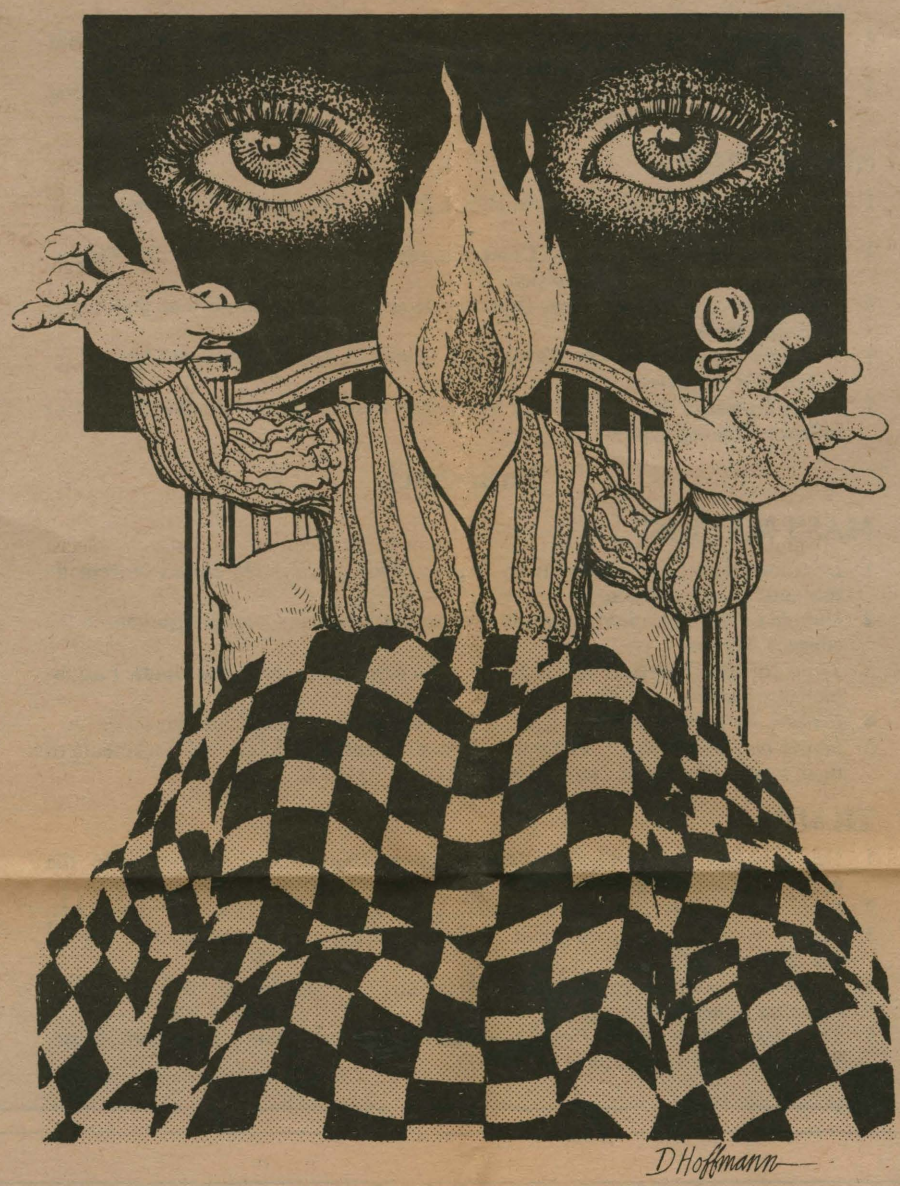
Francine's family moved north to Michigan where it was rumored that there was good money to made by farm laborers in the 1940s. In truth, toil in the onion and potato fields brought meager salaries; there were many moves to rundown houses provided by farm owners, and the social stigma of being "hillbillies." Her father drank, but that was "normal." He did not become an abusive drunk until later—and then Francine's mother tried to hide the bloodied bruises from her children. Prophetically, perhaps, Francine's earliest memory is of a Halloween where her new winter coat and all her candy burned up in the family car where her drunken father and uncle had dropped their cigarettes.

She was a happy little girl, proud to be called pretty, proud that she could color and read, proud that she could be trusted to look after a small brother—until he slipped away from her and was critically injured by a car. When her mother had to hunt her father down to get food money before it went for liquor and gambling, Francine accepted that as the way things were. When her father went to jail for larceny, she accepted that too—taking him cigarettes and candy.

Somewhere back in those poverty-stricken Michigan childhood days, Francine began to take on too much responsibility. She felt guilty for things that were not her doing. She lost a beloved grandmother, and grieved out of all proportion. Later—much later—psychological tests in prison would confirm that she suffered too much for others: "My score on 'empathy' was practically off the graph. Too much for my own emotional well-being."

This little girl who believed that women did what they were told grew up to meet Mickey Hughes, a handsome, raven-haired, high-school dropout who, along with his brothers, had been spoiled rotten by an indulgent mother and a weak father. Mickey had always gotten what he wanted, and he wanted Francine.

Ann Rule, author of The Stranger Beside Me *(W. W. Norton), a book about Ted Bundy, is a former Seattle policewoman and caseworker for the Washington State Department of Public Assistance.*



Doubtful of her commitment to him, but overwhelmed by the huge high school in Jackson, Francine dropped out in the 10th grade and, reluctantly, married Mickey Hughes. "I was scared to death. All I could think of. . . was that I was closing a chapter in my life—too soon."

The sixteen-year-old bride and the eighteen-year-old groom (who was unemployed) moved in with his parents—a pattern that would repeat itself many times.

The first violence was only weeks away. Maniacally jealous, the bridegroom repeatedly ripped Francine's clothing to pieces if she wore anything but drab, loose garments. She soon learned what it was like to be hit in the face with a man's fist.

His parents pretended nothing had happened. She could not go home; her leaving had meant a financial ease for her widowed mother who had younger children to support. After each battering, each black eye, Mickey would be contrite and beg for forgiveness. The pattern was set.

Poorly educated, too young, consumed by the feeling that *she* wasn't trying hard enough to make the marriage work, Francine Hughes was trapped. Over the next thirteen years, she bore Mickey Hughes four children; her pregnancies seemed to validate his manhood, but he was never around when labor began. There were too many moves to relate here, too many times when Mickey quit his job, too many bills, too many nights when the children had no food, and so many beatings for Francine that the number and the intensity are impossible for the rational mind to comprehend. Mickey drank, and was unfaithful.

The children were literally starving when Francine went to the welfare office to beg for help. Told that she would have to be divorced to get assistance, Francine divorced Mickey. It did no good; he refused to acknowledge that they were no longer married and moved in with her to enjoy the largesse of the welfare support.

Even so, Francine might have been able to break away, but Mickey suffered cataclysmic injuries in an automobile accident and his family persuaded her that it was her duty to nurse him back to health. The woman whose empathy for others was her undoing, agreed.

Mickey Hughes recovered, and began a reign of terror over Francine and the children. Local police patrolmen knew their address by heart: they often saw Francine with bruises and cuts, heard Mickey's threats. But statute made it impossible to arrest him unless he actually hurt her in their presence. Occasionally, he battled the responding officers and was hauled off to jail. More often, nothing was done. Time after time, Francine fled in the night to Mickey's parents' home, where they hid her from her raging husband, but they did nothing to help her either.

Incomprehensible as it might seem—except to police and social welfare agencies—there *is* very little that officers can do to protect participants in family fights. Francine Hughes attempted to get help from the courts, welfare, the police, and there was no help forthcoming, beyond a patrol car dispatched after each beating. She could not run away; Mickey vowed to follow and kill her, and she never doubted that he would. Francine had fallen through the loopholes in the system, and her desperation grew beyond all measure.

McNulty details in agonizing specifics the torment Francine Hughes suffered over her thirteen years with Mickey, as he systematically attempted to destroy her. The children suffered. Even the family dog was left to die on a frigid Michigan night as she struggled to give birth to a litter outside in the cold because Mickey would not allow her in the house.

What was happening to Francine Hughes was so horrible that no one seemed to want to think about it at all. That the frail woman did not crack sooner is, perhaps, the biggest puzzle of *The Burning Bed*.

Francine had tried religion, but found no salvation there. Finally, she somehow gathered enough resolve to return to school. There, she found a measure of self worth: she wasn't dumb; she had friends. The precious hours in school meant everything to her. But Mickey's inadequacies could not allow her even that; the fact that Francine was realizing a modicum of her long-sublimated ambitions for education drove him to frenzy.

And it ended in *his* death—not hers.

On March 9, 1977, Mickey Hughes subjected Francine to a series of beatings, threw the family's dinner on the floor, rubbed the jumble of garbage in her face, terrorized his children, and sent them to bed hungry. He'd done all of this before. . . many times. But, on this night, he tried to take from Francine the last of her hopes; he made her tear up her school books, her painstakingly written reports, and then he forced her to burn them. As a final humiliation, he demanded that she submit to intercourse. To save her children, she complied. And then she snapped.

Francine Hughes knew that the only way that she and the children could escape was to destroy everything that comprised her life at that point. That Mickey was part of "everything" made some kind of bizarre sense to her. She had never consciously hurt a living thing before.

McNulty's strength in *The Burning Bed* is her willingness to tell the story through Francine Hughes' eyes; she wisely chooses not to moralize or comment. And Francine's story is gripping. McNulty's writing is spare, nonintrusive, and meticulously researched. The reader is there, reliving the desperate years in shabby homes where terror and submission destroyed all semblance of normal family life, where babies drank watered-down jelly instead of milk, where there was no heat, no money for rent. Only a mother can understand what Francine endured to protect her young.

If there is a hero in the book, it is Aryon Greydamus, the court-appointed attorney who fought to save Francine Hughes from a murder conviction. After thirteen years, the battered woman finally found someone to fight on her side. And fight Greydamus did—battling judges, the prosecutor's office, and legal precedent. The courtroom scenes are particularly moving, with Francine and her children testifying before a stunned jury about the years that led up to the murder of Mickey Hughes.

In the end, Francine Hughes was acquitted because the jury agreed that she had been temporarily insane at the moment she set fire to the man who had tried for so long to destroy her.

If there is a fault, and it is hard to fault Faith McNulty's moving account, it may be that her portrayal of Mickey Hughes shows him as a man with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. The detectives who interrogated Francine are also given short shrift. The author admits in a disclaimer that she had never known the dead man, that there might have been another side. She does not apologize for her portrayal of the detectives.

The Burning Bed is not a pleasant book, but it is a book that shows more than any other thus far *exactly* what a battered wife endures—not for a month, or a year, but for years and years and years. Faith McNulty —and Francine Hughes—deserve respect for their courage in telling a story that cannot have been easy to recall or to relate.□

SF Chron. 10/3/82

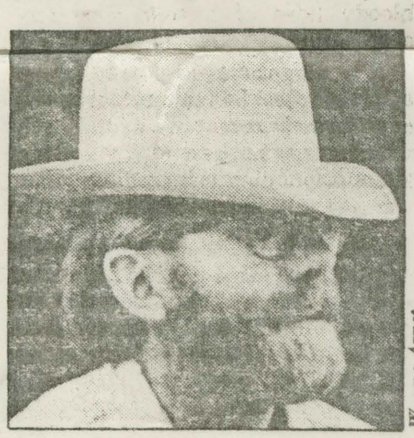
Escape From Alaska In a Stolen Canoe

THE SEA RUNNERS
By Ivan Doig
Atheneum; $13.95

BY HENRY MAYER

Ivan Doig has written a stirring novel of peril and endurance. Its energetic pace and stunning turns kept me reading far later into the night than is wise for a man with a new baby in the house, even though ultimately, the book is a disappointment.

In a very short time ("The Sea Runners" is his third book in five years) Doig has won a reputation as the most impressive Western writer of our generation. His first book, "This House of Sky" (1978) is a richly detailed, contemplative memoir of his Montana boyhood that treats the passage of generations with unusual subtlety and grace. Its successor, "Winter Brothers" (1980), probes the imaginative border be-



Wayne Arnst

Doig: A wintry vogage

tween past and present by mingling the biography of a 19th century Puget Sound pioneer with Doig's own exploration of the same territory.

Both books take as their underlying subject the special quality of the Western experience. "The Sea Runners," however, Doig's first novel, sacrifices his unique perspective for a salt-sprayed version of a familiar genre Western.

The story is about four Swedish indentured servants who in 1852 escape from the Russian fort at New Archangel (now Sitka), Alaska, and set out in a stolen Tlingit canoe for the American settlement at the south of the Columbia River, 1200 miles southeast along the treacherous, island-strewn North Pacific coast.

In this audacious, wintry voyage Doig gives us a glib intellectual, Melander, bold enough to conceive the scheme and charismatic enough to entice others into it; the quiet, even chilly hunter and oarsman Karlsson, and the cherubic-looking thief, Braaf. The trio prepares quietly for months, cleverly co-opts the oafish blacksmith, Wennberg, who tumbles to the plan, and finally makes the break.

Once the quartet is afloat — and clear of the Russian masters who sensibly give only token pursuit — we know from dozens of movies that this disparate crew is destined to undergo social transformation along with physical hardship. Unfortunately the character-types never grow into fully realized people, and despite some heavy manipulation by the author, the social drama never crystalizes into a story of parallel strength.

We get instead only a generalized sense of human aspiration pitted against the coastline's intractable wildness. Natural forces dwarf the men even as their daring ennobles them, and their effort to "dodge life's odds" moves to a poignant and exhausting conclusion.

Doig, I believe, is a writer best suited to the literature of actuality. Even this novel takes its inspiration from a very sketchy report of a real incident, and Doig's wholly imaginary, but authentically furnished account is based on considerable research. He has the historian's interest in causation, in the way that individuals are caught up in larger forces even while making their choices that affect their destiny.

He also has the researcher's fondness for sharing all that he has learned, and the narrative is studded with charming little lectures about maps and currents, place names, native cultures and colonialism. Here his writing is secure, reflective and filled with striking images.

The dialogue, however, falters, sometimes becoming too witty in the contemporary screenplay style or too self-consciously archaic. Although the action sequences have propulsive excitement, there is a stumbling quality to the narrative, a quirky syntax that serves no discernible purpose.

"The Sea Runners" succeeds well enough as entertainment and will probably make a fine movie, but it lacks the ruminative power, the artistic vision that has made Ivan Doig's previous work so remarkable. ▣

Henry Mayer is a Berkeley writer and critic.

IN BRIEF

Trade paperback reprints of note: "BEYOND THE HUNDREDTH MERIDIAN" (University of Nebraska Press, $12.50), Wallace Stegner's engrossing 1954 biography of explorer, "ethnologist and geologist" John Wesley Powell, whom Stegner believes to have been a "mass ry.... by Fr Club story hundr across with s

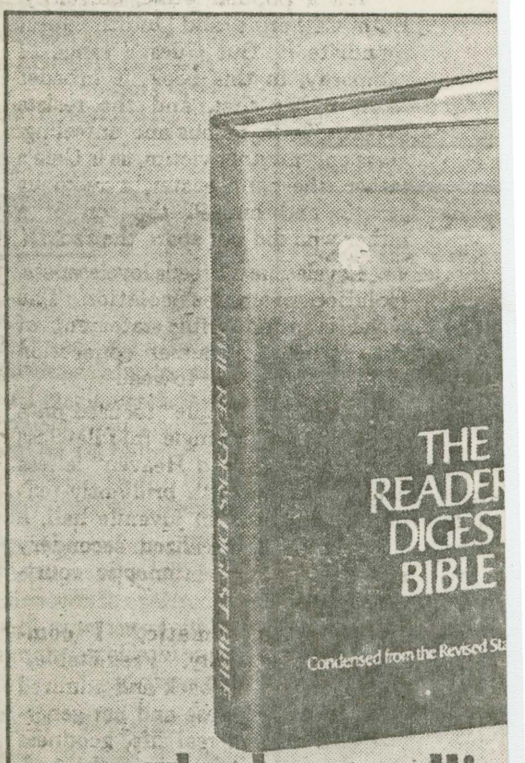


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Photo Wayne D. Sourbeer

Winter Brothers:

an intimate view of our region, seen through the eyes of two men generations apart.



SPECIALS

Thoughts Regarding Winter Brothers

by Jean Walkinshaw, Producer

When one works with an on-camera personality who happens to be a resolute Scotsman with a dry wit, amusing moments are bound to occur. Ivan Doig, second generation Scot, was not about to become a "personality kid" while reciting excerpts from his book, *Winter Brothers*, in our latest film for KCTS/9.

As we filmed Ivan in the center of the street in Port Townsend, I asked him if he could possibly appear a bit more natural. "How can I seem natural?" he asked. "I'm really not used to standing in the center of the street on a cold rainy day reciting lines from my book."

Yet Ivan was completely himself throughout the filming and it is for this very reason he did such a remarkable job. He is offbeat, surprisingly relaxed, and an excellent conveyor of his own prose. In this film based on his book—a book reviewers have called "a classic," "a masterpiece," a versatile and daring feat of writing"—Ivan carries the show.

Winter Brothers intertwines the diaries of James Gilchrist Swan, a colorful early settler on the Olympic Peninsula, with Doig's own journal. The result is a book which records the daily growth of a strange and powerful bond between the long-dead Swan, or "coastal nomad," and the sensitive modern writer, Ivan Doig. *Winter Brothers* has a complex construction as it shifts back and forth in time. In creating the film, we had an almost insurmountable challenge in our opening scenes: how to reveal to our viewers that this is a film about a book which includes diaries from yesteryear. I hope—after many edits and re-edits—that we have finally come up with an opening which not only draws in the audience, but also gives them some idea of what is happening in this complex plot structure.

In his book, Ivan used the landscape to link his own experience to that of the pioneer Swan. Of his writing, one reviewer said, "Doig weaves Swan's words into his own narrative . . . yet it is his own beautiful writing, original and filled with poetic imagery revealing the true romantic, that makes this a grand book."

And it was the potential of combining Ivan's writing with photographer Wayne Sourbeer's intimate and intuitive perceptions of landscape and place that first inspired this film and makes the program such an aesthetically exciting experience.

The book reviewer for the *New York Times* wrote of *Winter Brothers*, ". . . it is a gorgeous tribute to a man and a region unjustly neglected here-to-fore." We trust the film based on this exceptional book justly captures the essence of Ivan Doig's tribute to our beautiful Northwest as seen by two sets of eyes 100 years separated.

Airs Wednesday, November 24, 8:30 P.M.



Filmmakers Jean Walkinshaw (left) and Wayne Sourbeer (center) on location at Cape Flattery with Ivan Doig during the production of *Winter Brothers*.

Excerpts From Winter Brothers

DOIG: Four decades of Swan's diaries, some two and a half million pen words. Opening these pages of Swan's years is like entering a room filled with jugglers and tumblers and swallowers of flame, performance crowding performance.

SWAN: The grandeur of the scenery about Cape Flattery . . . the wild and varied sounds which fill the air, from the dash of water into the caverns and fissures of the rocks, mingles with the living cries of innumerable fowl . . . all combined, present an accumulation of sights and sounds sufficient to fill a less superstitious beholder than the Indian with mysterious awe.

DOIG: There is a kind of border crossing allowed us by time: special temporary passage permitted us if we seek out the right company for it, some guide such as Swan willing to lead us back where we have never been.

SWAN: Mr. Fitzgerald of Sequim Prairie, better known as "Skip," walked off the wharf near the Custom House last night and broke his neck. The night was very dark and he mistook his way. . . . Mr. Tucker is very ill with his eye, his face is badly swelled. This evening I got Kichook's Cowitchan squaw to milk her breast into a cup, and then I bathed Mr. Tucker's eye with it. . . . Yesterday my cat killed all my chickens so this morning I shot the cat.

DOIG: Swan was born two decades or so before my own great-grandfather, but more and more I feel that we dwell in a community of time as well as of people.

book week

NEW FALL FICTION



Sun-Times Graphic by Bill Linden

ES MICHENER: The little mistakes and misconceptions add up.

table in the guest bedroom.

s is unquestionably a good read (although t of peters out at the end) but it leaves a r who cut his eyeteeth on the space am a little bit disturbed about other bold, ranging Michener novels he has read: *The e, Chesapeake, Hawaii,* to name a few.

this man, who has written so glibly about its and bolts of so many other complicated , really have as little mastery of his t-matter (the archeology of Palestine, the logy of estuarine waters, Polynesian pre-y) as he so obviously has when writing space?

e does not fault a master craftsman of for setting up anomalous situations that ce his story line; that's what the craft is out. But when painting a make-believe e on a real-life canvas, the artist should be d to get the background facts right.

here is where Michener fails, with ronisms and in other dumb, trifling little like dropping a few orders of magnitude explaining an abstruse point of math-cs; like getting the date of the tragic fire wrong (in one place, and getting it in another); like putting extraneous char- into the communications loop during a ed flight; like identifying Sen. Harrison tt (R-N.M.) as being from Arizona; like a defendant tried in a state court for a l offense; like having a woman go to a quack for an abortion in 1972 in California, where abortions have been legal since 1967; like saying that the Florida launching base was named Cape Kennedy (it was Kennedy Space Center); like having a Brazilian jungle guide speak in Spanish instead of Portuguese; like suggesting that a top-level scientist who had been with NASA since 1958 never heard the phrase "real time" until he went to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in 1972.

EQUALLY troubling are the misconceptions Michener peddles about the history of the early space effort. As a single example, he totally mistakes the role of Lyndon Johnson in establishing a space center at Houston; the prime mover of this ploy was the late Rep. Albert Thomas, who held the purse strings of NASA in the House in 1961 and bluntly told John Kennedy that the path to the moon runs through Houston. By rights NASA's base there should have been named for Thomas, who has had to settle for a federal office building in downtown Houston and a post office across the way from the center that now bears Johnson's name.

One could go on, but won't. Michener's book will sell a million copies and many people will use it as a space bible when it really isn't. What it is, maybe, is the 15th or 20th best book ever written on the space program, and if that justifies an outlay of $17.95, well, as Lee Iacocca says, "Go buy it."

untry-house mystery revived

is exotic and isolated—a renovated castle, with Victorian art objects, on an island off past of Dorset. There is a limited number aracters, all of whom are introduced early story, and they are a classy bunch; they better English than most college profes-do, even in England. Clothes, furniture, and landscape are painstakingly described.

e first victim is someone nobody likes, and the reader, don't like her either, so you mind her being murdered; and the second is—well, I don't want to spoil the nse by telling you, but it's another charac-u don't much care for. Finally, the story is for your blood pressure: it contains noth-iat will upset you, until the very end.

may want to take a nip of sherry or hing before you read the last 25 pages, h, The heroine is fighting for her life and same time trying to keep the murderer and this passage is bound to make you nervous. It's tremendously exciting.

Yes, the book has a heroine instead of a hero. Her name is Cordelia Gray, and she owns a small detective agency in London. James introduced her to the public ten years ago; you may recall, in a novel called *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman.* She's sort of an updated Miss Marple, only younger. Her father was a Communist, and for a while she was raised in foster homes, but then she went to a convent school where she was very happy.

I don't find her in the least convincing as a detective, but I like her as a person. She's a level-headed, intelligent young woman who views humanity with compassion, which, as you've often complained, is an all too rare quality in the heroes and heroines of suspense novels, past or present. Cordelia is someone you would enjoy having tea with, Aunt Emma; you would admire her common sense and you would

Turn to Page 26

Trial by sea and by time

Chi Sun-Times Sept. 19, 82

IVAN DOIG writes a clear, clean prose, simple but purposeful, the kind that is hardest to achieve. He sculpts language, wielding verb and noun like hammer and chisel, carving sentences with spare, vigorous energy.

This House of Sky and *Winter Brothers,* two meditations on American Westernness, proved his originality as stylist and thinker. Now, in *The Sea Runners* (Atheneum, $13.95), he has also become a splendid lyric storyteller with his first venture into fiction—an adventure novel, at that. Observe:

One for the books

Henry Kisor / Book Editor

"Melander you would have spied early. Top-lofty man with lanks of arms and high hips, so that he seemed to be all long sections and hinges."

And: "Clumps of wan light, warmths fallen through chinks in the overcast, now would pinto the forest flanks."

"Now" is the winter of 1852 at New Archangel, Baranof Island, Russian America. Melander, a Swedish seaman indentured to the "tsarmen" for seven years, is rubbed raw by the fetters of near slavery. He resolves to escape by sea, stealing one of the 20-foot Indian canoes from the village outside the New Archangel fort. The route: 1,200 perilous miles stairstepping past islands, shoals, straits and sounds down the Pacific Coast to Astoria, Oregon Territory, where ships home to Sweden can be found.

For mate he chooses an axeman named Karlsson, slender and reticent, "a man built smoke-tight," and for "provisioner" appoints Braaf, an apple-cheeked, nimble-fingered thief. Weeks later, when the three are deep into preparations, a brutish, fiery-tempered blacksmith called Wennberg discovers the plot and demands entrance. There is no other choice.

Mistrusted at first, Wennberg proves his worth once the quartet gets away. His brawn makes the canoe fly. Unsuspected talents rise in the others also. Karlsson turns out to be a fine cook, Braaf a sensitive weather-reader, and leader Melander a mother-hen with both a soothing chatter and a mastery of detail.

As the voyage lengthens each man faces a sea-change in himself. Will further hidden resources emerge, or will each become more of what he seems, the lines carved deeper? The press of endurance upon character is an old, old subject that goes back to Homer, but Doig freshens the odyssey.

Tossful days, surf, the crash of tide accompany the voyagers. Now a storm, now a calm: each day a new test of nature and of self. "Vast weeks of dare" and boredom pass, cheerful Melander clucking away the friction that surfaces among men under such circumstances.

Until the halfway point, off the coast of New Caledonia (now British Columbia), when Melander is shot to death by Indians. Karlsson, chosen leader by default (only he can read), discovers that Melander had maps of coast just to the northern tip of Vancouver Island, barely two-thirds of the voyage, and he had kept quiet about it, trusting to his sailor's sense to take them the rest of the way. Karlsson is no seaman, but with doggedness and luck the canoemen struggle past Vancouver Island and the Strait of San Juan de Fuca.

OF the rest, let me say only that there is further loss, and crisis, and growing, rending doubt and desperation. This, after all, is high adventure, and not knowing how it ends makes the tension of reading all the higher.

Ivan Doig's story is simple, yet his muscular style and novelty of historical detail—what other tales do you know of Alaska before Seward euchred it out of the Russians in 1867?—set it apart among survival fiction. I can't recall another recent adventure novel so thoroughly satisfying.

And it delights me to learn that Doig is at work on a second novel, this one set in Montana.

Novels of History and Imagination

THE SEA RUNNERS

By Ivan Doig.
279 pp. New York:
Atheneum. $13.95.

THE BAREFOOT BRIGADE

By Douglas C. Jones.
313 pp. New York:
Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
$15.50.

NY Times
Oct. 3, '82

By MARY LEE SETTLE

WE carry our history within us, in our habits, our language, our country, our names, our mores, our memories. To write from within that timescape is the prime function of the novelist whose subject is the past. The historian is concerned with facts, the archeologist with physical objects, but the novelist must find that universal center that is both contemporary and historically true if the novel is to transcend romance and create its own present. Both of these novels do this.

"The Sea Runners" by Ivan Doig goes beyond being "about" survival and becomes, mile by terrible mile, the experience itself. Mr. Doig has created the illusion of going with four men in a 20-foot canoe over a thousand miles of the Pacific Northwest, from Alaska to the Territory of Washington, in 1852. The voyagers are

Mary Lee Settle's most recent novel is "The Killing Ground."



Drawings by Marla Horvath

Swedes, indentured servants in what was then Russian America, before it was bought as "Seward's folly" and became Alaska.

The feeling for the winter sea and the forbidding land is formidable. The four men are Melander, a sailor; Karlsson, a woodsman; Braaf, a thief; and Wennberg, a blacksmith. There is little courage or camaraderie — only the awesome sea and four men who have little in common and bear with each other because of their mutual need. Slow and brutal time passes; from cove to cove, island to island, in storms, in fog, the days and hours of survival are the drama and plot.

The book contains factual surprises: Russian America was settled by somewhat the same system of indenture used in Virginia 200 years before, even to the seven-year commitment; much of the West was settled by people who got there by sea and not across land. Yet the research never intrudes on the story.

The journey is a true one, based on an 1853 letter to the editor of The Oregon Weekly Times about the survival of three men following the same sea route. Only their names are known. The characters in the novel are Mr. Doig's creation. As he says in the author's acknowledgment, they "have lived only in the world of this book." And they do live (or die), in prose that suits the experience without straining for poetic "transcendence."

•

In "The Barefoot Brigade" Douglas C. Jones writes about some of the most haunting men in the history of the American South — the dirt-farm infantry of the Confederate Army. They trudged through Shelby Foote's fine account of the Civil War, so alive that fiction would need the evocative magic of "War and Peace" to re-create them more vividly.

Mr. Jones's research has been extensive — in the classic histories of the Civil War and the local records of the Third Arkansas Infantry. Out of it have been born six men: two brothers from a hill farm in Arkansas, a circuit-riding judge, a Welsh professional sol-

Continued on Page 18

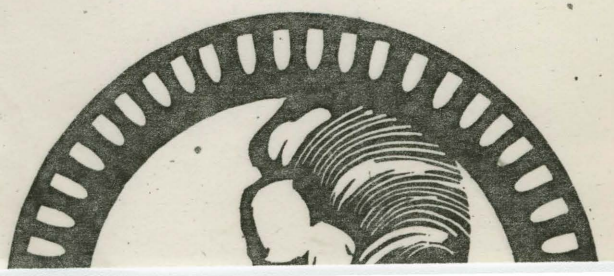
Married and Abandoned

A NEW WOMAN

By Janine Boissard.
Translated by Mary Feeney.
195 pp. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. $11.95.

THE CAGE

By Susan Cheever.
180 pp. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. $11.95.



her husband suddenly requests a divorce. Miss Boissard opens her story at the moment of Claudine's greatest shock, then goes on to record her moving and often painful journey with great artistry.

There isn't a wasted word in this haunting book: A woman's emotional death, struggle and rebirth are all contained in the six-month period between her husband's departure and their divorce. Her history, expectations, loss and recovery, her convictions about

ELLIOTT BAY BOOKNOTES

The Newsletter of the Elliott Bay Book Company, Seattle Fall, 1983

Interpreting The West: An Interview With Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig is a man of medium stature with a rugged academic look about him. He has published three books: ***This House Of Sky*** *(HBJ, $5.95),* ***Winter Brothers*** *(HBJ, $5.95), and* ***The Sea Runners*** *(Atheneum, $13.95) soon to be released as a Penguin paperback. You are made immediately aware of his Celtic origins by the heavy red beard which is just beginning to grey. Minus the glasses and dressed in buckskin he could be one of Charles Russell's trappers.*

I met with Ivan and Carol, his wife, in The Elliott Bay Cafe on a rainy summer day. Ivan preferred to tape the interview because he said he was spending enough time behind a typewriter working on his new novel, which he talked about at some length. Great artists inspire us not only with their works but with their presence as well. I found this to be true of Ivan Doig.

Interviewed by John Dally

JD: There seems to be a lot of scholastic as well as experiential background to your work. In the section of *The Sea Runners* where they're paddling south to the Queen Charlottes, the description of the ocean was incredible. I used to work on a commercial salmon troller, and I started to get seasick all over again. What sorts of research have you done and how did you start writing?

ID: I think I write best about things I can either see or get firmly in mind through research. In that particular part of **Sea Runners** set around the Queen Charlottes, the descriptions of the water and so forth are from flying over it in a Grumman Goose when Carol and I went out to the village of Massett for the sake of a beach scene. We had what turned out to be the good luck of a very foggy, overcast day, so the Goose from Prince Rupert flew very low over the water. The pilot was simply going by a radio beam and was going to pick up the shoreline of the Queen Charlottes eventually. So, I was able to look right down on the water and get the descriptions.

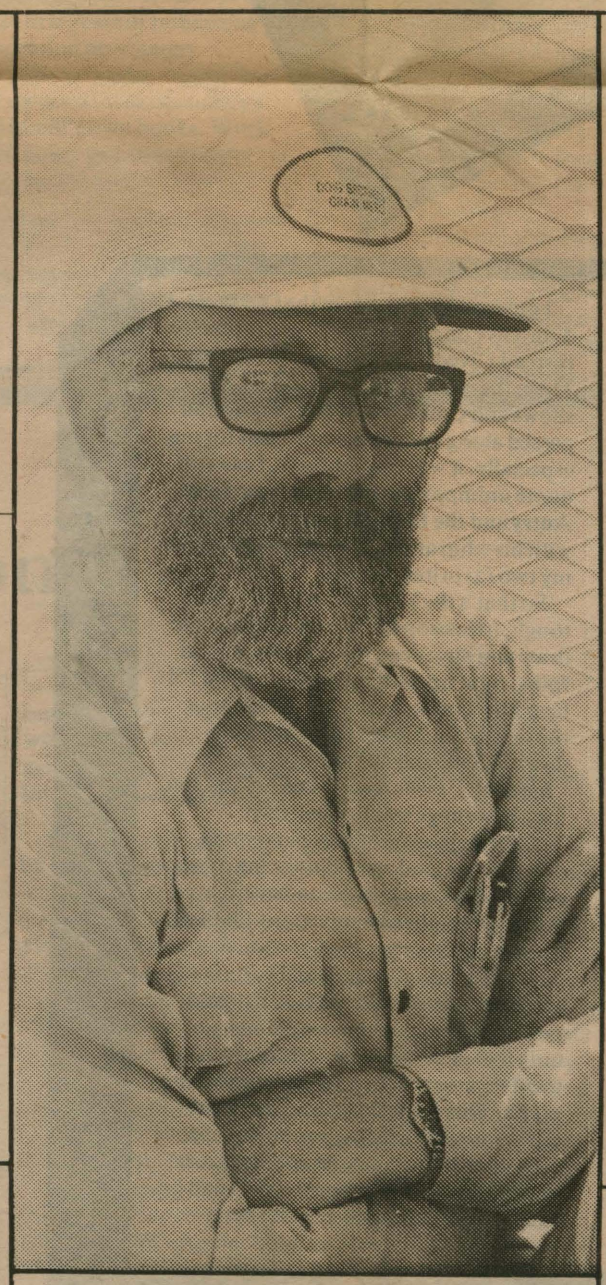


photo by Wayne Sourbeer

JD: Have you spent some time on the water?

ID: No, I'm not a water-person. I'm not a canoeist or kayaker. I'm a lover of the shoreline. I really haven't done water traveling except, again on **The Sea Runners**, coming down from Juneau to Seattle on a University of Alaska oceanography ship, which gave me the rest of the water and coastal descriptions.

JD: The thing I find remarkable about your style is that it resembles the landscape in its luxuriousness. There is a real lyricism to it that I think is part of the landscape as well. Is that something you work for?

ID: Well, I only had two English courses in my college life, but somewhere I heard that form ought to fit content and content ought to fit form. I think the books reflect that notion—**Winter Brothers** being a journal because it's primarily about a guy who keeps journals, and **House Of Sky** with the italic musings on memory being a book **about** memory, and **The Sea Runners** in brief, almost movie-like takes, paragraph by paragraph, moments of a long journey. So this probably carries over into the descriptions too. I've been interested in trying to capture landscape in metaphor. I do feel that after **Sea Runners** and **Winter Brothers** back to back, I've run dry of coastal descriptions for a while. The book I'm working on now, and maybe the next couple, will be set in Montana. But, yeah, I do try to think of what the landscape will suggest in terms of language.

JD: Maybe this would be a good time to talk about your new book?

ID: Okay. It's a novel set in Montana in the late years of the Depression, in the area where I lived during high school. That's between Sun River and Glacier Park on the east side of the Rocky Mountains. I'm creating a town

Continued on the back page.

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and a ranching valley to put on the actual landscape up there. And also a National Forest. This gives me the chance to do whatever I want with the characteristics of the town and the ranches and the forest and so on. Carol has tekan photographs of Montana buildings that would have been around in the 1930s. We piece them together to get what that small town main street would look like in the '30s. I've been working on that today, in fact.

The book is about a family that's been through the Depression. My narrator is a fourteen-going on fifteen-year-old son of a forest ranger, both native born to that area. So, it's a look at the generation that is coming out of the Depression. I'm interested in the late years of the 1930s as a historical hinge; of people feeling they have endured the major historical event of their lives and, of course, having no way of knowing another one, World War II, is coming. This novel will be much more like **House Of Sky** than the other two books.

JD: *This House Of Sky* is subtitled *Landscapes of a Western Mind.* Do you see yourself as a "Western writer," a "Northwest writer?"

ID: I would generally say "Western," simply because so much of my stuff is set in Montana. I have no notion of where the dividing lines rest, but I consider myself interested in regional topics out here, and hope to get to larger topics of life through a particular lens of regional characteristics.

JD: When I think of your work I also think of the works of Thomas McGuane, Richard Hugo, and Jim Welch. It seems like these writers, yourself included, are defining some kind of "Western" attitude, way of life, philosophy, style of living. Does that interest you? Do you look for them consciously?

ID: I'm not conscious of working on my own theory of the West. Because my background is in journalism and history I'm more interested in trying to interpret what the actual West seems to me to be like.

JD: Say I gave you the task of putting together a reading list on Northwest culture. What would be some of the books you'd include?

ID: Well, in Montana there are classes taught now in Montana literature, which often include **The Lady In Kicking Horse Reservoir**, Jim Welch's **Winter In The Blook,** and Norman Maclean's **A River Runs Through It**, which I think is one of the great stories of America, not just the West. **The Big Sky** by A.B. Guthrie, which is a book important to a lot of us because it showed that a Montanan could write a book that got published, when I was a kid out there. From farther this direction, Ken Kesey's **Sometimes A Great Notion**, Don Berry's **Trask,** Norman Clark's **Milltown.** I would probably put in there Swan's own **Northwest Coast.**

JD: Any painters you'd include?

ID: Tony Angell!

JD: Tony Angell.

ID: Because he's a friend and I'm paying close attention to what he's doing. We're about the same age. We're kind of watching each other go at life in this way. Tony's painting and sculpture interests me a lot.

JD: Do you make your living as a writer?

ID: Some years.

CD: But he doesn't do anything else. [laughs]

ID: [laughing] Yeah, I don't do anything else. I've been full time at it for thirteen years.

JD: Do you have a daily schedule?

ID: I usually wander into my office, in my house, a little after 7 a.m. and will work from then till about 11:30, lunch time. Maybe go out for a cup of coffee along elegant Aurora Avenue in between. And then in the afternoon after a break or reading or walking around the neighborhood I either write some more or edit what's been done in the morning, or do research or whatever. Pretty much go till 5 p.m. Out of this I achieve so many pages a day. It varies as to where I am in a book. If it's first draft it's four or five pages a day, usually five days a week.

JD: Do you write out those four or five pages and then go back to edit, or do you write one sentence over and over till you get it exactly right and then move on to the next?

ID: Well, I tinker quite a lot as I go along. I'm a cut and paste writer because of my journalistic background. My manuscripts gain heft from Elmer's glue and the additions of paper as I go along. That's the primary method of tinkering. The book I'm doing now is the most natural sounding book I've done. It has a first person narrator, this fourteen-year-old, and it's written in colloquial Montana lingo. And so it has a more casual flow than the very dense parts of all three other books. Some of those were revised endlessly. I'm purposely drawing back on the current book and not revising it till my kid narrator would sound like me, a forty-four year old Seattlelite with a Ph.D.

Days of rain, those four next.

Of Channel water like a gray-blue field very gently stirred by wind.

Of clouds lopping the mountains, so they seemed strange shagged buttes of green.

Of soft rattle of wings as gulls would rise in a hundred from a shore point of gravel.

Of fog walking the top of the forest in morning.

The Sea Runners, Atheneum, 1982: p. 182
Printed with permission from the author.

JD: Who do you write for?

ID: I wish I knew how to answer that. This may be too glib, it just came to me. I write for the sheet of paper in front of me.

I try things out on Carol incessantly, of course. She's my first and best editor. Because of having been a journalist where stuff had to be accessible enough to attract people, and having been around history departments and a lot of unreadable history, I do want these books of mine to be readable. That's in the back of my mind. But with **Winter Brothers**, if I'd had any particular reader in mind, I probably wouldn't have made that as difficult in format.

JD: Is accessiblity something, then, that worries you in your writing?

ID: Not much. Only in that I have a habit of looking things over and if it sounds pretty good to me, which is what I'm primarily trying to achieve—to Carol and friends who look at the manuscript—that's generally good enough. It then goes to an editor in New York who's being paid decently to see how easily it reads.

However, I'm interested in less accessible books that others have done. I thought **Riddley Walker** a wonderful piece of work. Also **The Book Of Ebenezer Le Page.** And **One Hundred Years of Solitude.** But my notion would be that if you're setting out to do a technically arcane kind of fiction you had better do it as good as any of those three, and not just make it difficult in an academic sense.

JD: What are your other great inspirations?

ID: I guess the English language is the prime one. I'm interested in the sounds of the English language. From what I've read it's somewhat like Russian, a great sprawling expressive language where you have a lot of freedom to roam. That's the basic that would have attracted me to a typewriter in the first place, in high school and then in college to become a journalist.

Certainly, growing up in the ranching West, as I did, has stayed with me as inspiration, too. The Independence and the ability to stand myself, to work alone at home (which daunts a lot of people), those I think come out of the way I grew up.

JD: I should ask you what advice you give beginning writers.

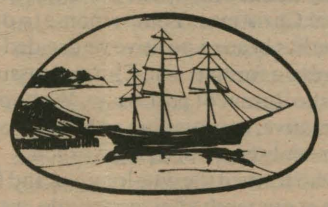
ID: That's about the hardest question of all. I end up saying I'm not sure my own example would be a particular prize to anybody else. My choice was to go into journalism, get some further background in history, then top it off with about ten years as a magazine freelance. I think that's about twice too long to fight the freelance life. Freelance writing in this country seems to get more and more impossible. But it did teach me quite a lot about writing. Most writers who are making it in this country are doing it by teaching. If you're able to do that I suppose that's a good compromise. I'd rather not split my time that way, and so I never have.

But it seems to come down to this: a person who is going to be a writer probably just can't be stopped. There might be some specific advice and courses in writing that might be helpful, but the writers I know—Hugo came out of Boeing, Jim Welch came out of Indian reservation life, Guthrie came out of a newspaper career in middle age in Kentucky to write about Montana, Maclean didn't really begin fiction till he retired from the University of Chicago—these are all wildly different backgrounds. But in each case the stubbornness of the person largely accounts for making it, that they simply wanted so much to write that in every case a way has been found. They've managed to go ahead without a lot of money and security, which could have been got some other way. But it ought to be made clear to anybody who thinks they're interested in writing that it's a very difficult financial proposition. A person who wants to write a book had better have some means of support for the time it takes.

JD: What makes a good story?

ID: John Gardner, one of the real gurus of writing in this country, said there are only two good stories: somebody takes a journey, and a stranger rides into town. [laughs] I was thrilled to read that because the Montana novel I'm writing has both those complements.

People still stop to hear a good story.



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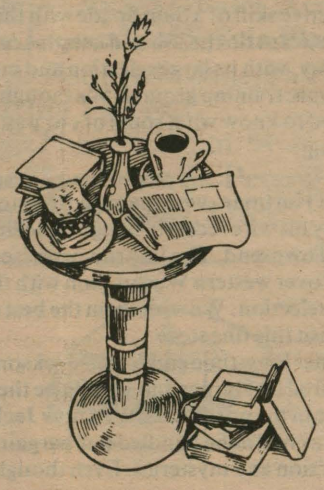




Some area residents who came to get an autographed copy of Ivan Doig's new book 'English Creek' took time out for reminiscences. (Tribune Photos by Wayne Arnst)

Visit becomes a homecoming

Those who helped shape Doig's books drop by to say 'hi'

By J.M. SWANSON
For the Tribune

Looking like an English professor, Montana-born author Ivan Doig came to town a hero on a Wednesday afternoon, and all the sons of sheepherders and ranchers came from miles around to see him and his new book, "English Creek."

"The fastest pen in the West," Doig's wife, Carol, calls him. Indeed, he scrawls best wishes and autographs swiftly in fine black old-fashioned script.

"It's like following a national monument around," Carol says later, half-wryly. No doubt she means a Montana monument on this tour.

A pert, rosy-faced and bright-eyed New Jersey native with short salt-peppered hair and casual manner, Carol percolates good cheer.

"This is fun!" she exclaims at one point before continuing her rounds.

Meanwhile, Doig contemplates the possibility of writer's cramp before this Montana tour is done, as he signs about 270 copies of a new book and countless copies of older ones at a bookstore in Times Square in Great Falls.

And the next day? A Bozeman bookstore had ordered 800 copies for Thursday.

Doig, an unabashed red-haired Scot with hairs thinning a trifle on top and flecks of white in the beard, sits straight, almost prim in a well-tailored brown suit with shirt and tie.

For all the finger work, Doig is at home.

These are the natives of the land, the descendants of the characters that helped to make Doig's first book, "This House of Sky, Landscapes of a Western Mind" so haunting and so popular.

Doig's memoirs of growing up around White Sulphur Springs and Dupuyer was nominated for the National Book Award in contemporary thought, received other awards and was named one of five best books about Montana in a 1981 poll.

Montanans are still reading and buying it, says Doig.

Returning to Great Falls is like a homecoming, as locals from White Sulphur Springs, Choteau, Stanford and Dupuyer line up to reminisce with Doig or tell him how he has touched their lives.

This fourth book, after two books set on the Northwest Coast, is Doig's first piece of Montana fiction, and the the first of a planned trilogy.

"Thanks for having Johnny for a father so I could steal a few stories," Doig tells one woman.

"This is the first person I met in Grade One," Doig explains with beaming pleasure as he stands to give a woman a hug. He greets another high-school classmate. "Valier, 1957!" he proclaims.

"Charlie Doig, we knew by stories," one couple tells Carol Doig.

Even Sen. Max Baucus' uncle shows up to talk. And here's a deputy county attorney and over there are the library workers and the media.

"A land office business!" Doigs tells one enquiring fan.

"Waiting for the Hunchback of Notre Dame to come out with all these bells," he mutters in aside later, as bells ring periodically close by.

Meanwhile, chatting with Carol is George Engler of Great Falls, retired as Lewis and Clark National Forest supervisor since 1976, and a chief source of information on the forest ranger and forest fire in Doig's new book.

Also stopping to talk are the Hamletts. Joy advised Doig on sour cream chocolate pie for dessert on the Fourth of July in "English Creek." It would have been angel food cake, if there were lots of eggs, she explains.

Obviously, Doig, who has degrees in journalism and a Ph.D. in history, does not lack for research. Generally his books take two years to write, he says.

In August of 1982, the Doigs spent a month in Montana interviewing "survivors" of the Depression and cataloguing data from the drought and grasshopper infestations of the 1930s.

Carol took scenic photographs, which Doig then put in a holder by his typewriter, along with notes, to jog his memory as he wrote.

That fall, "The Sea Runners," Doig's first fiction, partly set in Alaska was going into publication. Doig's work won him the Royal Order Tusk, a pin making him an honorary Alaskan. He wore it proudly Wednesday.

Doig's earlier book, "Winter Brothers, A Season at the Edge of America," from 1980, based on the journals of James Swan, won the Pacific Northwest Bestsellers Award and was adapted for a public television documentary.

In 1982, Doig drew back into the Montana heartland and set his sights on the Hi-Line, that larger-than-life area where the Rockies greet the plains.

Now that "English Creek" is out, Doig has begun research on the next book. He has visited "the Scandinavian coast of Scotland" for background research.

"English Creek" the middle book of the trilogy, focuses on the Depression; Doig is now at work on the "first" of the trilogy.

The new book will focus on the homesteading days from 1889 and statehood to the winter of 1919. A final book will follow the family to the Centennial.

The Doigs plan to return for research during the next few years.

Doig, who has focused on the past in his first four books, partly because of his interest in history, says he is not restricted to the past.

"I try to look at each generation

See DOIG, 6-A

Doig

From 5-A

somewhat on their own terms. Various generations have their own sets of courage. The Depression generation looked at both ends of the spectrum. They had a grim situation with a lack of cash, since life was so rural. They remember that they got through it by the generosity of neighbors and friends."

Carol says that A.B. Guthrie Jr.'s well-known "The Big Sky" trilogy may have influenced Doig in a distant way. "Ivan grew up and read Guthrie's books and — I don't think it's too much to say — idolized him."

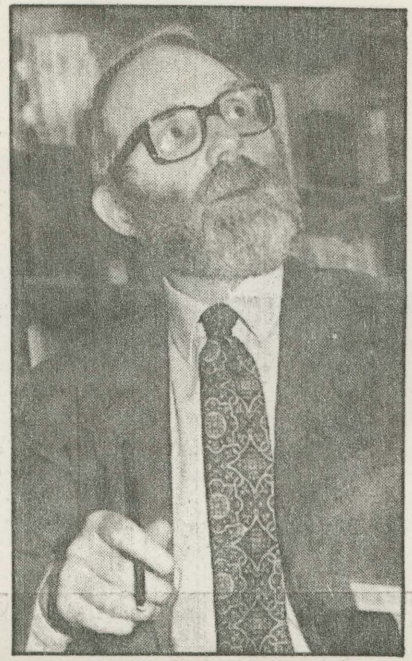
Like Guthrie, Doig worked for newspapers. After he received his Ph.D., he never taught. Instead, he became a magazine free-lance writer for the next 10 years, "twice as long as I should have," he admits now.

"Making a living became worse and worse, considering the effects of inflation," Doig says. So he tried writing books instead.

"I try to be a grown-up about it and write stuff that will last," he says. He's been a full-time writer now for 13 years.

Asked about his move to fiction, Doig says, "I never thought of it as a departure in that my fiction is so closely based on historical detail. With fiction there's the freedom of being able to make up the characters and not be bound by iron fact."

So far, Doig says "English Creek" may be the best seller of all his books.



Ivan Doig

He has promoted his own books, beginning with "House of Sky." "Nobody knew who I was. It's a hard book to describe."

Adds Carol, "Ivan thinks that you'd better be interested in the business side of book publishing if you're going to succeed."

While in Montana this week, the Doigs visited Kalispell and Helena, and were to travel to Bozeman Thursday, the Montana Historical Conference in Lewistown Friday and the University of Montana homecoming in Missoula Saturday.

In June they hope to return for "a real vacation," Carol says.

When the Doigs finally return to Seattle, where they have lived the past 18 years, Carol says they will resume a quiet life.

She teaches journalism at a community college in the mornings and Ivan writes from 7 to 11 a.m., doing editing and correspondence in the afternoons.

"Ivan's a morning person," says Carol. "Surprising, the amount of correspondence and the details!" she marvels.

"We try and lead a rational life," she says. At 5 p.m., they listen to National Public Radio and they usually turn in early.

With all this reception, have the Doigs ever considered uprooting their Seattle lives and moving to Montana?

"Yes, we think about it. We'd love to do it, at least seasonally," says Carol. Doig explains the immediate problems of Carol's Seattle job and their preference for the Seattle climate.

"We'd both like to spend more time here. We're not quite clear about how to do it," he adds.

Boyhood in Montana

REVIEW

Scouting out grown-ups' territory

English Creek
By Ivan Doig
Atheneum, 339 pp., $15.95

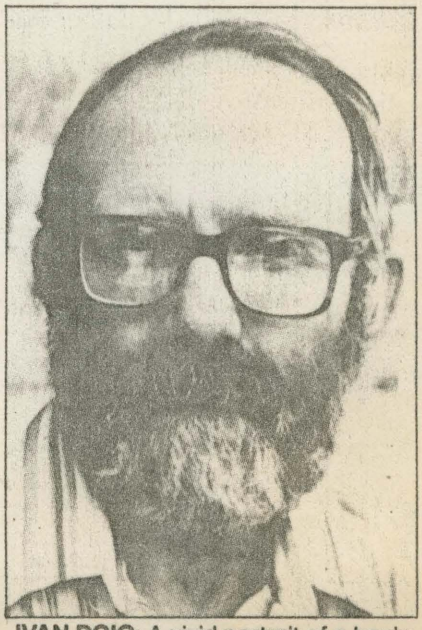
By Carol Van Strum
Special for USA TODAY

Ivan Doig has a rare, uncanny skill for bringing history to life. Shadows of the past animate the landscapes of his non-fiction, and his first novel, *The Sea Runners*, reads like an eyewitness account of a desperate 1853 voyage. In *English Creek*, his second novel, Doig again achieves a flawless weld of fact and fiction.

Drawing on the same heritage and landscape he celebrated in *This House of Sky*, Doig tells *English Creek* through the reminiscences of Jick McCaskill, the second son of a forest ranger in the fictional Two Medicine National Forest of northern Montana. The time is 1939. Jick's story of his 14th summer, a time of discovery and turning points, is a vivid portrait of a family, community and nation perched on the exhilarating brink between Depression and war.

Jick's summer begins with his older brother's defiant declaration of independence from his parents and inexplicable rejection of a promising future. Thrust suddenly into the unfamiliar role of eldest and only son as he ventures into the mountains on his father's business, Jick struggles to understand the rift his brother has caused in their family. An unexpected trail ride with an aging alcoholic, the memorable — and exquisitely funny — events of a 24-hour Fourth of July celebration, and a forest fire high in the Rockies mark the passage of what Jick calls "that summer where all our lives made their bend."

Warily scouting the outermost boundaries of adulthood, Jick explores the lives around him with fresh curiosity and awe. Overnight, it seems, his brother and parents acquire separate and fascinating personalities, half the world's population suddenly becomes female, and the rambling tales of old-timers hold vital clues to the mysteries that baffle Jick at every turn. He emerges from his landmark summer with a deeper love and understanding of the forces that have shaped his existence. As the summer ends, the world plunges into a war that will reaffirm Jick's discovery of home.



IVAN DOIG: A vivid portrait of a boy's 14th summer, just before World War II

English Creek evokes the sturdy, generous spirit of an era when survival — of child or adult — demanded quick wits, hard work and humor enough to fuel both. Jick's energetic summer of discovery contrasts keenly with the entropy that afflicts his modern counterparts, and Doig's gift for idiom — the inventive, exuberant language of the frontier — is sheer magic in a world of Newspeak. Like Mark Twain, he captures the essence of a faded heritage in the voices of the people who lived it; for its language alone, *English Creek* is simply a national treasure.

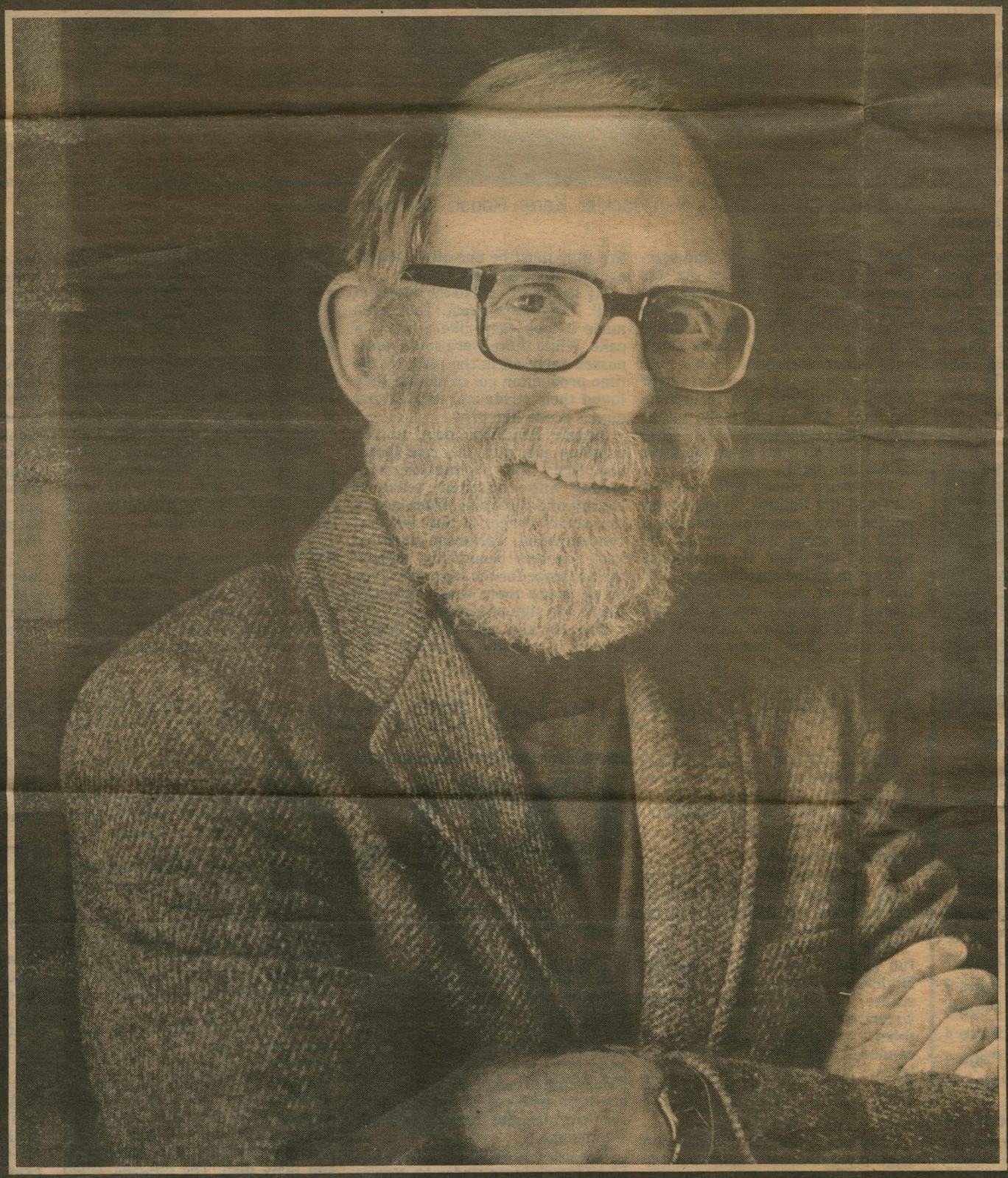
"All the people of that English Creek summer of 1939," Jick McGaskill says, looking back from middle age, "they stay on in me even though so many of them are gone from life." They stay on, too, long after the book is closed, more colorful and enduring than the history that inspired them. No more can be asked of the storyteller's art.

Carol Van Strum is the author of A Bitter Fog: Herbicides and Human Rights.

Inside: 'Places in the Heart,' GRCC's Season, Seaside Brunch

RAVE!

WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE



Ivan Doig captures the Northwest like no other author. See page 3

You'll wholly love 'How The Other Half Loves'

How The Other Half Loves, staged by the Valley Community Players, through Oct. 13, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. Carco Theater, 1717 Maple Valley Road. For tickets and information, call 226-5190.

By RON ALLEN
Rave Correspondent



From left, Steve Appelo, Nan Hackler, Karen Rouse, and John Bacon

Photo by Duane Hamamura

PLAY REVIEW

The Valley Community Players have opened another season with their best comedy effort yet.

Ayckbourn, the author of *How The Other Half Loves,* was once labeled as one of British theatres "wits and dandies" by the London Times. The London born playwright has been cranking out smash after smash for years. His clarity and humor have crossed the Atlantic with ease. In the late 1970's he was beaten out only by the Bard, William Shakespeare for the number of productions being done by regional theatres in the US in a single season. Ayckbourn even topped the likes of George Bernard Shaw and Moliere.

Ayckbourn builds ingenious, elaborate and daring structures with a foundation of conventional wit. He is one of the few playwrights that can make you laugh just by reading through his script.

The story is about three families who are as different as day to night. The only thing they really share in common is that the three husbands work together. Fiona Foster decides to have a fling with Bob Phillips. To cover up her indiscretion she tells her husband she was consoling one of the Detweilers because their marriage is troubled by an unfaithful spouse. Likewise Bob tells his wife the same story, with minor variations. Bob's wife Teresa invites the Detweilers over to dinner, thinking to offer a helping hand. And to compound things more than just a little, Fiona's husband Frank decides to do the same on another night.

Ayckbourn places both the Fosters and the Phillips' living rooms on the same set. The characters from one scene walk through the space of the other. He establishes this for us in the opening scene. He then weaves magic for us by unfolding the happenings of the two nights and the dinner parties at the same time. The dinner scenes in this play must be one of the toughest bits of stage work around.

My hat comes off to the people at VCP. They were great. They even made it look easy, like a piece of cake. While there were some weaknesses early on in the play, by the time production got in motion, they found their stride and tackled that dinner scene like pros.

Maggie Parkinson does an outstanding job with the role Fiona. She fires the production with strong and consistent sense of energy and direction. When one of the actors forgot a line and lost concentration, Parkinson pulled it back together beautifully, without the audience for the most part even being aware there was a problem. That's the sign of a good actor.

Nan Hackler and Steve Appelo turned in equally outstanding efforts as the Detweiler's. This duo worked off one another beautifully. Their combined performances were like a well-woven tapestry, a composite of creativity, skill and energy.

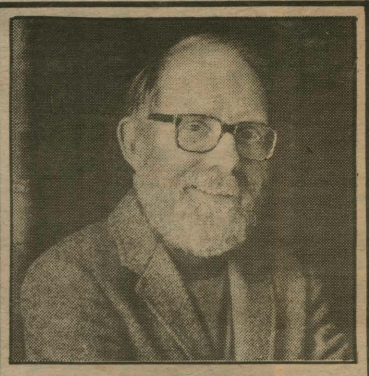
Niles Schomburg does a fine job with the part of Fiona's husband Frank. Schomburg invents all kinds of nice moves and attitudes for Frank, all of which work very well.

John Bacon and Karen Rouse are the ever-battling Bob and Teresa Phillips. The two did well with their characters, particularly once the work was in motion.

The director for this work was one of my favorites, Lee Paasch. She directed such VCP successful efforts as *The Miracle Worker* and *The Sunshine Boys* and one really can't forget her efforts at Centerstage Theatre in Federal Way with *Gigi.* There is good direction throughout this work. It would be easy to get lost in the opening scene, with all the character cross-overs. The dinner scenes could be a nightmare. But Paasch did an excellent job holding firm and giving this difficult work a real sense of direction and movement.

None of the people who work on stage or backstage receive any money for their efforts. Imagine if you would, all the hours of rehearsal and hard work that go into work like this, often with little more than a thank you from fellow cast members.

Well from those of us in the community that love live theatre, here's a big thank you. You've got a good one going.



About the Cover

Ivan Doig, popular and respected Northwest author, appeared at a meeting of the Kent Friends of the Library. Staff photo by Jim Bates

Art ..... Page 8
Books ..... Page 10
Drama Calendar ..... Page 6
Going On ..... Page 8
Lounge Acts ..... Page 12
Music Calendar ..... Page 7
Movies ..... Page 9
Movie Review ..... Page 5
Records ..... Page 4
Rock and Pop ..... Page 4
TV Highlights ..... Page 11

Editor ..... Jim Kershner

RAVE!, an entertainment and television magazine for South King County and the surrounding area, is published each Friday by the Valley Newspapers. Writers are from the staffs of the *Daily News Journal, Daily Globe News* and *Daily Record Chronicle.* Information on upcoming events should be addressed to the editorial offices at P.O. Box 130, Kent, Wash., 98032, or phoned in at 872-6679. Advertising offices are at the same location. For advertising information phone 872-6600.

Lists compiled by Donna Mooney.

A pleasant Sunday brunch, out on Hood Canal

Alderbrook Inn, on Hood Canal near Union, 898-2200 or 621-1119 toll-free; Sunday brunch, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; dinner, 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on weekdays, to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

By ANN STROSNIDER
Rave Correspondent

O.T.L.
Out To Lunch
(And Dinner)

A drive to Alderbrook Inn for Sunday champagne brunch makes a delightful outing on a crisp fall day.

First there's the trip itself — it's fun to drive along Hood Canal on Highway 106, checking out the real estate. On the closely spaced waterfront lots, you'll see everything from modest cottages to ultra-modern glass and cedar showplaces. The owners delight in giving their places quaint names like Tooth Acres (apparently built by a dentist) and Camp Run-a-Muck.

Alderbrook Inn is located on Highway 106 near Union, about an hour and a half from Seattle. Brunch is served in the main lodge. The popular resort offers golf, an indoor swimming pool and jacuzzi and boats for rent. From one of the many window seats in the large dining room, you can gaze out at the canal, the resort's dock and the Olympic Mountains.

A friend and I made the trip recently and spent nearly three relaxing hours talking, eating and taking in the scenery. Service was casual and friendly, and no one tried to rush us. Our waitress, Debbie, came around frequently to fill our cups with coffee and our glasses with Jacques Bonet extra dry champagne.

The price is $9.95 for adults and $5.45 for children under 12. You're allowed to make as many trips to the lavish brunch buffet as you wish. While it's not as sumptuous as, for example, the Benson Hotel brunch in Portland, no one will go away hungry from the Alderbrook's Sunday feast.

The food tends toward old-fashioned cooking that might remind you of grandma's. Missing from the outlay were some of the more sophisticated brunch favorites — no crepes or quiches were in evidence, for example.

I made three forays to the buffet, sampling just about everything in the interest of research. I started out with kiwi fruit, strawberries and fresh pineapple chunks accompanied by a croissant. The fruit was pleasantly fresh, but the croissant was unfortunately rather stale and tired tasting.

Next I tried the main courses — scrambled eggs with crab meat, strawberry blintzes, scalloped potatoes, creole meatballs, rhubarb cobbler, deep-fried apple wedges, sausage links and bacon. The meatballs, served with a spicy tomato sauce, proved the most interesting and tasty dish. The blintzes, filled with cottage cheese and covered with a strawberry sauce, were a close runner-up.

Scalloped potatoes can be delectable, but they need to cook for hours. In the portion I spooned from a fresh steam tray, the onions and the potatoes were still hard. My friend pronounced the scrambled eggs "a little bland" although they were studded with big welcome chunks of Dungeness crab.

The buffet tables were nearly groaning under a surfeit of desserts. I tried a piece of German chocolate cake and a lemon bar, passing up the crullers, the cookies, the rum balls, the crumb cakes and various layer cakes. Sweet things appear to be Alderbrook's specialty, and they do a good job with them.

After brunch, we strolled around the resort's pretty wooded grounds and walked out on the dock, where you can rent paddleboats or sailboats for $6 an hour. We peered into the glassed-in building that houses the pool and jacuzzi — an inviting sight but barred to all except paying guests.

While its food may not be quite up to the standard of some of the better Seattle brunches, Alderbrook Inn makes an excellent destination for a Sunday expedition to the canal. Its wonderful setting and relaxed atmosphere alone are probably worth the price of the meal.

Doig's books celebrate people who matter, like sheepmen and foresters

By JIM KERSHNER
Rave Editor

If you haven't read anything by Ivan Doig, you haven't read the best contemporary literature about the Northwest.

Doig, of Seattle, has written three successful books, all taking place in the northwestern quadrant of the U.S. Now, he is about to release a fourth. As he told a crowd Tuesay at the Kent Friends of the Library meeting, "I am at the nervous stage for an author. I am about to have a book."

The book is called *English Creek,* and it's about a boy growing up in Montana during the Great Depression. It should be in bookstores within a few weeks.

Doig read some excerpts from *English Creek,* and judging from the crowd's enthusiastic reaction, the new book will be loved by those who loved Doig's most popular book, *This House of Sky. English Creek* is funny, affectionate, and canny into the ways of 14-year-old boys. As in all of Doig's writing, he uses words so effectively that you can smell the lodgepole pine; see the clouds decorating the edges of the Big Sky; and hear the creak of leather on a pack saddle. He's an author who can skin a sheep and turn it into prose poetry.

He's also an author who chooses to celebrate people who normally couldn't even get their names in the paper except when they die.

"I'm sick and tired of books being written about disgraced politicians, washed-up athletes, and movie stars," said Doig. "If you've done something interesting, like herding sheep, you can't be in a book."

Doig's strength — some would say his genius — is his dead-perfect ability to render the conversational style of the northern Rockies. Westerners use conversation as kind of whimsical play, making little Twain-like jokes out of the most mundane statements. In *English Creek,* a forest ranger doesn't merely offer someone some peaches. He says: "Do you want some peaches? There are still a few in here we haven't stabbed dead yet."

A man in the audience on Tuesday said, "I've tried to write my own recollections of my growing up, and they came out dull and pedestrian. Yours come alive. Can you tell us how you do it?"

Doig said that he has taped hours of conversations with his relatives, with sheepherders, with forest rangers, with cowboys. He studies the way they talk. He also keeps note cards with words, phrases, and ideas. But mostly, as a man who grew up in the towns and sheep ranches near Dupuyer and White Sulphur Springs, the dialogue is simply a part of him.

> 'Do you want some peaches? There are still a few in here we haven't stabbed dead yet.'
>
> **A character from 'English Creek'**

"A lot of it comes straight from my father, I'm sure," said Doig. "Once I was writing a piece in which a character says, 'How much longer?' and I wanted to say 'We're about done.' I looked down at my typewriter, and I had written, 'We've pretty close to got it.'"

Here are some other words and phrases from a short excerpt of *English Creek:*

- "The bread was dry enough to strike a match on."
- "The conversation was mysteriously kinked."
- "His face had a lot of routes of squint wrinkles."
- "I've always thought the two commonest afflictions of Montana — probably everywhere, but I haven't been everywhere — are drink and orneriness."
- "It danced off Canada Dan like a berry off a buffalo."
- "He laughed a little now, in what I considered an egg-sucking way."
- (After skinning some sheep, and then sitting down to a mutton dinner) "The report came into my mind that I had just been elbow deep in dead sheep, and now I was expected to eat some of that. I tried to keep that thought traveling."

English Creek is part of a trilogy that Doig plans, which will span all 100 years of Montana's statehood. *English Creek* is actually the chronological middle of the story, taking place during the Great Depression. It will be in bookstores within a few weeks.

Doig is now working on the next volume, which will trace Scottish immigrants from the County Angus to a new homestead in Montana in the 1880s. The final book will take place in the 1980's.

Doig also discussed each of his previous books:

☐ *This House of Sky,* an evocative memoir of his childhood in Montana.

Doig said this book was spawned almost by accident. He was in his hometown in Montana, waiting to interview a black gospel singer ("the most famous person to come from that small town"). The singer, now an elderly sheepherder, couldn't talk to him that day. There Doig was, with a new tape recorder, so he taped lengthy interviews with his father and grandmother. Those interviews became the raw material for the book. (The book about the black singer never got written).

☐ *Winter Brothers,* a true story about an Olympic Peninsula pioneer trader.

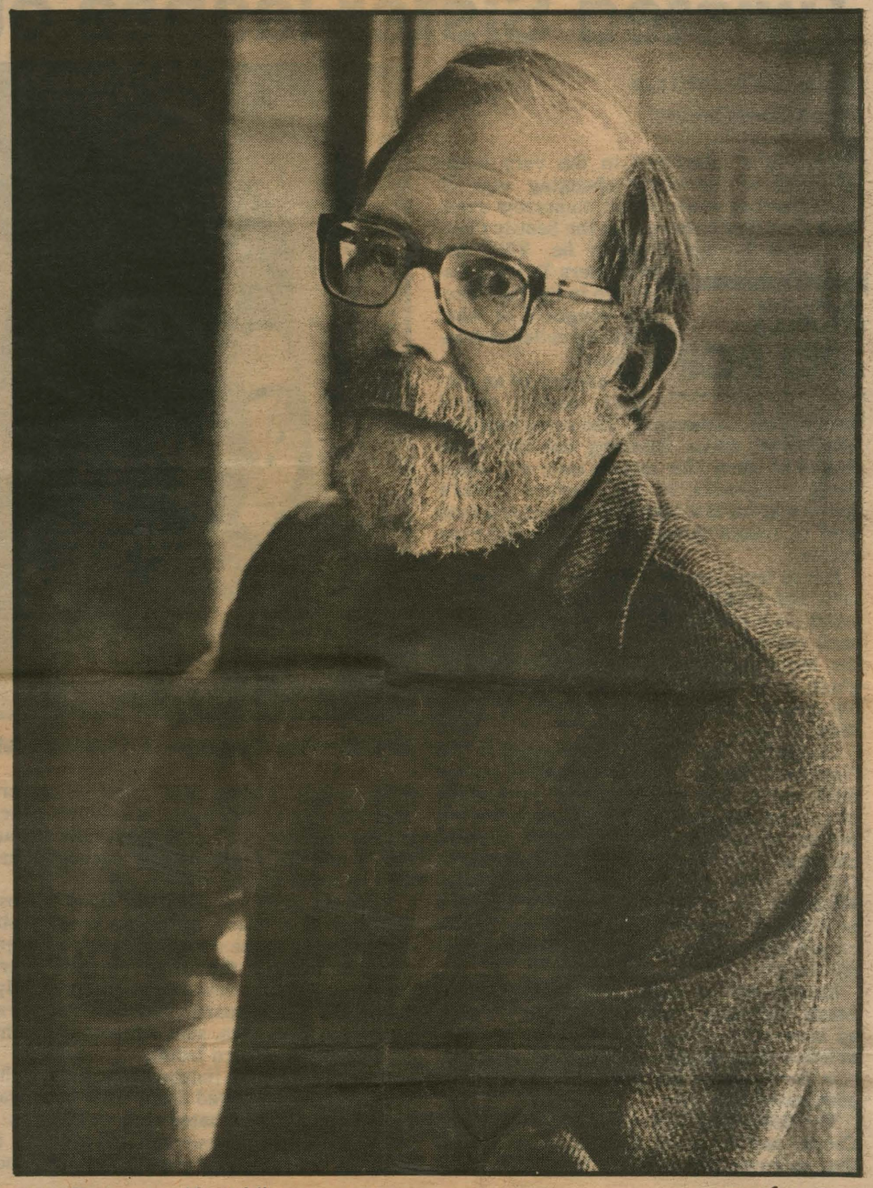
Doig said this book was inspired by the trader's diaries, which Doig ran across at the University of Washington while he was a graduate student.

☐ *The Sea Runners,* a gripping adventure story which takes place along the Northwest coastline from Sitka to Astoria.

Doig said he deliberately wrote this in the style of a nineteenth century historian, such as H.H. Bancroft.

The style may be archaic, but the words are poetry, and Doig makes the story compelling. It's about two Scandinavians in the Russian colony of Archangel, Alaska (now Sitka) in the early 1800's. They decide to escape indentured servitude by the only method available to them — by rowing an Indian canoe all the way to Astoria, Oregon.

They endure killing cold, blinding fog, unfriendly Indians, and mile upon mile of fir-covered coastline. It's a trip a reader will not soon forget.



Ivan Doig, at a Kent Library appearance

Photo by Jim Bates

> 'I'm sick and tired of books being written about disgraced politicians, washed-up athletes, and movie stars. If you've done something interesting, like herding sheep, you can't be in a book.'
>
> **Ivan Doig**

Twisted Sister lashes out into mascara metal

By GEORGE ARTHUR
Rave Correspondent

ROCK AND POP

If you're interested in the very latest twist in the never changing saga of American heavy metal, tomorrow evening's rock double-header at the Seattle Center Arena is the place to be. Y&T and headliners Twisted Sister are in the high-decible vanguard of what might be called mascara metal.

Of course, to an outsider, heavy metal does appear unchanging. The same bands of long-haired males churning out the same chords of glory, for mostly male and often rowdy audiences in the western world's sports arenas. But both performers and fans tend to renew themselves in the two-year cycles.

Not so long ago, Ted Nugent, Kiss, Aerosmith and AC/DC were the champions of the arena rock circuit. More recently, Def Leppard recruited its youthful following from the same stages, while the Benny Hill of ghoul rock, Ozzy Osbourne, has revitalized his career with capacity concerts in those same venues.

Currently, Ted Nugent is a legend in the "inactive" file and Kiss, a regrouped Aerosmith and AC/DC flail away on the concert circuit, trying to rebuild their massive following of only a few years ago. Current champion, Def Leppard, isn't due back in the U.S. for some time, having toured last year. While the group scurries around recording a new album, an LP from early in the band's career has been remixed and re-released to fill the gap.

Enter mascara metal. This new wave of bands, including tomorrow evening's Twisted Sister, Quiet Riot, Motley Crue and even, at some level, Bellevue's Queensryche, borrow freely from the past fifteen years in both sound and style.

The debt owed outrage rockers like Alice Cooper and the never fabulously successful (but authentically bizarre) New York Dolls is more than obvious. Kiss, with its larger-than-life image and hype, is a more direct inspiration. And the looming example of Van Halen and its supercharged success must also be counted as a source.



The all-male members of Twisted Sister, sharing a pensive moment together

AP Laserphoto

With six members, Twisted Sister almost qualifies as a heavy metal big band, probably a factor in the record industry's lingering disinterest in the group. As with others in heavy metal's new wave (most notably, England's Def Leppard), Twisted Sister first recorded on its own, sans support from any free-spending record labels.

Interestingly, the independent route to the turntable was adopted from what once was heavy metal's most hated rock rival, punk.

Twisted Sister's current LP release is entitled, *Stay Hungry,* and it's definitely not a homemade album.

Y&T is second on Saturday's Arena bill and beyond knowing this band's current album is called *In Rock We Trust* (a title which doesn't get many points for creativity), there's not much to report from this source. Their advertisements and album covers indicate that they are seeking a kind of sci-fi comic book appeal. Maybe they will start a new trend, 'Masters of the Universe' rock.

Lita Ford was originally scheduled to open the concert, but was replaced at the last minute by Q5.

Ford's rise to success has also had some interesting twists. Ford, along with Joan Jett, was a member of the Runaways, the female band which (prematurely) tried to rewrite the book on American heavy metal.

The group was better received the further it got from home. In Japan, the Runaways were front-page news and their British and European concert tours helped set the stage for punk's rowdy arrival.

But in the U.S., the Runaways were treated as a bad joke, for all the wrong reasons. After the act's eventual dissolution, its members were virtual rock outcasts. It took Joan Jett's single-handed success to make rock sit up and take respectful notice of the Runaways' accomplishments of seven and eight years ago.

Signed by the same company which released the Runaways' records, Ford's second solo LP is entitled *Dancing on the Edge.*

When Talking Heads leave studio, they 'Stop Making Sense'

By MIKE MOORE
Rave Staff

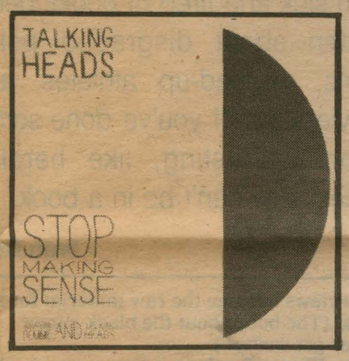
RECORDS

Talking Heads
Stop Making Sense

A Talking Heads concert movie seems like a good idea — the band has a fine artistic edge, their music a compelling quality and leader David Byrne a genuinely striking, haunting presence.

They have made interesting, entertaining videos, without relying on a lot of expensive gimmicks — in short, the kind of visuals that might tranfer easily to the concert stage.

After listening to *Stop Making Sense*, the LP taken from the Heads' film with director



the feeling the final product just couldn't have been any better.

It stands to reason, then, that any change *Wartime* and a slightly popped-up, pompous *Take Me To The River.*

The energy level on side two is generally higher, and the Heads seem a lot more comfortable with this older material than when they're trying to duplicate the seamless craftwork of the *Speaking In Tongues* material.

Because *Stop Making Sense* isn't a great live LP doesn't mean the Heads aren't capable of great live shows.

The movie — especially if it includes cranked-up Dolby stereo with industrial-strength woofers — should do the band and the music more justice.

Donna Summer
Cats Without Claws



Michael Omartian, the producer re- number, as well. No matter what she does, from the insipid *Suzanna* or the downright

NORTHWESTERN PERSPECTIVE

WINTER 1992



ALUMNI PROFILE

SON OF THE BIG SKY

Writer Ivan Doig weaves tales of the old and new West set against Montana's northern Rockies.

By Caroline Green

Listeners pack the Elliott Bay Book Co. reading room to its brick-and-bookcase walls this rainy Friday evening in Seattle, Wash., and the overflow crowd spills cheerfully into the cafe beyond. Cafe lattes and bottles of ale are carefully balanced on knees and laps, as audience members wedge closer to see, to hear. This reading has been sold out for days and looked forward to for months, for the simple joy of listening to tonight's reader, writer Ivan Doig (J61, GJ62).

Standing amid a sea of upturned faces, Doig holds the expectant crowd's attention by the very surprise of his unprepossessing manner. Lights glint off his glasses, making him appear a little nearsighted. Pens fill his shirt pocket, ever handy to make a note. His coat, unlike the high-tech weatherproof outerwear most of his Pacific Northwest listeners sport, is made of scholarly corduroy and lies neatly folded beside him. Doig's hands smooth the edges of the lectern as though willing its encouragement, and his beard, which pokes out toward his audience, gives him an air of amiable inquiry.

The Elliott Bay Book Co., Doig tells his listeners, "is the Carnegie Hall of literary readings." If so, then Ivan Doig is the Vladimir Horowitz of readers—a master of his art and shamelessly entertaining. For the next 30 minutes Doig has more than 200 listeners laughing over the exploits of the geriatric Baloney Express from his latest novel, *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana* (Atheneum Publishers), and aching for its curmudgeonly hero, the newly widowed Jick McCaskill. The reading, delivered with relish by its author, is quintessential Doig. The dialogue is wryly hilarious, the landscape a vision informed by the daily lives of its residents, and its theme is a gentle lesson in, as Doig puts it, "the task of turning loss into change."

Sums up one admiring listener, "Ivan Doig's work keeps writers writing and readers reading."

Ivan Doig is perhaps best known these days as what one headline writer dubbed him, "The Master of Montana." *Mariah Montana* completes a trilogy of novels chronicling four generations of the Scottish McCaskill family as their lives play out against the front range of Montana's northern Rockies. (The other two McCaskill books are *English Creek* and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair.*) Two works with a Pacific Northwest setting precede the trilogy, *The Sea Runners* and *Winter Brothers.* His first book, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind,* is a reflection on his own remarkable boyhood in Montana and his journey toward the writing life. Published in 1978, the memoir was nominated for a National Book Award.

This House of Sky also details Doig's five years of study at the Medill School of Journalism—an opportunity he clearly views as pivotal in saving him from the economic uncertainties of a life on the land in Montana.

"My presence at Northwestern was our equivalent of a moon shot, a launching project which for four years took most of our family's resources and then some," Doig has written. The "then some" included relentless dishwashing and utter frugality on Doig's part, but he knew it beat baling hay and digging postholes. (A $2,500 fellowship for his master's in 1962 enabled him to quit the Northwestern Apartments dish room and live, as he puts it, "like the Aga Khan.")

After a brief stint in the military, Doig returned to Illinois, working first as an editorial writer at the Lindsay-Schaub newspaper chain in Decatur, then, back in Evanston, as assistant editor of *The Rotarian.* He put his time in Illinois to further good use, marrying Medill graduate Carol Muller (J55, GJ56).

In 1966, the couple "yearned our way out of the Mid-

Carol Doig has photographed the land from Montana to Scotland to help her husband visualize the places he writes about.





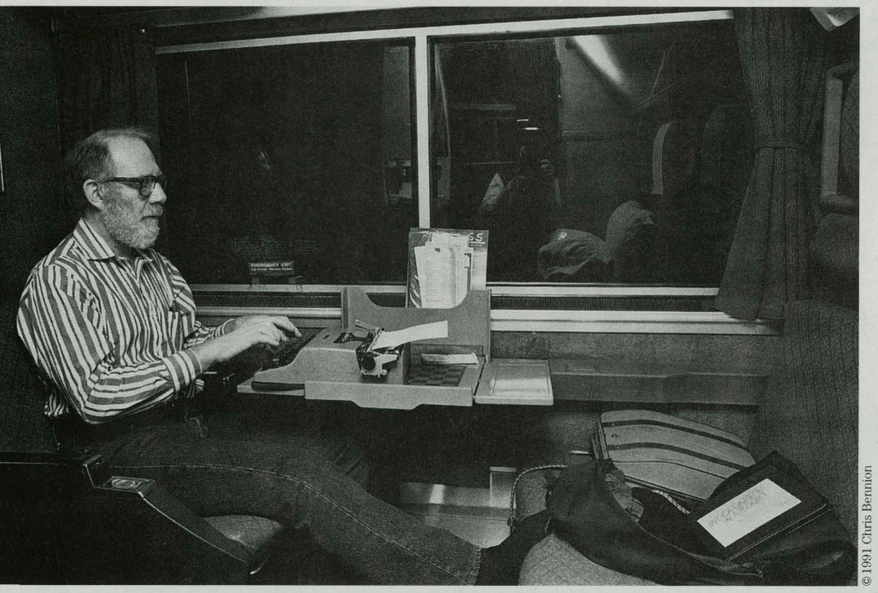
Photo © Carol Doig

west," Doig recalls, back to the mountains, beyond Montana to Seattle. There at the University of Washington, Doig earned a doctorate in American history and, in the process, concluded a career in higher education was not for him. "Spending three years around a graduate school watching how much time is eaten up by committee work and other necessary evils of academia, I decided I really wasn't cut out for that," he says. "I've never really worked happily in situations where the extraneous parts of the job began to overwhelm the parts I've been hired to do."

Instead he concentrated on "words coming out on the page," free-lancing 200 articles in 10 years, "which I now realize is about twice too long by any standard," he laughs. Inflation in the mid-70s convinced him "to take the total cure from magazine free-lancing." He tightened his focus to the writing of *This House of Sky.* Twelve years and six critically acclaimed books later, Doig has polished his distinctive blend of historical authenticity and delightful wordplay to a high shine.

To read Doig is to step confidently into genuine scenes of Western life. His meticulously researched books are built from the facts he records as oral histories, searches out from original documents, and jots down through first-person observation. "I'm not much of a believer in what I'm packing around within myself," Doig says. "I'm probably the kind of person Medill loved to have show up. It ain't particularly real to me until I pound it out of a keyboard, until I hear somebody say it, until I go out and take a look at it for myself."

He describes himself as "an absent-minded person with a pretty good memory." Raised by a father and grandmother easily as preoccupied and original as himself, Doig grew up making notes for reliability's sake, a habit that helped form the foundation of his commitment to factual honesty. Beyond



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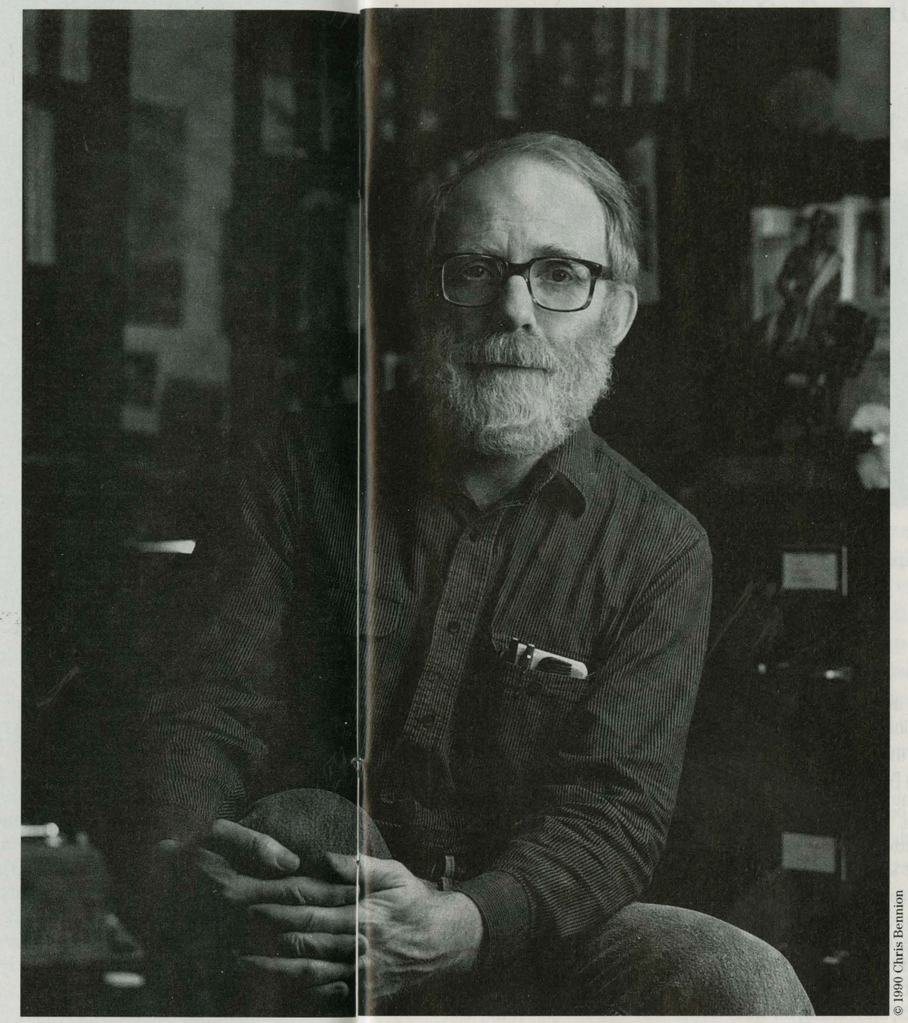
Ivan working on the railroad: Homeward bound to Montana on a research trip, Doig doesn't lose an opportunity to write.



© 1990 Chris Bennion

accuracy, though, he possesses the rare ability to transmit the humanity of his sources across the decades and onto the modern page.

Dave Walter, research director of the Montana Historical Society in Helena, Mont., where Doig digs regularly through primary sources, says the author is a rarity among researchers. When Doig walks through the door, says Walter, he knows what he wants, knows where to find it, and then "just disappears into the stuff."

If Doig excels at research, he thrives on what he calls "working with the words." This is, after all, a man who tunes up before writing by reading *The Dictionary of American Regional English* just "to see how the language is putting itself together."

On a usual day, Doig wakes before dawn, makes his wife breakfast, and then sits down at his manual typewriter to write whatever needs to be said. "I'm methodical, but I'm not consecutive," he says. "I write so many words a day. I think it was 800 on *Mariah Montana.* Some books it's been a thousand. I will do whatever I have to to get that 800 words on the paper. Maybe write a page of dialogue to get the characters talking. Maybe I'll visit the landscape or the weather. Maybe I'll try to describe somebody more fully than I have. Then it goes into a ring binder in what I think is an approximate order, and I'll fill in between the chunks. It's not nearly as tidy as it could be, but it keeps a lot of possibilities in the air that I might otherwise bypass by having my head down in consecutiveness."

He also maintains a perpetually expanding category called "phrasing" in which reside his own word sketches — distinctive combinations of thought and vocabulary recognizable to regular readers as hallmarks of the Doig style. When, in *Mariah Montana,* Jick McCaskill catches an unexpected, unsettling glimpse of his first wife in a Missoula grocery store, he muses, "The firefly thoughts of the mind. Why should memory forever own us the way it does?" A perfectly reasonable, poetic rumination by a crotchety sheep rancher in Ivan Doig's Montana.

Doig's art is a heartening mix of the dogged and the lyrical, his discipline fired by his delight in the bottomless paintbox called English. "Why am I doing this? Because I love dancing with the language. Dehydrated minimalism has never appealed to me either as a writer or a reader," he says. "I try to approach writing as a craft. And if you perform it well enough, maybe it begins to shade into art. But all you can do is perform it in all its increments in that direction and make it add up as much as you can towards the ultimate creation you want. I've always been an enthusiast of language. A lot of things you're not supposed to do with word forms just never occur to me."

Carol Doig, a warm, exuberant woman who is a successful writer and teacher in her own right, serves as her husband's companion in adventure. As such, she helped him research *Mariah Montana* — much of which takes place in a Winnebago — by rattling around the state in a motor home just "seeing how it worked." (Not too well, it turned out, once the thermometer hit 105 degrees. Assorted mechanical systems broke down on the Doigs in prompt order, recalls Carol. The couple, she dryly notes, prefers backpacking.)

While Carol is involved up to her eyebrows in much of Ivan's research and serves as his first reader, she laughingly but firmly refuses to be termed a literary collaborator. "When he has a scene to the point where he thinks it's a good, readable draft, then I get to see it," she says. "So I read it, and I say, 'That's nice, dear,' and he says, 'Well, it'll be better after I revise it.' And I don't see how he can revise it. But then later he shows it to me, and he has improved it. And that's what I mean by not being a whole lot of help."

Bill Kittredge, editor, writer, and professor at the University of Montana, describes Doig's work as the antithesis of the standard American "western." Rather than teaching us to solve our problems with guns, says Kittredge, Doig's books tell of people who solve their problems by taking care of each other and of the land. "He gives you a world in all its textures and all its sacredness."

"The guts and power and wonderfulness of people's

A Passage from *English Creek*

Jick McCaskill is almost 15 and is having the summer of his life in 1939. This describes his August morning ride on his way to harvest hay. Reprinted with permission of Atheneum Publishers, an imprint of Macmillan Publishing Co., from English Creek *by Ivan Doig. Copyright © 1984 by Ivan Doig.*

Where morning is concerned, I am my father all over again. "The day goes downhill after daybreak" was his creed. I don't suppose there are too many people now who have seen a majority of the dawns of their life, but my father did, and I have. And of my lifetime of early rising I have never known better dawns than those when I rode from English Creek to my haying job on Noon Creek.

The ford north of the ranger station Pony and I would cross; if there was enough moon the wild roses along the creek could be seen, pale crowds of them; and in a few minutes of climbing we came atop the bench of land which divides the two creek drainages. Up there, at that brink of dawn hour, the world revealed all its edges. Dark lines of the tops of buttes and benches to the north, towards the Two Medicine River and the Blackfeet Reservation. The Sweetgrass Hills bumping up far on the eastern horizon like five dunes of black sand. The timbered crest of Breed Butte standing up against the stone mountain wall of the west. What trick of light it is I can't really say, but everything looked as if drawn in heavy strokes, with the final shade of night penciled in wherever there was a gulch or coulee.

The only breaks in the stillness were Pony's hooves against the earth, and the west breeze which generally met us atop that broad benchland. I say breeze. In the Two country any wind that doesn't lift you off your horse is only a breeze. My mountain coat was on me, my hat pulled low, my hands in leather work gloves, and I was just about comfortable.



Wayne Arnst, *Great Falls Tribune*

Doig says signing and selling books are "simply part of the harvest of having done the writing."

lives are what I think are worth writing about." Doig says. "It ain't no picnic for people in my books, but nobody ever promised us a picnic. All we're ever promised is life." Doig's books push no overt political agenda beyond asking readers to reflect on the toll that shifts in fiscal policy and distant markets can exact from rural families. Instead, he gently advocates the qualities of perseverance, hopefulness, kindness, and humor. "I don't know that it's any great message I have to deliver, but it seems to me you have to go on in life."

Every two years or so, Doig throws himself into one more aspect of the writer's life — that of selling his wares. With the diligence that characterizes the creation of his books, he shuttles for weeks across the U.S., giving readings, signing books, and sitting for interviews.

"It is simply part of the harvest of having done the writing," Doig says. "This is not a country where we're electing our leading playwright president of the republic, or where we will fill soccer stadiums to hear poets, as has happened in Russia and elsewhere. American society simply has so many ways of entertaining itself and occupying its mind that books have a kind of small niche in that. And if you're going to be a writer of books you simply have to work at making that niche as efficient as possible. Out of a rural background, it's really not news to me that you're not done 'til the lambs are shipped or the grain has been combined."

And to those familiar with his work, it's really not news either that this imaginative and thoughtful man is making his literary mark with such distinction. Whether it's enterprising research or an artfully delivered reading, Doig's artistry and success stem from his own tenacious sense of identity.

Says Doig, "I've always considered myself simply a writer."

Caroline Green is a free-lance writer based in Seattle, Wash.

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Please submit notices of births, marriages, deaths, and other news of classmates to Margaret Ross Bjornson, Alumni Editor, 1800 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208-1800.

Because of the quarterly publication schedule and the abundance of material received, "Classmates" submissions generally appear within two issues of the time of submission.

A Message from the Director

As we ring in the second year of the new decade, I am pleased to announce several new programs offering services and opportunities to all Northwestern alumni.

NAA president Bob Creamer introduced the new, no-annual-fee (for at least three, and most likely for many more years) Visa Card program in the Fall issue of *Perspective.* If you haven't received an application yet, or if you have questions, please call 1-800-535-6627. In addition to the benefits you receive from using this Visa Card, the benefit to the NAA (at no cost to you) from purchases made on your card will support AlumNet, our alumni-student career network program. Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, AlumNet is up and running, serving students and alumni alike. The database service kiNexus, designed to facilitate alumni job searches, is now in place. Call 1-800-NU-ALUMS for information. Complete and return the form on page 24 to participate in AlumNet yourself.

Throughout 1992, during the commemoration of the 50th anniversary year of Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II, the NAA will salute those alumni who served, as well as the role Northwestern played, in the war effort. The NAA will mark this historic anniversary with events filled with reverence, June 19–21. This also coincides with our annual Half Century Banquet, and the 50th, 55th, and 60th class reunion celebrations.

The Nature Place, NAA Family Camp in the Colorado Rockies, has been added to our Travel Study program. Two one-week sessions, August 9–16 and August 16–23, will welcome you, your children, and/or grandchildren for a stimulating, educational, entertaining, and individually structured retreat in modern, comfortable facilities. Three generations of the Drake family are signed up to kick off the first session.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce that after much consideration and after listening to your sensible advice, the NAA will "cluster" those class reunions (5th, 15th, 30th, 45th, 55th) that are not celebrating a major (10th, 25th, 40th, 50th) year. That is, for certain celebrations, more than one class will gather for a "cluster reunion." The "clusters" change, so you will not always celebrate with the same classes. We believe that adopting this system will enrich your reunion experience because you will share it with a greater number and a more diverse group of NU friends. Please review the chart on page 24 to see when your own reunion falls.

In closing, on behalf of the University and the entire NAA I send good wishes for a joyous new year.

Sincerely,

Melissa R. Drake, *Director of Alumni Relations*



Books

Far, far removed from glitzy world

DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR
IVAN DOIG
Atheneum. 405 pp. $18.95.



WILLIAM L. TAZEWELL

Ivan Doig's "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and Tom Wolfe's "The Bonfire of the Vanities," which was considered here last week, are both novels about life in these United States.

But the cultural gap between the two worlds is to be reckoned in literary light-years.

Wolfe is writing about Manhattan in the '80s. His is a cynical, glitzy, trendy world. Doig's subject is the coming of the homesteaders to the English Creek/Scotch Heaven section of Montana, about a century earlier in American history. His is a hard-scrabble world, where the settlers and the sheep they tend are hard put to survive the cruel, long winters. Both are hard worlds. The weather is unforgiving in Doig's Montana; the people are unforgiving in Wolfe's.

The distance between the two worlds can be calculated in economic terms.

In Doig's Montana, "The time was September of 1896, a week before shipping the lambs, and Lucas and Rob and I were holding a Saturday war council on the west ridgeline of Breed Butte where we could meanwhile keep an eye on our grazing bands. By now Rob and Lucas's sheep had accumulated into two oversize bands, nearly twenty-five hundred altogether, as Rob kept back the ewe lambs each year since '93 rather than send them to market at pitiful prices. The band he and I owned in partnership I always insisted keeping at a regular thousand, as many as my hay would carry through the winter. So here they were in splendid gray scatter below us, six years of striving and effort, three and a half thousand prime ewes and a fat lamb beside each of them, and currently worth about as much as that many weeds."

And here we are in Manhattan, where Sherman McCoy and his wife are attending a dinner party in Wolfe's world: "Sherman and Judy arrived at the Bavardages' building on Fifth Avenue in a black Buick sedan, with a white-haired driver, hired for the evening from Mayfair Town Car, Inc. They lived only six blocks from the Bavardages, but walking was out of the quesstion. . . .

"It would be perfectly *okay* for the two of them to arrive for dinner at a Good Building (the going term) on Fifth Avenue by taxi, and it would cost less than three dollars. But what would they do *after* the party? How could they walk *out* of the Bavardages' building and have all the world, *tout le monde*, see them standing out in the street, the McCoys, that game couple, their hands up in the air, bravely, desperately, pathetically trying to hail a taxi? The doormen would be no help, because they would be tied up ushering *tout le monde* to their limousines. So he had hired this car and this driver, this white-haired driver, who would drive them six blocks and depart. Including a 15 percent tip and the sales tax, the cost would be $197.20 or $246.50, depending on whether they were charged for four or five hours in all."

Angus McCaskill — homesteader, sheepherder, schoolmaster, father and family man — is an economic survivor in Montana at the turn of the century, and just marginally that. Sherman McCoy, the boy bond salesman, is earning just under a million dollars a year in Manhattan before his world falls in upon his head. I suppose the distance from the one to the other is the triumph of capitalism, unless you happen to think it's the Decline of the West. In either event, it's not a literary judgment.

"Dancing at the Rascal Fair" is the second in Ivan Doig's Montana trilogy, but chronologically it precedes "English Creek," the first, which is set in Montana in the 1930s. Angus McCaskill, the immigrant-narrator of "Rascal Fair," is the grandfather of Jick McCaskill, the boy narrator of "English Creek." The connection between the two is Varick, Angus' son and the father of Jick. He is born in "Rascal Fair" and grows up during the narrative's span of 30 years; he breaks completely with his father, leaves home, goes off to World War I, survives the flu epidemic of 1919, and is reconciled with Angus at the book's end. In "English Creek," Varick is a forest ranger, a job that is foreshadowed in "Rascal Fair," and Jick is growing up in hard times, too. The third novel in the trilogy is unwritten; I presume it will be Jick's story and bring the McCaskill saga up to the present.

The fictional Montana of "English Creek" and "Rascal Fair" is an invented landscape Doig has named "the Two Medicine Country," but it closely parallels "the actual area along the Rocky Mountain Front near Dupuyer Creek, Montana, the cherished country of my growing-up years." Doig wrote about his "growing-up years" in his memoir "This House of Sky," which was nominated for a National Book Award. I admire all three of the books greatly; I haven't read his two earlier novels.

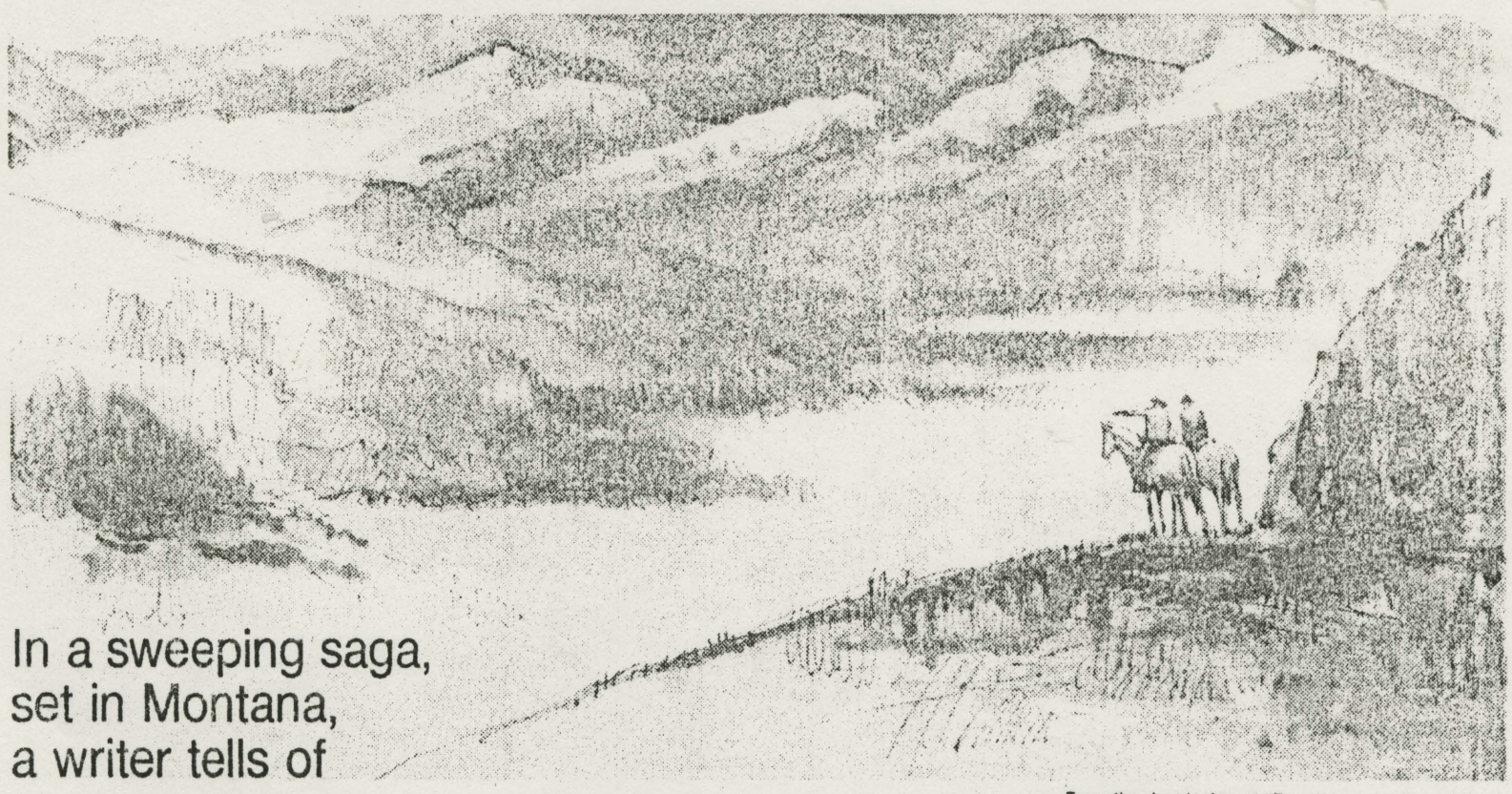
"Rascal Fair" is a frontier story. It's about the settlement of one of the last frontiers in the old 48 states, and it isn't as lyric in its telling as "English Creek," which bursts with the juices of youth. But I don't mean to suggest that it is a grim narrative, or covert economic history, or anything of the sort. Doig is a marvelous writer, and "Rascal Fair" is full of incident and readable set pieces — the Atlantic passage, sheep-shearing, square dances in the one-room schoolhouse and an account of the overturning of the outhouse by the shcoolboys that would be a credit to Mark Twain. Above all else, the book is a love story about the woman Angus McCaskill courted, who jilted him, and the woman he married, Rob's sister, and the life they all led. Doig's Montana saga, still unfolding, is one to which the adjective "epic" can be applied without any embarrassment.

He now lives in Seattle. If he lived in Manhattan he might be one of our most celebrated novelists — though maybe he wouldn't be writing about Montana and I can't imagine his wearing a white suit, *a la* Tom Wolfe, or appearing comfortable on the cover of Vanity Fair. But I'll bet people will be reading Ivan Doig when they've forgotten Tom Wolfe.

William L. Tazewell is a Charlottesville writer formerly of Norfolk.

The Seattle Times / Seattle Post-Intelligencer (Sept. 13 1987)

Books



In a sweeping saga, set in Montana, a writer tells of

From the dust jacket of "Dancing at the Rascal Fair"

The high life

■ "Dancing at the Rascal Fair"
by Ivan Doig
Atheneum, $18.95

by Michael Dorris

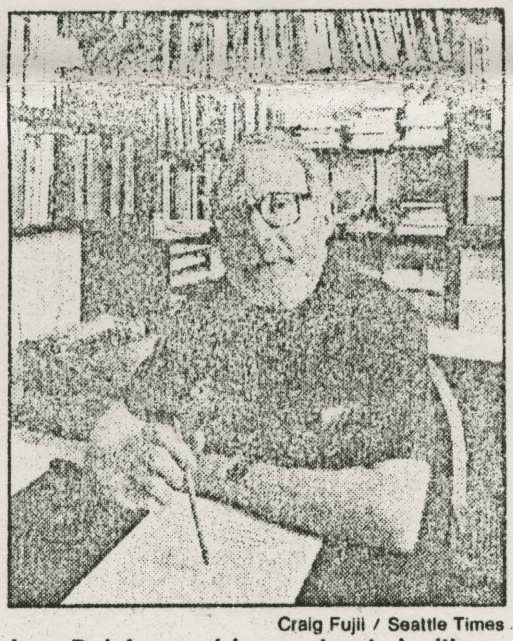
Ivan Doig's magnificent new novel is an answer to the prayer of anyone who has loved a distant country or experienced the full-hearted enthusiasm of youth — and who wants to return for the price of a book.

Part immigrant saga, part intelligent western, part sweeping romance, "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" further establishes its Seattle author in the front ranks of contemporary American writers. The novel traces the life of one Angus McCaskill, born in Nethermuir, Scotland, who crosses the Atlantic in steerage to arrive in Montana on the day of its statehood. He claims it, literally and spiritually, as his own.

The chronicle is constructed with the eye to detail and the unparalleled sense of place that characterize Doig's previous award-winning fiction and nonfiction. Virtually a "prequel" to his 1984 novel, "English Creek," it overflows with the precise yet magically evocative images of the northern Rockies that so distinguished his 1978 memoir, "This House of Sky."

But "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" is grounded in a compelling plot, archetypically familiar yet absolutely original. It is a story of the complexities of friendship and passion, of grief and exuberance, of endurance through fear and hardship. As its action passes from the late 19th century through the first two decades of the 20th, frontier history is illuminated through episodes that are, in turn, laugh-out-loud funny and agonizingly sad.

Doig's talent for describing nature is well known, but there are love scenes in this novel — from the ardor of youth to the tenderness of long-married discovery — that rival the splendor of any Montana vista. Listen to how Angus and his wife of many difficult years pass a snowbound evening in their cabin: "She came up into my arms, her head lightly against my shoulder, the soft sound of her humming matching itself to mine, and we began the first of our transits around the room, quiet with each other except for the tune from our throats."



Craig Fujii / Seattle Times

Ivan Doig's novel is constructed with an eye for detail and a keen sense of place.

The culture of isolated settlement, populated with individuals who crash and melt against each other from season to season, has not been better presented. Men and women get along because they have no choice; they adore and despise as if they invented the emotions.

We first meet 19-year-old Angus and his friend Robert Burns (Rob) Barclay as they sail from the River Clyde in Scotland, armed with a guidebook and a smattering of skills. Bound for Helena, where Rob's Uncle Lucas claims to own the Great Maybe silver mine, they survive a memorably described ocean voyage and arrive in America brimming with confidence and camaraderie. Nothing seems beyond the reach of hard work and good will, no frustration more than temporary, the springboard to a new, better opportunity.

They are eager to adapt, to shed Old World preconceptions and prejudice, and the Two Medicine country where they settle is breathtakingly splendid, matching every expectation: "We sat unspeaking for a while, in that supreme silence that makes the ears ring. Where the bevels of the valley met, the creek ran in ripples and rested in beaver ponds. A curlew made deft evasive flight across the slope below us as if revealing curlicues in the air. Everything fit everything else this day."

And in this place — "Scotch Heaven" as it comes to be called over the next 30 years — Angus and Rob marry and father children, dream and experience bitter disappointment, fight the weather and each other to a tenuous draw. They ride the crest of boom times, know the deprivations of economic disaster and most of all realize the pangs of disillusionment: in trust, in the boundaries of decency, in the future itself.

The other characters — Rob's determined sister, Adair; the indelible school teacher, Anna Ramsay; Angus' eventual son, Varrick; the shrewd Lucas and his lifelong Blackfeet "housekeeper," Nancy Buffalo Calf Speaks; the sanguine forest ranger, Stanley Meixell — are no less compelling.

With the varied community of Scottish shepherds and homesteaders, they constitute a self-enclosed world in which all the grand dramas are played and replayed on a landscape of limitless expanse but near-claustrophobic social interaction. It is a world in which secrets are not so much kept as respected, where time hones rather than heals, and where nothing is guaranteed beyond the next chinook.

As always, Doig writes with grace and eloquence; his prose is so subtle that only in the days after finishing "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," when we find ourselves framing our thoughts with the roll of a burrish brogue, do we realize the extraordinary skill involved in his creation. Through vocabulary, word order and pacing — yet without any distracting tricks of spelling or punctuation — he has managed to render the cadence, idiom and lilt of Lowland speech. We have *heard* these voices, been *touched* by these lives.

In this fine work of fiction, every word, every surprise, every resolution rings true.

■ Michael Dorris' novel, "A Yellow Raft in Blue Water," was published in May.

His Mother's Days

A surprise legacy of letters helps Ivan Doig write a new memoir that fills in the missing chapters on the woman he longed to know

Seattle, WA
(King Co.)
Seattle
Post-Intelligencer
(Cir. D. 200,495)

SEP 30 1993

By John Marshall
P-I Reporter

Writer Ivan Doig had tried his darndest before to get some sense of this woman who had died at 31 in the pre-dawn hours of his sixth birthday, this woman he could remember years afterward only in patchwork memory, this woman who was his mother.

There were family photographs taken with a Brownie camera and tape-recorded reminiscences of his father and his grandmother, some help in the remembering, but Doig still feared he would probably go to his grave with no recollection of his mother's voice.

Then came the surprise bequest of an estranged uncle, his mother's brother. It was a small packet of letters held together by a strand of grocery store string. There were 20 letters in all, 12 from Doig's mother, six from his grandmother, two from his father, all written over a few months in the spring of 1945. Doig took this simple family inheritance in his hands, then promptly set it aside, excited but skittish.



Berneta Doig

Several days passed before Doig untied the string and made his way through the letters, his head suddenly filled with his mother's voice, as immediate as today, a real person's voice at last.

"She had been this cutout, this figure from a melodrama," Doig recalls. "Dying that early meant nobody ever spoke ill of her or in anything but highly emotional terms. Neither my dad or my grandmother could talk long about her without breaking down.

"But to encounter her in these letters — hey, she's a lively sort of person with kind of a wicked eye for behavior and a wicked ear for gossip; in short, a writer. That brought a person from behind the cutout — she leaps out from behind, really — and it made me think about her and me. I grew up thinking I was my father's son and my grandmother's grandson, but then it dawned on me how much I am my mother's son, too."

What Berneta Doig had written in letters to her brother, who was serving on a Navy ship in the South Pacific, was not destined to remain family secret much longer. For her writing son has mined family memory for more than 15 years now, giving public life to the unsung laboring people who clawed an existence out of the unforgiving land in the shadow of the Montana Rockies.

"This House of Sky: Landscape of a Western Mind" came first in 1978: Doig's evocative memoir of his upbringing at the hands of his father and grandmother, staunch enemies turned makeshift family partners by his mother's tragic death from an unknown heart condition. This first book by Doig — then a little-known journalist on the free-lance fringe — became a Western classic, nominated for the National Book Award, studied in colleges, beloved by thousands, still selling at a rate of 10,000 copies a year (with more than 130,000 sold).

Two Northwest-based books followed, "Winter Brothers" and "The Sea Runners." Then came a Montana trilogy based on a fictional family called the McCaskills, bearing few similarities to the Doigs, their story told through "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana."

BUT DESPITE years of critical praise and increasing success, Doig seemed destined to be forever linked with "This House of Sky," still his most personal work, his introduction to many readers, the literary equivalent of a first love. Until the unexpected legacy of his mother's letters.

Doig has now worked this paper bequest into "Heart Earth" (Atheneum, $19), a masterful companion memoir to "This House of Sky." It is his mother's story, a slim volume, but Doig at the top of his considerable powers, moving smoothly between fact and memory and meditation, and the language bearing his distinctive stamp, as if handmade.

Doig writes of "silverghost illumination," "stiffbacked rectitude," "the dreamslow rhythm of the ride" and "moods deep and inscrutable as the keels of icebergs." He portrays a Montana dance hall on a Saturday night as "a plaid of bandannaed gallantry and hooty mischief." And he describes a meadow with "such grass, this rain-fed early summer, that the sheep will fatten on it as if it were candied."

See **DOIG**, Page C3

Doig: He cares about his readers' response

From Page C1

"I mean," Doig emphasizes, "for the language to be the strength of my work — the actual dance of the words on the page, sentence by sentence. And it may be for some readers. But that also might be the weakness of my work for others. I don't let up, I don't give people much time for their eyes to breathe. The stuff may be a little too intense."

Doig, an easy-talking, good-natured man in conversation, is intent and serious about his work. Woe to anyone who might dare suggest that he could turn a few wartime letters into a memoir by merely sitting at his manual typewriter in his home north of Seattle and letting the words flow.

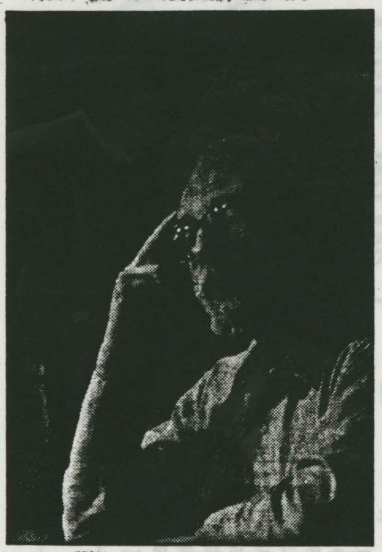
He is a stickler for detail, a fanatic about research. Doig, 54, gives the impression that one of the great joys of his life is coming upon a well-organized museum in a small town and poring over its dusty files and musty newspapers. Like he did in Wickenburg, Ariz., for "Heart Earth."

His parents had left Montana for Arizona during the war, a trek on "war-bald tires and waning ration books" that the writer would come to see as emblematic of larger themes — the search in the West for the next great place, the dislocations caused by the war, the urge to reinvent lives. Charlie Doig had gone from boss on a Montana sheep ranch to worker in an Arizona aluminum plant, before finally returning north to the Big Sky with his family for good.

SO IVAN DOIG poked around sites in Arizona, sought facts of that state during wartime from the National Archives, submerged himself in Wickenburg's Desert Caballeros Western Museum, all these findings carefully cataloged.

"Details tell you more," he says, "and even if I don't ultimately use a piece of information, there's a resonance there."

Doig takes particular pride in the surprise discovery during research, especially when it leads to the debunking of myth. What had originally brought the Doigs from Scotland to Montana had been lost in the passing generations, replaced with supposition that they found the landscape similar, heather replaced by sagebrush. But a research trip to Scotland convinced Doig otherwise.



ROBERT De GIULIO/P-I

Writer Ivan Doig says of his work: "I don't give people much time for their eyes to breathe."

"I checked up on that and the place they came from looks more like the coast of Maine than Montana; there's no heather for 35 miles," he says. "So they must have come to Montana simply out of choice, putting down roots there with three generations trying to make a living in a place that doesn't want to give you a living."

Doig himself fled the state for journalism school at Northwestern, near Chicago, knowing he wanted to write and convinced he could only pursue his trade outside his native state. He never really went back — this great irony now, the writer who has done for Montana what William Faulkner did for Mississippi has been a refugee from the place almost all of his adult life.

Seattle has been his home since 1966, originally chosen because of its moderate climate and his doctoral studies in history at the University of Washington. But Doig's wife, Carol, got a teaching job at Shoreline Community College, a job that kept the larder full during her husband's lean years as a magazine free-lancer and a beginning book writer. Their roots in the soggy ground of Puget Sound have only deepened since.

"This has always been the best place for my work," Doig emphasizes. "And there is citizenship incumbent on Montana writers in Montana; there, I would have responsibilities I do not have here, like serving on committees."

Doig is not one to shrug a writer's responsibilities, whether the well-crafted paragraph or the well-presented public performance. When readings started to become an important part of a writer's life, Doig did not just start showing up at bookstores and winging it on stage, as some writers do. He studied a book on acting by Laurence Olivier.

Prestigious awards continue to come Doig's way: a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western Literature Association in 1989 for his body of work, a Western biography award (with a $10,000 prize) this year for "Heart Earth." The prizes, in Doig's mind, belong to the books.

What he considers his is the personal response from readers, the heartfelt expressions of those touched by his work, what matters so much to this writer who freely admits he writes to be read.

Some rare writers do indeed become loved by their readers and Doig demonstrated again why he is one during a recent bookstore appearance in Montana. A woman approached him, asking him to inscribe a copy of "Heart Earth" in the memory of her husband, who had just died.

And then the woman broke down, consumed by grief. And Doig let her cry on his shoulder for a time, before writing a long and careful inscription about the need for life to go on in the spirit of her husband.

"In this work," Doig would remark later, "you've got to be a practitioner of the human soul; there's a responsibility that goes with these words."

Where readers can hear author

Ivan Doig will make the following local appearances for his new book, "Heart Earth."

Oct. 7: 7 p.m. reading at Kane Hall, University of Washington.

Oct. 8: 7:30 p.m. reading at Eagle Harbor Book Company, Bainbridge Island.

Oct. 9: 1 p.m. signing at University Book Store, Bellevue.

Oct. 13: 3:30 p.m. signing at Magnolia's Book Store.

Oct. 13: 6 p.m. signing at Tower Books, Seattle.

Oct. 14: 7:30 p.m. reading at The Elliott Bay Book Co., Seattle.

Way out West, it's a real Doig's life

Ranching hardships pushed scholarly writer into a life of the mind

By Burr Snider
OF THE EXAMINER STAFF

JICK McCASKILL, the protagonist of "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," is a crusty, retired Montana sheepherder with a willful and beautiful daughter, a wicked way with a one-liner and a serious disdain for most of what modern America has wrought — especially as the acne blight of contemporary life has manifested itself on the craggy face of his beloved state of Montana.

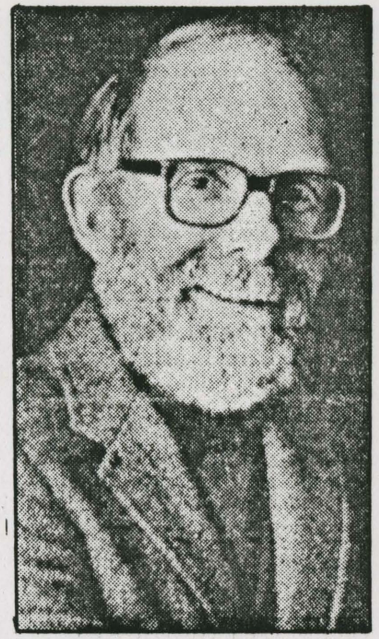
You wouldn't say that Jick is terminally annoyed, but you might not want to invite him on a long trip, either. Which is exactly what Jick's daughter, the maddening, mercurial Mariah, blithely does. The Montana centennial is in the offing and Mariah, a talented photojournalist, and her ex-husband, Riley Wright, a columnist, have been assigned to come up with a series of features on the state for their paper, The Montanian. Mariah dragoons the reluctant Jick into chauffeuring the pair around in his Winnebago while they go poking into the far corners of the state looking for story ideas.

Since Jick and Riley harbor a cordial loathing for one another, it's a mismatch made in heaven, but it sure makes for a hell of a book. "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana" (Atheneum; $24.95) is the third entry in Ivan Doig's Rocky Mountain trilogy ("English Creek" deals with the Far West of the 1930s, and "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" with the late 19th century), and even if there's not much in the way of two-fisted action and if the sex is by inference only, this is still a book that sports major *huevos*.

Ran sheep on bluffs

"I didn't set out to be a 'Western' writer, but I am a writer grounded in the country where I was born and grew up — the Two Medicine country of Montana," says Doig, who was in town recently to talk about his book.

"My family ran sheep on the bluffs above the Two Medicine River, really tough country, but the literary tradition that I embraced at an early age was that of Faulkner and Orwell, writers who were grounded in *their* backgrounds, but who, by God, were speaking out to the universe. Plus, there wasn't that much of the classic cowboy-sheepherder conflict in Montana so I didn't emerge with any animal ideologies. It wasn't particularly the big-hat and six-gun-type cowboy that settled there."



Ivan Doig: *"I am a writer grounded in the country where I was born."*

In contrast to Jick McCaskill, Doig is a soft-spoken scholarly man with a Ph.D in history who revels in research. "Actually, 'rummaging' is a better description of what I do," he laughs. "I love going through archives and oral histories, always looking for details. And I like roaming the country, too, taking a look at the land I write about."

'Big, broad place'

To research "Mariah," Doig and his photographer wife did just what Jick and his gang did — set out in a 'Bago to explore the state. "It's a big, broad place with a wonderful history of lots of trouble-making," Doig says. "Butte, for example, was a powerful union town and a powerful owner town, which made for some real battles. I'm fascinated by the radical political tradition of Montana — the unions, the Wobblies. ... There was even a corner in the '30s where a county elected a communist administration, sheriff and all. The New Deal was too wimpy for them!"

For Doig, these RV meanderings were reminiscent of his Depression childhood on the range. "For me the Winnebago is no less than a modern sheep wagon. In the summers we used to live in a small trailer hauled by a Jeep across the Blackfoot Reservation. It was a difficult life and we were perpetually at the mercy of the Montana climate. It made me really wary of that wonderful Big Sky because time and again it held May blizzards during lambing and cold rains in July during shearing. My family came to economic calamity time and again from the consequences of trying to ranch in country which maybe should not have been ranched."

The experience, Doig says, is what drove him to a life of the mind. "It sent me out into a profession where I hoped to be able to control my circumstances," he says with a laugh. "I became a freelance writer."

Jick McCaskill is also a man having trouble controlling his circumstances. He is not going at all gently into the dark afternoon of "senior citizenship," and he is mortally depressed that Montana, ever more in the grasp of the big-money interests, is losing its character as a place where a hard-working and frugal family can carve a meager living out of the land.

"Well, Jick has lost a lot. His wife has just died, he may have to give up his ranch, and Mariah and Riley are making eyes at each other again," says Doig. "My theme is the task of turning loss into change, and Jick's trying, but those calendar leaves are being blown away and the prospects aren't rosy."

'Economic refugee'

Doig will tell you that there but for the grace of God goes he. "I'm sort of an economic refugee from Montana. If I hadn't gotten a scholarship to Northwestern, the future looked to me like piling bales of hay until the body wore out, and then what? Jick is a little luckier in that he got some land, that old hole card, but still, what's facing him has him quite worried.

"It's been a pretty tough decade in Montana and the rest of the rural West — partly because of the overpowering urbanization and partly because of a public policy that sometimes willfully works against supporting life in small places. It's the intensification of a cycle that started when I was young. The West always feels the tip of the whiplash."

Ivan Doig makes the reader feel it, too. The real star of this book is Montana, and Doig takes you right into its big troubled heart.

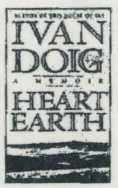
These volumes follow a similar format. Edited by a well-known scholar of Oregon literature or history, each book opens with general comments about the series and a brief introduction by the volume editor. Contents are divided topically, with selections generally following chronological order within the topical divisions. Brief biographical paragraphs preface each selection, an abbreviated list of suggested readings follows each story or excerpt, and another pertinent bibliography closes each volume. Most of the entries run five to ten pages, a few to only one or two pages, with each anthology containing an average of forty or so items.

As expected the volumes include selections from several nationally recognized Oregon authors. The volume on short fiction, for instance, includes stories by Joaquin Miller, H. L. Davis, Ernest Haycox, Ken Kesey, Don Berry, and Raymond Carver; the autobiographical collection has writings by Abigail Scott Duniway, Homer Davenport, John Reed, and William Kittredge; and the prose anthology includes work from CES Wood, Harvey Scott, Stewart Holbrook, Richard Neuberger, and Ursula Le Guin. Dozens of recent or lesser-known writers also find their places here. Only when selections from family members or close friends of the editors and "necessary" selections from multicultural writers appear dragged in does the selective process seem questionable. In addition, more attention to detail would have kept dozens of factual and spelling errors and incorrect citations from creeping into the editorial prefaces and bibliographies.

The content and format of these volumes raise two questions. Do the literary contributions of Oregon merit all this space and expense? By all means, not only because the state has spawned a notable crop of writers in the last century and a half but also because these collections reveal as much about the diverse, shifting cultures of the region as they sample its belletristic achievements. Second, is this format—six large-sized, durable volumes—the best medium in which to present Oregon literature. For scholars, teachers, and collectors, it probably is; but will students and generalists part with $220 for the six cloth volumes or even $130 or so for the paperbacks? The most obvious alternative format was the Montana anthology, *The Last Best Place*, edited by William Kittredge and Annick Smith, which, chronologically organized, includes half as many selections and sells for one-fourth as much in cloth and the same ratio in paper. One suspects that the costs of the Oregon volumes will keep them out of most classes, except in advanced college-level courses.

These volumes are notably important in other ways, however. Their contents attest to the abundant strengths of dozens of Oregon writers. The anthologies are also well-organized, attractively presented collections, useful to academic and lay historians. Further, they are clear proof of *Newsweek's* recent observation that Montana, New Mexico, and Oregon are three of the West's busiest and strongest literary colonies. Finally, these volumes are instructive models for other states and literary groups sufficiently ambitious and well funded to launch similar projects.

Richard W. Etulain
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque



HEART EARTH
Ivan Doig

Atheneum, New York, 1993. X + 160 pp. $19.00.

Readers who have waited eagerly since the 1978 publication of *This House of Sky*, Ivan Doig's return to his home ground—the country of spiritual autobiography and memoir—will find in *Heart Earth* (1993) that those fifteen years were well-spent. They brought us the author's *Winter Brothers* (1980), *The Sea Runners* (1982), and his Montana trilogy—*English Creek* (1984), *Dancing at The Rascal Fair* (1987), and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* (1990)—works in which he further refined and honed his powers of research, observation, and expression.

Nearly a decade after the publication of *This House of Sky*, those years brought Ivan Doig his mother's voice. That voice arrived as an uncle's bequest, a collection of letters written in 1944 and 1945 during the last six months of her life by Berneta Ringer Doig to her sailor brother Wally. *Heart Earth* is Ivan Doig's deeply affecting response to the letters' revelation that "the chosen world where I strive to live full slam—earth of alphabet, the Twenty-Six country—had this earlier family inhabitant who wordworked, played seriously at phrase, cast a sly eye at the human herd. . . . As I put words to pages, I voyage on her ink" (p. 156). Her son's palpable joy, relief, and pride in the discovery of his previously unsuspected maternal inheritance, "the lost side of my past" (p. 5), fairly radiate from the pages of this moving and beautifully constructed book.

Heart Earth, set in the Sixteen country of the Smith River valley of south central Montana and in Arizona, broadens our view of the "landscapes of a Western mind" offered in *This House of Sky*. *Heart Earth* also adds historical complexity and emotional resonance to our understanding of the ways in which the historical memories of the Ringer and Doig families were shaped by "the resonances of heart and earth" (p. x of the Author's Note). The book illustrates how the sweep of international political and economic forces buffeted the Ringers, Doigs, and the rest of the West's "lariat proletariat" in the 1940s. It is both more richly poetic and lyrical than Doig's first memoir and more specific and explicit in placing the family's experiences into the broader historical context of western and American history. In concrete ways it shows the impact of World War II on the Smith River valley and its inhabitants, while also exploring Doig's family connection to that country, his mother's "heart-chosen ground" (p. 93).

Ivan Doig's historical understanding allows him to shape his reflections on his mother's letters into a meditation on memory and history. He sees his parents as being "of the relic world of muscle-driven tasks" (p. 35). This work becomes his "Requiem for the lariat proletariat" (p. 55). He understands that his childhood memory of the new

sound of a ranch's generator was "the sound of history turning" (p. 35). While land that might have supported multiple modest ranches was increasingly falling into the hands of large landholders and corporations, Charlie and Berneta Doig struggled to make ends meet by working ranches on shares, sheepherding, haying, working the grain harvest, cooking for the crews, trapping, hanging on. Doig sees the working cowboys, sheepherders, and haying crews being "done in by mechanization, ending up in town jobs or none" (p. 25). Five-year-old Ivan, "spying on history" and "prowling with [my] ears" (p. 29), hears the radio bulletin announcing Franklin Delano Roosevelt's death: "When the bulletin was over, I came out from behind the couch on all fours, then stood up curious into another age" (p. 73). He understands that his parents' move to Arizona in late 1944, in hopes of finding a climate more bearable for his asthmatic mother, was also part of the beginning of the Sunbelt's postwar land rush: "you can feel the growth thrust gathering," he reports (p. 41). He sees himself, now living in Seattle, as one of the "economic refugees" from the home ground of Montana.

Ancient human tasks such as childrearing, sewing, caring for the sick, moving camp, herding animals, caring for dogs and livestock are juxtaposed with reports of defense factory work and modern air combat in the South Pacific. A less sensitive writer would have failed to show how individual lives can be honored and rendered more resonant with meaning when placed in this broad context of change and upheaval in human experience. Doig's sure sense of place and time allow him to reveal the dignity of love, physical labor, and the impulse to order experience, dream, and shape a personal, telling story.

Heart Earth is Doig's most elegantly constructed book. Divided into five sections roughly reflecting the five months' worth of letters from Berneta to Wally, each part begins with a postmarked excerpt from a letter and the author's responses to the passage. Throughout the book quotations from letters help to advance the action and develop our understanding of the family's members. The middle section, opening with a letter reporting: "Winona and I spent Saturday making formals and catching mice" (p. 69), is perhaps one of Doig's funniest, reflecting a brief interlude of family happiness, relief, and ease on their return to Montana. But the fifth and final section, marvelously detailed, rich with images of landscape, animals, work, and intimacy, and relentlessly building in tension—as well as a sense of foreboding and tragic inevitability—is the best piece of writing in any of this author's work. It reveals Ivan Doig at the height of his powers as a writer, equipped with the invaluable capacity to imagine the internal and external lives of others.

Doig's voice, sure and powerful in this work, is equally powerful in his audiotaped reading of *Heart Earth*, available in a two-cassette package from North Word Press, Inc., of Minocqua, Wisconsin. Doig reads with clarity, care, and resonance. The reader who may have been startled by some of his wordplay on the page ("healful," "birthdayed," "smellhall," "drinkeries," "gabstorms and earquakes") will be delighted by their renderings as the writer savors his reading of this tribute to his family. Both the written and the spoken versions of *Heart Earth* will warm your heart with gratitude for Ivan Doig's care and skill in depicting the ties that bind families to one another and to the land.

Margaret C. Kingsland
Montana Committee for the Humanities, Missoula



PAINTING TEXAS HISTORY TO 1900
Sam DeShong Ratcliffe

University of Texas Press, Austin, 1993. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. xlviii + 140 pp. $29.95.

Informative and well illustrated, *Painting Texas History* provides a valuable entrée into an intriguing but much neglected topic: How visual artists represent the past. Beginning with prehistoric pictographs and petroglyphs—an innovative and intriguing addition to the subject—and ending with Julius Stockfleths's haunting streetscapes of the Galveston flood in 1900—"the final historically significant event in premodern Texas" (p. 92)—Ratcliffe assembles reproductions of more than one hundred works of art (fifty in color), plus extensive documentation on their production and content.

Many of Ratcliffe's selections are familiar, indeed, inevitable—"classic" Texas history paintings, including scenes of Austin's colony, the Alamo, San Jacinto, and the Mier expedition, produced by nineteenth-century artists Henry Arthur McArdle, Theodore Gentilz, Robert Jenkins Onderdonk, William Henry Huddle, and Frederic Remington. Less well known are the sketches, prototypes, prints, photographs of lost or unlocated paintings, and other closely related images that greatly enrich our understanding of the primary icons; to have these images conveniently assembled in one volume is indeed a treat!

Other selections are more diverse, even surprising, yet all "function as historically evocative documents" (p. xii). Ratcliffe's purview extends beyond what painters or art historians classify as formal history paintings to encompass a wide range of imagery that modern historians use to research and communicate ideas about past life and historical events—indigenous rock art, European maps, ethnographic portraits and scenes of Native American life, rural genre scenes, and landscape and topographical sketches with tiny staffage figures. Although the author does not claim a comprehensive survey, his broad scope makes conspicuous the absence of any reference to the landscapes and ethnographic studies produced by Mexican artists Lino and José Maria Sánchez y Tapia during the 1829 Mier y Terán expedition into Texas.

To examine "how paintings . . . serve as a visual narrative of the state's history up to 1900" (p. xi), Ratcliffe

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about 1000 words

A Chart of Ivan Doig's Literature

Could geography be taught along with literature? The works of Ivan Doig beckon this use. Doig's six published books are unique as each begins with a map laying out the terrain of the story in the volume to follow, highlighting the role of the land. Doig's works are the epitome of geography--the study of the earth and its features and the effects of (or on) human activity. The prominence of geography and Doig's use of it in his works is captured in Melander's meditation about maps in *The Sea Runners.*

> Each time, this unfolding of his set of the Tebenkov maps riffles a profound pleasure through Melander. It is as if an entire tiny commonwealth has sprung to creation just for him. Sprigs small as the point of his pencil denote the great stands of forest. Tideflats are delicately dotted, as if speck-sized clams breathe calmly beneath...To cast a glance onto these superbly functional maps is like seeing suddenly beneath the fog-and-cloud skin of this shore, down to the truth of nature's bone and muscle and ligament. The frame of this shoulder of the Pacific is what Melander avidly needs to know, and the Tebenkov maps peel it into sight for him (1983, 111).

2/25/93

Starting in 1978 with the autobiographical memoir *This House of Sky*, Doig has produced a series of choice works which concentrate on a locale even to the point of being lessons in local history. Doig creates living history or what might be called 'history with work boots.' In *This House of Sky* we see the influence of the land shaping a person's character. The subtitle tells all: "Landscapes of a Western Mind." In an English Journal article a few years ago, Zirinsky and Morache (1989) point out that student responses to *This House of Sky* might range from recollections of childhood memories to oral history projects, and even investigations into their personal family histories (76).

In *Winter Brothers*, a 1980 non-fiction work, Doig exhumes the diaries of James Gilchrist Swan (1818-1900), an early arrival to the Puget Sound region, revivifying 18th century frontier life. Swan meticulously reported his studies of Makah Indians (among others) and exploration of the Puget Sound region in his voluminous (2.5 million words!) journals covering 1859-1900.

His Montana Trilogy (*English Creek* [1985], *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* [1988], and *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana* [1991]) minutely explores the features of Montana life. This is "Not 'Montana as the last grass heaven, the end of the longhorn trail'" (*Mariah Montana*, 49). Rather, Doig's Montana in *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* includes sheep ranch homesteaders braving the terrible heat and drought, then cold and blizzard of 1918-19. Outwitting a forest fire in 1939 climaxes *English Creek*. Traversing the state in a motor home to view the 1989 centennial through the eyes of a photographer and a journalist provides the backdrop of *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*. The novels also dramatize contours of human life like the alienation between friends, the rupture of a family, and the reorientation of life after retirement and the loss of a spouse.

The Sea Runners (Penguin, 1983) is a one-volume, stand-alone piece, combining action, adventure, and the gravitational effect of the land. Topography defines the drama in *The Sea Runners*. The story involves the 1853 escape from the Russian colony of New Archangel (now Sitka, AK) by four indentures and their subsequent flight down the Pacific Coast toward freedom. The geography of the coast is both threatening and accommodating to the fugitives, as Doig describes. At one time it is as beautiful as "Time and time, the canoemen saw a storm swoop onto a single mountain amid many, as if sacking up a hostage as a lesson to all the rest" (105). At another time it is as ominous as "...amid a climbing stride by Braaf as he began to cross the wrist of rock, surf burst its power in front of him...a startling white weight of water leapt, seemed to stand in the air...it then fell onto Braaf" (230).

I've taught *The Sea Runners* successfully not only as an adventure story featuring literary realism and naturalism, but also as a guide to the geography and culture of the Pacific Northwest coast. Student projects in conjunction with the novel have included investigations of the Tlingit Indians of Canada, as well as the history of Russian colonization of Alaska, with connections made to Swedish immigration to the Russian colony of Alaska.

The story's vigorous plot carefully tracks history and the movements of the characters, yet it also frequently raises the reader's eyes to reflection. Doig uses the character of Wennberg, an invidious personality, to delineate human motivation. In connection with Wennberg, the question is posed: "How was it you could be wearily familiar with every inch of a man and know not much of him at all?' (254). Later, with just Wennberg and Karlsson in the canoe, Doig hints at a theme. "Karlsson day by day finding dimension

he never knew of, and Wennberg in over his head as he always would be in life" (260).

On top of the domination of geography in his works, Doig is a master of description, as the quotes above show. Doig himself says he exalts language.

> The history and the characterization and so forth, those are all fine and obviously important to me, but I think the language is the constant orbit or magnetic force that has me doing all this. That's what really interests me constantly in the writing. History and characters, sure they're interesting, but what I enjoy more are the interesting turns of language as you deal with the history and characters (Auer 1991, 9).

An example of Doig's skill is when he has Melander--a word-smith himself--say in *The Sea Runners*, "'...a lazy wind...it goes through you instead of around you'" (142).

Whether for one's own pleasure, or as an alternative to the usual round of geography, or for a modern entrée of realistic literature, Ivan Doig can guide one into new territory.

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Definitions

topography--the technique of graphically representing the exact physical features of a place or region on a map; the physical features of a region.

cartography--the art of technique of making maps or charts.

map (synonyms)--chart, graph, plot, sketch, diagram, projection, delineation

types of maps--topographical, relief, contour

Residue

"Fleece-thick as this forest was, it seemed possible that every tree of the coast was in green touch with every other, limb to limb, a continent-long tagline of thicket" (96).

In *The Sea Runners* we read this description: "The major island called Prince of Wales rests dominantly in this topography like a long platter on a table, smaller isles along its west a strew of lesser plateware of this North Pacific setting" (100). And "One last new reach of coast, then, and its visible population only these two kinned against their will, the one family of the kind in all creation, slim Swede and broad Swede arked in a Tlingit canoe" (242).

Jick McCaskill, Doig's protagonist in both *English Creek* and *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana,* observes as a youth, "I cite all this because by my third afternoon shift of digging, I had confirmed for myself the Two country's reputation for being a toupee of grass on a cranium of rock" (*English Creek,* p. 107).

James Gilchrist Swan--Jan. 11, 1818-May 18, 1900. His journals consisted of some 2,500,000 handwritten words. The Makah Indians were the primary objects of his study, among others.

S.O.C.T.E.
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COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

14 Briarwood Drive
Athens, Ohio 45701

April 1, 1993

Mr. Tom Siekmeier
7614 S. Datura Circle
Littleton, Colorado 80120-4119

Dear Tom:

Thank you for your submission, "A Chart of Ivan Doig's Literature." I enjoyed your article and would like to use it in a future issue of *Focus: Teaching English Language Arts.*

The next two issues deal with "Advocacy for English" and with the push for "standards." It is possible, if there is space in either of the next two issues, I would use the article even though it doesn't fit the theme. Otherwise, I would like to use the article next spring (1994). I would understand, of course, if you would prefer not to wait that long to see your article published and would prefer to submit it elsewhere. (If you choose to submit elsewhere please let me know so I can return your manuscript to you.)

I would like to hear from you regarding your willingness to accept the possibility that the article may not be published for a year. Please feel free to call me at work at 614-753-3591, ext. 2370, or at home at 614-592-2632. If you prefer to write, please address correspondence to me at address above.

Again, thank you for your submission.

Sincerely,

Ron

Ron Luce
Editor, *Focus: Teaching English Language Arts*

WORD ONE

RECOMMENDED READING

By Lyn LeGendre

"I never desire to converse with a man who has written more books than he has read."

—Samuel Johnson

So you want to write fiction. By all accounts, you should read, read, read. But where should you begin? To find out, North Shore Magazine asked a high school librarian and six area bookstores to recommend three seminal novels for aspiring, young writers.



BEVERLY LIBRARIAN

Beverly High School librarian Cathy Milligan readily chooses **Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451"** for its theme — the value of books and free thought in society. She further selects **E.L. Doctorow's "Ragtime"** for its entertaining blend of fictional and historical characters and **J.D. Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye"** for its character development, its enduring ability to evoke a strong response, and because it is still checked out of high school libraries "all the time."



TOAD HALL

Eleanor Hoy, of Toad Hall, 51 Main St., Rockport, suggests **"Lyddie" by Katherine Paterson, "The Giver" by Lois Lowry,** and **"English Creek" by Ivan Doig.** "Lyddie," the story of a young mill girl in mid-19th century Lowell, has a strong basis in history and is a "good read." "The Giver," winner of the 1994 Newbery Medal, is a futuristic adventure story about choosing life values. "English Creek," set in the Northwest corner of Montana, also provocatively explores the search for one's own values and for self-reliance.



THE BOOKSTORE

Lee Cunningham, of The Bookstore, 61 Main St., Gloucester, does not hesitate to name **"All the Pretty Horses" by Cormac McCarthy** for its powerful, descriptive, clean language and **"The Shipping News" by E. Annie Proulx** for its carefully woven threads and enticing plot. Recognizing that these titles are for serious, mature readers, she nevertheless believes they are within the grasp of teen-agers who honestly want to become writers. Lastly, she independently casts a second ballot for **"English Creek" by Ivan Doig"** for its remarkable, smooth-as-butter language and its well developed characters.



BORDERS BOOKS

Phil Salmon, of Borders Books and Music, Route 114, Peabody, praises **Thomas Wolfe's first novel, "Look Homeward, Angel,"** for the rhythm and beauty of its language and for the way it captures the flavor of the American South. Salmon favors **"Voices from the Moon" by Andre Dubus** (whom he calls a "writer's writer") for its truly memorable characters, its powerful sense of place and its exquisite detail. Finally, Salmon considers **Kazuo Ishiguro's "The Remains of the Day,"** a novel in journal form, to be "very internal, introspective and masked, yet still extremely intimate and outwardly communicating."



THE BOOK RACK

Writer Jack Herlihy and **former children's librarian Terri Kyrios,** both of **The Book Rack,** 52 State St., Newburyport, recommend **Avi's "Nothing But the Truth," Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," and Betty Smith's "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn."** The Avi book is a docudrama, with a different point of view in each chapter. Lee's 1961 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel excels in "voice and specificity." Smith's story is selected for its "emotional power" and for its illustration of Jack Kerouac's belief that, "Anything felt will find its own form."



THE BOOK SHOP

Laurence Brengle and **Pam Price,** of **The Book Shop,** 40 West St., Beverly Farms, vote for **"A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" by James Joyce** for its language, its wonderful picture of a life, and because they believe young people will be able to identify with the emerging artist's experiences. **J.D. Salinger's classic "Catcher in the Rye,"** with its angst-ridden protagonist and his changing awareness of the world, is a repeat choice. Thirdly, any of the **Anne Tyler** novels, such as **"Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant," "The Accidental Tourist"** or **"Breathing Lessons,"** are championed for being "accessible, quirky, funny and alive."



JABBERWOCKY BOOKS

Sue Little of Jabberwocky, at The Tannery, Newburyport, selects **Michael Shaara's** Civil War saga **"The Killer Angels," Margaret Atwood's** anti-utopian, futuristic novel **"The Handmaid's Tale,"** and **Jane Smiley's** contemporary story **"A Thousand Acres."** Little says, "All three are beautifully written and well crafted, as well as commercially successful."

Again, these strictly limited suggestions are merely a starting place. Sue Little urges all young writers to read "everything from Dickens to Vonnegut," including Annie Dillard, John Gardner, May Sarton and Virginia Woolf.

Go forth and read! For only when a writer has first drunk deeply from the wells of life and literature can he or she really hope to plumb new territories of the mind, the imagination, the heart and the soul.

Lyn LeGendre is a free-lance writer who lives in West Newbury.



Movies can inspire a passion for literature

By Daniel Gewertz



When I was 15 and a budding writer, the discovery of movies on late-night television lured me away from reading fiction. And then, like a cunning sleight of hand, Hollywood on the tube led me right back to the printed page with a larger understanding.

Like many boys, I did not have interests, I had passions. Subjects either bored me, or I went after them in a virtually hormonal overdrive. First, oddly, it was an encyclopedic knowledge of U.S. presidents. Then, for several years, major-league baseball. I had just begun my lust for British Invasion rock 'n' roll, Bob Dylan songs and writing Dylanesque poetry when I entered high school, and I like to think it was the 10th-grade schedule that created my unbridled passion for movies.

It was Queens, N.Y., circa 1965, and because of the baby boom, city high schools were so over-crowded that grades went to school in sessions. The 10th-grade had late session, and I arrived at school at 12:30 p.m. and left at 5:30. I was allowed, therefore, the sin of going to sleep very late and getting up very late. It felt delicious.

There were on New York TV back then very few talk shows, but the movies came and went all night long. The titles of the programming itself were enticing: "The Late Show," "The Late Late Show" and "The Late Late Late Show." Now, finally, I could indulge in these nocturnal adult TV rites I'd only heard of before. I would often watch movies until 3. Sometimes I'd retire early, set my clock to 3:30 a.m., see a film that ran to 5:15, and then go back to sleep. I was insatiable.

At first, my habit of reading for pleasure diminished. But over that year of "late session," certain films led me back to the written word. The first may have been *East of Eden,* a wonderful film directed by Elia Kazan, starring James Dean and based on a John Steinbeck novel. When I picked up the 600-page book I was astonished to discover that the film had only told the final third of a multi-generational saga. It was a wise decision: the book held far too many characters and plots to be encompassed in a two-hour movie. Yet I found myself just as enthralled by the stories that preceded the movie's plot as the parts familiar to me.

I not only discovered Steinbeck, and then read almost every novel he'd written, but I was struck by the whole concept of creative adaptation between mediums. The decisions a director and scriptwriter make in translating a novel to the screen made me think about the decisions the novelist made in the first place. The whole notion of interpreting the meaning of a book, and envisioning who the characters are and what they might look like, made itself known to me in exciting new ways.

Take *Breakfast at Tiffany's,* for instance. This charming movie romance led me to the novella by Truman Capote, and then, afterward, to every word that Capote ever wrote. But beyond pointing me toward a master of style, the weird differences between the movie *Breakfast* and the book it sprang from amazed me. At the end of the movie, Holly Golightly falls in love with the story's narrator, her apartment-house neighbor. Audrey Hepburn and George Peppard made a lovely couple and they live happily ever after. In the book, what becomes of Holly is left a mystery. A bad end is possible. Even more important, the narrator is a friend, not a lover. Which makes sense: It is obviously Capote himself telling the tale, and he's gay.

That movies could change endings and transform characters made me read the novels these movies were based upon with new perception. Sometimes the adaptation was beautifully faithful. Old British versions of Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations" and "A Christmas Carol" are both splendid and true. Yet it was also fascinating to see an old Dana Andrews movie on "The Late, Late Show" called *My Foolish Heart,* and realize that it was based on a favorite J.D. Salinger story, "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," and that the filmmakers used the story only as a springboard, spending almost all the film on an anecdote within the story, filling out what Salinger only hinted at. It turned a sharp look at the neurosis of post-war domestic suburbia into a pleasing yet generic war romance. (Fortunately, Salinger never allowed "Catcher in the Rye," my favorite book as a teen, to be filmed. Holden Caulfield's image remains undiluted.)

My knowledge of Steinbeck, Capote, Dickens, William Styron, Tennessee Williams and Larry McMurtry was one reward of my cinematic lust. My new knowledge of the myriad decisions that go into a piece of writing was my dividend.

Daniel Gewertz is a free-lance writer and movie reviewer.

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Nothin' But Good Times Ahead
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Kane Hall, Room 130, 7pm

Lou Whittaker
Whittaker: Memories of a Mountain Guide
Wed., October 5th
Kane Hall, Room 120, 7PM

Mary Matalin & James Carville
All's Fair
SPECIAL PLACE
Fri., October 7th
****HUB Auditorium, 7PM****

Naomi Wolfe
Fire With Fire
Wed., October 12th
Kane Hall, Room 130, 7PM

Earl Emerson
Portland Laugher
Thur., October 13th
Kane Hall, Room 120, 7PM

Prof. Elizabeth Loftus
The Myth of Repressed Memory
Tues., October 18th
Kane Hall, Room 120, 7PM

Ivan Doig
Heart Earth
Thur., October 20th
Kane Hall, Room 120, 7PM

Sasquatch Publisher's Party
Fri., October 21st
Kane Hall, Room 220, 7PM

Michael Dorris
Guests & Working Men
Tues., October 25th
Kane Hall, Room 120, 7PM

Matthew Stadler
The Sex Offender
Rebecca Brown
The Gifts of the Body
Thur., October 27th
Kane Hall, Room 220, 7PM

Melvin Morse
Parting Visions
Fri., October 28th
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Noon - 1PM

Chin-Ning Chu
Thick Face Black Heart
Wed., October 5th
Ave Store, General Books
4 - 5PM

Charles De Lint
Memory and Dream
Thur., October 6th
Ave Store, General Books, 7PM

Bruce Sterling
Heavy Weather
Tues., October18th
Ave Store, General Books
3 - 4PM

Cleveland Amory
The Best Cat Ever
Wed., October 19th
Ave Store, General Books
2 - 3PM

Bruce Barcott
Northwest Passages
Sat., October 22nd
Ave Store, General Books
12PM

Mark Morris
Mark Morris
Mon., October 24th
Ave Store, General Books
2PM

Robert Jordan
Lord of Chaos
Tues., October 25th
Ave Store, General Books
4PM

IVAN & CAROL DOIG
17021 10th Ave NW
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mornings free for writing and I couldn't use more time than that anyway. So, I don't think teaching has cut into my time for writing at all.

NB: Do you think that what you're teaching makes any difference to your writing?

SM: I haven't thought about that, but it probably does. If I'm teaching books that I admire very much, it probably is an incentive. I'm constantly coming upon passages in books that, no matter how many times I've read them, impress me in a new way and I feel a kind of inspiration: "Ah, that's well done. I could do that. I might just do something like that." It happens all the time.

The intellectual encounter is probably helpful too. You trade ideas with students; you are forced to articulate your ideas. I suppose in all that, there is some benefit to your writing. Better, say, than not to trade ideas with someone, not to be forced to articulate your ideas to a class. So teaching is probably beneficial in a great many different ways, not all of which I recognize.

NB: Do you have any particular goals for the students?

SM: Yes, each course has its own goals and objectives, but in general I want them not only to learn something, but to perform to their capacities. I look for excellence and if I don't get it, I'm disappointed and I grade the papers accordingly.

NB: What kinds of literature courses do you teach?

SM: I teach a course called, "The Autobiographical Narrative" which is an investigation of the first person voice and the viewpoint of the writer who is looking inward on his own experience and writing about it.

NB: That sounds like something you've done.

SM: *The Names* is an example of that particular form and I was very much interested in books of that kind when I was writing *The Names,* so I fashioned a course out of it. We read things like *Out of Africa, Speak, Memory* and *Goodbye to All That* and Sartre's *The Words* and Lillian Hellman's *Pentimento.* I'm teaching that course this quarter and for the first time I'm using a book called *This House of Sky* by Ivan Doig about growing up in Montana. It's wonderful. Regularly I teach a course in oral tradition which is focused on American Indian oral tradition. And I teach a
ture of the American West from 1850 to the Pres
the landscape in American Literature and a course on L
son and Frederick Tuckerman.

NB: Your courses sound wonderful.

SM: They're fun. Yeah. I enjoy them.

NB: I imagine that you designed most of them.

SM: All of those I mentioned.

NB: Which comes first, the reading for the course or your ow writing?

SM: It works both ways. I guess I had the idea of writing *Th Names* before I had the idea of offering a course in the autobiograph ical narrative, so the course probably proceeded from my interest i writing in that form. But I'm sure it works the other way too. Ever year you're sent a questionnaire as to what you propose to offer i the next year and that's the time when you think, "Ah, what migh be fascinating to explore? What will the students find fascinating? And so you are encouraged to be inventive.

NB: One thing that interested me in your writing was the idea tha people are losing their sensitivity to words. Do you deal with that i your course on oral tradition?

SM: We talk a great deal about that in that course. It really is fundamental examination of the way we exist in the element c language. It turns out to be a comparison between the oral traditio and the written tradition. It's great fun because few people thin about their existence in language at that fundamental level. So it fascinating and I learn a great deal every time I teach it. I think th students do too because I'm sure most of them have never thoug about language in the way that I force them to think about it in th course. And we do, as you say, spend time talking about what wor are and what their potential is for us in literature and in conversatio —in every way.

When I first offered the course, I had no idea how it would b received. I was hoping that I could get maybe ten or twelve studen together around a table. Well, 150 students showed up for the fir meeting. I didn't want to turn anybody away, so I had to adjust m

By David Streitfeld

The Spy in Rags

HERE'S A short quiz to determine your publishing smarts. Suppose an exotic Spanish countess had penned a memoir of her World War II espionage activities that became a surprise hit. For a million dollars, you've persuaded her to leave her original publisher and do two sequels for your firm. That's a pretty hunk of change; to earn it back, those two books are going to have to end up on a lot of night tables.

When the first sequel is published, the bookstores order almost 100,000 copies, but sell less than half. That isn't bad, but neither is it particularly good—especially since your countess visited more than 20 cities and did a lot of publicity appearances for media that won't be interested in her with her next book.

Only 50,000 copies of the third book are ordered by the stores. You're worried people are tired of your countess. A million dollars seems like even more money when it's wasted. What can you do to get the kind of media attention that will move books in large quantities?

Give up? Well, how about this: Why not leak a story that your countess's adventures are less true than they seem?

Never mind the disclaimer in the front of the books that she created composite characters and her stories are only "based on the truth." Cook up a scandal. Have one publication discover it, and then watch the others follow suit. First, though, give your countess some media training, so she can look a reporter in the eye and be absolutely convincing in her protestations of innocence.

The sure-fire result: bestseller bonanza.

That's one script for the story of Aline, Countess of Romanones and author of *The Spy Wore Red, The Spy Went Dancing* and *The Spy Wore Silk*. Oh, I have no evidence that anyone at Putnam, her publisher, leaked to a reporter at Women's Wear Daily any notion that the countess embellished her facts. But I doubt if they were displeased with the media attention that followed. Newsweek, for example, rarely devotes a full page to an ordinary book review. Scandal, however, is a different matter, and *The Spy Wore Silk* garnered that valuable space last spring.

Yet planned or not, the media coverage of the countess's alleged fibs—her code name was not "Tiger" but "Butch," and dramatic moments like her shooting a would-be assassin tend to be unconfirmed in her National Archives file—didn't make any difference. (Which means there was no way to win this quiz. Sorry.) *The Spy Wore Silk* sold only 27,000 copies, half the number of the preceding book.

This was one of two exceptions last year to the Law of Media Attention, which says that the greater the attention the more copies sold. (Corollaries: The effect is maximized if the attention is concentrated in a short span of time. And there's no such thing as the wrong kind of attention.)

The second exception also occurred with a Putnam book: *Inside Out: An Insider's Account of Wall Street*, by former inside trader and ex-jailbird Dennis B. Levine. For his supposed tale of crime, redemption and recovery, Levine was to receive, a reliable source says, a million dollars (obviously the going rate at Putnam). That price was based on the proposal, which promised more than the manuscript delivered. Consequently, Levine got $250,000 less.

In the final chapter, Levine asserts, "This time I will do it right." A surprisingly large number of people bought this claim. Bill Barnhart, in a prescient review in the Chicago Tribune, was one of the few that was more guarded.



Aline, Countess of Romanones in 1945

"He is starting over (as a business consultant), but he will no doubt employ the talents that brought him earlier success, whatever they are," Barnhart wrote. "We would be more eager to wish him well in his second chance if we knew what his scorecard is today."

That scorecard was quickly revealed when "60 Minutes" reported Levine had gotten clients involved in deals with individuals who had a history of defrauding investors. He had apparently learned less about right and wrong than about the difference between getting away with it and getting caught.

All the returns aren't in, but Putnam is said to have a good chance of getting an astonishing 50,000 copies back out of the 70,000 it published. Conclusion: It's a little soon to talk about an '80s revival.

A State of Mind

MONTANA BOASTS an abundance of writers, but the one who really put the state on the literary map is Ivan Doig. So where does he live? A suburb of Seattle.

"I consider myself an economic refugee," Doig says, explaining that he left as a young man because he needed to make a living. As for the notion of returning now, "I hope I don't live to eat these words, but moving back as a kind of fancy-pants writer who's made his name somewhat in the world—well, that is the sort of grandee-ism I grew up hating."

It helps, he adds, that the Montana climate lacks a certain balminess. Otherwise, he might just be swayed in spite of himself.

But if it might be more fun to live in the state where he was born and which is the locale of his popular trilogy about the fictional McCaskill family and their Two Medicine country—*English Creek, Dancing at the Rascal Fair* and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana*—staying away has its advantages too. Doig gets more done this way.

"I'm not much of a citizen in the sense of being on committees, and there's not very much of a literary community in Seattle. I tend to just hole up and work. If I lived in Montana, I'm not at all sure I would have published six books. I would have had to become a professor years ago to support myself, and then that would have cut into my writing time." Only since *Rascal Fair* appeared in '87 has a "reasonable" income flowed from his books.

These books don't exactly cover the territory he once figured they would, either. Doig slipped into fiction very slowly. First he was a newspaper and magazine freelancer for a decade. In 1978, he published his first book, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of the Western Mind*. The title conceals that it was a personal story, not so much memoir as well-researched reportage on his childhood.

The next book, *Winter Brothers*, was nonfiction, too, a re-creation of an 1850s diary of exploration, while *The Sea Runners* sprang from a real-life 19th-century incident in which four men escaped from a Russian prison and made their way down the Pacific coast. Even the Montana trilogy, for that matter, is more heavily researched than some books passing for nonfiction these days.

"I always thought, and maybe this comes out of growing up in a community as small as Montana, that if you get it wrong, someone's going to come up and say, 'Dammit, didn't you know better than that? It didn't happen that way at all!' And he'll be right."

You don't have to be a Montana fanatic to enjoy Doig's trilogy. In fact, the writer isn't sure how much of a booster he is himself. "I wouldn't say Montana is so utterly special that you can wet a finger and wave it in the air and know whether you're there or in wonderful country in the Sawtooth area of Idaho. A lot of the specialness of the state comes out of my memory and skin, rather than the landscape overshadowing any other."

The three books cover the century that the white man has lived in Montana, with a book each for the homesteading experience, the Great Depression and the contemporary scene. Part of the author's intention in this broad panorama is to counteract the myth of the cowboy West. In a quote worth repeating, Doig once told Publishers Weekly that "I'm trying to write against the grain of what I call 'Wisterns,' after Owen Wister, the author of *The Virginian*.

"He went off from Philadelphia and Harvard and got in with some of the rich cattlemen of Wyoming. So far as he could tell, no one in the West ever had to do any work. In 'Wisterns' it's all card games and saving schoolmarms; nobody ever milks a cow or plants a spud. As best I can tell, there's got to be some kind of catering service out of Omaha that comes out and takes care of the whole damn West. It's nonsense, and I think it's harmful nonsense."

Still Concerned

YOU CAN tell a lot about a bookstore by how it presents itself to the passing world. In the window of Vertigo Books at 1337 Connecticut Ave. N.W. a few weeks ago were *Green Cane and Juicy Flotsam: Short Stories by Caribbean Women, Kwanzaa: An African-American Celebration of Culture and Cooking*, Stars of the Negro League playing cards, a volume on jazz and one on the Peace Corps, and a calendar titled "500 Years of the New World Order."

Does this bring back echoes of Common Concerns, the politically committed bookstore a few doors up from Vertigo that went out of business in July? It should: Two of the employees in Common Concerns are now partners in Vertigo, and there's been at least some carryover of philosophy, too.

"We're carrying Penguin Classics so we don't have to say, 'No, we don't have Chekhov because it doesn't fall within the realm of a political bookstore,' " explains Bridget Warren, one of the partners in Vertigo. "But in the sense that Common Concerns served the political or advocacy community in the city, we want to do that too."

This means that the store must avoid being perceived as leftist a la Common Concerns (and scaring off some customers) and, at the other extreme, being pegged as simply a small general-interest bookstore (and giving customers no reason to go there instead of the nearby Olsson's). "That's a line we have to walk," concedes Warren.

It's the books on the shelves, of course, that will supply the final answer. The literature and humanities sections are already broader than they were at Common Concerns—there's probably the best selection around of the Heinemann African Writers Series of paperbacks—but Warren promises as well "all the books people saw at Common Concerns, minus the Nicaraguan coffee."

Why call it Vertigo? Basically, because they couldn't decide on a name. Broadview Books, an early contender, was discarded as being too bland. "We were getting desperate, and it was a video on our bookshelf. In fact," Warren jokes, "we have a chain planned—The Psycho Store, then The Birds."

The proprietors have more serious plans to reach the readership for such specialties as African-American topics. Warren says she was heartened by the fact that two of the fire marshals who did the several inspections required for the certificate of occupancy came back on their lunch hour. "I think it's nice," she says, "to have positive contact with the D.C. government instead of just being booted."

Cover-Up

NUDITY ON book covers is not uncommon in Britain and practically required in France, but in this country it's never really caught on. In fact, it seems even less prevalent on paperbacks these days than in the more uptight '50s and '60s. Students of this sort of thing will recall a 1970 Bantam paperback of James Salter's classic *A Sport and a Pastime*, which featured no less than 13 very small photos of a naked couple frolicking.

The jacket that Michael Ian Kaye and Melissa Hayden have done for Fay Weldon's new novel, *Life Force* (reviewed on p. 6), is thus something out of the ordinary. The novel, about a well-endowed spreader of seed in '60s London, at first featured a snapshot of two (clothed) statues on the cover. The Viking sales reps, when they went out to present the book to the stores, felt something a little more corporeal was in order.

First, the old photo was dropped in favor of a close-up of Michelangelo's David. Then, to strategically protect his midriff, a paper band was attached that gives the book's title and author.

In an innovation of sorts, the band is attached to the book's spine, which means it isn't going to slide off at an inopportune moment. "You don't want David dropping his fig leaf down to his knees," notes Viking editor Nan Graham. "What good is it going to do there?" ■

Ivan Doig
17021 - 10th Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177

The Register-Guard
SUNDAY
OCTOBER 3, 1993

OREGON LIFE

SECTION F
Write On 3F
Weddings 4F
Anniversaries 5F

Ivan Doig



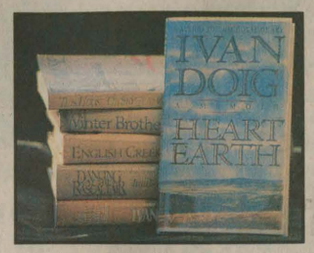
Author's images rise from imagination and memories

Running the mind's ridges

It's August and we're in Montana, driving from Bozeman to White Sulphur Springs. I'm going to interview Ivan Doig in Eugene in September, and I want to see for myself the country that he evokes so eloquently, from "This House of Sky" (1978) through his trilogy — "English Creek" (1984), "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" (1987) and "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana" (1990) — to the newly released "Heart Earth."

Even on this warm evening, in a summer of unusual rainfall, the country is spare. Mountains define the view. Bridgers, Crazies, Big and Little Belts mark our horizons and the lives of Doig's family and fictional characters. There is nothing but sagebrush, 50





EXCERPT

"As broadcaster of sheep her mind is free to go while the rest of her has to ride the horse, and she dreams ahead now. Extend yourself full slam; if she has found anything to believe, it's that. It reached her to Charlie, lyrical wire in the wind. It was what pushed her to the gamble of Ivan, chancy pregnancy atop her chancy lung health. She can't feel any regret for how any child of hers ridge-runs the country of his head."

— HEART EARTH
by Ivan Doig

miles maybe of visibility from this flat road. Occasionally, we spot antelope grazing. We pass through Ringling in a moment. White Sulphur Springs bumps up on the horizon. Take away the paved highway, the parallel power lines, and it's the extreme long shot that opens every traditional Western: a community almost lost in the vast space that surrounds it.

A month later, at the Eugene Hilton, I ask Doig about "This House of Sky," about the need he had to write about Montana and his family at a time when biographers dealt with lives of the well-known: "the past must beat in me to make a rhythm of survival for itself."

Doig links the personal to the political as he looks back at that beginning work. The death of his mother in 1945, on Ivan's sixth birthday, required a "new constellation of family." By the mid 1970s, his father and grandmother had died. "This House of Sky" honors the courage and persistence of these two disparate and often warring people who placed his upbringing above their differences.

"It's a technical, professional choice," he says, explaining the book's first-person viewpoint. "It got me to sit down and excavate out of my own memories."

He began his excavation in the early '70s, the period of Watergate. He'd been in grad school in the '60s, "logging through that Vietnam affair...one foot on an Air Force reserve plane and one foot off." He didn't have to go. "But," he emphasizes, "that and the politics of the period after Watergate when every political felon convicted or otherwise in fact got a fat book contract" enraged him.

"Whenever the going would get tough on 'This House of Sky,' a tough book to write, a densely poetical book, I would remember Spiro Agnew's publishing deal and say: 'Other people need to have a chance to have their stories told in this country — people like my parents.'"

Doig told his family's story, and an editor at Harcourt Brace took a risk on a non-traditional biography at a time when some American historians were beginning to revise the traditional histories of the West.

Richard Maxwell Brown, a University of Oregon history professor, believes that "This House of Sky" began "grassroots biography."

For the past four years, Brown has served as a juror for the Evans Biography Award. This year, Doig's "Heart Earth" won the $10,000 prize. The jurors, Brown says, found "Heart Earth" to be "a unique biographical perspective on the Depression decade of the 1930s and the era of World

Turn to DOIG, Page 2F



Author Ivan Doig visited Eugene recently on a tour promoting his latest book "Heart Earth," a memoir of his mother, Berneta Augusta Maggie Ringer Doig.

(Top left) Sunset along the Continental Divide in Montana's northern Rocky Mountains.

by SUSAN GLASSOW
FOR THE REGISTER-GUARD

photos by CARL DAVAZ
THE REGISTER-GUARD

Older writers let their creativity soar in 'Reflections'

By BOB WELCH
The Register-Guard

ON THE NINTH FLOOR of her high-rise apartment, in front of a new Smith Corona PWP 4300 word processor that wouldn't look out of place on the Starship Enterprise, she works on her latest novel.

It is a fantasy about a person who has a near-death experience while on an operating table. The woman spends up to six hours a day on the manuscript.

If you're envisioning some baby boomer in her Central Park flat, think again. The woman is Marie Melton Wilson, whose writing perch is the Ya-Po-Ah Terrace retirement home. In two weeks, Wilson will turn 80.

She was among the 100 older adults from around the state whose works are featured in the just-released "Reflections," a two-volume booklet sponsored by the Oregon Association of Homes for the Aging as part of its Creative Writing and Poetry Festival.

On a late September afternoon, some 250 people gathered at the Hult Center to listen to celebrity readers read the 10 best of the bunch. The work had to have been penned in the last 10 years while the author was 65 years or older. All authors were residents of nursing and retirement homes that belong to the association.

"The idea was partly to offer an outlet to older writers, who wondered why we offered something similar for artists, and partly to try to overcome some stereotypes," said Sally Goodwin, the association's executive director. "Some people see these older adults as all nice, pleasant, polite people who stay happy by not doing much. Just because someone is 55 or 95 doesn't mean they can't be creative."

The stories and poems range, in theme, from the personal ("To: Max On Our 48th Anniversary") to the humorous ("Cupid, You're Stupid"), from authors lost in memories ("Going to the Fourth of July") to those who have found peace amid the ailments of age ("Reflections on Aging").

"Some I couldn't read without crying and some without laughing," Goodwin said.

Eugene writers who made the booklet were Wilson, for "More Than Clay;" Gladys Irene King, Olive Plaza, for "Only Yesterday!"; Elizabeth Osgood, Washington Abbey, for "Why We Quit Cruising"; Ruth Barton Davis, Ya-Po-Ah Terrace, for "Happily Ever After (A Child's Story)"; Mary Jo Stephenson, Good Samaritan, for "Lilac Tide"; Trudi DeMarchi, Olive Plaza, for "We Must Say Goodbye"; Edna Thomas, Ya-Po-Ah Terrace, for "Doctor Jim"; Loucile Steen, Yo-Po-Ah Terrace, for "Little Dragon Cloud"; and Faye McCoy, Olive Plaza, for "A Winter Morning."

If ever there was an example of the "you're-never-too-old-to-start" adage, it's the 94-year-old McCoy. "I've always liked poetry but I didn't start writing until I was 90," she said.

Turn to DOIG, Page 2F



ANDY NELSON/The Register-Guard

Marie Melton Wilson: "Writing is just something I have to do. It's part of me."

DOIG Continued from Page 1F

War II in the West, graphically, memorably portraying the qualities of personal courage and persistence that are so deeply rooted in Western history and society."

"Heart Earth" is a delicate, beautifully woven memoir of Doig's mother, Berneta Augusta Maggie Ringer Doig, built from letters she wrote during the last year of World War II to her brother, Wally Ringer.

Bequeathed to Doig in 1986 by his uncle, Berneta's airmail letters connect Doig to the mother he barely knew: "I had given up ever trying to uncurtain my mother. Now her pages begin her. Upward from her held pen she is back again."

In "This House of Sky" he has written: "The costs that this father of mine paid in all the surviving he had to do, I know enough about. But about why life had to dangle him such terms, not nearly enough."

In "Heart Earth," he examines those terms. This Montana ranch boy, a sheepherder who went to the Northwestern School of Journalism and has a doctorate in history from the University of Washington, says that the "ferment of thinking" in Western history in the '80s and '90s gave him the "angles of history" he needed to evaluate both his parents' families and their status as "kind of serfs, peasants in a certain kind of political analysis."

He goes on: "When I was reading Dick Brown's book, 'No Duty to Retreat,' his pages on the Western Civil War of Incorporation, I said, 'That's it; that explains a hell of a lot. That's it. That's what my folks, really on both sides, that's what they were trying to function within.' I find this a continuing powerful theme — what we have to function within. I'm a third-generation Westerner. The first two generations, which added up to a lot of people, never managed to make a buck in life, not for want of trying or lack of hard work. I think that really tells us something about this society across 75 or 100 years."

What "angle of vision" did Brown's work offer? "No Duty to Retreat" continues the theoretical work that Brown has done on American violence. Into this framework he brings a study, certainly not done before, of grass-roots gunfighters who fight against the incorporation of the West by Southern Pacific and against the takeover of homesteads by large ranchers. He details a West where working-class people give ambivalent support to the shooting of railroad officials because these officials were sanctioned by the U.S. government to take people's lands and livelihood. By the 1920s the government had incorporated the West.

"My father came out of the candlelight of this century," Doig says, "born in the spring of 1901, back there on the homestead beneath Wall Mountain. More than that, born on the losing side of America's second civil war, the one out West where dollars were the big battalions. That Western Civil War of Incorporation, the businesslike name given it by its leading historian, powerfully pitted financial capital and government against those who occupied land or jobs in inconvenient unconsolidated fashion. Indian tribes and Hispanos: defeated onto reservations and poverty's enclaves. Miners, loggers and other industrial working stiffs: defeated in strikes and resistance to technological danger. Homesteaders, small farmers, backpocket ranchers: defeated from insufficient acres. The lariat proletariat, where my grandparents and parents started out, was done in by mechanization, ending up in town jobs or none."

Doig's strength as a storyteller comes from his ability to "word work," to bring to life people "functioning within" society. In "Heart Earth," he ob-

ganized by others doesn't mean despair. Even as he decries the system, he champions those tough enough to bear up. Bessie's daughter, Doig's mother, Berneta, inherits strength. At 31, in the last summer of her life, she herds sheep with Ivan's dad, Charlie, and Ivan, who is fighting asthma. Ivan imagines her:

"As broadcaster of sheep her mind is free to go while the rest of her has to ride the horse, and she

"The hands and arms of Bessie Ringer were scarred from every kind of barbwire work, yet there she sat hooking away at the most intricate of crochetwork, snowflaking the rough rooms of her existence with doily upon doily."

IVAN DOIG
Author

dreams ahead now. Extend yourself full slam; if she has found anything to believe, it's that. It reached her to Charlie, lyrical wire in the wind. It was what pushed her to the gamble of Ivan, chancy pregnancy atop her chancy lung health. She can't feel any regret for how any child of hers ridge-runs the country of his head."

Doig finds in her letters the reason he is "eternally keeping score on life, trying to coax out its patterns in regular report." For Doig, one of his mother's best dispatches carries the duality of "dancing at the Rascal Fair."

White Sulphur Springs, Montana, April 16, 1945, "Dear Wally — Winona and I spent Saturday making formals and catching mice."

In Doig, memory and imagination work together. He talks about a recent New York Times science article: "These scientists believe imagination and memory travel along the same neural pathways. Imagination travels one direction and memory and what we actually know travels the other. This to me . . . that's the way it works! There's something I would almost call the feel of a memory. When I look back at some of the situations that my mother was writing about in the letters, and it triggers things in

"The six-shooter, the gunfighter, the resort to easy bravado and terrible violence: that is not the real West. The real West is vastly more quilted and complicated than that."

IVAN DOIG
Author

there that I somehow knew about and didn't know I knew about. It's more than the writer's imagination working."

In the good marriages of Doig's family and fic-

nalism text together and the publisher gave them two contracts. "In his experience," Doig explains, "Married people collaborating meant divorce!" He goes on, "We look back now and we can't entirely tell which one of us wrote which part of which chapters."

The Doigs share a study in their Seattle home, finding no problem after their early work as journalists in newsrooms; he can't imagine how "the noise of typewriters is enough to jackhammer apart a marriage. We let each other get on with the work; that's what professionals do."

On the road, Carol, a community college professor, takes slides that she uses to teach literature of the American West and he uses to develop settings for his books.

"Say, in English Creek, the whole town of Gros Ventre is made up of actual old buildings in northern Montana from probably 15 towns, creamery from here, mercantile store from there."

He and Carol edit his manuscripts as well. "When I feel a section is ready enough, I'll either have Carol read it or I'll read it aloud to her. Turned out she has a very keen eye and ear for plot in fiction; she's good on pace. I harken to her on that. I don't always take her suggestions on the actual language. She tends to be straightforward, and I tend to be fancy."

Doig works always to find the possibilities within the language. "Lots of people comment on my using nouns as verbs, making up words; it still surprises me: I wonder what else the writer should be going, certainly not grinding the language down to cliches."

Work was Doig's passport to the adult world, but at 16, desperately herding sheep in a storm that could drive the animals over a cliff, he makes a decision to not work as his family has worked. "You open the door and you say, 'My God, there is an abyss here!' "

He continues. "Something very moving happened in Spokane at a recent book signing. A young college student, from Twin Bridges, Montana, bigger than Ringling, but not by much, came up to me and said he really likes 'This House of Sky.' 'You're the reason I left Montana,' he said. In Montana, people come up to me and say 'You're the reason I'm in Montana.' And so to hear this other side was very powerful. You can't imagine how many times people ask me why I left Montana. I was starved out."

On the future of Montana, Doig wishes he could tell how it's going to play out. "The best I can do, simply do, is point out the things that could happen. The place could turn into a sort of Georgian England, the rich own all the fancy acres and everybody else gets to do the peasant jobs and look colorful. I hope again that it is going to be more complicated than that, but I don't know. Montana has a lot of tradition of people using the place as a hobby."

On his next book, Doig is very clear. It is set in the Depression in Montana. The story comes from the setting. "Fort Peck dam was a colossal boom town. It went from absolute bald prairie to 20,000 people overnight. It was a deliberate make-work program by the New Deal, but it gave people a paycheck and remember in '33 there simply wasn't any money in circulation. Some of the oral histories tell us people were canning gophers in Northwestern Montana. So this dam gave people a chance to have some dignity of work.

"My characters are diverse. There's an engineer on the dam. He's climbed his way up that far. His wife is going to be a local woman and I haven't quite worked out her views on how fast they ought to rise because this is a dirt dam and the big leagues, of course, were the concrete Hoover and Grand Cooley. There will be a woman who's a part-time dancer and

WRITERS Continued from Page 1F

It happened in a calligraphy class. "I got tired of just doing the ABCs, so I started to write little poems. People laughed at them and enjoyed them. Pretty soon, rhyming words started running through my head and I was writing poetry for Halloween, Christmas, whatever."

McCoy has written gift books for her friends and family, an ample audience. She has three children, one of whom is 71; six grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and one great-great grandchild.

Her poem selected for "Reflections," called "A Winter Morning," deals with how perspective molds our moods. "I read the news of gloom and doom . . . I must, I must, escape this room/So I donned my coat, with spirits dour/Walked straight outside into a shower!/With lowered head and plodding gait/A still small voice would bring to mind,/That what you look for you will find./I raised my head, the sun came out/and from within there came a shout,/Oh My! Oh Me! What's this I see?/Purple crocus marching round our apple tree . . . "

"At our age, we have a lot of aches and pains and sometimes we focus on them," said McCoy. "I believe in focusing on what's good."

McCoy is a newcomer to the art of writing, but Good Samaritan's Stephenson has been writing for most of her 83 years. "I just love to work with words," she said.

Her published poem, "Lilac Tide," is a tribute to her mother. "The Lilacs that bloomed 'Back Home'/strangely seemed more fair,/seemed to be more fragrant/Just because she was there . . . "

Yo-Pa-Ah's Wilson first published poems when she was a 15-year-old in Tipton, Kan. In the '20s, she first got paid for her writing — $7 from the Chicago Tribune for a poem on the Ozark Mountains, where she had grown up.

She has had more than 100 poems and stories published in magazines, and has had two books published, autobiographies called "Nellie's Girl" and "Nellie's Girl 2."

"Writing is just something I have to do," she said. "It's part of me. You get caught up in your characters. It's the same kind of satisfaction you get from reading."

The story of hers chosen for the "Reflections" volume, "More Than Clay," is a fictitious piece about a little white girl and black girl becoming friends in a small Southern town, then being forced apart by a society that won't accept integration.

"The point is that color makes no difference," she said. "We are who we are."

Goodwin, the association's executive secretary, says organizers of the creative writing and poetry festival toyed with the idea of "making everyone a winner." But they decided "we're going to let some people really win."

"Judges Choice" awards went to Thomas Williams, Willamette View Inc.; Nathan Horowitz, Robison Jewish Home; Beatrice Bliss White, Jennings McCall; James Lewis, Ross Knotts Center; Frances Rieder, Hillside Manor; Fred Buehling, Capital Manor; Evelyn Gathman, Willamette Valley Inc.; Hazel Bowers, Rogue Valley Manor; Mary Craig, Willamette Valley Inc.; and Ellen Smith Case, Willamette Valley Inc.



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great a paperwork burden on owners of farms and ranches. Agricultural employees such as my grandmother were specifically excluded from its coverage."

But Doig goes beyond the unfairness his family had to live within to the people they were: "Instead she had what she was. The hands and arms of Bessie Ringer were scarred from every kind of barbwire work, yet there she sat hooking away at the most intricate of crochetwork, snowflaking the rough rooms of her existence with doily upon doily."

Here is Doig at his best, bringing together in two specific images, the marks left by such harsh work and the ability of those who have enough grit and joy in life, whatever that life is, to create moments of beauty. It's no accident that Doig prefaces "Heart Earth" with a line from the memoirs of poet Pablo Neruda: "Intervals of dreaming help us stand up under days of work."

For Doig, living within the frame of history or-

the word. He scorns at the notion that strong women emasculate men; he can't comprehend this current male movement of returning to the forest and beating drums, finding a "warrior self."

"The macho myth of the West is the West I hate and I have been writing against it in all these books. The six-shooter, the gunfighter, the resort to easy bravado and terrible violence: that is not the real West. The real West is vastly more quilted and complicated than that. I'm dumbfounded that this notion is still current: we saw it in the Reagan White House, and we see it now in the current 'cowboy' stuff — Bakersfield, California, dressed the part and walking the streets of Bozeman today."

Doig and his wife, Carol, have been married almost 30 years. In the meticulous notes that accompany each of his books, fiction or non-fiction, she is given credit for research photography, for manuscript readings.

He laughs and recalls the time they wrote a jour-

write a whore with a heart of gold. She's turning out to be one of the most interesting people in the book.

"There's an elected Bolshevik sheriff in a nearby county and a local sheriff who's really conservative but has had to run as a Democrat because he believes 'You can't be elected the town idiot in Montana without running as a Democrat.' He hates Roosevelt, hates the project, loves the river."

For us, for our future, read and lived, there's the promise a Doig work always offers: "Life is wide; you can always take another run at it." And we have to do it on our terms, resist incorporation whatever kind is afoot; remember that although courage and persistence are necessary, so is humor. "Heart Earth" indeed: love of people, place, work, dreaming. As Bessie Ringer put it, straight into the camera, "That's the how of it."

Susan Glassow of Eugene teaches writing and film at Lane Community College.

BEST SELLERS

FICTION

1. **The Bridges of Madison County,** Robert James Waller (Warner)
2. **Lasher,** Anne Rice, (Knopf)
3. **Without Remorse,** Tom Clancy (Putnam)
4. **The Golden Mean,** Nick Bantock (Chronicle Books)
5. **Sacred Clowns,** Tony Hillerman (HarperCollins)
6. **Like Water for Chocolate,** Laura Esquivel (Doubleday)
7. **Strip Tease,** Carl Hiaasen (Knopf)
8. **Streets of Laredo,** Larry McMurtry (Simon & Schuster)

HARDCOVER NONFICTION

1. **Sein Language,** Jerry Seinfeld (Bantam)
2. **Ageless Body, Timeless Mind,** Deepak Chopra, M.D. (Harmony)
3. **Eat More, Weigh Less,** Dean Ornish, M.D.(HarperCollins)
4. **Embraced by the Light,** Betty J. Eadie (Gold Leaf Press)
5. **Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus,** John Gray (HarperCollins)
6. **The Hidden Life of Dogs,** Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (Houghton Mifflin)
7. **The Winner Within,** Pat Riley (Putnam)

MASS MARKET PAPERBACKS

1. **The Tale of the Body Thief,** Anne Rice (Ballantine)
2. **The Way Things Ought to Be,** Rush Limbaugh (Pocket Books)
3. **The Pelican Brief,** John Grisham (Dell)
4. **Dragon Tears,** Dean Koontz (Berkley)
5. **Mitigating Circumstances,** Nancy Taylor Rosenberg (Signet)
6. **The Secret History,** Donna Tartt (Ivy)
7. **The Joy Luck Club,** Amy Tan (Ivy)
8. **The Stars Shine Down,** Sidney Sheldon (Warner)

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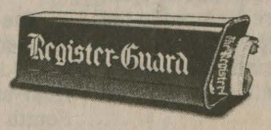
HomeFront



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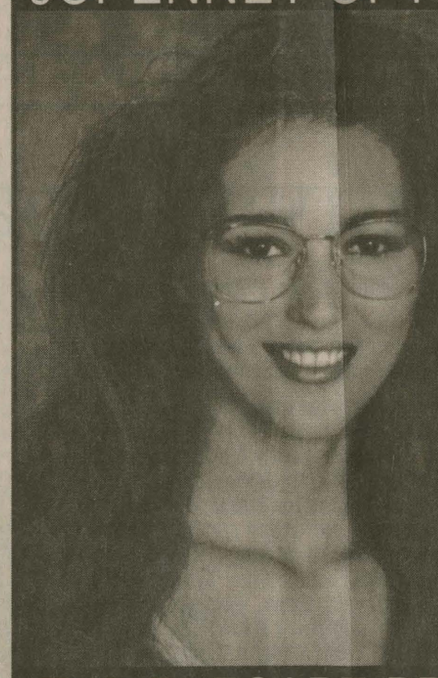

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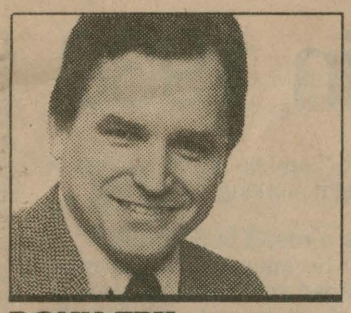


DONN FRY
Times book editor

Insider's view of law makes great fiction

There's been a lot of muscle at the top of the best-seller list this summer: predictable blockbusters from Stephen King, Tom Clancy and Louis L'Amour, as well as surprises such as Allan Bloom's controversial "The Closing of the American Mind."

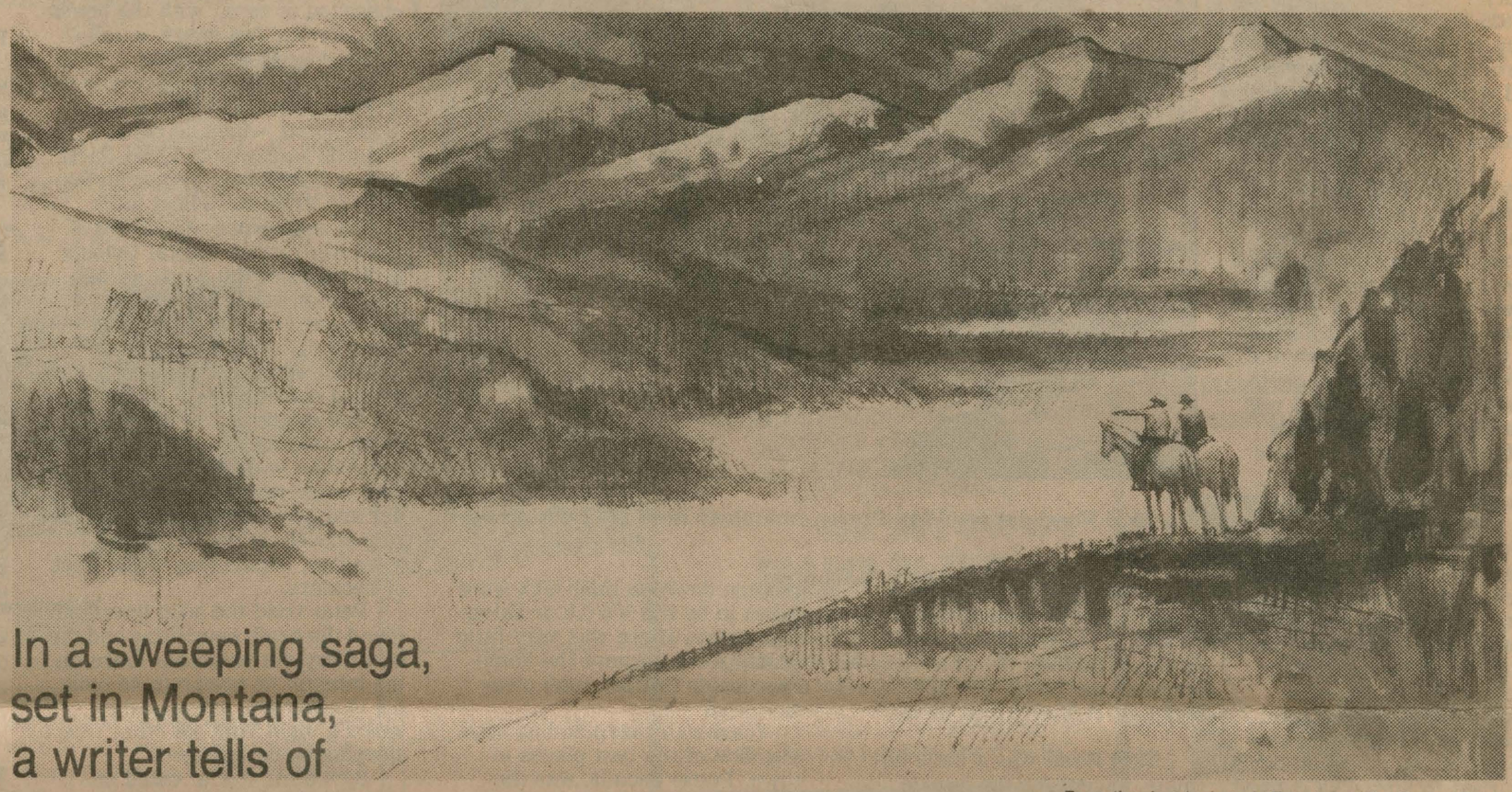
But one book by a first-time novelist has refused to be shouldered aside by King and Clancy et al. Scott Turow's "Presumed Innocent" has been near the top of sales charts since its July release. If you're a reader who regularly bemoans the lack of "quality" on the best-seller list, "Presumed Innocent" is cause for celebration.

It's that rarest of things: a popular entertainment with a finely drawn setting, an ingenious plot and wholly believable characters. At once a murder mystery and courtroom drama, it also is a meditation on marriage and adultery, a chilling view of political corruption and moral bankruptcy and a case study of a laudable but imperfect legal system.

This uncommonly good first novel was written by an attorney who turned to law school after his early dreams of a writing career were shattered.

"I had no ambition other than being a novelist," recalled Turow during a recent Seattle visit. After Amherst College — where he studied under the respected writer Tillie Olsen and published a short story before graduating in 1970 — he moved on to the graduate writing program at Stanford University.

He spent five years there as a fellowship student and lecturer, but as early as his second year he had begun having second thoughts. When a novel he had worked on for four years was rejected by 25 publishers, he turned to Harvard Law School, where a journal he kept



From the dust jacket of "Dancing at the Rascal Fair"

In a sweeping saga, set in Montana, a writer tells of

The high life

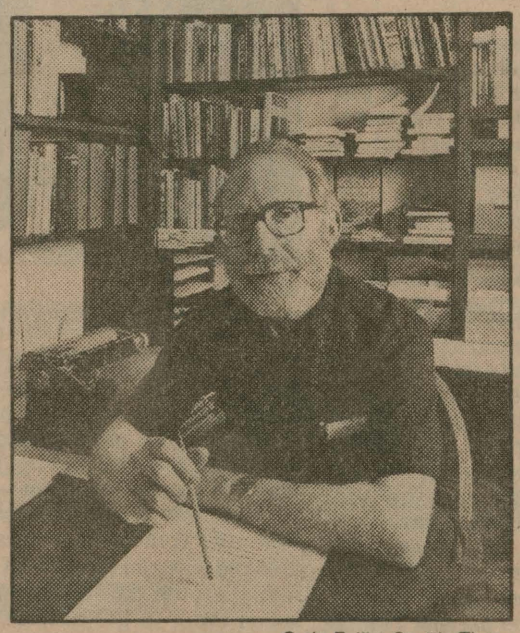
■ **"Dancing at the Rascal Fair"**
by Ivan Doig
Atheneum, $18.95

by Michael Dorris

Ivan Doig's magnificent new novel is an answer to the prayer of anyone who has loved a distant country or experienced the full-hearted enthusiasm of youth — and who wants to return for the price of a book.

Part immigrant saga, part intelligent western, part sweeping romance, "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" further establishes its Seattle author in the front ranks of contemporary American writers. The novel traces the life of one Angus McCaskill, born in Nethermuir, Scotland, who crosses the Atlantic in steerage to arrive in Montana on the day of its statehood. He claims it, literally and spiritually, as his own.

The chronicle is constructed with the eye to detail and the unparalleled sense of place that characterize Doig's previous award-winning fiction and nonfiction. Virtually a "prequel" to his 1984 novel, "English Creek," it overflows with the precise yet magically evocative images of the northern



Craig Fujii / Seattle Times
Ivan Doig's novel is constructed with an eye for detail and a keen sense of place.

around the room, quiet with each other except for the tune from our throats."

expectation: "We sat unspeaking for a while, in that supreme silence that makes the ears ring. Where the bevels of the valley met, the creek ran in ripples and rested in beaver ponds. A curlew made deft evasive flight across the slope below us as if revealing curlicues in the air. Everything fit everything else this day."

And in this place — "Scotch Heaven" as it comes to be called over the next 30 years — Angus and Rob marry and father children, dream and experience bitter disappointment, fight the weather and each other to a tenuous draw. They ride the crest of boom times, know the deprivations of economic disaster and most of all realize the pangs of disillusionment: in trust, in the boundaries of decency, in the future itself.

The other characters — Rob's determined sister, Adair; the indelible school teacher, Anna Ramsay; Angus' eventual son, Varrick; the shrewd Lucas and his lifelong Blackfeet "housekeeper," Nancy Buffalo Calf Speaks; the sanguine forest ranger, Stanley Meixell — are no less compelling.

With the varied community of Scottish shepherds and homesteaders, they constitute a self-enclosed world in which all the grand

well-received 1977 memoir, "One L."

Turow, 38, now is a defense attorney for one of Chicago's largest firms, but he spent eight years after law school as a prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago. Involved in a crackdown on corruption in the state judicial system, Turow learned firsthand much that he has rendered as fiction in "Presumed Innocent" — a book he began by writing 30 minutes on the commuter train each day.

Perhaps more than anything, "Presumed Innocent" will cause you to re-examine our legal system — or, rather, The Law. Admittedly it's naive, but I have always thought of The Law as an immutable body of regulations that can be applied equitably across the board, everything clear cut.

Not so, you learn in "Presumed Innocent." As you watch deputy prosecutor Rusty Sabich stand trial for the murder of a colleague, he is circled warily by the ambitious new prosecutor, Nico Della Guardia; the judge, Larren Lyttle, who has an overpowering presence and a compromised past; and his own defense lawyer, the urbane and infinitely subtle Alejandro Stern. Far from immutable, The Law among these contenders is revealed as a shifting vehicle open to myriad interpretations; truth can hang on the arch of an eyebrow.

"Being a trial lawyer and being a novelist are not entirely different," Turow observed. "There is the same sort of editorial process: You control what your witnesses say. One of the first questions you ask yourself is, 'How are you going to draw the reader — and jury — in?' You better start telling your story right away.

"One other thing I've learned as a lawyer: to be a ruthless editor. You only get so much of a judge's time. If you have something to say in a brief, and he only has time for 20 pages, don't get to your point by page 30."

The reading public has gotten the point about "Presumed Innocent," as has Hollywood. Sydney Pollack ("Tootsie," "Out of Africa") has purchased the film rights for $1 million, and the paperback rights recently were sold for $3 million — a record for a first novel.

"My idea was that it is a serious novel that happens to be a mystery," said Turow. "The fact that it happens to be considered nonstop reading by people just blows me away."

■ Donn Fry's column appears Sunday on the Books page of The Times.

memoir, "This House of Sky."

But "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" is grounded in a compelling plot, archetypically familiar yet absolutely original. It is a story of the complexities of friendship and passion, of grief and exuberance, of endurance through fear and hardship. As its action passes from the late 19th century through the first two decades of the 20th, frontier history is illuminated through episodes that are, in turn, laugh-out-loud funny and agonizingly sad.

Doig's talent for describing nature is well known, but there are love scenes in this novel — from the ardor of youth to the tenderness of long-married discovery — that rival the splendor of any Montana vista. Listen to how Angus and his wife of many difficult years pass a snowbound evening in their cabin: "She came up into my arms, her head lightly against my shoulder, the soft sound of her humming matching itself to mine, and we began the first of our transits

lated with individuals who crash and melt against each other from season to season, has not been better presented. Men and women get along because they have no choice; they adore and despise as if they invented the emotions.

We first meet 19-year-old Angus and his friend Robert Burns (Rob) Barclay as they sail from the River Clyde in Scotland, armed with a guidebook and a smattering of skills. Bound for Helena, where Rob's Uncle Lucas claims to own the Great Maybe silver mine, they survive a memorably described ocean voyage and arrive in America brimming with confidence and camaraderie. Nothing seems beyond the reach of hard work and good will, no frustration more than temporary, the springboard to a new, better opportunity.

They are eager to adapt, to shed Old World preconceptions and prejudice, and the Two Medicine country where they settle is breathtakingly splendid, matching every

landscape of limitless expanse but near-claustrophobic social interaction. It is a world in which secrets are not so much kept as respected, where time hones rather than heals, and where nothing is guaranteed beyond the next chinook.

As always, Doig writes with grace and eloquence; his prose is so subtle that only in the days after finishing "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," when we find ourselves framing our thoughts with the roll of a burrish brogue, do we realize the extraordinary skill involved in his creation. Through vocabulary, word order and pacing — yet without any distracting tricks of spelling or punctuation — he has managed to render the cadence, idiom and lilt of Lowland speech. We have *heard* these voices, been *touched* by these lives.

In this fine work of fiction, every word, every surprise, every resolution rings true.

■ Michael Dorris' novel, "A Yellow Raft in Blue Water," was published in May.

SPOTLIGHT: SHORT STORIES

Variety

TWO ECLECTIC COLLECTIONS

by Frank Moore

There are almost as many types of the short story as there are literary genres. Some feature dialogue with little description; some are descriptive with no dialogue. Some are brief, amounting to no more than three or four pages, while others border on the novella. Short stories can treat love, hate, death and divorce, and sometimes they rejoice in life.

"Prize Stories: The 1987 O. Henry Awards," edited by William Abrahams (Doubleday, $17.95), and **"American Short Story Masterpieces,"** edited by Raymond Carver and Tom Jenks (Delacorte, $19.95), are collections of stories published previously in various magazines and literary journals. It is obvious that the editors have taken care in culling stories from hundreds of possible sources.

The O. Henry Awards collection, with no stories published prior to 1986, continues its distinguished tradition — the awards began in 1918 — of recognizing excellence in the craft of contemporary short fiction. "American Short Story Masterpieces," on the other hand, goes as far back as 1954 for its material and is intended as an American companion to the well-known "Short Story Masterpieces," edited by Robert Penn Warren and Albert Erskine in 1954, which also included English and Irish writers.

Their intention may be admirable, although editors Raymond Carver and Tom Jenks have taken the concept a bit too far by rejecting any author who appeared in the earlier collection. Thus, we get no work from acknowledged American masters such as Eudora Welty and John Cheever (although we do get one from Carver).

The important thing, however, is not what was left out but what was included. Both "American Short Story Masterpieces" and the O. Henry winners are beyond criticism in their selection of authors and styles. The Carver/Jenks book includes works from Bernard Malamud, Arthur Miller, Grace Paley, Stanley Elkin, E.L. Doctorow, John Gardner, Philip Roth and Richard Brautigan, as well as more recent writers who are not yet household names but soon may be, like Tess Gallagher and Mark Helprin.

The O. Henry collection includes Louise Erdrich and Joyce Johnson (co-winners of first prize), as well as Donald Barthelme, Milicent Dillon, Helen Norris, Joyce Carol Oates and Paley again. The authors names should be enough in both cases to tempt any reader to investigate either collection without disappointment.

Whatever else one may say about the short story, it finally is the author's ability to evoke a world in a teardrop that holds the reader spellbound. In "Fleur," Louise Erdrich describes her central character: "She messed with evil, laughed at the old women's advice, and dressed like a man . . . She laid the heart of an owl on her tongue so she could see at night, and went out, hunting, not even in her own body."

■ Seattle writer Frank Moore works in publishing and is a volunteer teacher of English as a second language.

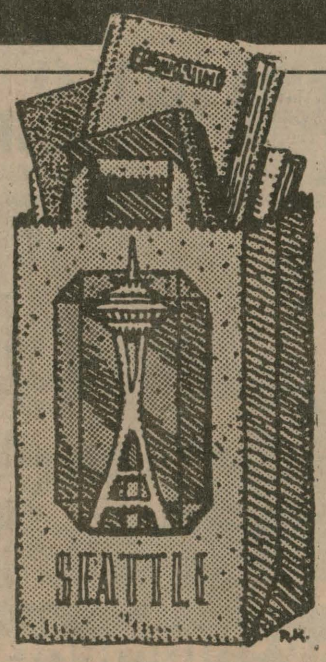
BEST SELLERS

Hardback Fiction

1. "Patriot Games," Tom Clancy
2. "Presumed Innocent," Scott Turow
3. "Sarum," Edward Rutherfurd
4. "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," Ivan Doig
5. "Five Bells & a Bladebone," Martha Grimes
6. "Legacy," James Michener
7. "Weep No More My Lady," Mary Higgins Clark
8. "Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency," Douglas Adams
9. "Misery," Stephen King
10. "Alnilam," James Dickey

Hardback Nonfiction

1. "Spycatcher," Peter Wright
2. "Rubber Legs and White Tail-Hairs," Patrick F. McManus
3. "It's All in the Playing," Shirley MacLaine
4. "The Closing of the American Mind," Allan Bloom
5. "Family: The Ties That Bind . . . and Gag!", Erma Bombeck
6. "Straight on Till Morning: The Biography of Beryl Markham," Mary S. Lovell
7. "Getting Better All the Time," Liz Carpenter
8. "8-Week Cholesterol Cure," Robert E. Kowalski
9. "The New American Diet," William and Sonja Connor
10. "Call Me Anna," Patty Duke and Kenneth Turan



Regional Interest

1. "So You Want a Divorce," Daniel Giboney
2. "Oregon's Quiet Waters," Cheryl McLean and Clint Brown
3. "Myrna's Bed and Breakfast Northwest," Myrna Oakley
4. "A Taste of Oregon," Junior League of Eugene
5. "The Year in Bloom," Ann Lovejoy
6. "Gunkholing in the San Juans," Al Cummings and Jo Bailey-Cummings
7. "Roadside Geology of Washington," David Alt and Donald Hyndman
8. "San Juan Islands: Afoot and Afloat," Marge Mueller
9. "The Pacific Northwest," Mary Brandt Kerr
10. "Best Washington Slug Recipes," Frank Howard

■ Last week's best sellers in the Northwest, as reported by Pacific Pipeline Inc., a regional book distributor based in Kent.

LOS ANGELES TIMES ● SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1992

Ivan-
fyi and best!
Leigh

NONFICTION

THIS HOUSE OF SKY *by Ivan Doig (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: $24.95; 314 pp.)* Only when a way of life is vanishing does it begin to seem worth writing about. The window of opportunity is narrow. Ivan Doig grew up on Montana ranches, but he had to go away to college—become an outsider—to recognize that life as a literary subject, and by then the real insiders were almost gone. Doig's father, Charlie, dying of emphysema, gasped out stories into a tape recorder; his maternal grandmother, Bessie Ringer, added others; Doig filled in the gaps by ransacking his own memories and those of decrepit ex-cowboys and saloonkeepers who had known his family decades before.

The result was "This House of Sky," the memoir whose appearance 15 years ago established Doig as one of the leading "sagebrush writers"—modern folks who write about the rural West without necessarily writing Westerns. Since then, he has become known for novels ("Dancing at the Rascal Fair," "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana"), but "Sky" has quietly retained its appeal. Hence this anniversary edition.

In retrospect, "Sky" seems an unlikely debut—a long book that shies away from most of the commercial kinds of excitement. What distinguishes it, besides a wealth of detail, is a lyrical style muscled with active verbs ("A bow of meadow makes the riffled water curl wide to the west. . . . A low rumple of the mountain knolls itself up watchfully") and what reveals itself to be a story of uncommon devotion.

essays, *The Territory Ahead*, Wright Morris discusses what he sees as the relationship between art and life. "We have a need, however illusive, for a life that is more real than life. It lies in the imagination. Fiction would seem to be the way it is processed into reality. . . . If man is nature self-conscious, as we have reason to believe, art is his expanding universe." The fiction of Morris is a particularly good place to see the expanding universe of one man's imagination. The urge is to live fully in a universe whole and alive. *In Orbit*, then, is only in part the story of Jubal E. Gainer. It is also part of Morris's imaginative attempt to explore the territory ahead, to conceive and articulate an integrated, dynamic, fertile—in a word, a living—image.

9

by A. Carl Brehdahl

Valuing Surface: The Imagination of Ivan Doig

Among westerners, the appearance of *This House of Sky* in 1978 led to interest in and respect for a new writer, Ivan Doig. Among easterners, however, Doig continues to be largely unknown. Ivan Doig was born in 1939 in White Sulphur Springs, Montana, and grew up along the Rocky Mountain front, where several of his books take place. After establishing a career as a free-lance writer, he settled in Seattle, Washington. Doig's growing reputation in the West and his relative obscurity on the East Coast suggest, I believe, that his work embodies the qualities I have been detailing and challenges the assumptions of contemporary criticism, which do not perceive surface as having essential substance. While Doig shares with his fellow westerners a concern for the direction of society, he is a writer who does not lament current conditions; instead, he pursues "place" within his particular physical and social environment.

In a talk given at the 1987 meeting of the Western Literature Association, Harold Simonson suggested that "place" need not be restricted to an interest in regional writing or a horizontal focus on geography. Vertically, said Simonson, a sense of place makes the individual aware of where he stands within and what he shares with ecological and social systems. I have shown how among western writers Lewis Garrard begins the search for place and how this search continues in the work of such writers as Mary Austin, Ernest Hemingway, Wright Morris, and Harvey Fergusson. Ivan Doig brings that search up to the present, making it the core of his imaginative work.

Readers familiar with Doig would expect any discussion of his writing to begin with *This House of Sky*, the book that brought him significant attention and a nomination for the National Book Award. However, Doig's first published book was *News: A Consumer's Guide*, cowrit-

ten with his wife Carol in 1972 and important because it reveals much about relationships that develop later in Doig's imagination. *News* represents a cautious first step, one taken together with his wife. More significantly, the co-writing hints of the function of family in Ivan Doig's work and in western literature generally.

Family is not a subject that generates much interest in the scholarship of the traditional American canon, unless one is talking about the deteriorating familial structures in such writers as Hawthorne and Faulkner. The traditional central figures—Leatherstocking, Ishmael, Huck Finn, Isabel Archer, Carrie Meeber—move away from family. Midwestern and western writers, however, give prominence to family: Hamlin Garland, Willa Cather, Conrad Richter, Frank Waters, and Wallace Stegner come to mind, as do such ethnic writers as Rudolfo Anaya, Leslie Silko, and Scott Momaday. Like the ocean in Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat," western space in its enormity demands human interaction. From the pages of James Pike's tale of his harrowing experience with blizzards to the opening scenes in Hamlin Garland's *Boy Life on the Prairie* emerge pictures of individuals acutely conscious of themselves in relation to the physical environment. Under conditions in which surface and place are central, human relationships become crucial.[1]

Valuing surface focuses attention on discrete events and on the ability of the individual to respond to those events. The title of *News: A Consumer's Guide* seems therefore especially appropriate to the imagination's effort to understand surface, pointing both to the discrete events designated "news" and to the fact that these events are important less in themselves than in the response of individuals to them. Interesting, of course, is that Ivan Doig, an individual who has chosen to spend his life working with the verbal packages called "words," begins his career with an examination of how these packages are made, how they relate to the physical world, and how they are consumed. "A word is like a section of telephone cable," says Doig, "a sheath with several conduits inside it. Each of the conduits can carry a different meaning, but all within the same unit." "News stories are made, not born. Made by workers and machines that refine random happenings into bundles of information."[2]

When Doig discusses the editing of news, he talks about the consumer's act as well as the more traditional role of the newspaper or

television editor—interpretation being the common denominator in both instances. Selecting material to be reported is certainly an important step in the process of receiving news, but the consumer's perceiving act provides the distinctive focus of Doig's book. Because the narrators in all Doig's work function as consumers seeking to understand and facilitate the perceiving act, we should expect that in his books Doig will not jump from event to event but will work with events themselves.

Given his interest in event, it is not surprising to see how Doig chooses to focus his next and best-known work, *This House of Sky*. *News* indicated that only with consciousness of the event's shaping could an individual make use of (consume) that event. With *This House of Sky* Doig turns to the event that is himself and begins a process of particularizing that will extend to his next book, *Winter Brothers*. From the general (news and consumer) to the particular (*this* house), Doig begins to apply ideas developed in the relative safety of impersonal moments to the more crucial concern of an individual life, and, for Doig, such definition is intensely verbal.

"Where [my father's] outline touched the air, my knowing must truly begin." The narrator returns to this image at the end of the narrative: "My single outline meets the time-swept air that knew theirs." "Outline" in each case points to the narrator's perception of the centrality of surface; each outline establishes a point of contact with other surfaces. The word *outline* also has clear verbal connotations appropriate to an imagination that, in the previous book, has established its sensitivity to language. "That 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 itself away from the dry twinings of map work and bloodlines, and into the boundaries of my father's own body and brain" (emphasis added). "Story" is important to Doig because events in his landscape function within a developing narrative; becoming aware of his life within that story requires that he train his visual and verbal skills.

Like that of Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn*, the title of the narrative, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind*, points to a perception of structure and enclosure significantly different from that developed in the East, where the architectural metaphors of Henry

James dominate the literary landscape. With Doig and Momaday, as with Austin and Hemingway, structure depends upon a physical organic environment. These are "Landscapes of a Western Mind," not the narratives of the Great Plains or the adventures of a Montana sheepherder. "House," "sky," "landscapes," "western," and "mind" integrate to form an image of an imagination seeking its place within a world dominated by land and sky. The interrelating of physical and mental landscapes define the focus of the narrative.

"I glance higher for some hint of the weather," says the narrator at the end of the second section, "and the square of air broadens and broadens to become the blue expanse over Montana rangeland, so vast and vaulting that it rears, from the foundation-line of the plains horizon, to form the walls and roof of all of life's experience that my younger self could imagine, a single great house of sky." Tony Tanner has said, extending the argument of Richard Poirier's *A World Elsewhere*, that when the American builds his house of style, he withdraws into it, seeking a "stay against diffusion." Alexis de Tocqueville made a similar point 130 years earlier: the American "shuts himself up tightly within himself and insists upon judging the world from there."[3] Taken together, these statements present a picture of the traditional American imagination as cut off from and unable to relate to the world. Ivan Doig's "house," in contrast, is something that one expands into, that allows the individual to embrace rather than exclude. Doig's house is thus the inevitable outcome of the difference between the protective imagination of Francis Parkman and the inclusive joy of Lewis Garrard.

The opening and closing lines of Doig's narrative define the shape of the book:

> Soon before daybreak on my sixth birthday, my mother's breathing wheezed more raggedly than ever, then quieted. And then stopped.
>
> The remembering begins out of that new silence. Through the time since, I reach back along my father's tellings and around the urgings which would have me face about and forget, to feel into these oldest shadows for the first sudden edge of it all.
>
> Then my father and my grandmother go, together, back elsewhere in memory, and I am left to think through the fortune of all we experienced together. And of how, now, my single outline meets the time-swept air that knew theirs.

The narrative springs out of "new silence." Learning to speak within that silence, getting from the opening to the closing lines, is an effort that necessitates seeing the self within the context of family and environment. In the first sentence, the sixth birthday and the mother's dying breaths go together—youth and age, child and parent, health and illness, beginning and end—not as distinct from each other in separate sentences but as interrelated within one sentence. *This House of Sky* does not dwell on the mother or, more particularly, her death. Its focus moves quickly out of death in the direction of expanding life. In fact, the first seven words imply eager, youthful anticipation. The strikingly abrupt first paragraph does not initiate a narrative of a young person breaking free from confinement but of a narrative voice—and one distinctly older than six years—moving immediately into the second paragraph, where its effort will be to "reach" and "feel" back along its father's tellings in spite of "urgings" to forget.

Those tellings call attention to both the communal and the individual acts of narration, acts that permit outlines to meet within the common story. Replacing the chronological continuity of chapters, seven sections develop a continuity growing out of the narrator's acts of remembering; the first section, the brief "Time Since," establishes memory and language as the prominent concerns of the book. The last two pages of the first section discuss memory as "a set of sagas we live by. . . . That such rememberings take place in a single cave of brain . . . makes them sagas no less." This particular saga, this "thirty-year story," begins in "Time Since" with the narrator working to capture something of his mother, something that eludes him—particularly because he does not have the sound of her voice, "the one thing which would pulse her alive for me." He has other voices, though, voices that appear in italics and talk about her. And he has black-and-white photographs—"I coax from the photos . . . as if I might finger through the emulsion patterns to the moments themselves"—striking in their detail of the moment and frustrating in their lack of the life that was his mother.

Most important, the narrator has his own voice, one that creates images and uses language to detail the surfaces that once were the life of the early surroundings: "The single sound is hidden water—the south fork of Sixteenmile Creek diving down its willow-masked gulch. The stream flees north through this secret and peopleless land

until, under the fir-dark flanks of Hatfield Mountain, a bow of meadow makes the riffled water curl wide to the west." One of the great pleasures in reading Ivan Doig is the discovery of a language that seems to want to touch the world's surfaces. The more one reads of Doig, the stronger the sense that Doig uses language as a vital point of contact between the individual and the natural or social worlds.

Mary Austin's *Land of Little Rain* contrasted the fluidity of Indian naming with the effort of the white man to fix change by imposing single, definitive names. The Indian recognized change in the surface, the outline, but he also recognized substance in the essence of the individual. Doig's perception is much like that of the Indian, with an additional white man's sensitivity to the desire for resisting change, for succumbing to the "urgings" to forget. Consequently, the technical devices throughout Doig's writings—the alliteration and assonance in the passage above or the gradually shifting accents in *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*—are ways into "place" rather than means of escape from the vagaries of life: "That is as much as can be eked out . . . about the past my father came out of." Language for Doig is a prominent means of "eking" out.

So also does Doig's imagery integrate imagination and natural environment; in the following sentence, language and imagery combine to sustain the imagination as the wind sustains the hawk: "Alone here on our abrupt time shelf, the three of us eased through May and the first twenty-six days of June secure as hawks with wind under our wings." But this idyllic world within the Bridger Range of southwestern Montana, cut off from the outside except for the weekly delivery of supplies, cannot itself be sustained; it ends with the death of the mother—"the clockless mountain summers were over for my father." The two males are forced to seek the nurturing of place rather than that of wife and mother. "I coax from the photos" begins the imaginative and narrative acts of consuming events, acts outlined in *News: A Consumer's Guide* and that now become the driving force of *This House of Sky*.

This House of Sky is a story not of breaking free but of discovering and accepting "place," defined early in the text as the name given to any "piece of land where some worn-out family had lost eventually to weather or market prices." As in Wright Morris's *The Home Place*, these locales are in reality less geographical than human, their substance

very real even if not tangible. "One such place was where our own lives were compassed from," with "compass" suggesting the inextricable bond between individual and land, what Morris speaks of as "making connections." Narratively, Doig's text compasses from such "places," detailing with an eye for surface and outline the patterns that reveal lives and relationships. "Little by little, and across more time than I want to count, I have come to see where our lives fit then into the valley."

Some of Doig's narrative compassing is achieved intellectually, as when he speculates about "place" or memory or when he outlines such past events as the arrival of his ancestors in Montana, but the compassing achieved imaginatively, the effort verbally to bring surfaces of the past into contact with experiences of the present becomes increasingly distinctive of Doig's writing.

> Before we could reach the corral, a sharp rain began to sting down. The mountains had vanished, and the gray which blotted them already was taking the ridgeline. Chill sifted into the air as the rain drilled through. Now a wind steadily sharpening the storm's attack. The sheep milled in the corral as if being stirred by a giant paddle, quickening and quickening. A stalled wave of them had begun to pack so tightly against the wooden gate that Dad and I together couldn't undo the wire that held it closed; the gate bowed, snapped apart against the tonnage of the hundreds of struggling bodies. . . . And so we fought, running, raging, hurling the dogs and ourselves at the waves of sheep, flogging with the gunny sacks we had grabbed off a corral post, shaking the wire rings of cans to a din, and steadily as the rain shot down on us, we lost ground. We were like skirmishers against a running army. We might bend the band slightly and gradually toward the coulee, but all the while their circling panic was carrying towards the cliffs now not more than a few thousand yards away. Only several minutes away for sheep running headlong. It was not yet midday, and grayness had clamped in on the ridgeline over us as if to rain for the rest of time.

Even a long passage such as this one cannot adequately suggest Doig's careful attention to detail. In scene after scene, the narrative reaches for the substance of the moment via the focus on detail. The particularity can seem like nothing more than a showing off of verbal skills—and perhaps that is the central problem a writer like Doig must continually confront—but what Doig seeks is consciousness of the mo-

ment. He seeks detail not for its own sake but for the sake of verbal contact with the detail.

Like the forest fire in *English Creek* and the blizzard in *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, the battle described above does not lend itself to symbolic reading, nor does much of Doig's writing. He is not writing a history, trying to get his facts correct; nor is he trying to transcend the physical world through the symbol. Instead, Doig's world has solidity, as conveyed in the passage above by verbs that appeal to the senses—the "rain began to sting down"—and by descriptions that make nature an active, physical force—the gray "blotted" (instead of the more clichéd expression, "blotted out") the mountains. Varying sentence structures and lengths—one sentence incomplete; one sentence nicely balanced against the semicolon like the sheep against the gate so that the sentence itself seems to bow as the gate does—reinforce the portrayal of two men struggling. Scenes such as these indicate the effort of imaginative coaxing, the eking out of the substance of events, which will allow outlines (that of the event and that of the working imagination) to touch.

Part of that imagination's grappling with the past is its recognition of the need to struggle forward: "If there was any mooring in our lives now, it was my schooling." Education, which in an earlier sense meant a leading out, becomes a central topic as Doig leaves Montana for school in Chicago in the second half of the book. This traditional leading out—this move *East*—does not produce the freedom hoped for; in fact, the section detailing that move, "Ivory," is the choppiest in the book. We are given letters and fragments of activity rather than the extended descriptions of events that characterize the other sections. The schooling, the mooring, is accepted by all as valuable, but the particular form of the mooring, a doctorate and the study of journalism, does not lead to the expected results; the narrator has not discovered the desired skills for coaxing life from outlines. The previous section, "North," concludes:

> The words of all the ties of blood interest me, for they seem never quite deft enough, not entirely bold and guiled enough, to speak the mysterious strengths of lineage. . . . What I miss in our special blood-words is a sense of recasting themselves for each generation, each fresh situation of kindredness. It seems somehow too meager that they should merely exist, plain packets of sound like any other, and not hold power to texture each new conformation with the bright exact ones that are yearned for. . . . For my father had to be more than is coded in the standard six-letter sound of "father."

In the final section, "Endings," the father is dying, the being "who enchanted into me such a love of language and story that it has become my lifework." Consuming, integrating that connection into himself therefore becomes essential to the narrator and provides the stimulus to the text.

The book, then, is shaped by the dying of the parents and the consequent imaginative growth of the child. Out of the frustration with the loss of the physically fertile mother and with the narrative effort to break through the verbal code of "father," Doig comes to value the land and people and to see the need for verbalizing that value. "All of his way of life that I had sought escape from—the grinding routine of ranching, the existence at the mercy of mauling weather, the endless starting-over from one calamity or another—was passing with him, and while I still wanted my distance from such a gauntlet, I found that I did not want my knowing of it to go from me. . . . I had begun to see that it counted for much." Seeing requires speaking if outlines are to touch, but speaking requires an internal education, and intellectual growth alone will not do: "Exactly at the point of my life when I had meant to turn myself to teaching, to the routined assurances of scholariness, I found myself veering inward instead."

The inward veering eventually produces *This House of Sky* and the struggle of "my single outline" to meet "the time-swept air that knew theirs." This action might generate little more than sentimentality were it to remain an expression of homesickness, but the looking into the narrator's past, his contact with the father, generates new movement and a new story, just as the focus on *News* generated the interest in the event that was himself. The narrative voice once again moves, in *Winter Brothers* turning to the historical past and its relationship to the historical present.

All of Doig's writings to date depend on a collecting and consumption of data, the act of a natural creature functioning at the peak of its ability within the natural world. In *This House of Sky*, the imagination wrestles with voices, facts about ancestors, photos, and personal experience in an effort to understand itself in relation to the lives closest

to it. In *Winter Brothers*, the imagination moves temporally, going back one hundred years to the life and writings of James Gilchrist Swan, a man who occupied geographical spaces similar to the narrator's own. The effort is to discover narratively a brother, an individual with whom the narrator shares space, motivation, and values: "Here is the winter that will be the season of Swan. Rather, of Swan and me and those constant diaries. Day by day, a logbook of what is uppermost in any of the three of us. It is a venture that I have mulled these past years of my becoming less headlong and more aware that I dwell in a community of time as well as of people." As in *News* and *This House of Sky*, the narrator begins by combing data, studying pieces of paper (containing some 2.5 million handwritten words), trying to put a life together, his own and that of a figure who, in "Day Sixty," is "doubly valuable to me because the people of my own blood are gone now, buried in Montana, the storytellers, reciters of sayings . . . and Swan is an entrancing winterer—a tale-bringer, emissary from the time of the first people."

Once again, it is the effort of outlines to touch, here temporally rather than spatially, that motivates *Winter Brothers*. Doig reads Swan and watches Doig read Swan, and he focuses on the outline of events every bit as intently as he focused on news events in his first book:

> He scares me a little, though, about this winter's effort at precision, my try at knowing as much as possible of Swan. There is that easy deceit of acquaintanceship. . . . If I myself am such an example of private code, how findable can Swan be in his fifteen thousand days of Diary words? Findable enough, I still believe, for by now I have a strengthening sense of how it is that some of those coastal paths which for so many years carried him now hold me. But Swan does maintain boundaries, often numerical ones, with that deft pen. He may let me know exactly what size coat he wore, yet generally is going to make me guess about the inside of his head. Which perhaps is as much as one measurer can comfortably grant another. ("Day Twenty-Five")

Data is what all of us have to work with. A postmodernist would stress the limitations, the sufficiency of the codes; in Doig's writings, working with codes allows contact with other outlines.

Winter Brothers begins slowly, almost formally, as the narrator sets out on what seems a relatively easy intellectual endeavor, one that ought to work—he will gather some information from Swan's writings

and "lop it into magazine-article length." However, the relationships between the two—no, three—lives, particularly the relationships between the writings of Swan and those of the narrator, begin to interrelate: "No question: the stickum that holds his life together is in his inkwell," perhaps most accurately the inkwell of the imagination. Both men are westerners, meaning for Doig that each tries to push his imagination to the coast, the limit of its capability—"I wonder whether something more is not urging him as well: a longing to step away, if only temporarily, to a new horizon. To the next West he can find." That westeringness fascinates Doig, an individual excited even by tracking rodent prints in the snow. It is the tracking that counts, even if tracking leads to the discovery that "the edge of America can also be a brink."

This intellectually confident but imaginatively tentative opening does not characterize the book as a whole. At first glance, both *This House of Sky* and *Winter Brothers* appear to be intellectually clever, somewhat self-indulgent commentaries on time, space, and surface, but that is not an accurate assessment of either book. Each demands the reader's careful attention and moves quickly away from an intellectual struggle with pieces of data. The father and the land emerge at the end of *This House of Sky* in a way that no selective quoting can detail. *Winter Brothers* begins as a study of the past but ends as an integration of outlines: the Indian Haidas " 'weren't bound by the silly feeling that it's impossible for two figures to occupy the same space at the same time.' " The book places Doig's story within Swan's; Swan's life provides the structure of the divisions of the text, while the narrator's developing insight into relationship influences the organization of material within the divisions. What begins as a curious parallel/disjunction between two westerners becomes finally the junction of two imaginations:

> Swan did not write those words. I have written them for him, or rather, for both of us, this dusk of winter and of his life. . . . From that eighty-second birthday of his, where my imagination takes over the telling, he has four months and a week to live.
>
> But I discover an odd thing as this companion of my winter begins to fade from life. There at the first days of this century Swan comes into view to me in a strong new way . . . Swan stepping to the century-line which I crossed in his direction almost three months ago now has endured into time which

> touches my own. . . . Unlearnable, those beneath-the-skin frontiers. Even the outer ones leave questions, for I believe now that no one winterbook—no book—can find nearly all that should be said of the West, the Wests. . . . What I do take from this time of musing in Swan's Wests is fresh realization that my own westernness is going to have to be a direction of the mind.

Swan's carving of a swan on the cliffs overlooking the sea punctuates this winter narrative, is a stone dot "that puts period—the seed of ellipsis [spoken of earlier as compressed through shorthand into the period] for whatever continuation is on its way—to this winter."

In these three books, the imagination of Ivan Doig builds on the efforts of the westerners of the imagination who preceded him, picking up Lewis Garrard's energy, Mary Austin's attention to the physical world, and Wright Morris's perception of the centrality of relationships. With *The Sea Runners*, Doig turns in a new direction but continues his commitment to event and surface. *The Sea Runners* again focuses on a moment in the past, but not with Doig as conscious presence; talking about Swan's life is replaced by detailing the lives of men who escaped from a Russian camp and made their way down America's West Coast. In *English Creek* and *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, Doig begins a trilogy that recreates the lives of the ancestral Scotsmen who settled Montana. Once again the narrator explores the event that is his own world but now attempts to touch its surface without intellectualizing the process. As always, Ivan Doig takes narrative chances. In *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, the narrator, Angus McCaskill, enjoys life's rhythms; he wants to see, says his lover, Anna Ramsay, "how many ways life can rhyme." The narrative he produces is one of those efforts at dancing with life, but in Doig that means dancing with storms both of the country and of the heart while keeping your wits about you through flood, blizzard, drought, and desire.

Doig's writing, from *News: A Consumer's Guide* to *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, is a sustained imaginative work struggling to put into motion the surfaces that might otherwise overwhelm. In Wright Morris's terms, "each time the writer creates and solves the problems of fiction, he makes it possible for men and women to live in the world," and so Ivan Doig has done in finding a place for the individual.

10

After Words: The Western Movies of John Ford and Sam Peckinpah

The western story plays a particularly important role within the context of the American imagination, for the western story explores and communicates the strengths and responsibilities of human life within social and physical ecosystems. Consciousness of surfaces leads to consciousness of rhythms common to the individual and to his environment, opening the way for new relationships and a new story.

Readers of canonical contemporary American literature are all too aware of its tormented voices, voices that reflect a loss of the sense of place. Because distrusting place leads to overweening ego, a sense of superiority within an ecosystem, and isolation, opening the canon to western as well as ethnic and feminist perspectives offers a significant corrective to the perspective of modern alienation.

Throughout my discussion I have focused on prose fiction, arguing that works accepted into the traditional literary canon have in common a preoccupation with enclosure based upon discomfort with the openness of space. This imagination finds the energy of the physical environment stimulating, but it is convinced that without the human commitment to enclosing and reshaping the natural, stimulation too often produces anarchy. This imagination therefore works within physical (houses, forts) or social (class structure) or cultural (myth) enclosures. In contrast, another aspect of the American imagination seeks to realign itself with the openness of space.

Narrative, of course, is not limited to prose fiction. The implications of my argument extend beyond the literary to the visual and practical arts and even to politics and foreign policy, where enclosed image has long had a troubling centrality. I will focus here on the visual arts, in particular on the western movies of two of America's most prominent directors, John Ford and Sam Peckinpah, whose work evidences the

How the West was undone

THIS HOUSE OF SKY: LANDSCAPES OF A WESTERN MIND
BY IVAN DOIG;
HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH;
314 PAGES; $24.95

HOLE IN THE SKY: A MEMOIR
BY WILLIAM KITTREDGE;
ALFRED A. KNOPF;
238 PAGES; $20.00

Reviewed by Peter Booth Wiley

EACH GENERATION OF Westerners has grown up on a vanishing frontier as the Western economy has passed from trapping to mining, ranching to agribusiness, and so on. Two sons of the ranching frontier have written classic accounts of a way of life that has all but disappeared as agribusiness overwhelms the last of the family ranchers.

Written more than fifteen years ago, Ivan Doig's *This House of Sky* has been released in a new edition with a new preface by the author. William Kittredge's memoir of his family's ranch in southern Oregon, *Hole in the Sky*, was inspired, according to his dedication, by Doig. This pair of histories tell two very different family stories.

Doig was born to parents who worked together as hands on the cattle and sheep ranches of the desolate valleys of southwestern Montana. His memories begin in 1945, on the day his mother died of asthma at a summer sheep camp. Doig's father, Charlie, raised him, wandering from ranch to ranch, working here and there as top hand, leasing his own place until luck ran out and they moved again. As the years passed, the small ranches disappeared—so many hollowed-out ruins scattered across the high prairie—while the drivers and the wheeler-dealers put together bigger and bigger spreads only to see them fall into the hands of anonymous corporations. "Ye know who owns the Dogie [ranch] now?" the property-less Charlie Doig asked his son near the end of his life. "A goddamn Kansas City paper box company."

The Kittredges were a different breed. Where Charlie Doig worshipped hard work, demonstrated an incredible range of skills from breaking horses to repairing D-8 Caterpillars, and delighted in the company and lore of the colorful ranch population, the Kittredges were more single-minded, patching together over two generations a huge ranching empire that spread across the high desert of southern Oregon.

Following the ways of modern agriculture, Kittredge's grandfather and father managed a bevy of fieldworkers and ranch hands, the unsung Charlie Doigs of the West, draining the desert marshes, dosing them with chemicals and water from miles and miles of newly fashioned irrigation ditches, and accumulating thousands of acres of ranchland. Accumulation was the family motto. "Whenever we got ahead," said Kittredge's grandmother, "we bought land."

Kittredge's parents adopted all the trappings of ranchland aristocracy: trips to the big city (San Francisco), wing-tipped shoes and tweed suits for their son, racehorses and an airplane, hobnobbing with politicians and movie people, and sending their son to private schools hoping he would get into Stanford. Kittredge's father's expansive ways brought him into conflict with his own father, the orginial accumulator, and a "mean bastard" as described by his grandson. Kittredge describes the conflict between his grandfather's traditional notion of horse-driven cattle ranching and his father's vision of a "new age kingdom," powered by machines and chemicals and centered on irrigated grain farming.

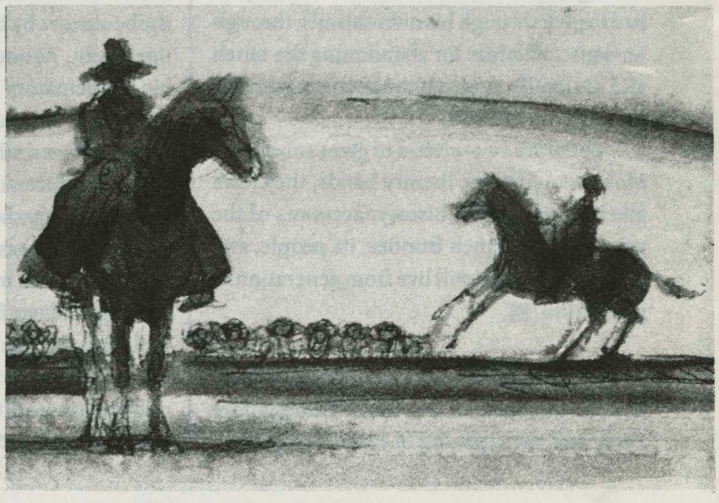
Money was the final irritant: Kittredge's father made and spent too much of it, and in retaliation *his* father found a substitute son, a distant relative who ended up with enough clout to control the family business.

Kittredge went back to the ranch as manager after a college degree in agriculture and a hitch in the air force. The ranch, however, was a different place; there were no more Charlie Doigs. "Men who hired out as ranch hands in the 1960s were missing the boat, and they knew it," Kittredge writes. "They despised themselves for it. And they despised the work."

Kittredge himself had a kind of breakdown, a premonition of death, of disconnectedness—the sense that things were happening in the outside world without him. His days as a rancher were over. The family had decided to sell the ranch, and Kittredge fell away in a long slide through despair and desperate drinking before he found his voice as a writer.

Ultimately Kittredge found a rough justice in all of this. As ranchers his family had run the course; the ranch had been transmogrified from the site of God's work to a blight on the land, a destructive enterprise that was wreaking havoc on the local ecology. Today the Kittredge's first ranch has become a wildlife refuge, and there are current plans, which Kittredge applauds, to hook up the rest of the old family place with the Buffalo Common, a vast arc of private and public land stretching from Oregon to the prairies. Comes another frontier vision.

Kittredge was driven to tell this story by the very muteness of his people. His people told no stories, he repeats time and again.



The frontier ethos was based on male isolation, what D.H. Lawrence described as "an inward individual retraction...the breaking of the heart, the collapse of the flow of spontaneous warmth between man and his fellows." It was that breaking from which Kittredge sought escape and which he records so painfully in his memoir.

How different was the life recorded by Ivan Doig! Unencumbered by property, his father Charlie bounced along from one tough job to another, a man with a powerful sense of himself and a true delight in the company of his fellow man. As much as the elder Doig shared with his son, ranching would not be his son's future. At times father and son lived apart, Charlie working some remote piece of land while Ivan boarded with friends during the week so he could attend school. At other times they lived cramped together with Ivan's grandmother in a sheep trailer that had been dragged along to serve as home beside some summer pasture.

The moment of truth came for Doig when he was sixteen. As he, his father and grandmother tended 3,500 sheep on the Blackfoot Reservation, a winter storm threatened to drive the flock over a precipice. After a desperate struggle, the three managed to save most of the sheep, but this experience altered the young Doig's vision of his future. Books and education began to count, and with the support of father and grandmother, Doig went on to college and to writing.

Much of Doig's language and stories came from his father's way of telling things. He also turned to his task early enough to capture the Americanized brogue of his Scottish ancestry, recording the stories of his parents' and grandparents' generations. For Kittredge, it was a grimmer task. To retrieve his story he had to pick through his own entrails, through his sense of failure for abandoning the ranch and his family, and achieve reunion with the survivors in the end.

These are two writers of great substance. More than just fine literary hands, they have given us true social history: accounts of the passing of the ranch frontier, its people, and their psyches that will live from generation to generation. ■

Peter Booth Wiley's most recent book is Yankees in the Land of the Gods: Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japan *(Penguin).*

Culture clubbing

By Carina MacLeod

It seemed to be a phenomenon typical of the eighties: the literary star, a media darling more noteworthy for appearances at New York dance clubs than for writing prowess. Meanwhile back at the academy, literary theorists of an amazing variety of shapes and colors were asserting their power, questioning the autonomy of the author and the primacy of the text. Now here we are in the nineties and the writers are taking their revenge, in a most biting, humorous, and often ambiguous fashion.

Recently I spoke with techno-populist hero Mark Leyner and academic-turned-satirist Robert Grudin about writing, critics, and fame. An interesting theme emerged—one that might be overlooked in the hype-driven nineties—authors still want to write engaging stories and to be appreciated for it.

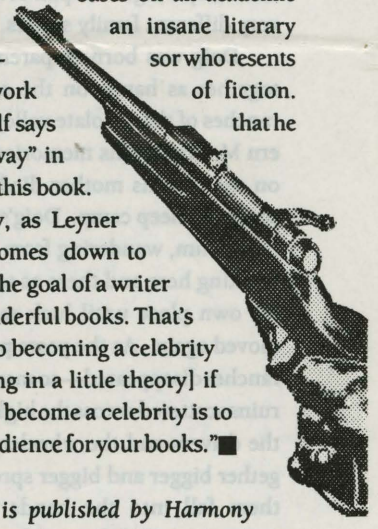
Don't get me wrong, Robert Grudin is ultimately still concerned with issues of theory and Mark Leyner wants nothing if not to be cool. Possibly as cool as the fictionalized portrait of himself in *Et Tu, Babe* complete with snakeskin boots, black leather sport coat, and a Hollywood breakfast to "do": "Okay, we're going to use *Et Tu*...and the Partridge Family, it's going to be an *Et Tu*-Partridge Family thing."

But Leyner also prides himself on being the writer who brought young readers back to the bookstore by being relentlessly funny and intelligent. As one might expect from reading his hallucinatory prose, he has been created by today's fast-paced, disjointed media culture; a self-described satellite dish open to all types of information. But his influences are not the smorgasbord of popular culture that his writing suggests but rather a solid basis in the classics and modern nonfiction. (He was reading *Madame Bovary* and a book on naked mole rats on the day we spoke.) He rarely reads contemporary fiction and watches only the fringes of television—the Home Shopping Network, CNN, and the Weather Channel– where it is most "TV-like." The variety of his interests is central to his project (resulting in a mind-boggling array of information twisted within his stories) and to his approach to life. "If you're going to try to make a computer out of yourself, then be a computer that can read *Madame Bovary* and take in all sorts of information. Aspire to do everything."

BY THE BOOK

Like Leyner, Robert Grudin wants to relegitimize storytelling and finds his influences in classic texts. *Moby Dick* inspired the nonfiction snippets about the history of the book that thread through his latest work. This is not an easy time for categorization, and I've recently heard *Moby Dick* with its mix of fiction and nonfiction referred to as proto-hypertext (the computer format now being promoted as the next revolution in literary style and thought). Interestingly, the nonfiction bits came from *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, one of Grudin's favorite texts as a child to which he recently contributed a substantial article on humanism.

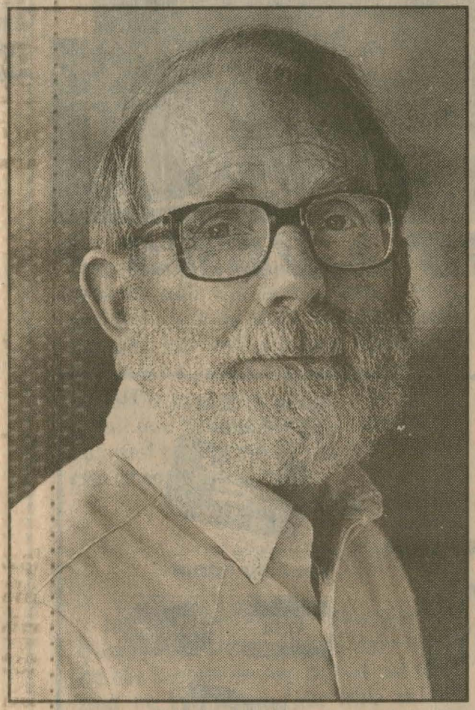
Like Leyner, who plays the star and tries also to maintain the integrity of his writing, Grudin involves theory in his work but is critical of its role: "I'm all for theoretical discussion but the kind of theory now being touted is extreme and constitutes an attempt to take over the profession." While Leyner finds the act of creation psychologically taxing, even "hellish," Grudin is enamored of the idea of inspiration. His *Book: A Novel* focuses on an academic stalked by an insane literary theory professor who resents his inspired work of fiction. Grudin himself says that he was "swept away" in the writing of this book.



Ultimately, as Leyner contends, it comes down to the fact that "the goal of a writer is to write wonderful books. That's not inimical to becoming a celebrity [or to engaging in a little theory] if your desire to become a celebrity is to have a wide audience for your books." ■

Et Tu, Babe is published by Harmony Books; 168 pages; $17.00. Book: a Novel *is published by Random House; 251 pages; $19.00.*

— Amy Ginsburg



A.E. Araiza, The Arizona Daily Star

Author Ivan Doig is in Tucson

Western author's next b

By J.C. Martin
The Arizona Daily Star

Author Ivan Doig's Arizona fans who read his Montana sagas with unflagging pleasure will like this news: He is about to turn his attention to Arizona.

Doig, born in White Sulphur Springs, Mont., 51 years ago, began his published literary career in 1978 with a Montana memoir, "This House of Sky." He used family recollections to paint the harsh, rewarding life of early Montana pioneers. The book was nominated for a National Book Award.

His next effort, "Berneta's Book," — at the moment just a working title, — will be a continuation of "This House of Sky," Doig says. It will be partly factual.

Berneta was Doig's mother and she died in 1945 when he was barely 6. The family — Doig, his mother and father — spent the winter preceding her death in Phoenix and Wickenburg. There Berneta Doig, who had asthma, tried to regain her health.

In telling his mother's story, basically that of a girl and a woman who grew up in Montana in the early 20th century, the Arizona sojourn will come into the picture through her letters. They were sent faithfully every two weeks to her brother serving in the South Pacific during World War II.

"She was a clear, vivid writer," Doig says. One of her accounts, he remembers, concerned a Montana Club get-together in Mesa.

In spite of Berneta's improving health, Arizona could not keep the Doigs. "Homesickness, family considerations," Doig says, drew them back to Montana. So Ivan Doig did not grow up in Wickenburg, after all, where he might have devoted his talents to presenting Central Arizona with the same chiseled precision he uses on Montana.

On the other hand, although Doig has spent most of his literary career portraying Montana life, he hasn't lived there since 1957 when he left home to attend Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)
Feb. 16, 19[illegible]

ook to include Arizona

For the past 26 years he has lived in Seat- with his wife, Carol, a former journalist ho now teaches at Shoreline Community ollege.

He returns to Montana regularly, how- ver, as he did earlier this month to receive Governor's Arts Award. He won simi- r awards in Washington in 1979, '81, '85 nd '88.

Despite ties to his home state, Doig insists e could never live there. "You have to ear too many hats in a small city."

He cites the case of writer friends whose good citizen consciences" keep them on vic committees and boards. "That and lis- ening in on the downtown geezer table," oig shakes his head in cheerful dismay. They just won't let you alone."

He prefers what he calls the "aloneness" f his Seattle suburb.

Doig traces his decision to be a writer ack to junior high school and the encour- gement of a sympathetic teacher.

"I dropped out of Future Farmers and signed up to take a course in typing. You talk about a career decision."

Graduating from Northwestern in 1961, Doig spent a few years at various journalistic jobs (a newspaper and a magazine) before getting a Ph.D. in Western history at the University of Washington.

Beginning in 1970, Doig spent the next 10 years, "twice the length for human sanity," as a full-time free-lance writer. He was turning out a couple dozen articles a year when "This House of Sky" started making the rounds of New York publishers.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, which bought it, was the 13th publisher to read it.

But when the rejection slips started coming back with comments such as, "This is really well-written but we don't see any commercial prospects," Doig says, he knew he was getting close.

"It's hard to say enough good things about what happens when Ivan Doig sets words

See **DOIG**, Page 7B

Doig

Continued from Page 6B

down on a page," a critic wrote.

"He has that magical quality," one fan put it, "of being able to make you see, taste, feel and smell what he is writing about."

It is not something he achieves casually. Most Doig books have gone through at least three and often as many as seven rewrites. Doig, who still relies mainly on a manual typewriter, says, "It's the first writing that's tough. Getting the words out of my head and onto anything. By the third draft, it starts to sing."

Using a Roget's Thesaurus that he acquired in college, Doig works at what he describes as "sorting words." (For the Montana trilogy "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," he also used a songwriter's rhyming dictionary.)

Sometimes, Doig says, he will look over a manuscript "just for verbs." Sometimes, "to see how every paragraph begins and ends. I like to read things out loud to hear their rhythm, the turns of phrase." He has been known to sit at his desk reading silently, tapping the eraser end of a pencil in cadence as his lips move.

"I try to work two stubborn substances, research and craft," Doig told an interviewer for the "Contemporary Authors" series, "into becoming the hardest alloy of all — a good story."

Doig will be at The Haunted Bookshop, 7211 N. Northern Ave., 2-4 p.m. tomorrow to sign books and greet readers.

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we know has been shaped by both. The power lines along the Columbia River, as well as the words of Northwest Writers, shape our *mental* picture of the region.

And, in turn, the writers of the Northwest, as well as the employees of the Bonneville Power Administration, have constructed a 'Master Grid' bringing power to our lives.

J. William T. Youngs
Editor

At the Edge of America with James Swan and Ivan Doig

by Harold P. Simonson

Harold Simonson is Professor of English and American Literature at the University of Washington. He has written about a variety of topics including, Turner's Frontier thesis, the American Puritans, Soren Kierkegaard, and John Muir. In this essay he revises an earlier estimation of Ivan Doig's work.

Ivan Doig's first book, *This House of Sky* (1978), was nominated for a National Book Award. Here was a virtually unknown former Montana ranch hand, newspaperman, small-time magazine editor, and a University of Washington Ph.D. in history suddenly hitting the big time. It appeared that with this first book Doig had proved himself a master of historical narrative. In it he recounted not only his childhood in Montana but also the deeper rhythms of love and landscape and truly turned these things into the stuff of art.

The book was no flash in the pan; it was followed two years later by *Winter Brothers* (1980), which won the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award. This second book was more original than the first. It set forth how Doig met the former Bostonian James Swan, over a hundred years his elder, met him in the University of Washington library where Swan's diaries and journals lay untouched--yes, met him in imagination and temperament and, as if by grace, recognized him as a brother, a "winter brother," both men living on the farthest western edge of America, living mysteriously as if out of time on this far-away corner of Washington's Olympic Peninsula.

Two years later Doig's third book appeared, *The Sea Runners* (1982), a splendid lyrical story of four men canoeing for their very life against all the ocean could throw at them, making their way down the hostile coast line from the Russian Sitka of 1853 (then called New Archangel) to Astoria.

Following still another two-year gestation, Doig's fourth book appeared, *English Creek* (1984), set in 1939 as the clouds of the coming war replaced those of the Depression and containing a wealth of details true to its western Montana locale. It's a fictional study of fourteen-year-old Jick McCaskill who, one supposes, will grow into full Western proportions when the trilogy that Doig promises to write is completed. Indeed, Doig's is a remarkable achievement: in less than a decade a reputation placing him atop Pacific Northwest's literary Mt. Olympus.

One of Doig's books, *Winter Brothers*, stands apart from the others in both subject and conception. Informing, the book is Doig's belief that words incarnate a person whom the outsider through these same words can meet and call "brother." In retrospect I realize that my book review--published in *Western American Literature* [16 (August 1981), 169-171], played down what Doig was attempting to do. I called his mindscape in this book mere "mist-icism" and generally questioned the notion that one mindscape fuses with another, specifically Doig's with Swan's, when in fact a hundred years and a thousand differences in culture and in nurturing separated the two writers. Doig was trying to convince us that his own Western mind discovered linkages with Swan's, and then to delineate the eventual fusion. Using impressionistic prose that sometimes rivaled Faulkner in its italicized stream-of-consciousness and that everywhere befitted a wintry Puget Sound fog, Doig (I said) sought to weave his own spell that supposedly would eventuate in a colloquy of three: Swan, Doig, and the reader's tallying response. I said then that Doig's effort failed to ring true. I want now to reconsider that judgment.

First let us look at *Winter Brothers* . Doig begins by remembering the day at the University of Washington library when he made a side trip into "archival box after box of Swan's diaries and began to realize that they held four full decades of his life and at least 2,500,000 handwritten words" (3). Doig began to read and, he says, "At closing hour, Swan got up from the research table with me"(4). Thinking a magazine piece on Swan would do nicely--one of those "smooth packets of a few thousand words" that would show Swan as "a figurine of the Pacific Northwest past"--Doig soon realized that Swan was refusing "figurinehood"(4). With each attempt to summarize Swan, the more Doig sensed that to know this diarist would take more time than he could ever grant it. Yet, year after year, Swan remained alive in Doig; the "Westernness" of both, their mutual quest for place, called each to each. Swan had gone West first. Doig had followed in what he calls "this matter of sitting oneself specifically *here: West* " (5).

And the diaries? Doig confesses that they dazzled him, forty years of diaries, page after page, volume after volume, "the simple stubborn dailiness of Swan's achievement" (5)--comparable, say, to a carpenter hammering away on the same framework for forty years, or a monk spending that time tending the same vineyard, or a Tolstoy writing out a manuscript the equivalent length of five copies of *War and Peace*.

Once committed, Doig kept his daily appointment with this man who had come to the Pacific Northwest a hundred years ago--this oyster entrepreneur, schoolteacher, railroad speculator, amateur ethnologist, lawyer, judge, homesteader, linguist, ship's outfitter, explorer, customs collector, author, small-town bureaucrat, artist, clerk--this Bostonian who in 1850 at the age of thirty-two had left his wife and two sons behind, never to return to them. Doig wonders, "Did Swan simply come onto the porch one day, back there in Boston, and say to his wife, 'Matilda, I have been thinking I will go to California'" (15) The household had been divided, Swan living in a Boston boardinghouse and Matilda in Chelsea with the two children. Bu Swan pointed no accusing finger a either her or himself, nor explaine his real reason for leaving. Doig likewise refrains from any accusations; he accepts Swan for who he was and is. As for Swan' Western impulse, Doig is content--no, is compelled--to read on and on then to write about this man.

Swan went around Cape Horn i 1850, worked the waterfront in San Francisco and the river steamers on the Sacramento, saile aboard a schooner to Hawaii, and returned to San Francisco but not for long. He headed north along the coastline, plopping ashore in what Doig calls the "misty, spongy, oozeful" tideflats of the Shoalwater sloughs, now called Willapa Harbor, a few miles nortl of the Columbia.

In those days Shoalwater Bay, named for the shallowness of its muddy flats, was a perpetual sea banquet, offering clams, crabs, shrimp, mussels, sand lobster, salmon, sturgeon, trout, sole, flounder, and oysters. Swan paid Indians to harvest oysters, which he shipped to San Francisco on passing schooners. As another kind of harvest he wrote his first book, *The Northwest Coast, Or*

Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory, a movable feast of its own that included a look at the coastal Indians as human beings rather than the frontier's "tribal rubble"(21). Doig says that the book, which was published by Harper & Brothers in 1857, "stands as a jaunty grandfather of us all who face west above our typewriters"(21).

From the frontier Washington at Shoalwater Bay Swan's trajectory looped him up and around the Olympic Peninsula to the governmental Washington, specifically to a village called Port Townsend, situated at the point where the broad strait of Juan de Fuca sends an arm southward, down Admiralty Inlet and into Puget Sound. Swan arrived in Port Townsend in February 1859. He was forty-one, the mid-point of his life. Forty-one years later, May 1900, he died in the same town. Left behind were his 2.5 million handwritten words telling of his Port Townsend life that included other specializations such as episcopal choister, secretary to Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens, teacher at the Makah Indian reservation at Neah Bay, collector of Indian (Makah, Elwaha, Mootka, Tlingit, Haida) artifacts for the Smithsonian Institute, author of scientific monographs, drinking man, and most conspicuously diarist.

On page after page of Doig's *Winter Brothers*, Swan's quoted and italicized words appear like wisps of fog so evanescent they barely brush Doig's thoughts. Doig beckoned the words to appear and a century later to speak their own embodying things; the words are almost perishable to be sure and yet foreboding like an ocean fog or stark like a mountain ridge. I say that Doig beckoned Swan but the reverse is also true. What Doig lets happen was a merging, his own consciousness with that lying beneath Swan's silent words.

Doig, a Seattle man, makes journey after journey to Port Townsend and the remote places at Neah Bay and along the coast where Swan lived and traveled and where he sometimes had his own epiphanies. Traveling back and forth from the University's archival boxes to the Olympic Peninsula, from Swan's words to their headland and heartland origins, from one remote time to a time a hundred years later, from one mindscape to another, Doig resolved that nothing would avail to keep the two apart. His book records ninety such journeys, each seen as a day ("Day One . . .Day Twenty-five. . .Day Ninety"). Each day confirmed Swan's words because the researcher Doig experienced to the extent he could their originations and thus completed their meaning. The task was not easy; Doig insists that Swan was an "inward man," not an "elaborate" man but an inward one, a "winterer within himself as well as his far-frontier surroundings"(61). Doig finds this season of the soul congenial with his own, and so persists. Here is "Day Twenty-five":

I like about Swan that he has arithmetic in his eye.

When he and the Makahs dig around in the rubble of the short-lived Spanish fort at Neah Bay, the clay tiles they unearth *are 10 inches long 4 1/4 wide & 1 1/4 thick.* When Swan visits the lighthouse on Tatoosh Island, the Fresnel lens *measures 6 ft. across* and *is composed of 13 rings of glass above 6 rings below.* When he is curious about how large the clearing behind the Indian lodges at Neah is, he finds out by *pacing it off. . .235 paces long 60 paces wide this will give at a rough estimate 2 9/10 acres.*

He scares me a little, though, about this winter's effort at precision, my try at knowing as much as possible of Swan. There is that easy deceit of acquaintanceship; in the months since*This House of Sky* was published. I have heard again and again from schoolmates and Montana friends, "I figured I knew you pretty well, but. . ." If I myself am such an example of private code, how findable can Swan be in his fifteen thousand days of diary words? Findable enough, I still believe, for by now I have a strengthening sense of how it is that some of those coast paths which for so many years carried him now hold me. But Swan does maintain boundaries, often numerical ones, with the de pen. He may let me know exactly what size coat he wore, yet generally is going to make me guess about the inside of his hea Which perhaps is as much as one measurer can comfortably grant another (90; italics are Swan's quoted words).

Questions Doig never answers are whether he writes from his own mid-point, or ever gets insi the other's mind, or how congeniality between himself an Swan works. Yet a clue etches t importance of place. For Doig makes clear enough that had he remained in Montana he would never have understood Swan. Montana was not the place to discover this new kinship. "Not winters of white steel but the coastal ones of pewter-gray, soft-toned, workable, with the uninsistent Northwest rain simp there in the air like molecules m visible, are the necessary steady spans for me to seek the words' (103). Had Doig wished to wor with different words, Montana words, he would have stayed; more to the point, his inner chambers already overflowed w Montana and he could go to the again. But in writing *Winter Brothers* he needed a different place to be.

Place bridges time; place evokes the past and makes possible its re-creation. Ordering is remembering, re-creating, but place begins the ordering. The fact that a different place evokes a different past or a different way of ordering only corroborates the generating force of place itself. This, I think, is what Doig seeks to verify in this book. Place is existential. Something happens that makes one place different from another, makes responses different, makes words different, and makes responses to those same words different too. Reading Swan in Alabama is out of place; so, too, is reading Faulkner in Port Townsend.

Granted that imagination bridges space and time, yet every Shelleyian skylark has its local nesting, every metaphor its local point or moment. Of course we read our Faulkner even though we've never spent a day or year or half a lifetime in Mississippi. But once having given ourselves to the place however briefly, once having strolled through the whispering streets of Oxford at dusk, the magnolia heavy and the burnished fragments of sunset still violent, we recognize Faulkner and in his words we find our kinship. This is what Doig found: kinship.

Before he began to share that winter season with Swan at the edge of America, something had first invited him in as if the diaries themselves had said, "Read me." Through them Doig entered another's consciousness, barriers dissolved, certain thoughts and feelings of the old Northwesterner became identical with those of the younger, and the common element joining the two was place.

To interpret Doig's response to the diaries as passive is not to think of it as dull or sluggish but rather as his being "gripped" or possessed. It's what Georges Poulet has called "the experience of interiority"; the reader is held by and within the consciousness of the writer.[1] On the other hand, one might also interpret Doig's response as truly active. While joining Swan in the same sea mists and listening to the same relentless heft beyond, Doig had his own creative work to do. No author even of Swan's generous eye ever sets forth the whole picture of anything. The reader fills the gaps, makes connections, supplies tone and shading, and becomes a creator too. The phenomenologist Wolfgang Iser insists that reading is an event, in some ways as active for the reader as the writer.[2] Something happens, not on the page where we are accustomed to look for it but, according to Stanley Fish, "in the interaction between the flow of print (or sound) and the actively mediating consciousness of the reader-hearer."[3] In Doig's case, reading Swan summoned up a private world, and he used it to fill in and complete the other's work while creating his own.

What gives *Winter Brothers* its force is Doig's own risk-taking, his courage to let Swan's enigmas intermingle with his own. Doig wonders what "urges of the night" worked in Swan, what moved behind Swan's brow, under his thatches of beard, atop his thighs. In such wondering Doig dares to show himself as one alike and also "western-edged." After musing so long in Swan's West, Doig realized that his own Westernness was going to have to be "a direction of the mind. . .a personal geography"(214). Like Swan and Doig, I confess the same. Unlike before, when I first read this elusive book called *Winter Brothers,* I now take my place in this colloquy of three. I understand what Doig means when he says that "atoms merge out of the landscape into us"(241). Places fresh to them are fresh to me: "Whidbey Island, gulls balleting along the roofs of wind. Dungeness Spit, days there glossed with sea ducks and crowned with an eagle, the thrusting Capes, Flattery and Alava, their surfs bring in perpetual cargoes of *sound and thought"* (241).

Notes

1. George Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority," reprinted in *Reader-Reponse Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism,* ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1980), pp. 41-49.

2. Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Becket* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974). See especially his chapte "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," p 274-294.

3.Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Si The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971).

(Figures in parantheses indicat page numbers in *Winter Brothe*

Voices of Experience



JEANNE FISCHER & HAROLD KITTLESON, BOOKSELLERS EMERITI

The memories and observations of booksellers can be the best record of a community's intellectual life. In the Twin Cities, retired booksellers Jeanne Fischer and Harold Kittleson are commonly acknowledged as the keepers of local bibliophiliac history. Their combined experience equals over 100 years of involvement in bookstores and publishing.

Harold Kittleson has always been interested in the rare book world. He started collecting first editions when he was in high school back in 1922. For many years, he managed the large book department of a Minneapolis department store and in 1945, joined the early Random House sales staff as a Midwest representative. Harold's colleague and friend, Jeanne Fischer began work as a bookseller in 1933. In addition to bookselling, for 40 years Jeanne lectured organizations and churches about new books "that I thought they should read," and about trends in publishing. Throughout their careers Jeanne and Harold met some of the leading lights of American literature. They both worked in bookstores when Minnesota was best known as the birthplace of F. Scott Fitzgerald, and home to the first American Nobel prize-winner, Sinclair Lewis.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LEWIS? Harold: "Sinclair Lewis was a trailblazer. I remember an afternoon I spent with Lewis. He lived in a magnificent house in Duluth. He was writing books reviews then... but I think the most important thing—and I'll never forget this—the English department up there [at UM Duluth] had asked him to talk, not for a fee or anything, about books and writing, which he did. And he was very unhappy 'because you know,' he said, 'they never once thanked me for that.' He was charming. No affectation, no mannerism. You couldn't help but like him."

WHAT WAS BOOKSELLING LIKE BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS? Jean: "We sold new books, and we had a circulating library. People would come in on their lunch hour and stand on line to borrow books. The average novel was a dollar and a half or two dollars (in bound, hardcovers)."

Harold: "During the depression it was a constant battle. We continued to buy private libraries when we could get them cheap enough, and we continued to carry the new books as extensively as we could."

Jean: "We did a lot of carriage trade."

Harold: "That's people in the upper echelon, economically."

Jean: "I remember one woman came in once and said 'I want two hundred books.' I asked her what kind and she said, 'I don't care, I just want them principally in blues and greens.' She'd had her library redone and didn't like the old books because they were tattered."

HOW ARE YOU STILL INVOLVED WITH BOOKS? Jean: "I'm involved with friends of the library in St. Paul, and I review books for the St. Paul Pioneer press and other publications, and I'm still going out and telling people what I think they should read. I've had a wonderful life in books. I wouldn't have chosen any other."

Harold: "I read all the rare book catalogs, and I stay as involved and informed as possible."—**Interviewed by Leslie Brody**

Photography by Leo Rickertsen

News of current and upcoming movies and television that tie in to books

MOVIES

The Addams Family. Before the Simpsons and the Bundys, there was the Addams family. Now, television's weirdest family is moving to the big screen. Due out in November, this film stars Anjelica Huston as Morticia, Raul Julia as her husband Gomez, and Christopher Lloyd as Uncle Fester. Scholastic is releasing three books based on the screenplay: a picture book for ages 5-7 by Jordan Horowitz ($2.50), a digest-size book for ages 7 and up by Stephanie Calmenson ($2.95), and a mass-market book for ages 12 and up by Elizabeth Fausher ($2.95).

At Play in the Fields of the Lord. To film this tale of gunrunners, missionaries, and natives, the all-star cast, including Aidan Quinn, Kathy Bates, John Lithgow, Tom Berenger, and Daryl Hannah, had to trek down to the Amazon jungle. Fortunately, the rest of us can just visit the local movie theatre in November. Peter Matthiessen's book is available from Vintage ($11.00).

Boyz N The Hood. In December, NAL will release a novelization of the summer's surprise hit about life in South-Central Los Angeles that starred Ice Cube, Cuba Gooding Jr., and Larry Fishburne. Mike Phillips wrote the book based on John Singleton's screenplay (price not yet determined).

City of Joy. *Dirty Dancing* star Patrick Swayze takes a more serious turn by playing a disillusioned doctor who finds new meaning among the poor of Calcutta. The film version of Dominique Lapierre's book is slated for a December release and Warner is publishing a special edition hardcover ($24.95) as well as a movie tie-in ($5.99).

Hook. Steven Spielberg's updating of the Peter Pan tale stars Robin Williams as the grown-up Pete. The boy who could fly is now an investment banker, but must return to Neverland to save his kidnapped kids from Captain Hook, played by Dustin Hoffman. Due out in December, the film also stars Julia Roberts as Tinkerbell. Ivy has a mass-market book by Terry Brooks ($5.99) while Fawcett has a special hardcover edition ($15.00) as well as a juvenile book by Geary Gravel ($2.99).

Madame Bovary. This French film version of Gustave Flaubert's classic tale is scheduled for a fall release and stars Isabelle Huppert (Vintage $10.00).

The Mambo Kings. Armand Assante stars in this film about two musical Cuban brothers in New York during the 1950s. The book by Oscar Hijuelos is available from HarperCollins ($12.00).

Prince of Tides. Now slated for a Christmas release, this film stars Nick Nolte as a Southern teacher who has an affair with Barbra Streisand, the New York psychiatrist who is treating his sister. Kate Nelligan also stars as Nolte's mom. The novel by Pat Conroy is available from Bantam ($5.99).

Rush. In December, Jennifer Jason Leigh plays an undercover narc who becomes hooked on cocaine. This film version of Kim Wozencraft's book also stars Jason Patric and Sam Elliot (Ivy, $5.95).

Shattered. Starring Bob Hoskins and Tom Berenger, the film version of Richard Neeley's book about a man who becomes disfigured and suffers amnesia after a car crash is due to be released in October (Vintage, $9.00).

TELEVISION

False Arrest. On November 17 and 19, ABC will air this drama based on the true story of Phoenix housewife Joyce Lukezic, who was falsely accused of murder and confined to a maximum-security prison. Donna Mills and Robert Wagner star and the book by Lukezic and Ted Schwarz is from New Horizon Press ($21.95).

Memories of Midnight. Jane Seymour and Omar Sharif star in this miniseries based on Sidney Sheldon's book about a woman who has amnesia and must face the evil Greek shipping tycoon who murdered her husband. The show is slated to air on independent stations during the last week of October. (Warner, $5.95).

A Murder of Quality. John Le Carre's tale is set in an English public school and will air on PBS's "Masterpiece Theatre" on October 13 and 20. The show stars Denholm Elliot, Glenda Jackson, and Joss Ackland (Bantam, $4.99).

A Woman Named Jackie. This fall, NBC will try to fit the life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis into a six-hour miniseries based on the book by C. David Heymann. Tentatively scheduled for October 13, 14, and 15, the shows stars former soap opera star Roma Downey as Jackie and Stephen Collins as JFK (NAL, $5.95).—**Pam Long**

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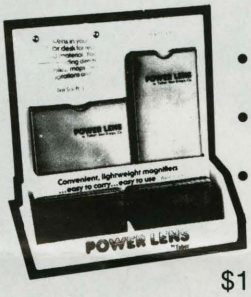

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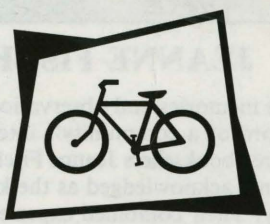

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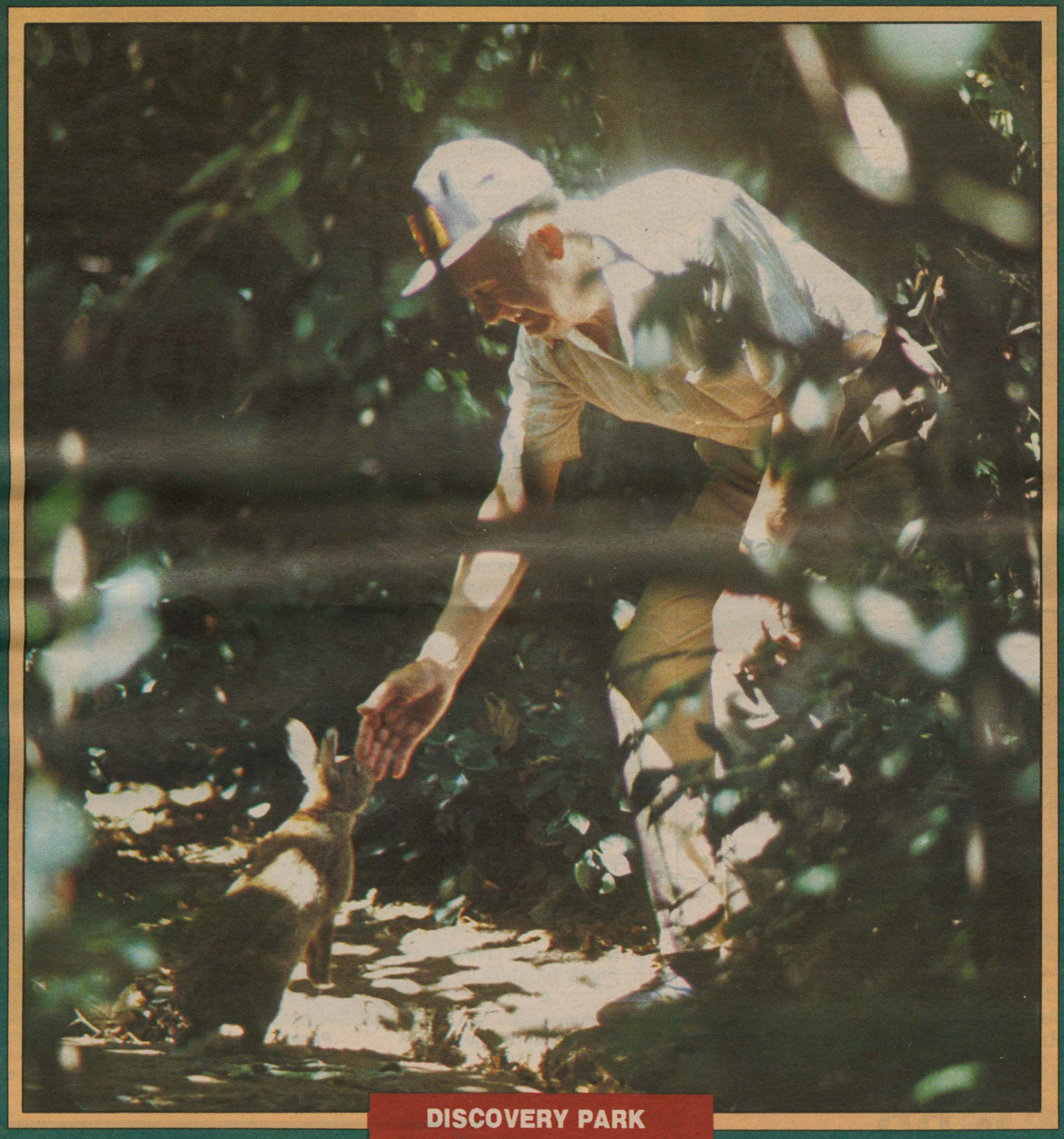
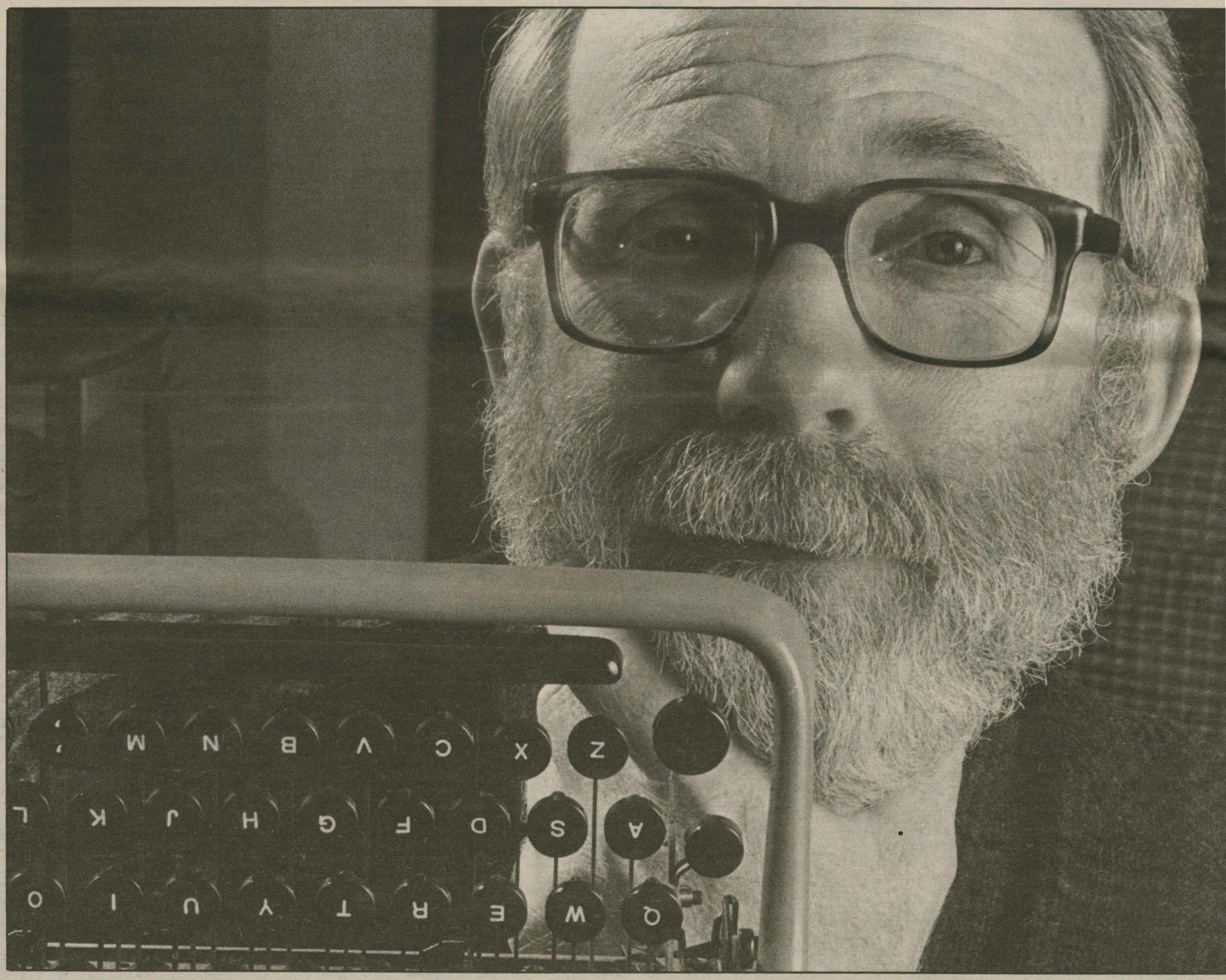


DISCOVERY PARK

Everyone wants a piece of something that was meant to be left alone.

Ivan Doig



***Author Ivan Doig** pounds out his fiction on a manual typewriter. The word processor he received as part of the 1985 National Endowment for the Arts grant sits under a dust cover in his Seattle office.*

SEATTLE'S MONTANA WRITER

HIS LIFE IS NO 'OPEN BOOK'

WRITTEN BY BEN GROFF
PHOTOGRAPHED BY CRAIG FUJII

Ivan Doig may be the son of a cowboy, but he is not one to jump two-fisted into an interview. He'd rather be writing books.

Doig is telling me about the time he was invited to speak with a group of literature students who were reading his work. He was introduced, he says, as "the man behind the words." He gives me a flabbergasted stare, and the story seems to be over.

"So?" I prompt. "How did you respond?"

"I said 'Huh?' " He drops his mouth wide open in mock speechlessness, and with that, the story *is* over.

In fact, he does not believe that he is "behind the words," nor that he should be, nor that anyone should care. Doig is a businesslike man, and his business is to create books that are lovely, moving and true. If there is anything antithetical in that, it is lost on one of Seattle's finest fiction writers.

The man behind the words has a ready laugh and wary eyes, an open heart but a careful brain, and a face that is oddly uncertain between the two. The soul of a poet and the mind of a clerk — not an unusual combination for a writer. Whatever the mix, though, it has been a successful one for Ivan Doig.

The 48-year-old transplanted Montanan has carved a comfortable literary niche for himself, based on nationwide critical esteem and sales that are brisk, if persistently regional. But that may be changing, with a new Doig title in the bookstores this week. "Dancing At The Rascal Fair," his fifth book and third novel, seems targeted with greater commercial savvy in an effort to boost Doig's following in those populous reaches where the average reader may not know a buckrake from a bellwether. Even so, "Dancing" is all Doig, set in the northern Rocky Mountain country where the author grew up.

It is that land of his birth, that connectedness to a place where he no longer lives, that has inspired all of Doig's best writing. It is not easy to explore a man who has written beautifully about himself, and then stood aside from his work as if it were all the most ordinary stuff in the world. He can joke that "my life is an open book," but his eyes say something different. They say the books are on the shelf, have at 'em, leave your money in the till and feel free to draw your own conclusions.

The conclusions start in the southwest of Montana, in the high, dry Smith River Valley, in the little town of White Sulphur Springs, where an old lady lives who remembers a thing Ivan Doig cannot — a time when his mother was alive.

In 1943, when Ivan was 4, his father headed the haying crew on the Buckingham Ranch. "Charlie was very genial, very Scotch, very opinionated," recalls Theresa Buckingham, a lively septuagenarian. "You know, you can tell a guy by the way he wears his hat, and his was always cocked."

Charlie was a top hand, and Charlie loved Berneta. Small and frail, Ivan's mother "had a nice mind," in Buckingham's phrase. She also had asthma, so she darkened her little side-house on the Buckingham Ranch to keep it cool, and read to the children through the heat of the afternoon.

That would be the Buckinghams' girl, and Ivan. Even then he was quiet, and no quick study. "One day I was in the kitchen cooking, when he came up and told me did I know he could count? He went 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 with his thick little fingers, so slowly and laboriously, and my Susan was so much the quicker that I thought she must be the smarter. I sure had *him* figured wrong."

But time moved neither laboriously nor slowly, bringing them too soon to a night when the asthma killed his mother in a herder's cabin in the Bridger Range, with 6-year-old Ivan in the other bunk to hear the cessation of her breathing, to see a lantern suddenly lit, to chill to his father's tear-choked voice — and one day to remember.

And to write. In "This House Of Sky," published in 1978, Doig told the sequel to "the death on the summer mountain," looking back on the half-orphaned child he was without a trace of self-pity, but a hard-won joy in what he calls his "gift-passage into a grown-up world" — his life at the side of that job-hopping, beer-drinking, wise-cracking, and fiercely loving son of the sagebrush named Charlie Doig. He writes memorably of nowhere saloons and tough-luck homesteads, of small-time losers and smaller-time winners, of the cobbled-together "brink of a family" his father endured — and then something deeper, for the sake of his son.

After his mother died, "Ivan lived from pillar to post," Buckingham recalls, shifted constantly from house to house among a colorful assortment of town families in order to attend school in White Sulphur while his father hired out as a sheep hand in one corner or another of the Smith River Valley. The boy seems to have been welcomed by his guardians' own children on account of his vast personal library of comic books. "He was brought up on funny-books," says Buckingham; "Charlie got him all he wanted."

Doig refuses to acknowledge any reservoir of pain dammed up behind his memories

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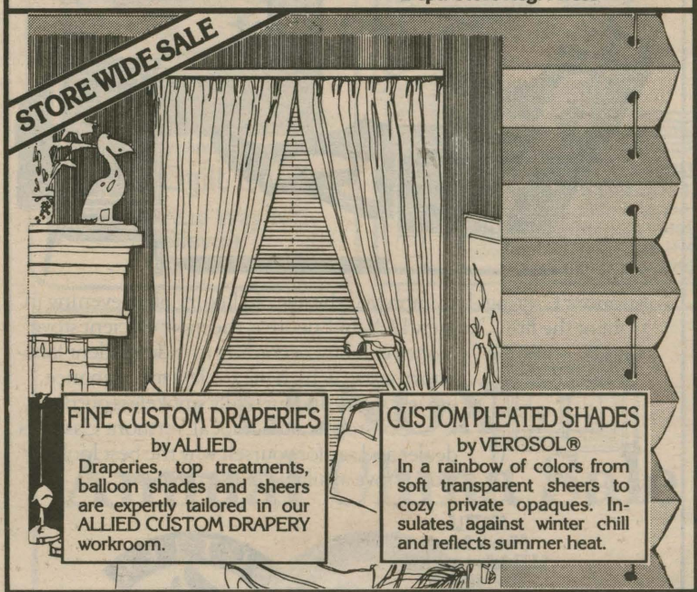

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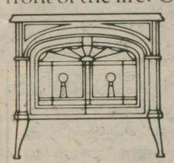

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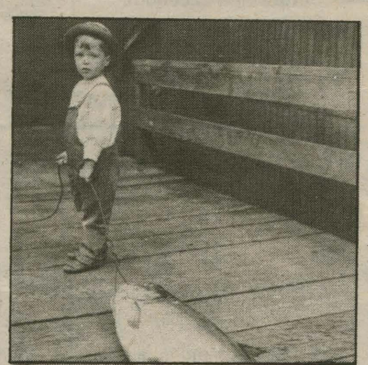

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DOIG'S LATEST

Ivan Doig, excerpted from, "Dancing At The Rascal Fair." © 1987 Ivan Doig. Reprinted with the permission of Atheneum Publishers. $18.95).

We came to the Two Medicine River in sunny mid-afternoon and were met by gusts of west wind that shimmered the strong new green of the cottonwood and aspen groves into the lighter tint of the leaves' bottom sides, so that tree after tree seemed to be trying to turn itself inside out. In the moving air as we and the sheep went down the high bluff, a crow lifted off straight up and lofted backwards, letting the gale loop him upward. I called to Varick my theory that maybe wind and not water had bored this colossal open tunnel the Two Medicine flowed through. And then we bedded the sheep, under the tall trees beside the river.

When morning came, I was sorry this was about to be over. All the green miles of May that we had come, the saddle hours in company with Varick, the hand-to-hand contest with the sheep to impel them across brimming Badger Creek, yesterday's sight of the Two Medicine and its buffalo cliffs like the edge of an older and more patient planet. Every minute of it I keenly would have lived over and over again. This I knew the tune of.

The sheep crossed the bridge of the Two Medicine in a series of hoofed stammers. Up the long slope from the river Varick and Davie and the dogs and I pushed them. When they were atop the brow of the first big ridge north of the river, we called ourselves off and simply stood to watch.

On the lovely grass that once fed the buffalo, the sheep spread themselves into a calm cloud-colored scatter and began to graze, that first day of June of 1914.

of those times, but Buckingham may have a clearer recollection.

"He was so lost," she says simply. "A lost little boy."

"I wasn't really aware of that," he claims. "What we were really aware of was getting by. Finding a place for Dad to work, a place for me to live. Quotidian realists." He laughs, the kind of laugh that is like a shrug of the shoulders.

A boxful of comic books; no mother, but a stack of fantasies — that, and a sense beyond remembering of having been read to by a sweet woman in a cool and darkened house.

You can't tell Ivan Doig is a writer by looking at him, any more than you can look at that gorgeous Montana countryside and tell that it kills people.

In his writing, the land and the language feed each other. He fashions a tough and knotty prose full of the language of unschooled, loose-tongued working people, folks who use their minds to feel with.

"My people were poor in money, rich in words," he says without noticeable pride.

He was the cream of Valier High School in the northern wheat country when he turned his back on Montana and went away to Northwestern University near Chicago. There he got his bachelor's degree and a master's in journalism, and he plied that trade in heartland Illinois for four years before returning west in 1966 — not home, but to Seattle and the University of Washington, where he sweated out a Ph.D. in American frontier history before turning full time to the rigors of free-lance writing.

It poses a bit of riddle why this wordsmith with Montana at the heart of him chose early on to keep it at arm's length. The answer begins in economics and ends in death and defeat. First came the revelation that he hated sheep, then the grateful awareness that he loved words, and finally acceptance of the sad fact that there were no jobs for a young writer in Montana.

But there is more to it than that. The West as a metaphor is all over Doig's writing: a heartless bigness and a going away, a cutting loose, a setting free — to what? "The most unfree souls go west, and shout of freedom," observed D.H. Lawrence, and Doig, born in the West, has long since put that home to the east of him.

There is only one reason why Americans have ever followed the setting sun — to leave the past behind. The unforgiving distances, the extremes of weather, the living always between a promise of success and the imminence of catastrophe, the hard foothills that after three-quarters of a century gave his Scottish immigrant family nothing more marketable than character — all seemed to culminate for Ivan Doig in the slow dying of his father, from emphysema, in the early '70s. He now goes back, but only to visit.

In Seattle, he lives a well-regulated life

with his wife, Carol, whom he met as a journalism student at Northwestern. Born and raised in New Jersey, an enthusiastic west-comer and relentlessly positive woman, she has taught journalism and communications at Shoreline Community College for the past 20 years. She and Ivan are similar in outlook and attitudes, vocal inflections, favorite quotes, and the contention that they have not had a serious quarrel in their entire married life.

No workaholics, the Doigs' weekday evenings are reserved for reading, and weekends for quiet socializing or the occasional jaunt to Whidbey Island or Dungeness Spit. Both are only children and have chosen to remain childless themselves, although Ivan's prose has lingered lovingly on the intricate bonds of family. "We *are* the family," he says reluctantly. "Carol and me."

Linda Bierds, a Seattle poet whose work has appeared in New Yorker magazine, assisted Ivan with the editing of "Dancing At The Rascal Fair," and rhapsodizes about his down-to-earth qualities.

"He is a warm and generous man," she insists, "who also, by the way, walks at a break-neck pace, very close to running, as if he is serious about where he's going."

Seriously is how he takes the writing of his colleagues, and he is known for aiding them whenever possible with their own research. "Usually I don't socialize much with other writers," Bierds confides. "There can be such an aura of competition. But with Ivan, there's none of that."

Still, sometimes this earnestness comes across as a studied coolness. Ivan Doig the man is unswervably determined to be neither pretentious nor flippant about Ivan Doig the writer, so he answers questions in a hesitant, roundabout way. His wife says he's just a thoughtful person who ponders every question so hard that the answer gets lost in the circlings.

"Yes, he seems a naturally distant man," says Harold Simonson, professor of English at the University of Washington, "but this doesn't contradict the introspective tone of his writing. The point is integration. It's a reassurance that existing within the ordinary is the extraordinary, the mysterious, the beautiful."

Attempting to sum him up, I once said to Ivan, "You seem like a doggedly cheerful man. Is that true?"

His voice turned ever so slightly steely and, yes, contemptuous. "I think I'm dogged, and I'm cheerful, so I guess that adds up, yeah."

Then he softened, and circled back, trying, ever trying, to be helpful. "I think," he added, "that is probably Montana, in a sense."

Ivan Doig is stacking wood.

It is almost summer, a drowsy day of Puget Sound mildness when no wind ruffles the leaves of a tree-lined North Seattle neighborhood, and you can almost hear the creek water trickling through the green crease of alder and vine maple that gives signature, with a small brush-stroke of unobliterated topography, to the living-place of this self-described "suburban druid." Beguiling weather, yet Doig has a habitual eye on winter, and his expression beneath the baseball cap emblazoned "Doig Bros. Grain Co., White Sulphur, Mon.," is all November.

You know, you can tell a guy by the way he wears his hat, and this guy wears his way down low across the forehead, dead level.

As he stoops to the job, blue jeans and an old work shirt conceal what might be the awkward curves of an unhorsed cowboy, something lean, tense, and smaller-than-expected in the build. But from the neck up, he is a lumberjack with horn-rims.

The beard is the main thing, full-face and the color of hot coals ashing over. When his mouth is closed, he might as well have a faded bandanna cinched up tight below his nostrils like a drover in a dust-storm; when he talks, the beard splits crossways in the middle and words come out of it, broad, baritone, un-Western and unmusical in their herky-jerky flow, as different from his writing as any words could be.

He ushers me into his study and begins describing for me the realization of every writer's dream — critical acclaim for his first book, plus the sales figures to carry it along — in cautious language that seems unwilling even yet to risk breaking the bubble.

"This House Of Sky" was nominated for the prestigious National Book Award, and enabled him to do whatever he pleased for an encore. There followed "Winter Brothers," "The Sea Runners," and "English Creek," the first Montana novel. "Doig's is a remarkable achievement," notes the UW's Simonson. "In less than a decade, he has earned a reputation placing him atop Pacific Northwest's literary Mount Olympus."

But is it only the Northwest's literary heap he's entitled to? How does an author living in Seattle and writing about Montana or the Northwest coast make a splash in a continental nation whose literary nerve-center happens to be located in a few Manhattan high-rises?

"He's not well-know here at all, why should he be?" barks an assistant manager of Doubleday Books on Fifth Avenue in New York City. "Look at his subject matter" — rodeos? sheep shearing? Fourth of July picnics? — "What is there to make him known?"

"Every writer is a regional writer," soothes Tom Stewart, Doig's editor at Atheneum Books. "Joyce was a regional writer. Proust was a regional writer."

"Those of us whose books draw on a region," sighs Ivan Doig, "we hope we're writing about a bigger country: life!" Then the sudden laugh, the glint of light off the Coke-bottle glasses. "Of course, we all want to be regional writers, but to sell cosmically!"

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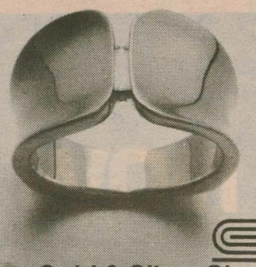

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IVAN DOIG

He sells less than cosmically, to be sure. Until recently, he admits, his career was "entirely underwritten" by his wife's teaching. The aggressive marketing of "Dancing At The Rascal Fair" is a frank assault upon the best-seller lists, but it isn't easy for a writer who occupies uncertain middle ground between the fashionably high-brow auteurs and those facile fantasists who sell like toilet paper in the supermarkets.

He is a punctual creator, creature of work-habits deep in the pink-cheeked grain of this former sheep-herder, hayraker, journalist and historian. His books are meticulously researched, carefully calendared, and cushioned from the ebb and flow of inspiration, which he prefers to keep corraled in large gray file boxes on his shelf labeled "Dialogue" and "Montana Lingo." Deriding the romantic view of writing, he calls himself a craftsman, not an artist, and he is proud of it.

"I do like to think that if you work the craft as well as you can, it tends toward art — aspires, reaches toward art. But I don't need self-discovery, I'm already here." A burst of laughter to deflate that balloon. "No, writing is an act of discovering the possibilities of language."

It is tribute, then, to his craft, or art, whichever you choose, that his firmly managed books seem rather inspired.

"Why not?" he shrugs. "We're lots of things in life. We're bundles, not single reeds."

"But you're very methodical," I say.

"*That's* inspiration." He lifts his head in a chuckle and the light makes sudden mirrors of his horn-rims.

The poet John Berryman has written of every writer's yearning to be "back from wherever, with it said." Ivan Doig smiles wistfully and allows as how there's something even sweeter, which is to say it again.

To that end, every morning around sunrise, he seats himself at a typewriter and circles back. His next novel, projected for completion in 1990, carries the intoxicating title "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana." He worries over it like an engineer over an equation, but whatever is lost in all the circlings was lost somewhere back in the Smith River Valley and is found again in the words on the page and the books on the shelf, of which there is now a new one. And the next after that will be here in 1990, put your money on it, not in 1991.

In Seattle, Ivan Doig dreams his careful dreams in a room his mother would have enjoyed, because it is cool and shaded. His desk faces west.

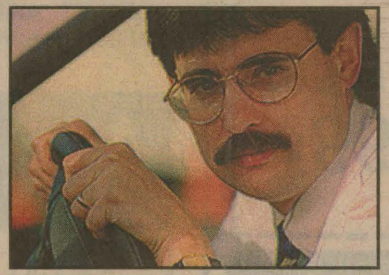
BEN GROFF IS A SEATTLE-AREA FREE-LANCE WRITER.

Catch up on your reading along way

The driver of the flashy foreign car was on me like Oprah to an eclair, but I wasn't the least concerned.

I was having too much fun.

At that very minute I was drinking strong coffee and enjoying a Mark Twain short story, "Carnival of Crime," with an introduction by Peter Benchley. And I never once took my eyes off the road.



STREET SMARTS
Bob Wodnik

This was a new phenomena for me. Instead of succumbing to the foul stench of talk radio or the pathetic maneuverings of that car behind me, I'd turned my commute into a lively session with Twain.

Very entertaining.

The story spinning out my car's cassette player came to me via the local public library, where I'd discovered there are thousands of talking book titles available. A good many motorists, I soon learned, had long ago turned their dreary commutes into quality time with the likes of Dickens, Doig and Clancy.

After I'd talked with Tom Mayer, director of the Isle Regional Library System and Pat Shaw, the librarian, I couldn't wait to sample talking books myself.

"They're enormously popular," says Mayer, who is currently enjoying John McPhee's "Coming Into the Country" on his weekday commute.

And even though Sno-Isle has about 2,500 talking book titles, the library system can't keep up with the demand, Shaw told me. She, by the way, has been a talking book fan for years and is currently listening to Ken Follett's "The Pillars of the Earth," on her Lynnwood-to-Marysville daily drive.

Mysteries, biographies, science fiction, children's books, westerns and works of fiction are available on cassette, and the authors vary from Dickens, Fitzgerald, Ivan Doig and Anne Tyler to Robert Ludlum. There's even (ouch!) a "State Voter's Pamphlet" on cassette, in case you're into that kind of torture.

"It's very escapist," Shaw says of the talking books. "It's a bridge between work and home, and it really reduces the stress if you're caught in a traffic jam. There's something soothing as well as enjoyable about listening." She went on to tell me that listening to books on tape is a much different experience than plopping down in a chair with a good book.

"If the reader is good, it's kind of like the dramas on old radio: It can be very compelling, you can really visualize it," she says.

Oh pleeease, I thought at first, there's nothing out there that could make my commute compelling. But that was before I'd actually begun listening to the car tapes and had a change of attitude.

Mayer discovered that listening to someone reading a book sometimes brings greater depth of understanding to the work.

If you happen to be a fan of big books, you can check out the "Bible," which logs in at 48 cassette tapes. Or, there's Michener's "Texas," rolling in at an exhausting 45 tapes. (The abridged version of "Texas" is only two tapes, which, I guess you could say, means the storyline must have been trimmed to something like this: "On a steamy November day in 1535 at the Mexican seaport of Vera Cruz, a sturdy boy led his mules to and from the shore where barges landed supplies from anchored cargo ships. The End.")

Talking books are popular with commuters, but motorists leaving for long vacations also check out the tapes. As with print books, best-selling authors, such as the John Grishams and Stephen Kings of the modern literary world, are generally the most sought-after talking books.

Still, there's a good selection of the classics, Shaw

See **SMARTS,** Page **2D**

The Everett Herald 10-10-94

SMARTS

from Page **1D**

adds, and they too are popular with the driving crowd.

Talking book aficionados also tell me that the book's reader is very important. There are, apparently, both excellent professional readers and others who simply go through the motions for a paycheck. I noticed, for example, that Burt Reynolds narrates one of the talking books. I'll let you draw your own conclusions about that.

As Shaw puts it, "The quality of the book depends on the reader. If it's a really compelling performance, it makes listening a real joy."

Like all drivers, it seems, I have a choice on my commute. I can listen to talk radio, FM music or a really good story.

For now, I think I'll keep taking Twain to work.

If you have an idea, suggestion, complaint or an offbeat story you'd like pass along, call me at 672-6225 or 339-3496, fax 339-3464 or write to Street Smarts, c/o The Herald, P.O. Box 930, Everett, Wash. 98206.

NORTHWEST BOOKSHELF

Ivan Doig, romances mysteries, and more

A biweekly selection of new titles by Washington writers and publishers, or of local interest. (Prices cited may not include shipping/handling costs):

Fiction

"Happy Endings," by Katherine Stone (Kensington Books, $15.95). Romance from a Seattle-area author about a successful Los Angeles lawyer who is "a prisoner of her violent past."

"Nautilus," by Vonda N. McIntyre (Bantam Spectra, $5.99). The conclusion to the Seattle science-fiction writer's Starfarer Saga finds Earth trying to join an interstellar civilization from which it has long been banned. Bantam has also reissued earlier McIntyre titles, **"Starfarers"** and **"Dreamsnake,"** both at $5.99.

"The Dissolution of Nicholas Dee," by Matthew Stadler (Harper-Perennial, $12). A Dutch opera house, a history of insurance and an affably sinister dwarf all figure in this second novel, new in paperback, by the Seattle author of "Landscape: Memory."

"Grave Secrets," by Louise Hendricksen (Zebra, $3.99). This new Dr. Amy Prescott mystery, from the Renton writer, finds the sleuth tracking down a missing reporter in Idaho.

"The Far Kingdoms: A Mythic Tale," by Allan Cole and Chris Bunch (Del Rey, $5.99). Paperback release of two Long Beach Peninsula authors' fantasy novel about a pampered young man's encounter with a "dashing soldier" who dabbles in forbidden magic.

"The Myrtlewood Grove," by Royal LaPlante (Northwest Publishing, $9.95). A novel about a motherless boy who searches for his father on the Oregon coast in 1850. By a Tacoma-raised author, now retired and living in Washington state.

"A Toad in a Bottle," by Tom Sparks (Northwest Publishing, $8.95). First novel by a Seattle author about a private investigator who accepts a job removing a nun from a convent — and comes up against a group of cultists.

Nonfiction

"Heart Earth: A Memoir," by Ivan Doig (Penguin, $11.99). The Montana-born, Seattle-based author adds to his autobiographical writings with this "prequel" to "This House of Sky."

"Generation at the Crossroads: Apathy and Action on the American Campus," by Paul Rogat Loeb (Rutgers University Press, $24.95). The Seattle author of "Nuclear Culture" examines the generations coming of age in the 1980s and '90s.

"Magellan," by Tim Joyner (McGraw Hill, $16.95). Paperback release of a Seattle author's book about the 16th-century Spanish explorer's three-year journey around the world.

"This Bloody Deed: The Magruder Incident," by Ladd Hamilton (Washington State University Press, $18.95). An account of the famous 1860s gold rush robbery.

"Schooling Homeless Children: A Working Model for America's Public Schools," by Sharon Quint (Teachers College Press, $14.95). A study of how Seattle's Carole Williams, principal of B.F. Day school, transformed the lives of homeless schoolchildren.

"Staying Found: The Complete Map and Compass Handbook," by June Fleming (The Mountaineers, $10.95). Got a map? Got a compass? Here's how to use them.

"A Heart in Politics: Jeannette Rankin and Patsy T. Mink," by Sue Davidson (Seal Press, $9.95). A Seattle author's portraits of two feminist groundbreakers. Rankin, the first woman to run for Congress, was elected in 1916. Mink was the first woman of color elected to Congress.

"Fliers in Their Own Words," by Katie Goode (Aviation Supplies & Academics, 7005 132nd Place S.E., Renton, WA 98059-3153, $14.95). Fourteen interviews with fliers, from a local publisher specializing in aviation.

"Golf GetAways: Washington Golf Travel Planner," by Steve Johannesen (S. Johannesen Associates, P.O. Box 19720, Seattle, WA 98109-6720, $19.95). A guide to local greens.

"The Real Estate Agent's Business Planning Guide," by Carla Cross (Dearborn Financial Publishing, $24.95). The manager of the Windermere West Seattle office offers marketing and money-making strategies.

"Little St. Simons Island on the Coast of Georgia," by Junius Rochester (available from the author, 805 32nd Ave., Seattle, WA 98122, $25). A history of the isolated Georgia coastal island, by a Seattle author.

Poetry

"A Drifting Boat: Chinese Zen Poetry," edited by J.P. Seaton and Dennis Maloney (White Pine Press, $15). Includes translations by Port Townsend publisher and poet Sam Hamill.

"Roses and Thorns: Poetry and Prose," by Phyllis R. Beaumonte (Ra-Beau Enterprises, 10012 61st Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98178, $8.95). Verse and essays by a Seattle high school teacher.

"Black Socks," by Bennett Stalvey III (Odd-Moment Press, 16212 Bothell Way S.E., No. F-222, Mill Creek, WA 98012, $4.95). A Seattle poet's first collection.

Children's Books

"A Tale of Two Rice Birds," by Clare Hodgson Meeker, illustrated by Christine Lamb (Sasquatch, $14.95). A picture-book adaptation of a Thai folk tale, by a Seattle writer-and-artist team.

Anthologies

"Meeker Mansion Mysteries," edited by Penny Lent (Kaleidoscope Press, 2507 94th Ave. E., Puyallup, WA 98371, $5.95). Stories by 11 local writers, inspired by Puyallup's Victorian-era Meeker mansion.

— Compiled by Michael Upchurch

To be considered for this listing, finished books (no manuscripts or galleys) should be sent to: Book Editor, Seattle Times, P.O. 70, Seattle, WA 98111. Clearly indicate book's price, publishing info and local connection.

"...classical ballet of the highest order... sheer professionalism..."
The Mail, London

...Northwest Ballet presents
...world-renowned
...lian Ballet.

...Seattle Premiere of
...tle Center Opera House
...around the world,
...ou with a humorous,
...love story,
...ughter). Don't miss
...see the exclusive
...nother
...company.
...day.

with a performance at the Power Center Friday night.

"He is called the Bob Dylan, or the Pete Seeger of the Middle East," explained Elie Chalala, editor of the Arab-American monthly Al Jadid and author of a biography and numerous profiles of Khalife, who does not speak English.

"First of all," Chalala explained. "Khalife is a pioneer in that he

thing very few have ever attempted before."

Fletcher St.

HOW MUCH: $50-$25; for details call 763-TKTS.

Khalife also has composed a massive oratorio incorporating such Western elements as violins and metallic flutes, as well as Arabic thematic material. He has composed several works for symphony orchestra, and

Khalife attended the National Conservatory of Music in Beirut, where he studied the *oud*. In 1972 he began to test his wings by forming a small ensemble that performed throughout Lebanon. In 1976 he founded the Al-Mayadine Ensemble, and had by then developed the sophistication and assembled the talent necessary to share his music with the rest of the world.

The Arabic song master has com-

looked at with great admiration."

It isn't possible to pigeonhole the kind of songs that Khalife writes or the lyrics that he sets, which is more evidence of his expansive talents.

"He is a pioneer in addressing in his music the interests of the average man, the worker, the peasant – he doesn't just write love songs," Chalala said.

"Most Arabic traditional songs fo-



MARCEL KHALIFE
... Arabic song master at Power Center Friday.

cus on the relationship between men and women. Khalife addresses all the concerns of human beings, not just the intimate or the sentimental."

Doig tuned to sounds, voices of the West

By LINK YACO
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

Ivan Doig writes novels because of noise.

In a recent interview from a hotel room in Washington state, during his tour for his current book, "Heart Earth, A Memoir," (Penguin, $8.95, SC 160 pp.) Doig said, "I am a writer, or certainly the writer I turned out to be because of the sounds of the way I grew up."

Doig grew up in Montana and his books are about the American Western experience. His first book, the award-winning "This House of Sky" was about being raised by his father and grandmother after his mother died when he was 6 years old.

That book was published in 1978. 15 years and seven books later, Doig discovered a cache of his mother's letters. This led him to once again call upon the sounds and voices of his youth and write a novel about what he imagines his mother's life to have been.

The resulting book, "Heart Earth," has a rich, authentic, and lyrical voice. "Being there at the elbows of my dad when he was in the bars talking to the other ranchers and sheepherders, and with my grandmother when she was, oh, playing canasta or crocheting or having coffee with the other women of the ranch community – the storytelling, the turns of phrase there stuck with me," Doig said.

"I come from a lively family of talkers and storytellers. I say somewhere in 'Hert Earth' that 'the tongue is the treasury of the poor' ... you can be poor and all else but you can talk very richly."

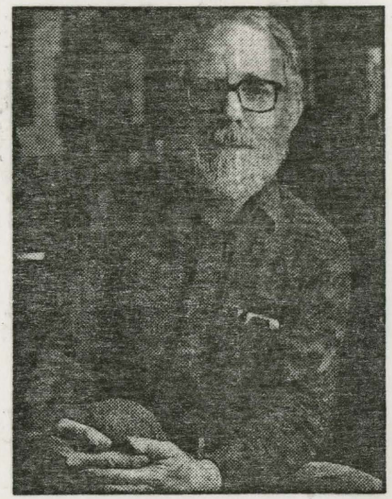
Doig said he used his memories of the voices and sounds of his youth to reconstruct the past but that was just the beginning of the process of "excavating" his memory.

He also returned – for his subject, at least – to the West.

"When I was working on 'This House of Sky' in the late '70s, writing that memoir which was my first book, all the houses I lived in Montana, on the ranches and sheep camps, still did exist there in that high, dry air in Montana," he said.

"Maybe the doors had been kicked in by the cows and the cattle wandered their way through those house. But the structure still stood – derelict or not – so I could pace off the dimensions of the house, count the windows, see where the kitchen was, figure out how we lived in those places.

"I've done similar kinds of excavating in sitting down and thinking about a topic – such as 'lambing' time on a ranch or here in 'Heart Earth.' How do you herd sheep on a day in the mountains for the big final scene in this book when my



IVAN DOIG
... signs copies of his latest book, 'Heart Earth' at Borders Wednesday.

mother does it by herself? If a person will sit down and see what weave of connections will form you can gain a lot back into your past that way. Words, terms will bring into mind faces and faces will bring into mind other details – the names of horses, the kinds of footwear and other clothing."

Although Doig writes about the West, he lives in Washington.

"I starved out economically, which is another American story," he said. "I was third-generation – my forebearers homesteaded into the Big Belt mountains in the early 1890s.

"Things like the big winter of 1919 and the depression and the dislocations of World War II simply meant that by the time that I came along ... my father was ailing from something we'd never heard of before, which was emphysema and my grandmother, the other person who brought me up, was heading into her mid-60s.

"So I got out of the Air Force Reserve in 1963, went back to Ringling, Montana with two dollars to my name and two aging 'parents' living in a three-room railroad shack. So, back I went to a Midwest newspaper job to get a firm wage into the family.

"By and large, my profession has kept me out every since. My wife is a community college professor and her job has been in Seattle. That kept us afloat the several years it took to get me under way as a writer. I continue to live in Montana and elsewhere in the West in my head and in my work and I'm only a day's drive from it in Seattle.

"It's the usual writer syndrome. James Joyce gave us the greatest book of place ever, maybe, writing about Dublin in 'Ulysseses' while he was living in Paris."

Doig recently made another expedition to the West to do research for his next novel. Again, the sound of the place impressed him.

"It was very striking to be places there in the west where you don't hear an airplane going over. You don't hear the distant throb of freeway traffic. You don't hear house alarms going off accidentally or not. It is simply a different aural world.

"You hear the planet pushing its way through space," Doig laughed, "which means the sound of wind. This is the silence humankind has been accustomed to a lot longer than we've been accustomed to the urban clicks and clacks. It's a fundamental silence."

Doig's next book will be less personalized than "Heart Earth." It's going to be, he said, "a Russian-sized novel set during the 1930s during one of the great, audacious projects of the 1930s. The Fort Peck dam on the Missouri River was the greatest earthen dam ever built at the time – 25 stories high and four miles long of earthfill.

"This was a godsend to people left dollarless if not penniless by the depression. On the other hand, it radically changed the face of one of our great rivers of this continent."

Ivan Doig will be signing copies of and reading from his book, "Heart Earth, A Memoir," at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday at Borders Books And Music, 612 E. Liberty St. For more information, call 668-7652.

passionately counting on his visit.

He also put a glitch into the plans of Alfred A. Knopf, the American publisher that recently paid nearly $9 million for the chance to publish a book of his religious and philosophical musings.

Though the pope was in no way planning to hawk his forthcoming book, "Crossing the Threshold of Hope," by appearing on talk shows or signing copies at bookstores, his very presence would have drawn constant attention to the book and its message and would have been one of the best built-in marketing campaigns a book could have.

It is hard to calculate exactly how the huge media attention generated by the pope's visit would have translated into book sales, publishers say, but the appearance of an author of his stature can often provide an enormous surge in sales.

Without the pope's visit (he plans to make the trip next year), several rival publishers said, the equation changes for Knopf, which took a big chance when it agreed to spend such an enormous amount on the book in the first place.

"It isn't going to help, that's for sure," said the publisher of a rival firm. "They paid so much money for the book that they really need to take it to a transcendent level. We all know that the author being present helps, and without him it will be very damaging."

But Sonny Mehta, publisher and editor in chief of Knopf, said he wasn't especially worried about the pope's cancellation, particularly as orders from bookstores had held firm. "I'd much rather he hadn't adjusted his plans but we haven't substantially altered ours," Mehta said.

Mehta said that the pope's book – which has a first printing of about 1 million copies – should be in stores across the country around Oct. 20.

Among other things, the company plans to market the book heavily to religious bookstores and to Spanish-speaking Catholics in a Spanish-language edition.

RECENT MAJOR GIFTS TO THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Recent commitments for top priorities are helping to push the campaign closer to its $40 million goal.

DONALD J. '49 AND CAROL JEAN BYRNES - $100,000 for construction of the Gallagher Building for the School of Business Administration.

FIRST BANK SYSTEM FOUNDATION/FIRST BANK MONTANA - $100,000 from the Minneapolis-based foundation on behalf of the eight member banks in Montana for construction of the Gallagher Building.

FIRST INTERSTATE BANCSYSTEM FOUNDATION - $150,000 for the telecommunications center in the Gallagher Building. The gift honors bank founder, Homer Scott Sr. and his wife, Mildred.

ROBERT E. '40 AND FLORENCE STEINBRENNER JONES '35 - $135,000 from property for the Gallagher Building.

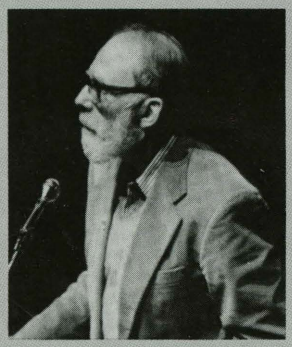
WESTERN FEDERAL SAVINGS BANK OF MONTANA - $100,000 for the executive board room in the Gallagher Building.



Donors from the banking community were among those who participated in the Gallagher Building groundbreaking. Pictured are Phyllis Washington, campaign national chairman, business Dean Larry Gianchetta, Bill Bouchee of First Security Bank of Missoula, President George Dennison, David Calahan,president of First Interstate Bank of Missoula representing First Interstate BancSystem Foundation; and Doug Bardwell, executive vice president of Western Federal Savings Bank of Montana.

NEH Challenge Raises Urgency of Rocky Mountain West Funding

The University received word in December its application to the National Endowment for the Humanities for funding for the Center for the Rocky



Writer Ivan Doig was a Works in Progress lecturer.

Mountain West was successful, and The University of Montana would need to come up with matching funds to get the grant money.

The $520,000 NEH grant, requiring a 3-to-1 match of $1,560,000 from The University of Montana by July 31, 1997, will be paid in annual installments provided the University is able to certify receipt of its share from private or University sources. Raising the matching funds is one of the highest priorities of the Capital Campaign.

A major portion of the required match will come from the $1 million campaign gift from Carroll and Nancy Fields O'Connor, but the University still must raise $560,000 for the Center for the Rocky Mountain West through the Capital Campaign by the 1997 deadline. Campaign chairman Phyllis Washington said, "The chance to increase the value of gifts for the Center for the Rocky Mountain West with an NEH grant is a great opportunity for the University. It is one we will not let slip through our fingers."

Initial funding for the Center for the Rocky Mountain West came from the estate of William J. O'Neill, a student here in the 1920s. O'Neill had had an interest in the region's uniquely western heritage. Distribution of his estate came at the very time UM sought to establish the multidisciplinary center.

History Professor William Farr, director of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West, believes it affords a wonderful opportunity to investigate the intellectual, social and economic development of the region and offer an implication for its future. The Rocky Mountain region is in a state of flux, he said, and "if we have any hope of keeping this area as rewarding a place as it has been, we're going to have to know better what made it what it is."

A goal of the center is to educate both those who are native to the region and newcomers about the character of the area. Among ways it accomplishes the goal are conferences and lectures, such as last year's tribute to writer Wallace Stegner a symposium on the new field of environmental history called "Nature and Culture in the Northern West," an investigation of the interaction between people and place. In its ongoing lecture series, Works in Progress, Farr said presenters representing a variety of disciplines "each try to make sense of our regional past and present."

With the NEH grant and matching funds, the Center will implement a scholar-in-residence program, support regional research, add library and archival holdings and expand the lecture and conference program.

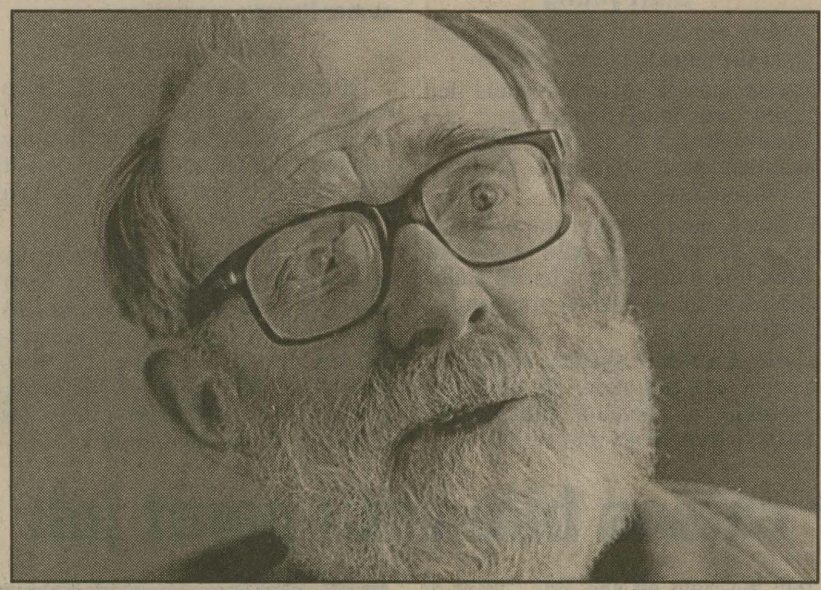


Jessie M. Bierman '22 gave her summer home on Flathead Lake's Goose Bay to fund the Bierman Professorship at the Flathead Lake Biological Station. Dr. Bierman, now retired from her maternal and child health care practice, has a life-long appreciation for Flathead Lake. She is a Flathead Valley native and was an undergraduate student of Professor Morton Elrod at the Biological Station in the 1920s. Dr. Bierman regards the research undertaken at the station, where she is pictured, as impressive science and vital to the preservation of a fragile ecosystem.

The Oregonian 12-10-93

A novelist's spillway of time

Ivan Doig uses the building of the Fort Peck Dam as a backdrop to his newest work



STEVE NEHL/The Oregonian

Ivan Doig has again turned to Montana for the backdrop of his newest novel, which will deal with the Depression-era Fort Peck Dam project.



PAGES

Paul Pintarich

Back in Portland for a visit during the holiday season, author Ivan Doig arrives with a work-in-progress that may become the best dam novel in the Northwest.

It's the story of massive Fort Peck Dam, built in Doig's home state of Montana in the 1930s during the Great Depression. At the time, it was the largest earth-filled dam in the world.

"I call it my 'Montana-Russian novel,' " Doig explains cheerfully. "It's got the appropriate scale and heft to it."

The yet-untitled Fort Peck story is a nice contrast to Doig's most recent book. "Heart Earth" (Atheneum) is a brief but moving remembrance of his mother, who died of asthma during World War II when Doig was only 5 years old.

"Heart Earth," recently on Northwest best-seller lists, is told through a little boy's memory and letters that Doig's mother wrote to her brother, who was serving on a destroyer in the South Pacific at the time.

The book, soon to appear in paperback from Simon & Schuster, is a "prequel" to Doig's first book, "This House of Sky" (1978), which was nominated for a National Book Award.

That earlier book is Doig's account of being raised by his father and his maternal grandmother, who joined in a truce to herd sheep as well as a young boy over the vast grasslands of eastern Montana.

Doig is best known, however, for his trilogy of novels, "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and the recently completed "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana." His other books include the haunting novel, "Sea Runners," set along the Northwest coast during the early 19th century, and "Winter Brothers," a nonfictional account of Doig's life set against that of James Swann, a Pacific Northwest pioneer and American Indian agent.

Doig is also a very nice guy who several years ago, with wife Carol, left the snows of his native Montana for the warm dampness of Seattle.

At 54, he is a red-bearded, cheerful Scot whose history may be loosely traced through the McCaskill clan, a family featured in his trilogy.

Still, the question is: Why Fort Peck Dam?

"It has nothing to do with a family connection," Doig explains, "though the main characters, the Duffs, are related to some of the people related to the McCaskills.

"No," he adds, "I was fascinated by the boom town aspects of the project. The radical politics and the impact of Roosevelt's New Deal on the people of Montana, who then were 'way to hell and gone.' "

Building the dam took 10,000 workers — "and 10,000 camp followers," Doig says, "many working in the brothels of nearby Happy Hollow."

Hiring began in 1933, and the people hired were all locals, mostly "starved-out" farmers who were put to work immediately clearing brush and cottonwoods for 25 cents a day.

"That wasn't too bad for people who didn't have a nickel," Doig says. "Almost anyone you talk to of any generation had a relative or someone they knew working on the dam."

Interesting is the fact that an aerial photograph of the dam — four miles across, 250 feet high — was the cover photo on the first issue of Life magazine, published in 1936. (The photo was taken by Margaret Bourke-White.)

Fort Peck had a Bolshevik sheriff, Doig points out, which leads naturally to another issue in the book — what Doig calls "the 20th century's main wrestling match in politics" — communism vs. democracy.

And most of all, there were questions about the land.

"The project, the biggest of its kind since the Panama Canal, wouldn't pass an environmental impact statement today," he said. "It was simply to put people to work. The dam was not for irrigation or electricity, but for flood control and navigation on the Missouri River — which hadn't changed much since Lewis and Clark passed through."

After the Fort Peck novel, says Doig, he will abandon Montana and his family to work on a novel set during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, involving such characters as President Kennedy, Fidel Castro and then-Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara.

"I'm glad to be going back to fiction," Doig says. "It's a looser, more galloping schedule to have, and much more enjoyable. Especially historical fiction. I like the historical law of gravity. I want to know the larger patterns of the period.

"And no," he adds with a grin, "I'm not 'stuck in Montana,' as some people say. The dam just happened to be there."

DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL

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etworks – including Su-
hcock, Disney and Steven
night, she solves a crime
California zoo.
mpsons" (8 p.m., Fox) –
nsbury has beaten Super-
e now goes head-to-head
ıpson. Tonight, The Simp-
mantic when Marge gets
ily applying their imagi-
subject of love. So what is
e romantic fantasy?

HOT TRAX

These were last week's best-selling pop singles according to Billboard:

- **1. I'll Make Love to You** – Boyz II Men
- **2. Endless Love** – Luther Vandross and Mariah Carey
- **3. All I Wanna Do** – Sheryl Crow
- **4. Stay (I Missed You)** – Lisa Loeb and Nine Stories
- **5. When Can I See You** – Babyface
- **6. Wild Night** – John Mellencamp and Me'Shell Ndegeocello
- **7. Stroke You Up** – Changing Faces
- **8. At Your Best (You Are Love)** – Aaliyah
- **9. Never Lie** – Immature
- **10. This D. J.** – Warren G.



Special to The Olympian

Aquatic theme

Site Line Gallery's theme 'Water, Metal and Light' is continued throughout the gallery with luminous aquatic photos by Gay Lin Gorden and forest and fountain photos of David Stein. The gallery is located at 422 Legion Way S.E., Olympia.

BEST SELLERS

Here are last week's top selling books from Four Seasons bookstore.

- **1. "Consider This Senora,"** Harriet Doerr
- **2. "Snow Falling on Cedars,"** David Guterson
- **3. "Half Asleep in Frog Pajamas,"** Tom Robbins
- **4. "The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House,"** Bob Woodward
- **5. "Heart Earth,"** Ivan Doig
- **6. "Politically Correct Bedtime Stories,"** James Garner
- **7. "A Mutant Message Down Under,"** Marlow Morgan
- **8. "Shipping News,"** Anne Proulx
- **9. "Smilla's Sense of Snow,"** Peter Hoeg

Stories of

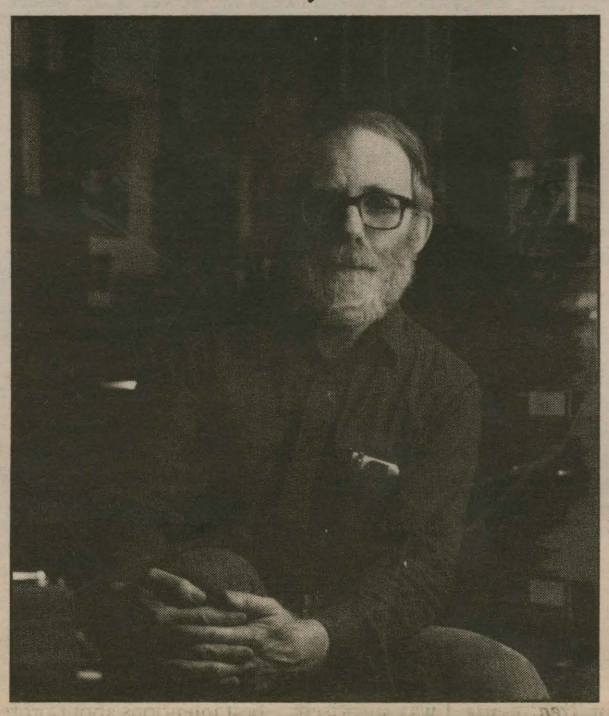
THE AMERICAN WEST

The Writers, Issues, History, Arts, & The Environment

Montana Memories

Ivan Doig

An Interview by Tom Auer



When *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* was published last fall, Ivan Doig no doubt breathed a deep sigh of relief. His much acclaimed Montana trilogy was complete. Ten years of research and writing about the McCaskills, a fictional family who had immigrated from Scotland to the Two Medicine Country of Montana late in the nineteenth century, had finally come to an end. His father had been a Montana homesteader, and his father's family had immigrated from Scotland to Montana. Doig labored long and hard to make his novels as realistic and true to the times as possible. He and his wife Carol traveled to Scotland, and spent months interviewing Montana homesteading families and researching homestead records in the national archives to make the novels ring true. Not coincidentally, the completion of the trilogy coincided with Montana's Centennial.

Doig has been writing about Montana for many of the twenty-one years since he left the Big Sky country, first for college, and later to pursue a career in wordsmithing, a livelihood not easily managed in his home country. Doig now lives in Seattle with his wife Carol, who teaches western literature at a local college. Montana and the Pacific Northwest are deeply ingrained in his work, though his novels concern much more than geography.

After graduating from Northwestern University with a B.S. and M.S. in Journalism, and later a Ph.D. in History from the University of Washington, he set his sights on newspaper and magazine work, which he did for ten years, writing freelance pieces for a variety of publications and working for the Rotarian magazine.

Doig's trilogy may be his best known works: *English Creek* (Atheneum, 1984), *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* (Atheneum, 1987), and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* (Atheneum, 1990) have all been well received by critics and readers. But his other works have also garnered some acclaim. His first book, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of the Western Mind* (Peter Smith, 1978) was nominated for a National Book Award and received a Christopher Award; *Winter Brothers: A Season at the Edge of America* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) received a Pacific Northwest Bookseller's Award and a Governor's Award; his first novel, *The Sea Runners* (Penguin, 1983), was hailed by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the notable books of that year.

The late *Los Angeles Times* critic Robert Kirsh, wrote of *This House of Sky*: "The language begins in western territory and experience but in the hands of an artist it touches all landscape and all life. Doig is such an artist."

Doig stopped by the *TBR* office last September, when this interview took place.

The Bloomsbury Review: *Let's start at the beginning and talk about growing up in Montana and what made you decide to write books? You majored in electronic journalism in college, didn't you?*

Ivan Doig: I was a radio and TV major—never used it. And seeing the way television has gone, how thankful I am that I got lured off into newspaper and magazine work, and now books.

Let's see, growing up in Montana. My people were ranch hands, my dad was sometimes cowboy, sometimes sheepherder. My mother often worked with him as a ranch cook. And my grandmother, who ended up sharing in the raising of me after my mother died, she too was a ranch cook. And we sometimes did the western equivalent of sharecropping. My folks would run sheep "on shares," as we called it, which means we'd run them year-round, do the lambing, do the herding, whatever, for a certain share of whatever profit there was. Surprising the number of times it turned out there wasn't any. It's a pretty tough life.

My dad always preached education to me—of finding a way of life so that I wouldn't have to go through some of the things he had to, and trying to muscle out a life of ranches, always working for somebody else, usually somebody big who lived in Seattle or Minneapolis or somewhere.

But I can't remember when I couldn't read. My reading goes back farther than my memory. I was reading before I ever went to grade school. And so my interest in words, combined with my dad's propulsion and my own propulsion out of that ranch, sent me off into making a living with words, one way or another.

TBR: *History is a big part of your writing. Is it a life-long interest?*

ID: I suppose it is. I wasn't all that aware of it until I got to college. I went to journalism school at Northwestern and one of the thrusts of that journalism school was a lot of liberal arts. They really like to have their students take political science or history. So I ended up with enough history credits to have been a history major, actually. There were some excellent people on the faculty at Northwestern at that time. Ironically, I didn't take his course, but the great panjandrum of the West, Ray Billington, was still teaching his cowboys and Indians course at Northwestern, the guy who wrote the standard text that Patty Limerick and others are pulling to the ground now. He was on the campus all the while. I actually sat in on some of his lectures, auditing, seeing how things looked in other classrooms.

Probably the original impulse behind the writing, I would think, would be family storytelling. My dad was a good storyteller, and we had somewhat of a self-contained history. He was born on the homestead in 1901, and his parents had come over from Scotland no more than ten years before. And so the entire compartment of American history of the Doigs was readily available, either in his memory or what he had heard from his parents. So there was kind of an immediate feel back through three generations, the full scope of us being in America and in the West.

TBR: *Seems natural you would want to write about it.*

ID: It seemed like the thing to do. Then I made a U-turn back to history from journalism. I thought I was going to be a journalism professor, but I wanted to try and bring some historical perspective to teaching journalism. As I looked around at the graduate degrees in journalism at that time, they were either business oriented or communications theory oriented. I thought of playing on both of those houses, and I thought neither had anything to interest me at all. So it became kind of an excuse to spend three years getting the Ph.D. in history.

TBR: *What made you decide to switch to books? Were you tired of journalism?*

ID: I magazine freelanced for almost ten years after I finished the Ph.D. Even during the Ph.D., I kept on writing, one way or another, freelancing little Sunday supplement pieces. And I began writing poetry. The mind finds its own self-defenses against seminars, and so I wrote some poetry. Turned out, I did not take a journalism job, which eventually came open in Indiana. I stayed on, because my wife had her community college professorship by that point. We decided to stay on in the Northwest. And I said, "OK, I'll keep on with magazine work, and start tinkering with books at the same time," in whatever spare time I could find.

I really was infatuated or in love with magazine work. I'd wanted to do that ever since a freshman in college, I suppose, and I sold my first piece when I was a sophomore. At the time, I liked the format very much, 1,500-2,000 words, and doing something new every week or two. And so I did that for nearly ten years, a couple of hundred magazine pieces, from regional magazines in the Seattle area to short pieces for *McCalls* and a number of travel pieces for *The New York Times*, but it got more and more financially preposterous. Inflation set in. Even writing for *The New York Times*, a place where I got marvelous editing. I don't know how they managed to do it, but by telephone, they could look down their nose at you, and say, "It's a nice piece, it just needs a few fixes." And their few fixes would be three days' to a week's worth of work, and by god, they would improve the piece by 30 to 50 percent. They really knew what they were doing. But, they were paying a flat fee of 250 bucks with no travel expenses, either. That's not very much money, but all the prestige you can imagine, I guess. What would have been my best market, so to speak, was an utter financial dead end.

And I had been gathering the material for *This House of Sky*, and working on it, trying things out for it, and decided in late 1976 to take a chunk of time, do a manuscript sample of respectable length, maybe a third or a fourth of what I hoped the book would be, and really try it as a book writer.

A friend of mine in Seattle who'd been acting as my literary agent for the magazine stuff had never done any book stuff, but she undertook *This House of Sky* sample. And so in the summer of '77, Carol and I went to Montana and did the final research, went to all the places I had lived, and talked with a bunch of people and came home and wrote, finished up about the first 125 pages of manuscript in that sample. And in late '77, the agent sent them out half-a-dozen at a time to New York. We picked names out of *Literary Marketplace*, to senior editors, so it sounded like we knew what we were doing, and back began coming these remorseful, prestigious turn-downs. I've saved those letters: "This is really quite beautiful but we don't see any commercial prospect for it."

But the thirteenth editor was Carol Hale at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and she wrote back, "I like this, I have to get clearance one echelon above me, but I'll let you know within a week." And within a week, she sent us a contract for *This House of Sky*. So it only took about three months of actually sending out manuscript samples.

TBR: *The book was quite a remarkable success, wasn't it?*

ID: It was nominated for a National Book Award, won a Christopher Award and various regional awards, yeah. And its total sale is 110,000, most of it in paperback. It continues to sell about 10,000 copies a year. It's in, I think, its twelfth printing. It sells quite a lot in college courses now—western lit courses, and northwest lit courses, and some biography and autobiography courses. So *This House of Sky* really wrote my ticket for me, and it became evident even to me, even to a stubborn Scotsman, that magazines no longer were anywhere in the ballpark.

TBR: *Having completed the trilogy, how does that feel? Is it relief or is there another book in there somewhere you wish you'd written?*

ID: I don't feel any gap. I'm glad to have that amount of work behind me, a ten-year mountain of research is what it amounted to. A lot of it was fairly difficult research. I knew *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* was going to be tough, simply because the homestead period in Montana was so broad and sudden that historians really haven't managed to swim their way through the real sense of the homestead boom in Montana, which was by and large a twentieth-century phenomenon, from World War I on. Most of the real sense of that exists in the homestead papers back in the National Archives, literally hundreds of thousands of homestead entries, or in the homesteaders' reminiscences.

TBR: *How did you go about that research?*

ID: Once you have the description of the land, and the name involved, all of a sudden here it comes. My own grandfather's homestead claim is about sixty-five pages of stuff going across ten or twelve years of official wishy-washiness. A lot of other people's are somewhat similar. I started interviewing people in '83-84 for *Rascal Fair*, people who'd been kids on the homesteads around World War I or even a little before. Those people are still alive, fairly old people. And I found a surprising number of them to talk to and gathered material from them, and from a good oral history project by the Montana Historical Society, and quite a number of letter collections or people writing reminiscences for their children, particularly people who had emigrated to this country, Danes for instance. I have a Danish character, Dick, who has a Danish grandfather. And so I was able to draw on some of that for the trilogy.

TBR: *Idiomatic language is a very important element in your books.*

ID: Actually, I see it as *the* element. The history and the characterization and so forth, those are all fine and obviously important to me, but I think the language is the constant orbit or magnetic force that has me doing all this. That's what really interests me constantly in the writing. History and characters, sure they're interesting, but what I enjoy more are the interesting turns of language as you deal with the history and characters.

TBR: *What made you decide to leave Montana? Many of your books are based there. You obviously love the land. But you haven't lived there for twenty-one years.*

ID: By the time I left, when I got on the train to go to college, I didn't know it was going to be for good, but in a sense, it was. I was back the next five summers working ranch jobs and so forth, but once I lit into that school of journalism in Evanston, pretty promptly, inoculated with ambition and sense of craft and wanting to get out and work with words, Montana faded pretty promptly for me then. The jobs weren't there, jobs still aren't there unless you're really willing to be professionally underemployed, if you're going to work in journalism. Some people who are doing it are pretty happy, some who are doing it are only semi-happy, I've discovered in talking with them.

In essence, I went to college as an economic refugee from Montana. I had an aging and ill father and grandmother, and I was an only kid. It didn't take too many smarts to see that somebody had better get an income in this family.

A point that's often missed, and I'm going to have to kick some historians in the shins or something, is that agricultural people didn't used to be covered by social security. It wasn't until, I think, the sixties that ranch workers and farmhands were brought under social security. They

(Continued on page 20)

INTERVIEWER: **Tom Auer** is the publisher of *The Bloomsbury Review*.
PHOTOGRAPHER: **Chris Bennion**. © 1991.

Can't remember whether I sent you a copy of this earlier or not.

Gone fishin' . . . for the New West

OREGONIAN - 7-12-94

JOSEPH — There never was a plan. That's the first thing that Rich Wandschneider wants everyone to know. There never was a plan.

"It just sort of happened."

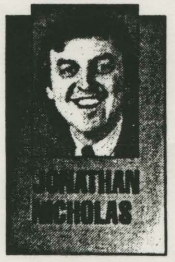
Back in 1986, Kim Stafford — the shaman of Stumptown syntax — organized what he called "a gathering" of Western writers on the campus of Lewis & Clark College.

Much grumbling was heard that weekend from writers who showed up in the city with sage on their shoes.

Webfoots, they said, invariably insist that their valley is the epicenter of erudition.

One arch drysider was Wandschneider, a great elk of a guy, who some years earlier had launched the least likely of careers. He opened a bookstore in Wallowa County, a place where cougar darn near outnumber citizens.

If writers really wanted to gather in the heart of the Western experience, he said, they should head to the high Wallowas. So the next year, they did just that.



There never has been a star system at the gathering that Wandschneider calls "Fishtrap."

No fat stipends lure big-name scribes. This is no meet market for manuscripts. Agent groupies are quickly flushed out, then ritually drowned in the conveniently nearby — and deliciously bottomless — lake.

The currency of Fishtrap is ideas.

This remarkable, and still remarkably isolated, top right corner of Oregon — Joseph is 363 miles from Portland — offers little in the way of upscale amenities.

Fishtrap features rustic cabins, simple fare and an old mountain Methodist meeting hall that can be way too hot and way too cold in the same hour.

But something magic happens here each July. They show up from all over. From New York and Los Angeles. From Eagle Point and Elgin. Poets. Novelists. Essayists. Historians. Heck, organizers even let in the occasional journalist.

The sole qualification: Participants have to believe that the pen is mightier than the horde.

Writers here last week included Ivan Doig and Alvin Josephy, Craig Lesley and Harold Johnson, Richard Garcia and Jeanne Wakatsuki, Valerie Miner and Ashland's Sandra Scofield — the most underrated novelist in our state.

Doig, who has a long-standing reputation for avoiding these literary love-ins, confessed that he was drawn to Fishtrap this time around, not by the promised pantheon of prose-aholics but by the appearance of Richard White, leading "new historian" of the West.

And, indeed, it was White who proffered the most provocative thinking of the '94 session with his analysis of much of Western history as a tapestry of ironies stitched with wishful thinking.

He reminded his audience that the West, through its heady first century of white occupation, remained "a hardscrabble, dirt-poor, contentious place." Then along came World War II and, in the name of national security, suddenly into the West came capital, population and an industrial base — the Holy Trinity of development that Western boosters had been craving for decades.

Here then was the first great irony: Despite its almost pathological fondness for notions of independence and self-reliance, the West largely exists on the largesse of the federal government.

Most poignantly, Smith spoke of a recent shift in Western perspective: Westerners who, contrary to their Big Sky self-image, remain an overwhelmingly urban, not rural, people long focused on talk of tomorrow's harvest.

"When a Westerner showed you a place," says White, "he showed you what it was going to become."

Suddenly, however, almost without anyone noticing, this Best West, this True West, has become a matter of retrospection rather than of hope.

All this makes for pretty heady stuff in a town where out-of-work loggers stand in food-stamp lines beside Lycra-clad lovelies buying their brut and brie.

Especially at 5 a.m. when the heat already mirages across the valley floor and I watch dawn's cowboys slip down from the treeline to make hay before the sun shines.

I think I'll take a break from writing and head down Main Street. This, after all, is the New West. There must be a cappuccino cart around here someplace.

Jonathan Nicholas' column appears each Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. Reach him by phone at 221-8533, by fax at 294-5029 or by mail at 1320 S.W. Broadway, Portland 97201.



BESTSELLERS

Last week's best sellers in the Northwest, as reported by Pacific Pipeline Inc., a regional book distributor based in Kent.

Hardback fiction

1. "Disclosure"
   Michael Crichton
2. "The Book of Guys"
   Garrison Keillor
3. "The Bridges of Madison County"
   Robert James Waller
4. "Like Water for Chocolate"
   Laura Esquivel
5. "The Voyager"
   Diana Gabaldon
6. "Bad Love"
   Jonathan Kellerman
7. "Philadelphia"
   Christopher Davis
8. "Chaos Mode"
   Piers Anthony
9. "Mr. Murder"
   Dean R. Koontz
10. "Honor Bound"
    W.E.B. Griffin

Hardback nonfiction

1. "Embraced by the Light"
   Betty J. Eadie
2. "The Hidden Life of Dogs"
   Elizabeth Marshall Thomas
3. "The Book of Virtues"
   William J. Bennett
4. "Stop the Insanity"
   Susan Powter
5. "A Woman's Worth"
   Marianne Williamson
6. "Ageless Body, Timeless Mind"
   Deepak Chopra
7. "Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus"
   John Gray
8. "Fly Fishing Through the Midlife Crisis"
   Howell Raines
9. "Soul Mates"
   Thomas Moore
10. "Having Our Say"
    Sarah Louise & Annie Elizabeth Delany with Amy Hill Hearth

Trade paperbacks: nonfiction

1. "Care of the Soul"
   Thomas Moore
2. "The Road Less Traveled"
   M. Scott Peck
3. "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"
   Stephen R. Covey
4. "Return to Love"
   Marianne Williamson
5. "Get Your Act Together"
   Pam Young & Peggy Jones
6. "The Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook, Updated! New Entries!"
   Henry Beard & Christopher Cerf
7. "Bottoms Up!"
   Joyce L. Vedral
8. "Your Money or Your Life"
   Joe Dominguez & Vicki Robin
9. "The Good Samaritan Strikes Again"
   Patrick F. McManus
10. "This House of Sky"
    Ivan Doig

1-23-94

TEL: May 10 01 10:17 No.005 P.02
Chicago Sun-Times
Sunday
May 30 1993

THE GOLD DUST TWINS STRIKE AGAIN! BUT THEY GOT THE "WANTED" POSTERS CONFUSED.

Voices of New West

More Dreamers Than Desperadoes in Short-Story Collection

PAPERBACKS

By Dolores and Roger Flaherty

Gun-toting outlaws and cowboys familiar in Wild West lore have given way to characters more like the rest of us in **Dreamers and Desperadoes: Contemporary Short Fiction of the American West**, edited by Craig Lesley (Dell/ Laurel Paperback Original, $12.95).

Dreamers outnumber desperadoes in these 46 stories, where men and women isolated by choice or circumstance try to make terms with the world they hold at a distance. Their tales unfold on ranches and Indian reservations, in timberlands and RV parks, in strikebound mining towns and suburban shopping malls. But even in the most urban and urbane setting, loneliness dominates the landscape.

In Ivan Doig's "Winter of '19," two men struggling through a Montana blizzard find their greatest strength in the enmity built in 30 years ranching together. The story, excerpted from Doig's novel *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, has the collection's oldest historic setting and its most traditional view of the landscape, as a hostile force to be subdued and conquered.

A sharply different West is offered in "Buried Poems" by Terry Tempest Williams. In this brief tale, events take a surprising turn for an archaeologist who roams the Utah desert, burying poems for future excavation in the expectation that "his poetry will be held as an artifact, mulled over by minds that will follow his."

Humor leavens the collection, as in Ron Carlson's two offerings, "Bigfoot Stole My Wife" and "I Am Bigfoot," recounting the sudden disappearance of a woman from the viewpoint of her vaguely bereft husband and her abductor. David James Duncan's "Science Meets Prophecy," from his novel *The Brothers K*, is a hilarious version of the family life of "an athletic millworker, a patriarchal matriarch, four testosteroneous teenage boys and a tautology of first-grade girls."

Elizabeth Tallent's "Migrants" and James Houston's "A Family Resemblance" present the West as seen by new immigrants. In "Sleepwalkers" by Ursula K. LeGuin, a seemingly uncomplicated motel maid is revealed to be the survivor of terrible family violence. Tess Gallagher's "Girls" portrays the efforts of two elderly women to understand their hard lives. "Personal Silence" by Molly Gloss gives a futuristic glimpse into a world dominated by environmental warfare.



Ivan Doig: A sensitive voice of the West.

This may be regional fiction, but it is not provincial.

Who Will Tell the People?, by William Greider (Touchstone, $13). The writer for Rolling Stone and former Washington Post editor pleads for democracy, exposing the flim-flam, posturing and self-aggrandizement that have come to characterize our politics, undermining our constitutional heritage.

The Rapstone Chronicles, by John Mortimer (Penguin, $14). Speaking of politics, consider Leslie Titmuss, the fictional petit bourgeois English Conservative Party MP. Titmuss is humorously depicted as a male Margaret Thatcher, humorless to the bone, annoyingly pompous and tough. The book brings under one title the novels *Paradise Postponed* and *Titmuss Regained*, which were adapted for television. Mortimer is also author of **Rumpole A La Carte** (Penguin, $10), six stories featuring London barrister Horace Rumpole now being shown on public television.

Give War a Chance, by P. J. O'Rourke (Vintage, $12). Savage humor characterizes this collection of articles that cover wars, rumors of war and rumors of peace with side trips into the topics of drug testing and Dr. Ruth. O'Rourke is the author of the acerbic best seller, *Parliament of Whores*.

We Were Always Free, by T. O. Madden Jr. (Vintage, $12). In 1949, Madden found a trunk in his attic that unveiled the history of a free black family from Virginia through official papers, letters and business records. The family name came from Mary Madden, an Irish immigrant who in 1758 bore a child, Sarah, whose father was probably a slave owned by James Madison, the father of the future president. Although born free, Sarah was indentured to Madison until age 31 to "pay off the fine of her birth."

New on the mass market racks: **Waiting to Exhale**, by Terry McMillan (Pocket, $5.99), a best-selling novel offering a funny/serious look at male-female relationships among African Americans; **The Silent Passage**, by Gail Sheehy (Pocket, $5.50), a look at menopause as "the gateway to a second adulthood" offering medical and psychological insights; **Sacred Lies**, by Dianne Edouard and Sandra Ware (Bantam, $5.99), a sexy spy novel featuring a female spook forced to choose between a killer agent and a priest; **The Secret Sisters**, Ann Maxwell (Harper, $5.50), a romantic adventure sending a New York fashion writer back to her native Southwest in search of her missing fashion-model sister; **Downtown**, by Ed McBain (Avon, $5.99), a mystery puzzling out the strange mishaps of an orange-grower framed with murder and pursued by the mob; **Once in a Blue Moon**, by Penelope Williamson (Dell, $4.99), a historical romance uniting a tireless adventurer and heroic woman on the windswept Cornish moors.



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"Another Birthday Celebration" opens Friday at Salt Lake City's Another Language Performance Studio, 345 W. Pierpont Ave.

The concert looks at the dark side of birthdays filled with celebratory clothes, presents, cakes, videos, music and accompanying anxieties.

Performer Victoria Panella said, "We all have birthdays. . . . Some years they go better than others, and this year, well, we're all getting older."

Director and performer Carolyn Wood said, "I hate birthdays. They bring out the worst in people and make everyone over the age of 12 cranky and miserable. Even children get cranky because their expectations are always greater than the reality. People torture you on your birthday and you have no control over it. At Christmas you can share the guilt. But on your birthday, it is all your fault."

This DTC return to natal day celebrations is a sequel of sorts to "Debbie's Day: A Birthday Celebration," which premiered eight years ago.

Ms. Panella described that show as "wild, crazy and funny. This new work is also that way but many of us have reached new milestones in our own birthdays this year and the tempation to explore the darker side was too much fun to resist."

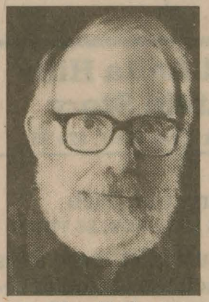
Other company members performing will be Jack Droitcourt, Marina Harris, Susie McGee, Tina Misaka and Deva Whitney.

Performances continue Saturday and May 28 at 8 p.m. Tickets are $5, $8 and $10. A fundraiser for the company will be offered May 29 at 7 p.m. The $25 ticket will include a cake contest, an auction and birthday cake after the show.

Doig tours state

Western writer **Ivan Doig**, author of *Dancing at Rascal Fair, English Creek* and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana*, will lecture this week on "The West as Heart Earth" for the Utah Humanities Council.

The free lectures will take place at Piute High School, 550 N. 100 West, Junction, Monday, 7:30 p.m.; Layton High School, 440 Wasatch Drive, Layton, Wednesday, 8 p.m.; and Union High School, 135 N. Union, Roosevelt, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.



Mr. Doig

Mr. Doig's first book, *This House of Sky*, was nominated for the National Book Award in contemporary thought. The author, who was born in Montana, lives in Seattle, where he has just completed *Heart Earth*, a companion book to *This House of Sky*.

Plaza 5400 Sig



CHUCK WING/Standard-Examiner

Ivan Doig's new work 'Heart Earth' is a 'prequel' to his earlier memoir of a Montana childhood in the years following World War II.

Doig combines research, craft

By JANELLE BIDDINGER
Standard-Examiner staff

"Soon before daybreak on my sixth birthday, my mother's breathing wheezed more raggedly than ever, then quieted. And then stopped.

"The remembering begins out of that new silence..."

So begins "This Landscape of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind," Ivan Doig's 1978 memoir of the years following his mother's death from asthma in the closing months of World War II.

The memoir, which was nominated for a National Book Award, looks thoughtfully at the rough-finished cowboy father and his maternal grandmother, who first battled, then joined ranks to raise Doig.

Doig's father appears larger than life, a product of the rugged Montana landscape.

But always missing has been that soft-voiced, feminine image so important to a boy. Doig's life, he says, was deeply marked by that early, unintended abandonment by his mother.

And now, in a sense, Doig has found his mother. "Heart Earth," to be published in early September by Macmillan, is what he calls a "prequel" to "This House of Sky." That book began with the last summer of his mother's life; "Heart Earth" looks at the woman herself.

Doig was in Salt Lake City recently to present a lecture sponsored by the Utah Humanities Council and he took a moment, over a glass of iced tea, to talk about this new-found vision of his mother.

"I come to the conclusion in 'Heart Earth' that nobody got over my mother," he said.

Doig's memory of his mother in "This House of Sky" is of a woman fine-boned and delicate, but at home in the Montana mountains she loved so much. From old photographs, he pulls an impression of "eyes which are almost too calm and accepting," of her "roundish, slightly wondering face." Still, writes Doig, "the one thing which would pulse her alive for me does not come. I do not know the sound of her voice, am never to know it."

It was with the death of his uncle, his mother's brother, that he first heard his mother's voice — in letters. His uncle bequeathed him these letters written by his mother — letters that Doig had not known existed.

But here they were, and Doig, nearly 45 years after his mother's death, was first able to follow the unfolding of her thoughts, the excursions of her mind.

"There was a particular thrill in looking back at these letters, because she's a pretty good writer, not in a high literary terms, but she had a nice wicked eye," he said. "Everybody says how soft my mother's voice was, yet I find from her letters that she didn't always have a soft eye. She sometimes had a pretty good, hard Western eye."

The letters date from late 1945. Doig had moved with his parents to Arizona, where his dad had settled the family in a defense housing project while he worked at a defense plant. The move south was motivated by the hope that the dry air would help his mother's asthma. Instead, Doig's father fell ill from appendicitis. "And so, the first of these letters to her brother are her saying openly, 'I need a shoulder to cry on,' " said Doig.

Since the publication of "This House of Sky" 15 years ago, Doig has written several other books, including a trilogy of novels about a Scottish family that homesteads in Montana, and the family's descendants — "English Creek," "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana."

But with "Heart Earth" Doig says he's returned to the rich style of writing that marked "House of Sky" — although, he adds, "This is a shorter, faster book."

The danger in writing from years-old memories about such a loss as the death of a mother is that the subject may appear more than human. And Doig concedes that. But, he adds, "I imagine the largeness of life is what a writer's interested in. ... I'm using this chance to see people as large as I can find them."

Doig pays close attention to research, and craft; he's been quoted as saying: "In every book I try to work (these) two stubborn substances into becoming the hardest alloy of all — a good story."

Research has been difficult, he says now, because his books focus on subjects not easily found in the library's card catalog. The homesteading of Montana in "English Creek," for instance, simply hadn't been studied, and "some of it very stubborn to lay hands on."

The same goes for the book Doig is now working on — a "Russian-sized" novel about the building of Montana's Fort Peck Dam in the 1930s. Little has been written about what Doig describes as "the dozen construction towns which had sprung up over night on what had been bald prairie," where prostitutes and all-night bars gave an air that must have been present during the gold rush.

As for craft, it can be stubborn because, as Doig believes, fine writing takes hard work and patience. Like fellow writer John McPhee, Doig admits to spending weeks, even years, refining sentences. The opening sentence of "This House of Sky," for instance, was rewritten some 75 times. "It's a matter of shaping it. It's a matter of making it be the most it can," he says.

Perhaps, he muses, this attention to the finetuning of words is a Western trait. Author Wallace Stegner possessed it, as does Doig, whose work has been described by Stegner this way: "Here is the real Montana, the real West, through the eyes of a real writer."

In the West, says Doig, "You get writers who know their land, the people they grew up with."

And, as well, writers who know their subject. Doig recalls a statement by fellow Montanan Norman Maclean, the author of "A River Runs Through It": "He used to say, 'When I tell you how to pack a mule, by god, that's how you pack it.'"

Says Doig, "Maybe it's from growing up in land where if you don't get it right it can kill or maim you. So a lot of us writing out here are very serious about our craft."

In Brief

By MICHAEL HARRIS

Nonfiction

THIS HOUSE OF SKY *by Ivan Doig (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: $24.95; 314 pp.)* Only when a way of life is vanishing does it begin to seem worth writing about. The window of opportunity is narrow. Ivan Doig grew up on Montana ranches, but he had to go away to college—become an outsider—to recognize that life as a literary subject, and by then the real insiders were almost gone. Doig's father, Charlie, dying of emphysema, gasped out stories into a tape recorder; his maternal grandmother, Bessie Ringer, added others; Doig filled in the gaps by ransacking his own memories and those of decrepit ex-cowboys and saloonkeepers who had known his family decades before.

The result was "This House of Sky," the memoir whose appearance 15 years ago established Doig as one of the leading "sagebrush writers"—modern folks who write about the rural West without necessarily writing Westerns. Since then, he has become known for novels ("Dancing at the Rascal Fair," "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana"), but "Sky" has quietly retained its appeal. Hence this anniversary edition.

In retrospect, "Sky" seems an unlikely debut—a long book that shies away from most of the commercial kinds of excitement. What distinguishes it, besides a wealth of detail, is a lyrical style muscled with active verbs ("A bow of meadow makes the riffled water curl wide to the west. . . . A low rumple of the mountain knolls itself up watchfully") and what reveals itself to be a story of uncommon devotion.

THE SWAMP ROOT CHRONICLE: Adventures in the Word Trade *by Robert Manning (Norton: $24.95; 419 pp.)* When we read Russell Baker's autobiography, "Growing Up," the humble details of his Depression boyhood are back-lit by his fame as a New York Times columnist. The story ends with Baker in his 20s, his career barely begun, but we scan it for hints of the happy ending to come, clues to the qualities that would separate him from the pack.

It's just the opposite with the memoirs of Robert Manning, newspaper and wire-service reporter, Time magazine writer, assistant secretary of state for public affairs in the Kennedy Administration and editor of the Atlantic Monthly from 1964 to 1980. The distinguished career is laid out before us; we search it for glimpses of the man.

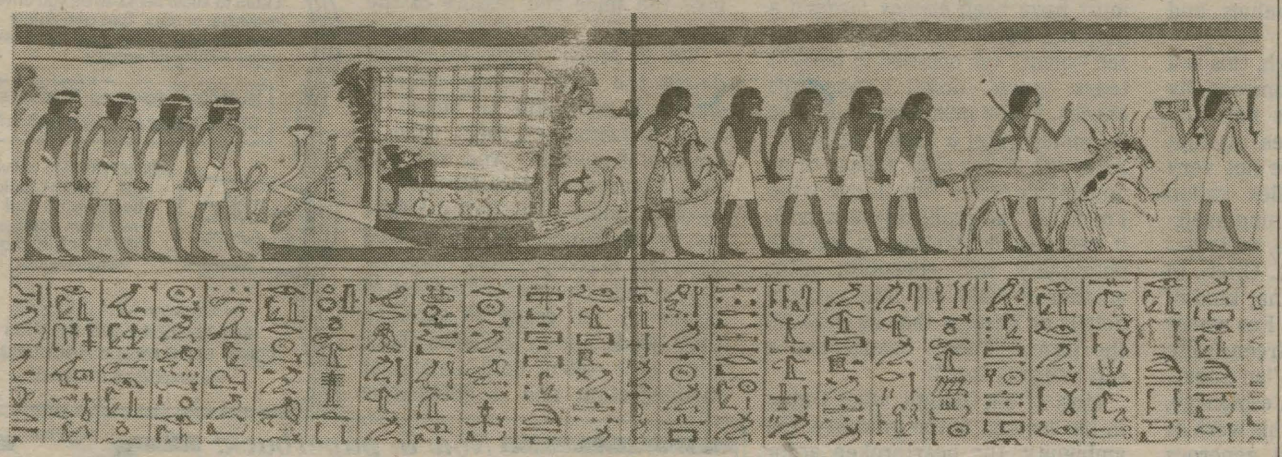
Events and personalities parade by—the idealistic beginnings of the United Nations, the miasma of the Vietnam War, J.F.K. and L.B.J., Hemingway and Henry Moore, media moguls from Henry Luce to Mortimer Zuckerman, a host of colorful colleagues. Manning saw much and knew, it seems, practically everybody. He has sensible things to say about press-government relations (the government has the right to keep certain secrets; the press has the duty to dig for everything). Once in a while he ventures an unorthodox opinion (the Cuban missile crisis came nowhere near as close to Armageddon as we think). Still, nothing fades like yesterday's headlines.

The reticence beneath the witty surface of this book isn't just a newsman's conviction that the teller is less important than the story. Rather, Manning seems to have had so many of the right qualities from the start—humor, balance, a gift for friendship, the ability not to get in the way of his own hard work—that he experienced little of the failure or self-questioning that makes autobiographies interesting. "Lucky Bob," he modestly calls himself; the reader isn't quite so fortunate.

THE PURLOINED CLINIC *by Janet Malcolm (Knopf: $23; 382 pp.)* This isn't the place to rehash Janet Malcolm's past troubles (a psychoanalyst filed a landmark libel suit against her and the New Yorker after she allegedly fabricated quotations by him in two 1983 articles) except to note two things: Those articles are not included in this collection of four pieces on psychoanalysis, nine book reviews and three long profiles that Malcolm has written for the New Yorker and the New York Review of Books since 1978. But issues of truth-telling and authenticity are central to them all.

In the title piece, Malcolm writes approvingly of art critic Michael Fried's "disfiguring [a Thomas Eakins painting] almost beyond recognition" so that we can see it in new ways. In articles on family therapy (as witnessed from behind a one-way mirror) and on post-revolutionary malaise in Czechoslovakia, the country of her birth, she peels away defenses layer by layer until her interviewees look raw. In reviewing a biography of Victorian critic Edmund Gosse, she notes his pathological inability to get facts straight, then lets him halfway off the hook—"carelessness, sloppiness, misinformation, misquotation, and fudging of fact are commonplaces"—and then describes the sad fate of John Churton Collins, the "wrathful Defender of the Spirit of Fact" who had the temerity to expose Gosse's errors.

It shouldn't be unfair to Malcolm—who tends to explain people's behavior in terms of Freudian irruptions from the unconscious—to speculate that her obsession with truth-telling is born of her own uneasiness on that score, just as certain womanizing members of Congress have exemplary records of voting for women's rights. In either case, the good may outweigh the harm. The legislation gets passed; the moral urgency of Malcolm's essays transcends their marginal or esoteric subject matter. She has a wicked way with the long sentence, which often ends with a stinger, like a scorpion's tail. And few have ever written as clearly as she about that strangest of truth-mining operations, the excavation on the psychiatrist's couch.



THE SMITHSONIAN BOOK OF BOOKS *by Michael Olmert (Smithsonian Books: $45; 320 pp.)* The habit of reading may wax and wane, but books are survival experts. They can hibernate for decades, even centuries, yet spring to life again instantly when opened, conveying to us, in a uniquely intimate way, the dreams and thoughts of other times, other cultures, other minds. To lose oneself in a book is really the privilege of finding oneself in another world. Michael Olmert's "The Smithsonian Book of Books" is a fitting testament to the richness and longevity of book culture. Clearly a labor of love by all concerned, it's a lively, up-to-date and stunningly illustrated Grand Tour, highlighting the multiple guises of the ineffable thing we seek when we haunt bookstores, burrow in libraries or convene in the pages of a book review. Olmert's text is the best sort of essay: vivid, anecdotal, intelligently digressive, inquisitive, informative and entertaining. He includes an amazing range of material. There are chapters covering the first written records on tablets and scrolls, like the above passage from the "Egyptian Book of the Dead"; the monastic trade in illuminated manuscripts; the textual histories of the various religious traditions; medieval record-keeping and account books; the Renaissance explosion of printed books and the first master printers; the history and practice of typography, printing and binding; and much more. The beautifully printed illustrations form what amounts to a second volume running alongside the first. These, with their meticulous captions, are not simply keyed to the prose in a textbookish way. By living an independent life, they interact with the text and amplify it enormously. In addition to a wealth of examples from throughout the history of bookmaking and printing, they provide a fascinating survey of the prolific iconography of the book in visual representation. Mallarmé wrote, "Everything in the world exists to end up in a book," and after reading this one we feel that everything has. Certainly the world of books is contained here so attractively that at the end we're likely to echo the sadness of the medieval scribe who penned at the end of a manuscript, "Goodbye, little book." But of course we don't have to say goodbye—that's what books are all about.

—Thomas Frick

What the Stones Know

By ROBERT DANA

Fire says
"The flesh. The flesh."

Water says
"Hair."

The air says
one or two feathers in a field of wheat.

Earth says
"Sweat."

The mowing
dazzles with the shadows of passing clouds.

I say to my son,

"Write your name
on everything that's yours."

From "What I Think I Know" (Another Chicago Press: $18.95; 174 pp.). © 1991 by Robert Dana. Reprinted by permission.

Fiction

MAZURKA FOR TWO DEAD MEN *by Camilo José Cela, translated from the Spanish by Patricia Haugaard (New Directions: $21.95; 312 pp.)* In this 1983 novel by Nobel Prize-winner Camilo José Cela, the mazurka of the title is played by a blind whorehouse accordionist on two occasions only: when Baldomero (Lionheart) Gamuzo is killed in 1936, at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and when his brother Tanis avenges the murder in 1939. But the mazurka also is the novel itself. Like a musical composition, it arranges apparently random bits of history, legend, gossip, superstition, humor and bawdiness in calculated ways so that meaning emerges from repetitions, recurrences, themes broken off to be completed later.

This isn't as complex as it sounds. Readers used to conventional narratives should have little trouble following this one. The point of Cela's experiment is to immerse the story in its context—a backward, rural area (Galicia, at the northwestern tip of Spain) where life hasn't changed much since medieval times and where people are bound by a web of family ties and regional mythology that, during the war, is torn by the impact of the modern world. Meanwhile, Cela never forgets that the mazurka is a dance. He writes with gusto about that fundamental two-step of human existence: sex and death.

JOURNEY TO THE INTERIOR AND OTHER STORIES *by Lawrence P. Spingarn (Perivale Press: $11.95 (paper); 103 pp.)* Veteran Los Angeles poet and fiction writer Lawrence P. Spingarn makes an odd mixture of these 10 stories. They are subtle yet melodramatic, knowing yet somehow amateurish. Spingarn has little gift for dialogue; he writes in a musty idiom that compromises his descriptions of the present without bringing the past to life. Still, these stories have variety, and something about them that keeps us off balance.

A professor's daughter has a love-hate relationship with the girls her father seduces. A young man confronts an uncle who collaborated with the Nazis. A Nevada woman takes out her resentment of her ne'er-do-well husband on his ailing father. An Egyptian pasha writes to a guilt-ridden English missionary in 1888. The statue of a mermaid changes the luck of a French customs inspector. The screams of tortured prisoners unhinge a writer in Greece.

The awkwardness of Spingarn's stories—the writer's-workshop plots (including a couple of suicides), the insistent prose—is in the foreground. The subtlety is hidden. In some cases, the plot is clear but the characters' perverse nature comes as a surprise; in others, it's the plot that must be traced, like an underground river, across a field of relationships that seem to have played themselves out.

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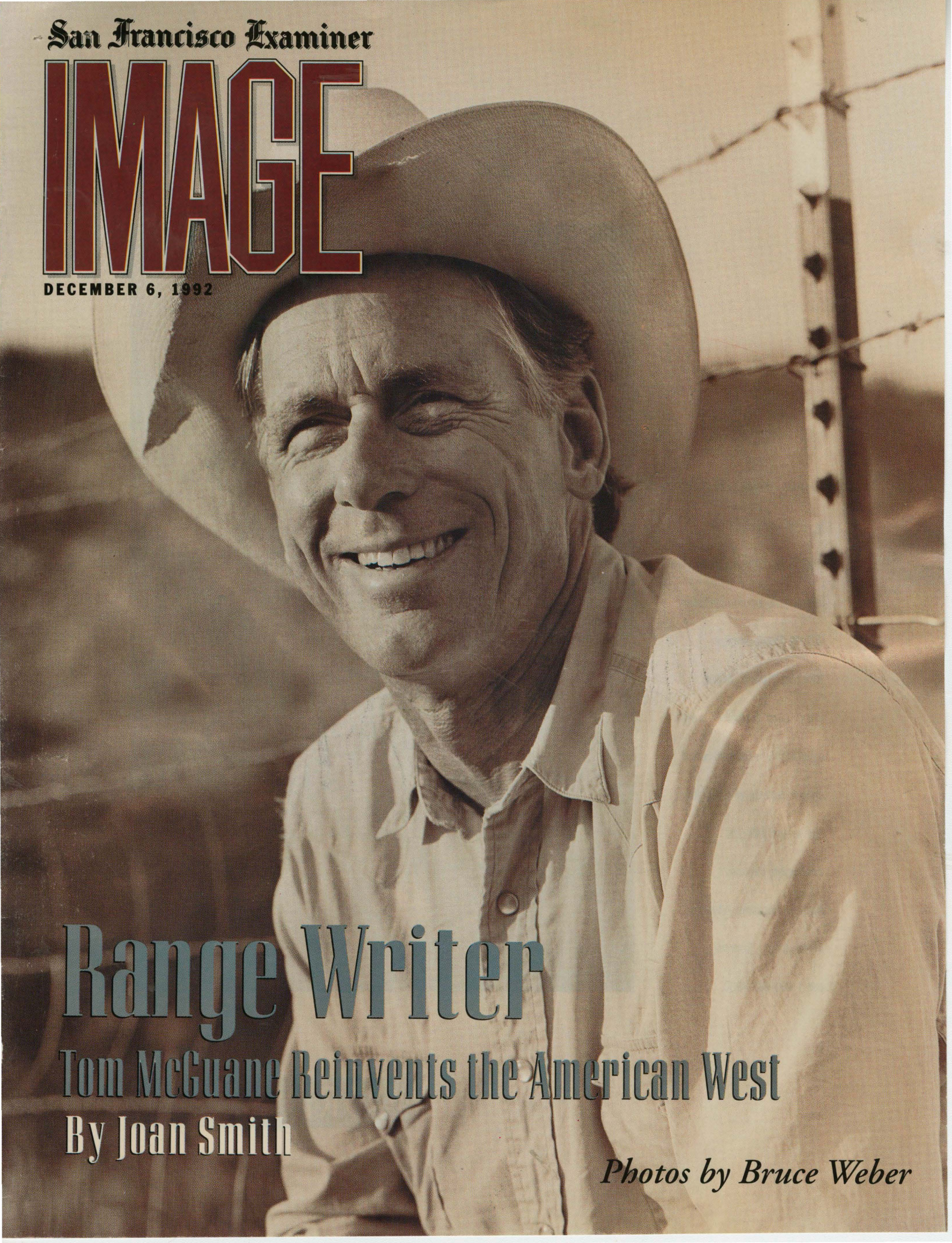
San Francisco Examiner
IMAGE
DECEMBER 6, 1992



Range Writer

Tom McGuane Reinvents the American West

By Joan Smith

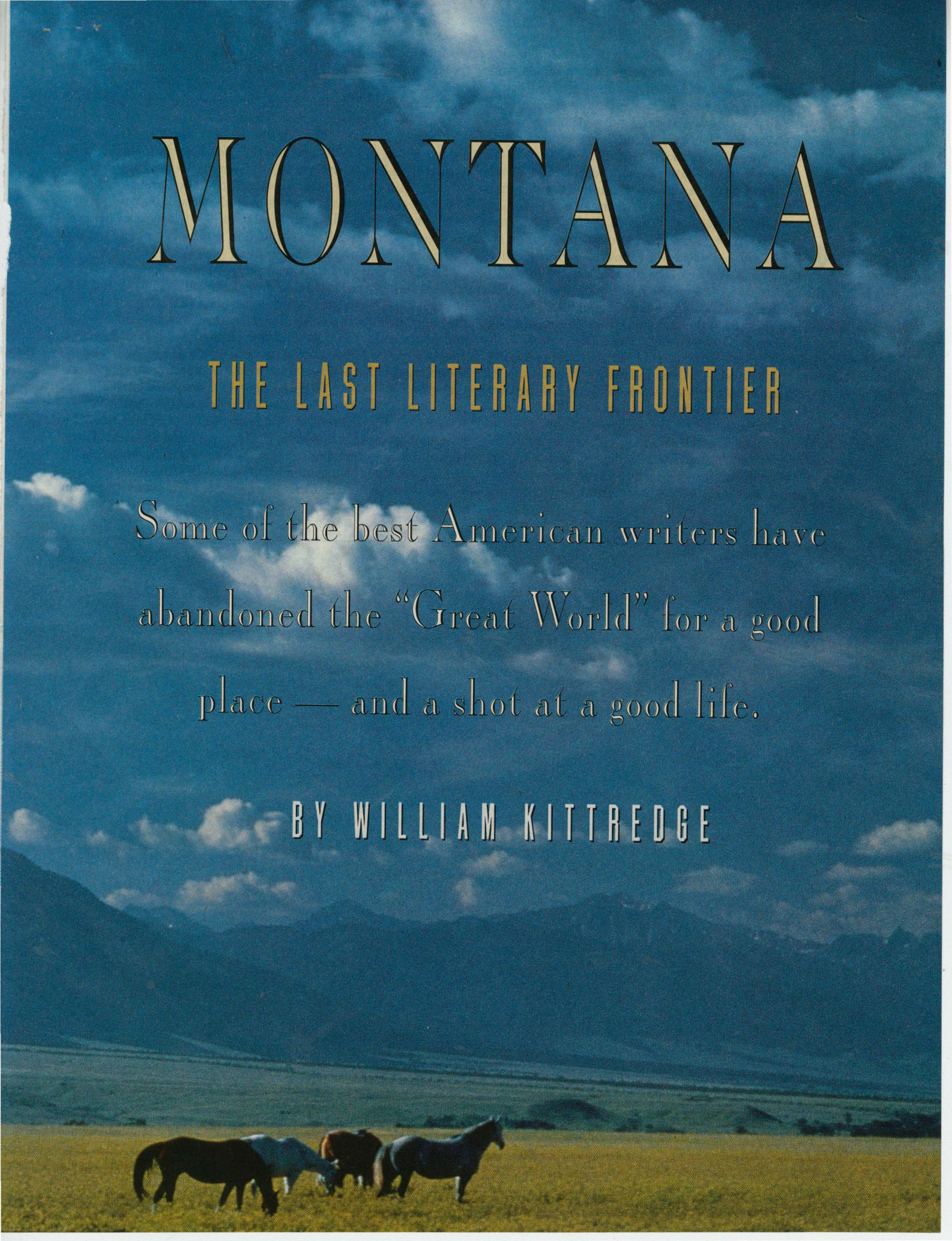
Photos by Bruce Weber

MONTANA

THE LAST LITERARY FRONTIER

Some of the best American writers have abandoned the "Great World" for a good place — and a shot at a good life.

BY WILLIAM KITTREDGE



It is almost impossible to sort recent storytelling in Montana into schools or even traditions. And that's good, as I see it, a sure sign of maturity. Our writers are no longer paying much attention to the old hidebound mythology of the Western; they are writing from their own experiences, discovering and defining their own demons and battles, engaged in the constant business of the artist — renaming the sacred.

In 1974, the Native American writer James Welch published *Winter in the Blood*, which a *New York Times Book Review* critic called an "almost perfect first novel." Among other things, *Winter in the Blood* is a quite unflinching look at the possibilities of reservation life on the Montana Hi-Line, a story concerned with finding a meaningful life in connection with a place distant from the so-called Great World, which is nevertheless made sacred by the history of a people.

Winter in the Blood gave considerable heart to an emerging group of writers who had elected to stay and work in Montana, writing about Montana subjects. It was a work that said a thing they wanted to hear, about staying home. It was also an artistic success.

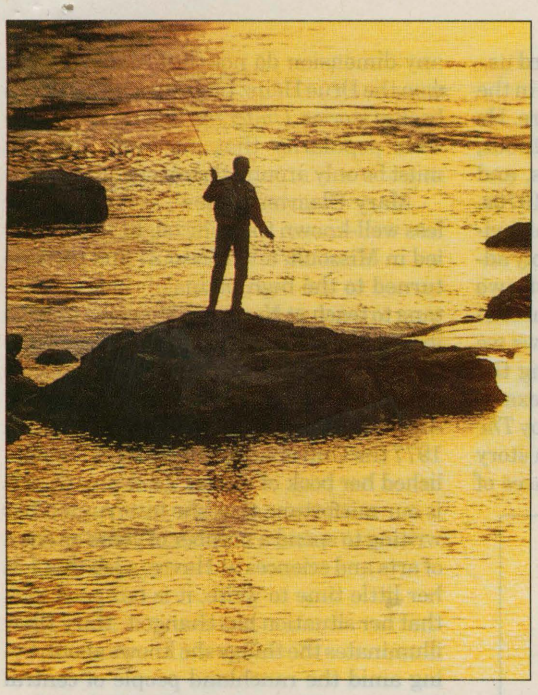
Then in 1976 Norman Maclean published *A River Runs Through It*. Maclean had retired from a long and distinguished career at the University of Chicago in 1973, determined to try his hand at some stories about growing up as a Presbyterian minister's son in western Montana. In the title novella, with the constraint of an impeccable, resonating style, Maclean details for us the story of his father and himself and his mother and the death, in 1937, of his brother, Paul, the transcendent fly fisherman.

"A River Runs Through It" is a story about delineating the ways in which we can and cannot help one another, in the unlikely event we might know what help would be. Its glory lies in Maclean's willing reverence, always implied in the precision of his language as he goes at his business of naming the sacred aspects of his own life. And there's more. Perhaps the story's most profound glory lies in Maclean's ability to convince us that all of our lives contain elements that are sacred on any scale of things. Quirky and idiosyncratic as it is, "A River Runs Through It" is to me as valuable as any other single piece of American writing.

James Crumley left the University of Montana in 1969, but like so many he kept coming back and writing about Montana. In 1975, he published *Wrong Case*, which takes place in the bars and along the highways between various wildernesses in Montana, both real and metaphoric. Crumley had moved the hard-boiled detective novel out of Los Angeles to the rural West; it was a brilliant notion. Detectives guide us down the mean, bewildering streets of our times; and Milo is our Virgil, leading us through the circles of corruption in a very real Montana we hadn't seen in books before. *Wrong Case* was followed by *The Last Good Kiss* (which starred a fat poet much on the model of Dick Hugo) and *Dancing Bear*. These books are honest and smart and contain some of the most insightful writing we have about contemporary life in the American West.

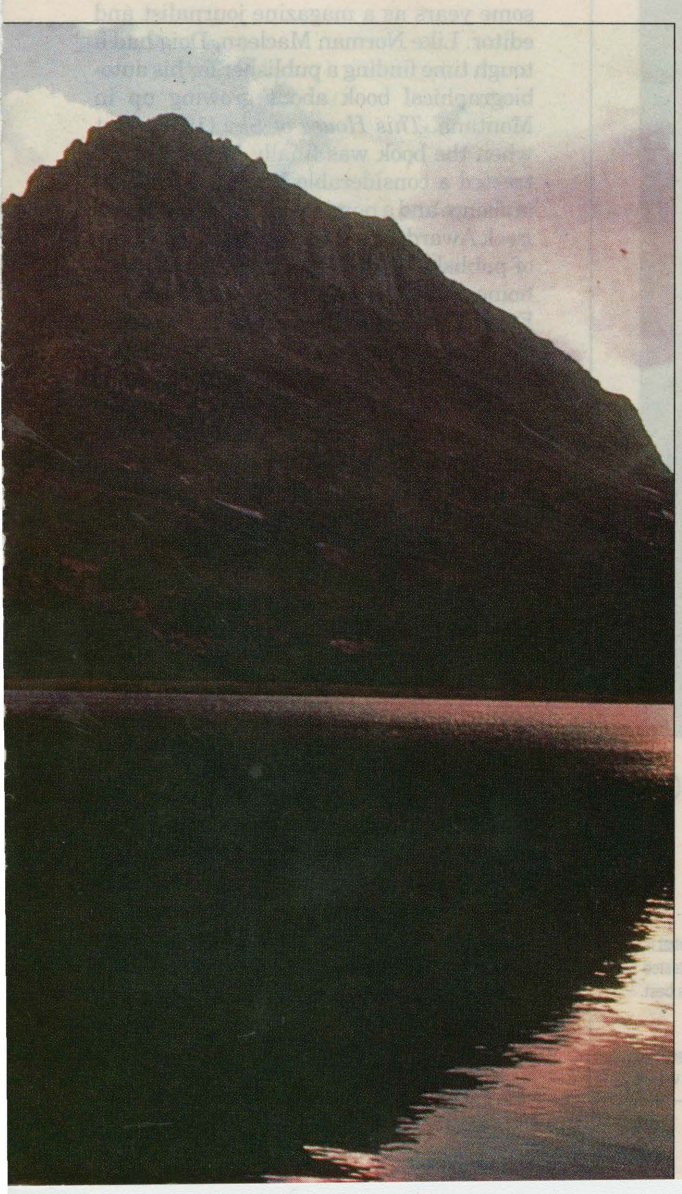
About this time Tom McGuane began to write about his chosen





J. TALLON/TRAVEL MONTANA

ABOVE: FLY-FISHING ON THE FLATHEAD RIVER. BELOW: GLACIER PARK IN NORTHWEST MONTANA. (PREVIOUS PAGE: HORSES GRAZE IN SOUTHWESTERN MONTANA.)



PHOTOS AT LEFT AND PREVIOUS PAGE: D. O'LOONEY/TRAVEL

TREE SONG

Between dirt dark and giddy sky
Straight, twisted, mountains, mudflats,
Where we bloom,
Limbs that wait and wave,
Noble Silence for a lifetime's talk.

Across the hill the pollen blows
A cloud of orgies in the boughy air —

Are we our black wet roots
Or do we live by light?
One hand grips, the other makes a sign.
Scanning slope or gully where it soon must lie.

I lay
This punky mossy gnarled and
Useless scab-barked worm-ate
Seedless wore-out loggy body
— with a great crash —
Down.
My secret heartwood no bud ever knew.

— Gary Snyder, Kyoto, 1957

Gary Snyder, who lives in the Sierra foothills near Grass Valley, was a nominee for the 1992 National Book Award. "Tree Song" was issued in a limited edition by James Linden in 1986, with photography by Michael Mundy.

home ground in Montana. He'd included some Montana episodes in *The Bushwhacked Piano* (1971), but when I read "The Heart of the Game" in *Outside* magazine, I realized that McGuane had moved in to stay. He wrote: "He (the buck) wasn't in the browse at all, but angling into invisibility at the rock wall, racing straight into the elevation, bounding toward zero gravity, taking his longest arc into the bullet and the finality and terror you have made of the world, the finality you know you share even with your babies with their inherited and ambiguous dentition, the finality that any minute now you will meet as well." The language was always gorgeous, and now it was directed toward us.

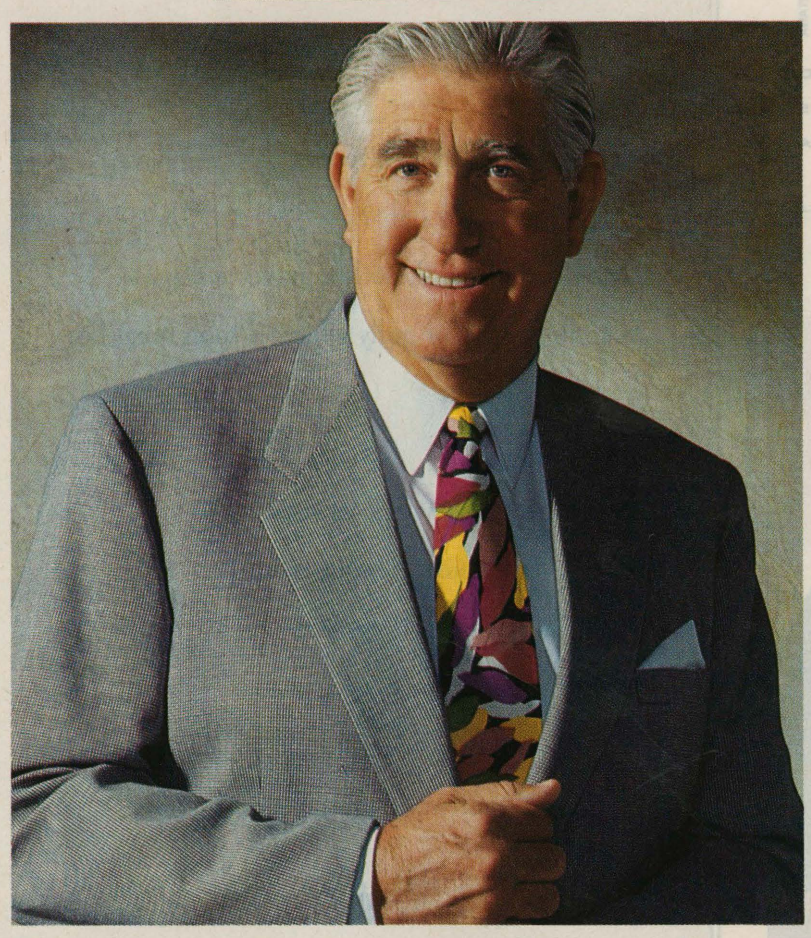
Rick DeMarinis came to Montana in the Air Force and was stationed in Havre. He studied with Dick Hugo during the 1960s, went away to various teaching jobs, and came back to Montana in the 1970s. Working from a relentlessly modernist vision, DeMarinis' fiction has been deeply admired by other writers for almost two decades. He never leaves us comfortable in our preconceptions as he tells us news we often don't want to hear, performing the true work of an artist, helping us re-examine ourselves. All of this is evidenced by *The Burning Women of Far Cry* (1986), a story of a modern Montana where romances of any dimension do not thrive. He recently won the Drue Heinz Literature Prize for his book of stories, *Under the Wheat* (1986). The wide popularity that his work deserves must be only around the corner.

Mary Clearman Blew, another writer less well-known than she ought to be, studied in Missoula and Missouri and then returned to the high plains of central Montana to teach at Northern Montana College in Havre and to write about that piece of the world where she had grown up. Her stories have twice been included in the annual *Best American Short Stories* collections, and in 1977 the University of Missouri Press published her book of stories, *Lambing Out*. It is our misfortune that she interrupted her writing to spend a number of years as dean of arts and sciences at Havre, a job that left her little time to write; it is our good luck that her situation has changed. Mary Blew illuminates the things she knows about, living amid the ranchland people of central Montana, with candor and insight, and we don't get many like her in any generation. We should cherish them.

Ivan Doig went from Valier High School to Northwestern University and then spent some years as a magazine journalist and editor. Like Norman Maclean, Doig had a tough time finding a publisher for his autobiographical book about growing up in Montana, *This House of Sky* (1978). But when the book was finally in print, it attracted a considerable local and national audience and a nomination for the National Book Award. Doig is currently in the midst of publishing a trilogy of novels set in his home country along the Rocky Mountain Front. The first, *English Creek*, came out to considerable notice in 1984; the second, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, to even better world of mouth in 1987. The trilogy is drawing a justifiably large national readership to its examination of Montana life along the Rocky Mountain Front over a long sweep of years, a precise evocation of life as it was and how it got to be the way it is.

But Doig's reputation is still irrevocably anchored to his accomplishment in *This House of Sky*, a book that so vividly rewarded readers who were "longing for an explicable past." And more. Readers keep coming back to *This House of Sky* to renew connections with Doig's people. It is his success in connecting the affections of his readers to his major characters, his father Charlie and his grandmother Bessie Ringer, that established *This House of Sky* so centrally in the canon of major Montana literature. Bessie Ringer and Charlie Doig were real people, of the kind we understand and care about in Montana, and so we care deeply about their story, because it is in so many ways our own.

ROCHESTER BIG & TALL



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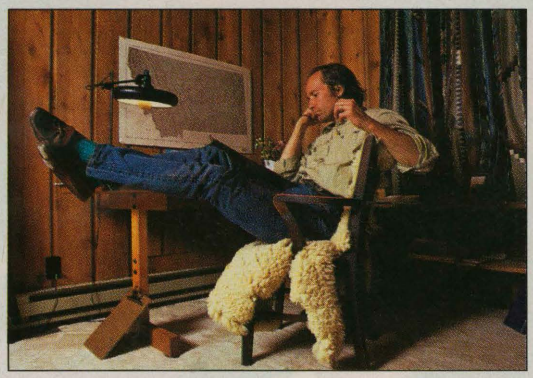
By the late 1970s, a renaissance of wonderful narrative writing was clearly on the bloom in Montana. Jim Harrison came to visit McGuane and wrote *Legends of the Fall* (1979), a novella that is regarded by a large public as one of the most vivid and compelling stories ever written about Montana.

A year later, in 1980, Steven Krauzer and I were editing an edition of the literary magazine, *TriQuarterly*, which was to be devoted to stories about the American West. We got some work from a man named David Quammen, who had come to Montana with a novel published in his senior year at Yale and a Rhodes Scholarship behind him. He had worked as a bartender in Missoula and a fishing guide in Ennis. We published a story called "Walking Out," which details a father/son hunting trip into the Crazy Mountains. The story has since been anthologized nationally maybe a half-dozen times. Quammen has gone on to become one of the finest natural history essayists in America, a career capped in 1987 by the National Magazine Award for Essays and Criticism.



KURT WILSON

RICHARD FORD AT HIS FORMER MISSOULA HOME.

Richard Ford is a man at a delicate place; at this writing he is emerging as one of those fortunate few American writers who have been identified in the popular mind as likely to have a major career. Ford seems to have lived everywhere at one time or another. He grew up in Little Rock and Jackson, went to school in Ann Arbor and Los Angeles, lived in Mexico and New York City, taught at Princeton and Williams, moved to the Mississippi Delta, and then to Montana. [Ford has since moved to New Orleans: ed.] His writing reflects the width of sympathy and unrest and speculation that led him to try so many homes, that restlessness that seems to find its proper residence in the American West. This is true not only of Ford, but also of other writers who have come to settle in Montana, such as David Long and Patricia Henley.

I remember reading a story of Ford's called "Rock Springs" when it first appeared in *Esquire* in 1982 and wondering how these outlanders should be able to write so accurately about the West, often more insightfully than many of us who have lived here all our lives. Much of the answer lies of course in the amount of time they have spent learning their craft, learning to see and pay attention to the life around them. But there are other answers that may be of more interest, at least to other writers in the American West who presumably have spent their own time honing their craft.

I am talking about the perceptions of people who have moved around extensively, looking for places and people they can identify with as uniquely valuable and who then can live with them in emotional comfort. In America these days, that's a tall order.

From Ford and Long and Henley we get stories about escape from that threatening world, in which the only hope seems to lie in finding a calm place where we can go at some decent tasks, engage in straight talk with a few friends, and find a lover with whom to share life as truly as we can manage. Behind this escape we sense a certain rattled despair. We also sense a profound relationship with the truths of our own lives here in Montana, where so many of us have lived an elaborate history of getaway.

This seeking after a good place in which to conduct a good life is the most evident pattern in Montana narratives. In this we are together, both natives such as Maclean and Welch and Doig and those who came from somewhere else such as Hugo and DeMarinis and Crumley and McGuane and Ford. So many of their stories seem to be focused mainly on naming, one way or another, what they value in the Montana they were born to or found. What we find in their stories, over and over again, is talk of home, lost or sought after, or in some conditional way discovered or rediscovered — the possibility of a coherent life in a last best place. ■

Reprinted from The Last Best Place: A Montana Anthology, *University of Washington Press, with permission of the author. William Kittredge is a professor of English and creative writing at the University of Montana. He is the author of* The Van Gogh Field, We Are Not in This Together *and* Owning It All. *His short stories and essays have appeared in* Harper's, Outside *and other national magazines and journals.*

Photographs are courtesy of Travel Montana in Helena, Mont. (800-548-3390).

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Events and personalities parade by—the idealistic beginnings of the United Nations, the miasma of the Vietnam War, J.F.K. and L.B.J., Hemingway and Henry Moore, media moguls from Henry Luce to Mortimer Zuckerman, a host of colorful colleagues. Manning saw much and knew, it seems, practically everybody. He has sensible things to say about press-government relations (the government has the right to keep certain secrets; the press has the duty to dig for everything). Once in a while he ventures an unorthodox opinion (the Cuban missile crisis came nowhere near as close to Armageddon as we think). Still, nothing fades like yesterday's headlines.

The reticence beneath the witty surface of this book isn't just a newsman's conviction that the teller is less important than the story. Rather, Manning seems to have had so many of the right qualities from the start—humor, balance, a gift for friendship, the ability not to get in the way of his own hard work—that he experienced little of the failure or self-questioning that makes autobiographies interesting. "Lucky Bob," he modestly calls himself; the reader isn't quite so fortunate.

THE PURLOINED CLINIC *by Janet Malcolm (Knopf: $23; 382 pp.)* This isn't the place to rehash Janet Malcolm's past troubles (a psychoanalyst filed a landmark libel suit against her and the New Yorker after she allegedly fabricated quotations by him in two 1983 articles) except to note two things: Those articles are not included in this collection of four pieces on psychoanalysis, nine book reviews and three long profiles that Malcolm has written for the New Yorker and the New York Review of Books since 1978. But issues of truth-telling and authenticity are central to them all.

In the title piece, Malcolm writes approvingly of art critic Michael Fried's "disfiguring [a Thomas Eakins painting] almost beyond recognition" so that we can see it in new ways. In articles on family therapy (as witnessed from behind a one-way mirror) and on post-revolutionary malaise in Czechoslovakia, the country of her birth, she peels away defenses layer by layer until her interviewees look raw. In reviewing a biography of Victorian critic Edmund Gosse, she notes his pathological inability to get facts straight, then lets him halfway off the hook—"carelessness, sloppiness, misinformation, misquotation, and fudging of fact are commonplaces"—and then describes the sad fate of John Churton Collins, the "wrathful Defender of the Spirit of Fact" who had the temerity to expose Gosse's errors.

It shouldn't be unfair to Malcolm—who tends to explain people's behavior in terms of Freudian irruptions from the unconscious—to speculate that her obsession with truth-telling is born of her own uneasiness on that score, just as certain womanizing members of Congress have exemplary records of voting for women's rights. In either case, the good may outweigh the harm. The legislation gets passed; the moral urgency of Malcolm's essays transcends their marginal or esoteric subject matter. She has a wicked way with the long sentence, which often ends with a stinger, like a scorpion's tail. And few have ever written as clearly as she about that strangest of truth-mining operations, the excavation on the psychiatrist's couch.

What the Stones Know

By ROBERT DANA

Fire says
"The flesh. The flesh."

Water says
"Hair."

The air says
one or two feathers in a field of wheat.

Earth says
"Sweat."

The mowing
dazzles with the shadows of passing clouds.

I say to my son,

"Write your name
on everything that's yours."

From "What I Think I Know" (Another Chicago Press: $18.95; 174 pp.). © 1991 by Robert Dana. Reprinted by permission.

Fiction

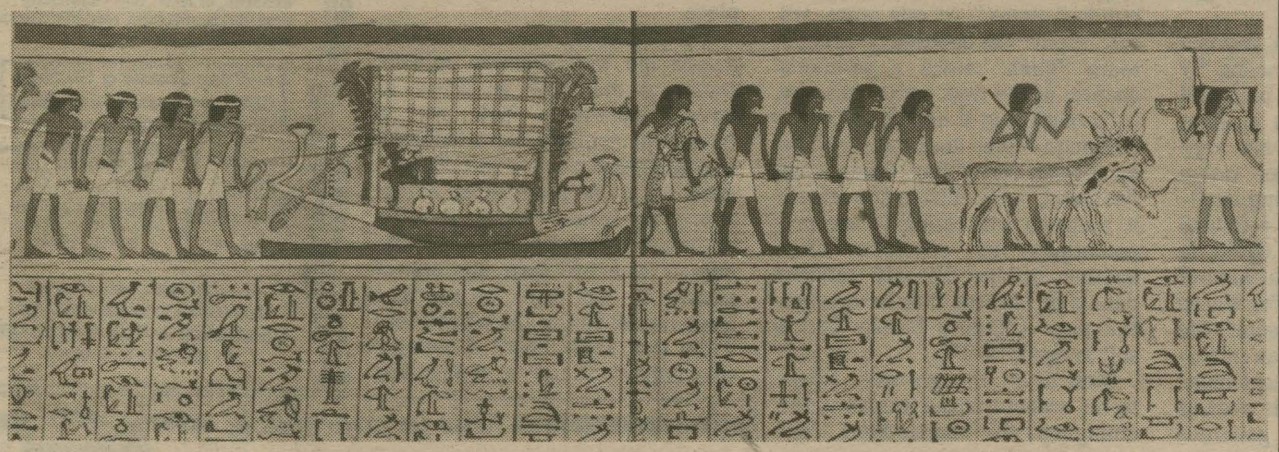
MAZURKA FOR TWO DEAD MEN *by Camilo José Cela, translated from the Spanish by Patricia Haugaard (New Directions: $21.95; 312 pp.)* In this 1983 novel by Nobel Prize-winner Camilo José Cela, the mazurka of the title is played by a blind whorehouse accordionist on two occasions only: when Baldomero (Lionheart) Gamuzo is killed in 1936, at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and when his brother Tanis avenges the murder in 1939. But the mazurka also is the novel itself. Like a musical composition, it arranges apparently random bits of history, legend, gossip, superstition, humor and bawdiness in calculated ways so that meaning emerges from repetitions, recurrences, themes broken off to be completed later.

This isn't as complex as it sounds. Readers used to conventional narratives should have little trouble following this one. The point of Cela's experiment is to immerse the story in its context—a backward, rural area (Galicia, at the northwestern tip of Spain) where life hasn't changed much since medieval times and where people are bound by a web of family ties and regional mythology that, during the war, is torn by the impact of the modern world. Meanwhile, Cela never forgets that the mazurka is a dance. He writes with gusto about that fundamental two-step of human existence: sex and death.

JOURNEY TO THE INTERIOR AND OTHER STORIES *by Lawrence P. Spingarn (Perivale Press: $11.95 (paper); 103 pp.)* Veteran Los Angeles poet and fiction writer Lawrence P. Spingarn makes an odd mixture of these 10 stories. They are subtle yet melodramatic, knowing yet somehow amateurish. Spingarn has little gift for dialogue; he writes in a musty idiom that compromises his descriptions of the present without bringing the past to life. Still, these stories have variety, and something about them that keeps us off balance.

A professor's daughter has a love-hate relationship with the girls her father seduces. A young man confronts an uncle who collaborated with the Nazis. A Nevada woman takes out her resentment of her ne'er-do-well husband on his ailing father. An Egyptian pasha writes to a guilt-ridden English missionary in 1888. The statue of a mermaid changes the luck of a French customs inspector. The screams of tortured prisoners unhinge a writer in Greece.

The awkwardness of Spingarn's stories—the writer's-workshop plots (including a couple of suicides), the insistent prose—is in the foreground. The subtlety is hidden. In some cases, the plot is clear but the characters' perverse nature comes as a surprise; in others, it's the plot that must be traced, like an underground river, across a field of relationships that seem to have played themselves out. ■



THE SMITHSONIAN BOOK OF BOOKS *by Michael Olmert (Smithsonian Books: $45; 320 pp.)* The habit of reading may wax and wane, but books are survival experts. They can hibernate for decades, even centuries, yet spring to life again instantly when opened, conveying to us, in a uniquely intimate way, the dreams and thoughts of other times, other cultures, other minds. To lose oneself in a book is really the privilege of finding oneself in another world. Michael Olmert's "The Smithsonian Book of Books" is a fitting testament to the richness and longevity of book culture. Clearly a labor of love by all concerned, it's a lively, up-to-date and stunningly illustrated Grand Tour, highlighting the multiple guises of the ineffable thing we seek when we haunt bookstores, burrow in libraries or convene in the pages of a book review. Olmert's text is the best sort of essay: vivid, anecdotal, intelligently digressive, inquisitive, informative and entertaining. He includes an amazing range of material. There are chapters covering the first written records on tablets and scrolls, like the above passage from the "Egyptian Book of the Dead"; the monastic trade in illuminated manuscripts; the textual histories of the various religious traditions; medieval record-keeping and account books; the Renaissance explosion of printed books and the first master printers; the history and practice of typography, printing and binding; and much more. The beautifully printed illustrations form what amounts to a second volume running alongside the first. These, with their meticulous captions, are not simply keyed to the prose in a textbookish way. By living an independent life, they interact with the text and amplify it enormously. In addition to a wealth of examples from throughout the history of bookmaking and printing, they provide a fascinating survey of the prolific iconography of the book in visual representation. Mallarmé wrote, "Everything in the world exists to end up in a book," and after reading this one we feel that everything has. Certainly the world of books is contained here so attractively that at the end we're likely to echo the sadness of the medieval scribe who penned at the end of a manuscript, "Goodbye, little book." But of course we don't have to say goodbye—that's what books are all about. **—Thomas Frick**

BOOKS

Seattle author celebrates anniversary edition of 'Sky'

By John Marshall
P-I Reporter

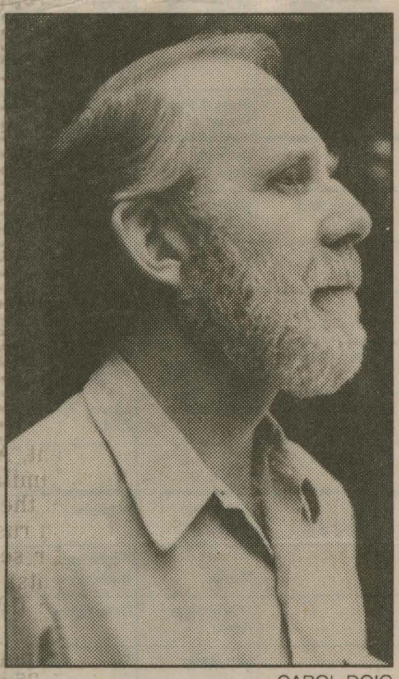
"Beloved" is a description merited by only a few books — and Ivan Doig's "This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind" is certainly among them.

The Seattle author's memoir of his Montana boyhood has been a Western favorite since its publication in 1978. But those who have wanted to replace their well-thumbed paperbacks with a hardback edition have usually had to go to rare-book dealers where they could pay $75 for a book that originally cost $9.95 — if they were lucky enough to find a copy.

No longer. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich has brought out a special 15th anniversary hardback edition of "This House of Sky," priced at $24.95. And it includes a new preface written by Doig that recounts the fitful labors that gave birth to his first book, years of wrestling with what once seemed nothing more than a serendipitous collection of tape recordings and memories, times he now recalls as "gut fear" and "grindstone mornings."

"It would be magnificent," Doig wrote in his journal at the time, "to do the entire book with this slow care, writing it all as highly charged as poetry — but will I ever find the time?"

Doig's writing back then was mostly free-lance work for magazines, but, truth be told, he really lived off the salary earned by his wife, Carol, a professor at Shoreline Community College. And that situation would not change until a few years ago, when Doig did indeed demonstrate that he could, as he puts it, "make more as a writer than raking leaves."



CAROL DOIG

Ivan Doig will read from "This House of Sky" Nov. 12 in Bellevue.

Still, Doig has a special feeling for "This House of Sky," which was nominated for the National Book Award, won the Christopher Award, has been translated into German and has now sold over 135,000 copies. Its style is different than his five other books ("a kind of semi-poetic dense language"), and it came first.

"I don't know if I am fonder of 'Sky' as a piece of prose than my other books," Doig was saying this week. "I'm always in love with my latest piece of work. But 'Sky' was the one that let me proceed as a full-time book writer."

The new hardback edition has given Doig time to reflect on the making of "This House of Sky," including its haunting title and somewhat mysterious subtitle. The title was a compromise — Doig had proposed "In This House of Sky," his editor had countered with "House of Sky" and then they finally settled on a title halfway in between.

The much-mentioned subtitle ("Landscapes of a Western Mind") was his editor's creation. "I've never been entirely sure what it means," Doig admits with characteristic bemusement.

Doig, 53, is now at work on another family memoir, one that focuses on his mother and ends where "Sky" begins: "Soon before daybreak on my sixth birthday, my mother's breathing wheezed more raggedly than ever, then quieted. And then stopped."

The new memoir, "Heart Earth," will be published next fall.

In the meantime, Doig is happily celebrating the occasion of the new hardback edition of "This House of Sky," which his publisher agreed to do after his initial urging. Such an honor had been accorded only to books of Eudora Welty and John Steinbeck in recent years, Harcourt Brace books that company vice president Leigh Haber described yesterday as "modern classics."

Doig will read from "Sky" at 7 p.m. Nov. 12 in the Bellevue branch of University Book Store. And he will sign copies of the new edition at noon Nov. 18 at the main University Book Store.

Rereading "Sky" for the new edition prompted Doig to conclude: "I didn't really see anything I wanted to change. I guess that's the accolade I'd give it."

James C. Williams, '62, '64, '68, Cincinnati, general manager of GE Aircraft Engines' Engineering Materials Technology Lab, was honored at the UW College of Engineering Dean's Recognition Dinner.

R.Y. Woodhouse, '63, '70, '83, Seattle, president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, received UW College of Arts and Sciences 1992 Distinguished Achievement Award.

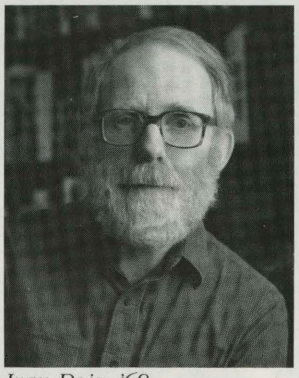
Sandra Lewis, '65, '70, Seattle, is executive director of the Alzheimer's Assn.

Rick Rose, '65, Lakeville, Minn., is a warranted contracting officer for the Resolution Trust Corp. and has been certified as an arbitrator for the American Arbitration Assn. He and Linda have two children.

Attention Class of '67

Your 25-year reunion will be held during Homecoming Weekend, Nov. 13-14. A block of tickets for the UW-Oregon State game also is available. See events article on pages 34-35. For reservations, call Christine Howeiler at 543-0540 or 1-800-AUW-ALUM.

R.J. Kirsten, '67, Gig Harbor, owns and operates Kirsten and Stillwater art galleries in Seattle



Ivan Doig, '69

and is a fine art print publisher with 525 vendors in the U.S.

Ed Miller, '67, Everett, sold his charter fishing business last year to establish the Snohomish River Queen Management Corp., offering river boat tours.

William A. Edwards, '68, San Rafael, Calif., continues to serve as the sociology chair at the Univ. of San Francisco.

Robert Berkovitz, '69, Mesa, Ariz., a fire weather meteorologist, recently taught classes for federal agencies in Texas and New Mexico and will do so in Virginia this fall.

Bill Brooker, '69, Olympia, is resident engineer for environmental projects at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District.

PEG PHILLIPS



Peg Phillips — who plays the endearing shopkeeper, Ruth Anne, on the hit TV show *Northern Exposure* — hasn't completed her UW degree yet. But, have no doubt, she will. Just as soon as her acting career allows her the time.

Even as a child in Everett, Phillips felt the call of stage and screen, and she grew up with the dream of attending the UW's drama school. Unfortunately, Depression-era economics put her dream out of reach. She married a Navy man, later divorced, lived all over the country and raised four children. For 40 years, she worked as an accountant to support her family.

But Phillips never lost her optimism or her interest in acting. "I was enough of a detail person that I could be happy about two and two making four," she says of her years as an accountant. Besides, she never forgot her father's advice to "live every day as if it were your last on earth."

For years she honed her skills in amateur performances with local drama groups and community theaters. Then, finally back "home" in the Northwest, Phillips, at age 65, enrolled at the UW School of Drama in 1984. She performed as Mom in *True West* her first year and fell in love with theater history under Professor Jack Wolcott. The experience, she says, exceeded her wildest expectations, and before long she was in demand as an actress.

With the help of an agent she found through the UW drama counseling office, Phillips began her belated professional career with regional TV commercials and bit parts in television movies and feature films including *Chase*, *Dixie Lane*, *Dangerous Affection*, *Plain Clothes*, *Waiting for the Light* and *Dog Fight*. But her big break came in 1990 when she was cast as the soft-hearted but feisty proprietor of the Cicely, Alaska general store on *Northern Exposure*. Originally hired for just one episode, Phillips has appeared in almost every show since the series began. The role is ideal for the energetic, 5-foot-3-inch brunette who acknowledges that she isn't interested in roles where she would portray an apron-clad "cookie-jar grandmother."

Indeed, more than the role is ideal. She likes the "reasonable stories" that the show tells, how it deals with social issues, and how the entire cast and crew (more than 100 people) work beautifully together. And conveniently for Phillips — who lives near Seattle — *Northern Exposure* is filmed in Roslyn, Wash.

Even with her success, Phillips still finds time for her pet project — a drama workshop program at Echo Glen Children's Center, a correctional center for 10- to 20-year-olds who have committed major crimes. As founder and director of the program, she works with local teachers, directors, actors and drama students to introduce the residents to the performing arts.

"It is one of the few voluntary activities that these kids can choose," she says, "and it allows them to learn cooperation and to try on different roles. We've worked with more than 300 kids and never had a major behavior problem. That says something about the power of drama."

Now 73, Phillips shows no signs of slowing down. "I come from a long line of small, tough, hardworking Scottish people," she laughs, "who just never die."

Ivan Doig, '69, Seattle, received UW College of Arts and Sciences 1992 Distinguished Achievement Award. He is the author of six books, including *This House of Sky*, about his childhood in Montana, which was nominated for a National Book Award.

Deni Linehan, '69, Modesto, Calif., is a realtor.

Julie Weston, '69, Seattle, was recently elected secretary of the board of directors of Goodwill Industries. She is also a volunteer in Goodwill's adult literacy program.

1970

Daisy E. Arredondo, '70, '74, '83, Columbia, Mo., is on the educational administration faculty at the Univ. of Missouri.

Sachiko Lakahashi, '71, Tokyo, is an interior designer for the Japanese government and is looking forward to hosting UW architecture professors this year.

Ross Dwinell, '72, Vancouver, Wash., is president of Grocers Insurance Group.

Eleanor Barber Malmfeldt, '72, Windsor, Conn., has been the librarian at Mansfield Middle School in Storrs ("the *other* Husky town") for 18 years and is now also overseeing the town's three elementary schools.

Thomas Hendrickson, '73, Foster City, Calif., is an architect with McLellan & Copenhagen and has been working on several UW projects, including the new chemistry and computer science buildings.

Jon McCormick, '73, Port Alberni, B.C., teaches high school English and operates a personal protection consulting business.

Greg Jacobson, '74, '75, Colleyville, Texas, recently was appointed vice president-finance for GTE Telephone Operations-Central Area.



Michael T. Benson, '78, '87

Mike Rumberger, '74, '78, Kirkland, has recently left US West to co-found Synectics, Ltd., a telecommunications consulting firm.

Karen Anderson Chushcoff, '75, Tacoma, after a 10-year stint in mortgage lending, became "a casualty of the current trend in bank-merging" and earned her elementary education teaching certificate from Evergreen State College. She is in her second year with the Bethel School District. Husband ***Bryan E. Chushcoff***, '74, is an attorney.

Stephen P. Sakai, '75, West Chester, Pa., writes that he has been promoted to director of planning and business systems for Scott Paper.

Duane Covey, '76, Seattle, has been named general manager of Telepage Northwest. He will oversee technical, marketing, administrative and finance operations.

Sharon D. Rollins, '76, Seattle, has been a teacher for 14 years, currently with the Seattle Public Schools gifted program.

Mary Cahill, '77, Chevy Chase, Md., earned her J.D. degree in 1987 and is with the Justice Management Division, U.S. Dept. of Justice, in Washington, D.C.

Ed Joyce, '77, Corvallis, Ore., received public affairs, sound use and news writing awards

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A&S

Spring 1992, Vol. 3, No. 3

PERSPECTIVES

Newsletter of the University of Washington College of Arts and Sciences



DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Dean's Club Honors Faculty and Alumni

More than 125 friends of Arts and Sciences gathered on May 19 for the Dean's Club event, held annually to acknowledge the generosity of the College's donors and to highlight exceptional faculty and alumni. Arts and Sciences alumni **Ivan Doig** and **R. Y. Woodhouse** were honored with Distinguished Achievement Awards.

Barbara Akers, Arts and Sciences Development Advisory Board member, opened the evening's festivities by thanking the College's donors for their support. Dean **Joe Norman** then gave a brief overview of noteworthy activities around the College, including Arts and Sciences' increased emphasis on improving undergraduate education. "We have made profound changes in classes ranging from chemistry to art history, and we can see the results in greatly reduced drop-out rates and increased student comprehension," he said. "The improvements affect 9,000 students every quarter—nearly one-third of the undergraduate student body."

Following his comments, Dean Norman presented Dean's Recognition Awards to 14 Arts and Sciences faculty who have been honored for their teaching or research during the past year. The group included:

■ Liberal Arts Professors for 1990-91 and 1991-92: **Collett Cox**, assistant professor of Asian lanaguages and literature; **Michael Williams**, associate professor of comparative religion; **Kent Guy**, associate professor of international studies and history; and **John Palka**, professor of zoology;

■ 1991 Distinguished Teaching Award recipients **Stephen Woods**, professor of psychology, and **K. Tsianina Lomawaima**, assistant professor of anthropology/American Indian studies;

■ **Norman Rose**, professor of chemistry, who recently was named Washington State Professor of the Year by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education;

■ **Leigh Thompson**, assistant professor of psychology, who received a Presidential Young Investigator (PYI) award;

■ **Mark Cooper**, assistant professor of zoology, who received both a PYI award and a Sloan Fellowship;

■ Guggenheim Fellowship recipients **Victoria Foe**, research associate professor of zoology, and **Daniel Chirot**, professor of international studies;

■ **David Wagoner**, professor of English, who was honored with the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize;

■ **Bruce Kowalski**, professor of chemistry, who has been named to the Endowed Professorship in Analytical Chemistry; and

■ **Hans Dehmelt**, professor of physics and the first Boeing Professor of Physics.

The Dean's Club event is held annually to acknowledge the generosity of the College's donors and to highlight exceptional faculty and alumni.



At the Dean's Club event, Arts and Sciences alumni R.Y. Woodhouse, left, and Ivan Doig were honored with the College's Distinguished Achievement Awards. Photo by Mary Levin.

Attention then turned to Arts and Sciences' distinguished alumni. In recognition of their accomplishments, two alumni were selected to receive the Arts and Sciences Distinguished Achievement Award. The award has been presented annually since 1990.

This year's recipients both received degrees from the College in the 1960s. R. Y. Woodhouse, president and chief executive officer of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, graduated in 1963 with a B. A. in Sociology. She went on to receive two more degrees at the UW: a master's degree in social work and a Ph.D. in educational policy, governance, and administration. Education remains a priority for Woodhouse, who currently is chair of the Board of Trustees of Central Washington University.



Garrett Eddy, left, chatted with Brigitte and Sievert Rohwer at the Dean's Club event. This summer Eddy will join Rohwer, professor of Zoology and Burke Museum curator of birds, on an expedition to Siberia. (See page 3 for details.) Photo by Mary Levin.

Ivan Doig received a Ph.D. in history in 1969 and went on to become a bestselling author. His first book, *This House of Sky*, was nominated for the National Book Award in contemporary thought. He has written five more books and has received the Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award for Literary Excellence five times. After accepting his Distinguished Achievement Award, Doig read from his novel *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*.

To cap the evening's events, UW music student **David Wolff** performed a short program of Chopin on the piano. Wolff, 16, entered the UW through the Early Entrance Program, a program for gifted students.

Tons of Money for School of Drama

The School of Drama selected a perfectly named play—*Tons of Money*—to help kick off its campaign for a School of Drama Endowed Scholarship Fund. A sell-out crowd of more than 150 people attended a black-tie performance of the play on April 21.

The event also celebrated the reopening and renaming of the Penthouse Theatre, which had been closed for renovations since being moved to the north end of campus last summer. The theatre has been renamed the Glenn Hughes Penthouse Theatre in honor of the man who inspired it. The 50-year-old Penthouse Theatre was the United States' first constructed theatre-in-the-round.

The School of Drama hopes to build its Endowed Scholarship Fund to at least $150,000 and provide three full scholarships each year.

"The three scholarships could have a broader effect than one might imagine," says **Mary Hensel**, Arts and Sciences Director of Development. "The recruitment of exceptional students serves to inspire other students, buoy faculty expectations, and raise the caliber of the program."

Several friends of the School of Drama have already come forward to support drama students. The **Valerie Ellis Fleming** Fellowship for students in the Professional Actor's Training Progam (PATP) will be awarded for the first time this year. The Duncan Ross Fellowship, also for PATP students, has received recent pledges from **Kayla Skinner** and **Jane and David Davis**. The Peg Locke Newman Fellowship is being established as a school-wide fellowship with a bequest from **Peg Newman**. And a group of alumni have established the Glenn Hughes Scholarship to provide full support to a drama undergraduate.

For more information on the School of Drama Endowed Scholarship Fund, please contact Mary Hensel at (206) 543-5340.

Music Scholarship Students to Perform

Interested in attending an afternoon of performances by exceptional UW musicians? The School of Music's Visiting Committee is planning an event that should fill the bill. "Catch a Rising Star" will be the School's first annual scholarship benefit concert, featuring three outstanding scholarship students. David Wolff, who performed at the Dean's Club event, will be one of the performers. The proceeds from the event will go toward increasing the scholarship fund.

The concert will be held in the School of Music's Brechemin Auditorium on Sunday, October 18 at 3 p.m. Mark your calendars! For more information, call the School of Music at 543-1200. ■



To celebrate the reopening of the Penthouse Theatre, School of Drama students performed in Tons of Money. *Photo by Christoph Maier.*

Thought you might like to see this.
Busy getting ready to retire this month.
Regards L. Reddick

Look t

Library

Explor n

Editor's Note umn is writt Mitchell, reference librarian at the Estes Park Public Library.

Librarians call them the "hot" books.

They're the ones found at the top of the best-seller lists, the ones that sizzle when you touch their dust covers.

You know the titles: John Grisham's "Pelican Brief," Judith Krantz's "Scruples Two," Clive Cussler's "Sahara," and Robert Parker's "Double Deuce."

Some of these "hot" books have waiting lists, so you may have to cool your heels a week or so before you can get your hands on them.

While you wait, why don't you take a look at some authors just outside the glare of the best-seller spotlight.

They just might surprise you with the quality of their writing.

I've known about Ivan Doig for some time, having enjoyed his wonderful non-fiction work "This House of Sky."

But I had never read any of his fiction until Larae Essman and former library director Ted Schmidt (now director of the Loveland Public Library) twisted my arm and demanded that I read one of their favorite authors: Ivan Doig.

Doig's "English Creek" is a delight. It is about a boy growing up in Montana on the eve of World War II.

No one describes a country picnic better than Doig, or for that matter, a rodeo or a square dance.

If you are interested in the way the West used to be, read Doig.

I've also heard good things about Doig's "Dancing at the Rascal Fair."

If your taste runs toward the more classic western authors, check out Louis L'Amour's "Four Complete Novels." This thick volume contains his classic short novels: "The Tall Stranger,"

and
e."
prings

thoughts of baseball books.

Pulitzer-prize winner Michael Shaara has written a slim baseball novel titled "For Love of the Game." It's about Billy Chapel, after 17 years a sure Hall of Fame pitcher, pitching the last game of his career, a game that will decide which team goes to the World Series.

Then there's Peter Lefcourt's "The Dreyfus Affair," in which the all-star shortstop falls in love with the second baseman, in the middle of the pennant race! Imagine the ramifications.

A dead body is found in the stands after yet another Met loss in Michael Bowen's "Fielder's Choice." Can sleuth Sandy Curry solve the mystery with the help of her new knowledge of baseball?

Then there are your straightforward mysteries, with a comic twist.

When Susan Nebens backs her car out of the garage and accidentally crushes her father-in-law to death, she is consumed with guilt. She never meant to kill the poor man.

But will the authorities understand? When she decides to hide the body in a bag of grass clippings, Ralph McInerny's "Infra Dig" really gets rolling.

Leona Blair's "The Side of the Angels" promises it all: sex, riches, fame.

Abandoned by her mother and isolated from her father, Katherine Ballard struggles with her life until she is invited to a grand South Carolina estate by her distant grandmother.

Though she has it all, she throws it all away for romance when she marries an actor. Then the sparks really fly.

This Literary Guild selection promises to be a summer sizzler.

So when you're waiting for that latest "hot" best-seller, why not try another book that you can pick up without a potholder.

You may enjoy it.

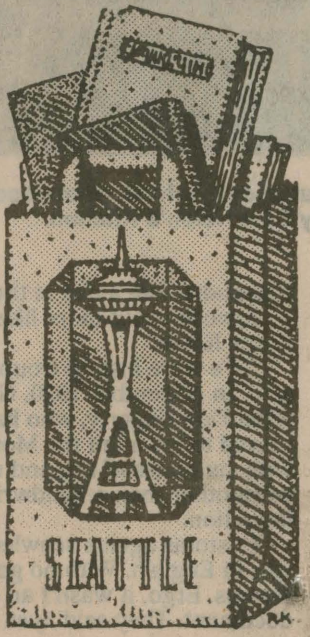
Hardback fiction

1. "Sahara," Clive Cussler
2. "Ricochet River," Robin Cody
3. "A Thousand Acres," Jane Smiley
4. "The Brothers K," David James Duncan
5. "The Living," Annie Dillard
6. "The Losers," David Eddings
7. "The Evening Star," Larry McMurtry
8. "Griffin & Sabine," Nick Bantock
9. "Jewels," Danielle Steel
10. "The Bridges of Madison County," Robert James Waller

■ Last week's best sellers in the Northwest, as reported by Pacific Pipeline Inc., a regional book distributor based in Kent.

Hardback nonfiction

1. "The Way I See It," Patti Davis
2. "Hard Drive: Bill Gates and the Making of the Microsoft Empire," James Wallace and Jim Erickson
3. "The Juiceman's Power of Juicing," Jay Kordich
4. "Jenny Craig's What Have You Got to Lose?," Jenny Craig with Brenda . Wolfe
5. "The Silent Passage: Menopause," Gail Sheehy
6. "Playing in the Dark," Toni Morrison
7. "Care of the Soul," Thomas Moore
8. "The War Against Women," Marilyn French
9. "Chief: My Life in the L.A.P.D.," Darrel Gates
10. "A Brief History of Time," Stephen Hawking



Trade Paperback - Fiction

1. "Daisy Fay & the Miracle Man," Fannie Flagg
2. "Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe," Fannie Flagg
3. "When I am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple," edited by Sandra Martz
4. "Animal Dreams," Barbara Kingsolver
5. "A Time to Kill," John Grisham
6. "The Bean Trees," Barbara Kingsolver
7. "English Creek," Ivan Doig
8. "A River Runs Through It," Norman MacLean
9. "Thousand Pieces of Gold," Ruthanne Lum McCunn
10. "Dancing at the Rascal Fair," Ivan Doig

P.I. 5-31-92

Truth Emerges in Writer's Love of Lingo

■ **Books:** Ivan Doig, author of a trilogy about a Western family and other books, creates scenes that 'come right up off the page and get you.'

By BRAD KNICKERBOCKER
THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Toward the end of "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," the third in Ivan Doig's 100-year trilogy about the McCaskill family, there's a 30-second scene in which a character jumps out of a Winnebago fueling up at a gas station, runs over to the sign for "Air & Water" and grease-pencils the other two ancient Greek elements, "Earth & Fire."

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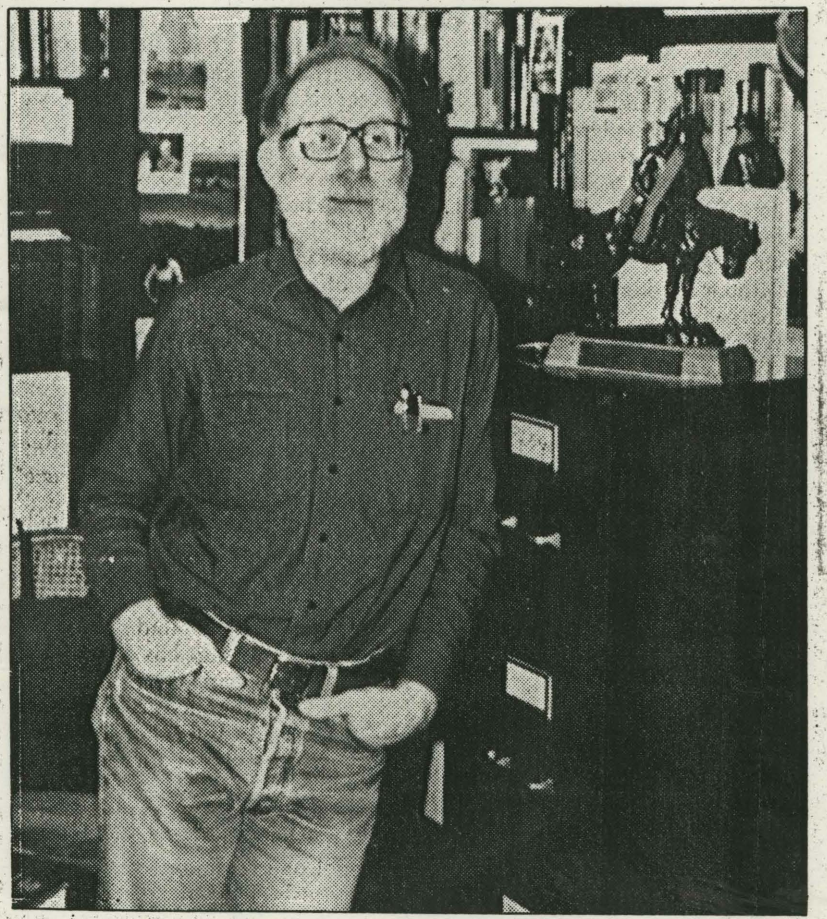

BRAD KNICKERBOCKER / Christian Science Monitor

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The thing that connects many of these writers, he acknowledges, is love of the spectacular landscape. "But I don't agree that that's our strongest muscle," he says.

"The language, the style, the craft is of such a skill that I don't see why this kind of travelogue tag is at all justified. I mean, Louise Erdrich is a world-class writer—the equivalent of Robert Penn Warren. Jim Welch in 'Fools Crow' has produced a truly great book. Bill Kittredge has been a unique writer. I mean, this is increasingly fine stuff and, even if it appeared on a barren planet, it would be unique writing."

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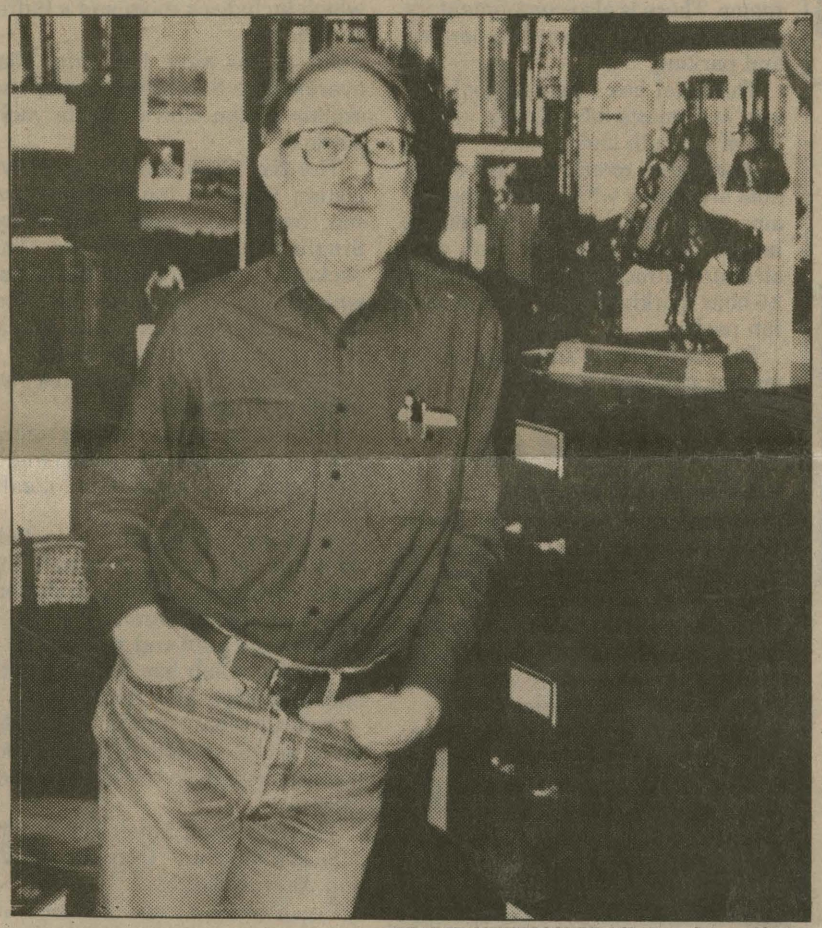

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1992 50¢ ($1.00 CANADIAN)

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VOL. 84, NO. 54

ROBERT HARBISON – STAFF



Salvation Army Headquarters, Nashua, N.H.
Rosa Vasquez takes home purchases for the children. Points of the Compass looks at New Hampshire's tough economy as an election backdrop. **PAGE 10.**

New Hampshire Primary Bares Dark US Mood

Voters poised to send message to politicians as recession dampens hopes for the future

By John Dillin
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

NASHUA, N.H.

KEN JACOBY, head of a small printing firm in downtown Nashua, sums up the prevailing mood in New Hampshire about America's economy.

"It's been going downhill since about 1988," says Mr. Jacoby, who has laid off one of his five employees at The Print Factory. "I've heard no optimism from any place other than Washington."

Next week's presidential primary in New Hampshire marks the first major election of the post-cold-war era, and economic depression has supplanted anticommunism as the No. 1 issue. Voters here are spoiling to send a strong message to the nation's politicians.

President Bush, battling conservative Patrick Buchanan in New Hampshire's Republican primary, remains heavily favored to win his party's nomination. And most analysts still believe Mr. Bush will defeat the Democratic nominee in the November general election.

But judging by the somber mood of voters in New Hampshire, the president's success this year is no longer assured.

Across the country, a profound change has taken place during the past 12 months in the attitudes of voters, especially members of the middle class, according to political experts. Prolonged recession has created a foreboding that the American dream of broad-based prosperity might be slipping away.

Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas, the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination, observes that people are concerned that the United States could soon see "the first generation of Americans to do worse than their parents."

This sense of unease among Americans comes after 45 years of national sacrifice to halt communist expansion around the globe. In that period, the nation spent trillions of dollars for defense, lost more than 100,000 lives in wars, and ran up the largest national debt in the history of the world.

Although victorious, the US now finds itself with a monumental task of rebuilding at home. Bridges are crumbling, schools are

See **VOTERS** *next page*

Israelis Scramble to Keep Up With Pace of New Diplomatic Ties

By Peter Ford
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Foreign Ministry, flush with a spate of recent successes in breaking the Jewish state's diplomatic isolation, has run into an unexpected problem.

It does not have enough experienced diplomats to staff all the new embassies it wants to set up in the countries that have decided to open diplomatic ties with Israel.

"Each time I ring up the administration people, they are afraid I'm going to tell them we have established diplomatic relations with yet another country," says Moshe Yegar, head of the ministry's Asia and Africa desk, only half jokingly. "They grumble that we don't have the budget and we don't have the manpower to staff all these new missions."

Though the speed of Israel's recent breakout from diplomatic quarantine has taken diplomats here by surprise, they add quickly that stretching their resources is a small price to pay for widening the country's net of international diplomatic relations.

That trend was dramatically highlighted in the last week of January, when in the space of a few days both China and India, accounting for half of the world's population, established full diplomatic links with the Jewish state.

Ostracized by a large proportion of the world community for nearly a quarter of a century since the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, Israel has finally won broad international acceptance, enjoying normal diplomatic relations with 104 of the 166 United Nations member states.

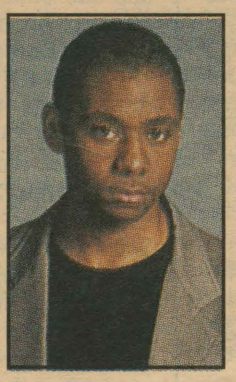
See **ISRAEL** *next page*

Strong Words From Dublin
New Irish prime minister's sharp condemnation of terrorism in Northern Ireland raises peace hopes.
3

Aussies May Soon Fly More Efficient Skies
Deregulation could lower airfares and boost tourism.
7

Make Way For Turtles
Nevada ranchers are being asked to move their cattle from 1.7 million acres of public land to save the desert tortoise.
8

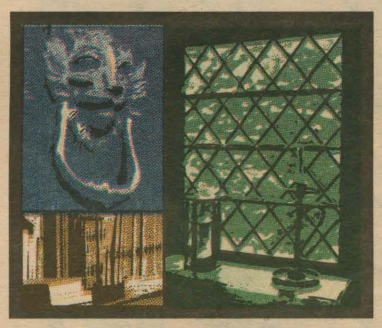
Sprawling Olympics
Future Games may be held in more than one country, but with one city given overall responsibility.
12



Branford Marsalis On the Move
Saxophonist shifts into high gear with opportunities in film, TV, and recording.
14

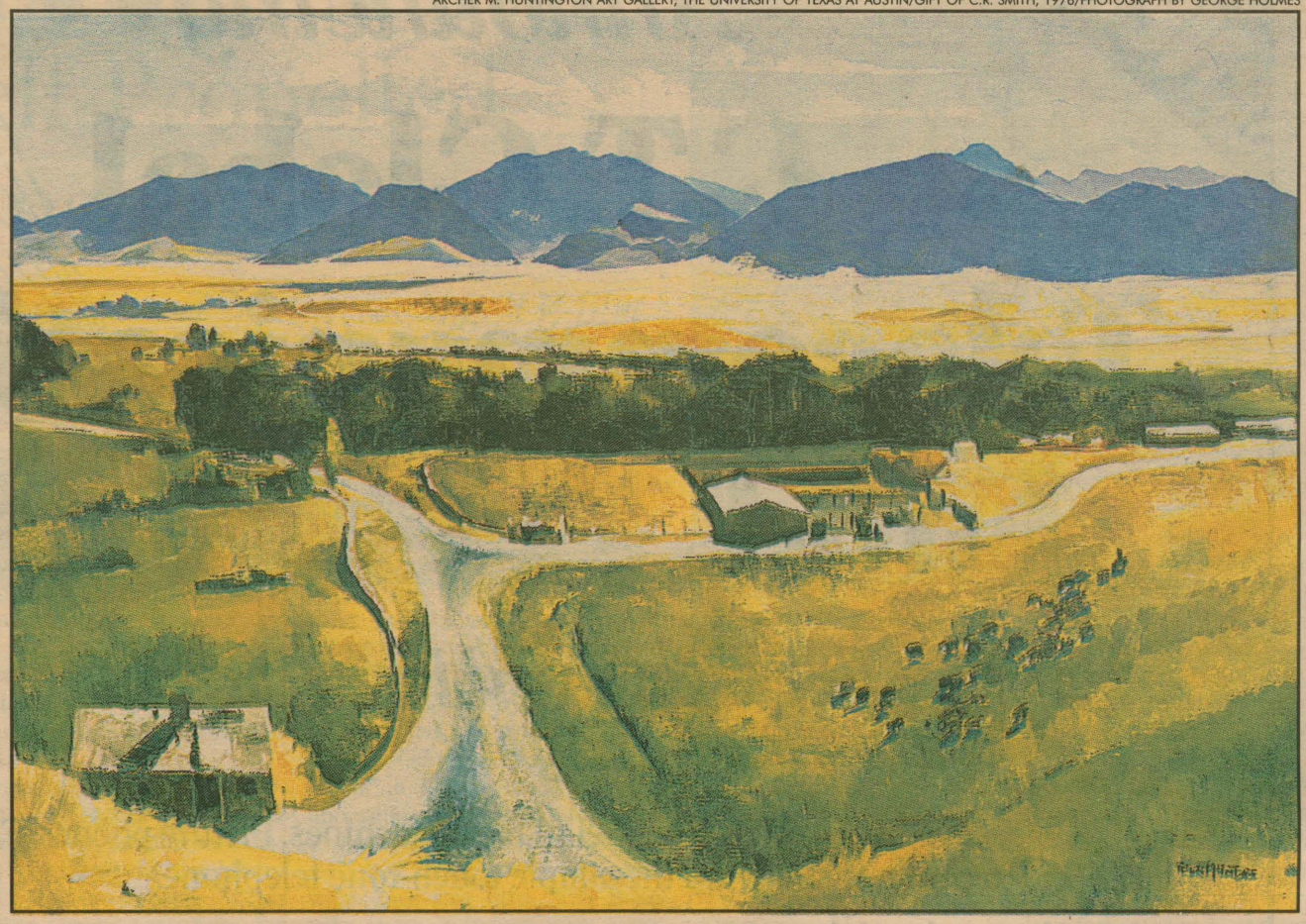
Fiction From Big Sky Country
Novelist Ivan Doig captures the minutiae of life on Montana ranches – a Home Forum interview.
16

Columbus, As Viewed From Latin America
A Paraguayan comments on the uneasy meshing of Spanish and Indian cultures.
19



THE HOME FORUM®

ARCHER M. HUNTINGTON ART GALLERY, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN/GIFT OF C.R. SMITH, 1976/PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE HOLMES



'LONGHORN RANCH, MADISON VALLEY, ENNIS, MONTANA (1971): *Oil on canvas, 23 3/8 by 33 1/2 in., by Peter McIntyre.*

Fiction From the 'Big Sky' Country

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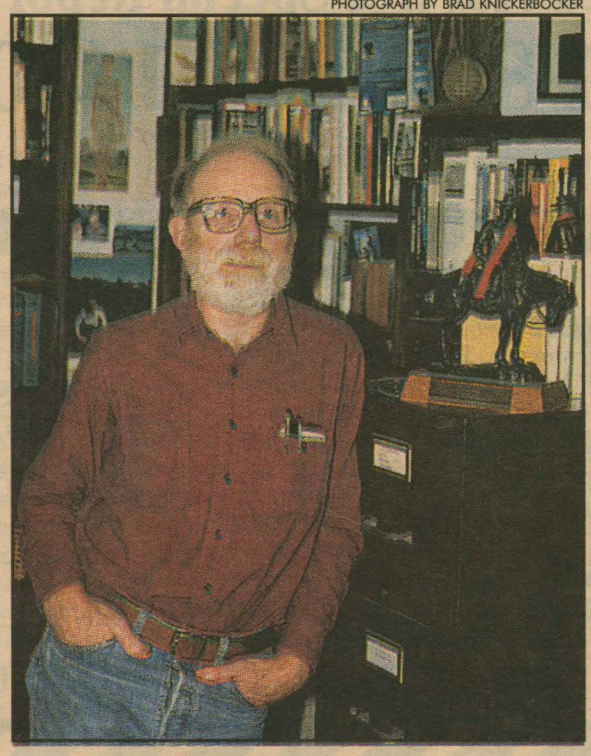
Later, he dug back into Depression-era Works Progress Administration writers' files in Montana to learn how Anaconda Copper smeltermen, cattle ranchers, and sheep ranchers talked in the early part of the century. The sound of the spoken word is very important to him – "the shimmer behind the plot" feeding the "delicious hunger of the ear." He was careful to have the two Scotsmen gradually lose their burr over the 30 years of "Rascal Fair."

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRAD KNICKERBOCKER



IVAN DOIG AT HIS SEATTLE HOME

When he wanted to include scenes about fighting fires, he had four forest rangers check his manuscript for details. He photocopied old Forest Service cookbooks so he would know what it was like to cook for 75 men in the woods.

"I'm always looking for details," he says. "The details are what the skeins of life germinate out of." He loves to repeat Vladimir Nabokov's instruction to students at Cornell University that they must write "with the passion of the scientist and the precision of the artist."

In a spare bedroom office he shares with his wife at home in the north end of Seattle, Doig works away at an old gray Royal typewriter. The remembrance of Scottish ancestors are in his sandy hair and beard. Just back from 50 book readings and signings in San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Chicago, and Minnesota, he relaxes in jeans, a red-striped shirt, and Birkenstocks.

Shelved around him are his favorite writers, including Wallace Stegner, Nadine Gordimer, John Steinbeck, Isak Dinesen, Edward Hoagland, Robinson Jeffers, Loren Eisley, Beryl Markham, Eudora Welty, Frank O'Connor, Joseph Conrad, Barbara Tuchman, Gretel Ehrlich, and William Faulkner. Contemporary western historians Patricia Nelson Limerick and Donald Worster are there. And also "The Songwriter's Rhyming Dictionary," by Sammy Kahn.

"I like people who dance on the page," he says, leaning back in his chair. "Anybody hip-deep in love with the language." One of his characters in "Mariah Montana" says, "Language is the light that comes out of us."

But "with nine-tenths of the ink of this century now expended," he told the western historians in Nevada, "modern American fiction in terms of originality and staying power still adds up to 'Faulkner and the rest of us.' "

On another shelf, just next to

where he writes, are his notebooks: "Comparison and Description," "Ideas," "Lingo," "Anecdotes," "Phrasing," and "Technique." Bits and pieces waiting to be worked into future projects.

His next book, which will focus on his mother (based on letters to an uncle during World War II, interviews with family members, and his dim recollections as a small boy), will feature "deliberate dreams."

"It's the only way I can think of to get at what might have gone on beyond what I can hear and see," he explains. When it comes right down to it, he admits, "a lot of style and technique is best guess." Then, too, "the alchemy of language carries with it the high probability of fizzle."

Of the growing recognition of contemporary literature coming out of the American West, he says: "I think there are enough classy writers west of St. Paul that scholars will eventually have to write about them as a group as they did about the Southern fugitives."

The thing that connects many of these writers, he acknowledges, is love of the spectacular landscape.

"But I don't agree that that's our strongest muscle," he says. "The language, the style, the craft is of such a skill that I don't see why this kind of travelogue tag is at all justified. I mean, Louise Erdrich is a world-class writer – the equivalent of Robert Penn Warren. Jim Welch in "Fools Crow" has produced a truly great book. Bill Kittredge has been a unique writer. I mean, this is increasingly fine stuff, and even if it appeared on a barren planet it would be unique writing."

Yet Doig and many of his contemporaries do connect with the land and worry about what's become of it over the past century or so.

"It is saddening that a lot of what we tried in the West – with reasonably good intentions – has not worked out," he says. "Plowing up the prairies was not a good idea. Pulling up the ore and running it poisonously through smelter stacks turns out not to have been a good idea. Damming up every river of any consequence except the Yellowstone hasn't been a good idea, either. So the stance many of us write from out here is 'Wait a minute, we'd better try something else.' " In "Mariah Montana," Jick McCaskill arranges to protect his land when he retires from sheep ranching without selling out to developers or a big agri-business spread.

The result of Ivan Doig's passion for detail and "the lingo" is more than the sum of the parts. Much more, and it comes through most obviously in the clear personality and especially the sound character of the people we meet.

He has been described by one reviewer as "the most hopeful of writers – not blindly optimistic but deeply humanistic." A friend of mine wrote recently: "Over the past year I read most of his books and just fell in love with his characters and their goodness, and of course his descriptions of the West."

Another says she slows down when she gets near the end of a Doig novel because she doesn't want it to end. Not to worry. He's got many productive years ahead of him and plenty of history to mine ... with passion and precision.

Brad Knickerbocker

'Ride With Me, Mariah Montana'

Despite their differences, rancher Jick McCaskill, his daughter Mariah, and her ex-husband Riley have packed their lives into a Winnebago and are driving around Montana. Mariah, a photographer, and Riley, a journalist, are on assignment for the Missoula Montanian newspaper – hoping to capture the spirit of the state 100 years after it joined the Union. Jick, acting as chauffeur, narrates their story. The following is an excerpt from Ivan Doig's most recent book, "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana."

A YAPPITY pup careened across the yard to challenge the Bago. I braked just in time to keep him from becoming a pup pancake.

The canine commotion brought a woman out onto the porch of the older house. Plentiful without being plump, in blue jeans ageworn to maximum comfort and a red-checked shirt with a yoke of blue piping in emphasis across the chest, she still was wearing her hair in a summer hank – it sheened whiter than gray, grayer than white – more abbreviated than a ponytail, to keep it off her neck in back. Somewhat leathered and weathered, she nonetheless had a well-preserved appearance: time simply paid its respects to a face like that. She stood deliberating at the motorhome while the kiyi chorus of the pup reached new crescendos, until Riley slid back the sidewindow and yelled out, "Call off your dog pack, Mother, we're relatively peaceful."

"Here, Manslaughter," she spoke to the barking guardian and patted a denim thigh for him to come to her. By now the woman had recognized Mariah's red hair as well as Riley's vocal presence and she came down off the porch striding quickly, in a kind of aimed glide, toward the Winnebago as if she had something vital to deliver. But when the *Montanian* duo stepped out of the motorhome, followed by me, Riley's mother halted a good distance away and somehow managed to gaze from one to the other of them and both of them at once while saying diagnostically, "I saw by your performances in the paper that you two are tangled together again."

Riley, trust him, cupped a hand to his ear and asked, "Did I hear a 'hello' or was that thunder?" Then he brassed on over as if doing a major favor by delivering a kiss to his matriarch.

"It would help, Riley, it really would, if you'd keep me informed as to when you're on speaking terms with her," his mother gazed indicatively straight at Mariah, "so I can stay in step. Couldn't you have it announced on the radio or something?"

A watcher of this didn't have to be rocket-swift to pretty speedily realize that Riley's mother had as much peeve built up at Mariah as I did at Riley and for the one and same reason, the crash of their marriage. Why this surprised me any I don't know – just one more case of an in-law flopped into an outlaw – but it did.

Mariah looked like she'd rather be juggling hot coals, but she said to the silver-haired woman, "We maybe both better get in practice on our terms, how about."

Riley's mother eyed my daughter skeptically. Then perhaps registering the echo of McCaskill boneline in Mariah's form and my own over Mariah's shoulder, she cast her first full look at me. A moment was required to decipher me under the beard and then her eyes went wide.

"Jick!" she let out with her blaze of a smile. "Hello again."

"'Lo, Leona."

Half a century it had been, since I first said that. Since Leona Tracy, as she was then, all but married my brother Alec.

■ *Reprinted by arrangement with Atheneum Publishers, an imprint of Macmillian Publishing Company, from "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," by Ivan Doig, ©1990 by Ivan Doig.*

Never Hopeless

IN many parts of the world today, conditions still seem hopeless. Although repressive governments are becoming somewhat less monolithic, there are still areas where freedom is desperately needed. If this seemingly endless struggle were all we could expect, we could perhaps justify the depression and hopelessness that we sometimes feel. Christ Jesus' ministry, however, shows clearly that there is something beyond this finite view of life—that there is hope even in the midst of darkness.

Take Jesus' own example. After the crucifixion, his followers felt the situation was hopeless. Many of them were frightened for their own lives. His resurrection from the grave changed all that. And when the disciples perceived anew the power of Jesus' teachings, they preached fearlessly despite the danger. In short, they had gone beyond a merely human concept of hoping, to the kind of hope that comes from confidence in God.

They were galvanized by the need to share this good news with all. The basis of their ministry was the fact that man is truly spiritual. He is not, and never was, a mortal who could somehow be separated from God or who is the helpless victim of material conditions. We are, in reality, the ideas of God, divine Mind, or Love. This means that each of us has direct access to Love. And it also means that we can never be deprived of Love. The result is that we are never truly alone before a hopeless situation. We always have the presence of God with us.

The Christian Science Monitor's Religious Article

This presence is Christ, the true idea of Love, and it is what Christ Jesus worked so hard to leave to the world. One significant example of Jesus' attitude when confronting seemingly hopeless conditions is the time when he raised Lazarus to life after he had been dead for four days. The mourners certainly felt hopeless; Lazarus's sisters were more trusting in Jesus, although they were not without doubts. I have often pondered the difference in perspective between Jesus and these other people. The Master, perceiving the spiritual nature of things, was confident of the power of God. The others seemed to think that the best Jesus could do was comfort the sisters in their loss. He did comfort them, but not in the expected way.

After asking for the stone that sealed Lazarus's grave to be removed, Jesus turned to God and said: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." Then he simply cried, John's Gospel tells us, "Lazarus, come forth." And a seemingly hopeless condition was completely turned around.

It is so clear from Jesus' life that the understanding of God as divine, ever-present Love was the answer to any hopeless situation. His certainty that God loves all His children and has no desire for them to suffer informed every step he took. And he taught this to his followers as well.

Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science, emphasizes the importance of understanding God in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.* She declares, "To understand God strengthens hope, enthrones faith in Truth, and verifies Jesus' word: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' "

Sometimes, when things seem hopeless in my own life, I think of the many times Jesus and his disciples were confronted by situations that were worse than anything I could have imagined. This not only gives me perspective; it also gives me hope. And in each case, I have also found these teachings bring healing solutions to my life. Trust in God does give us hope; and, like Jesus' other followers, we can expect it to save us.

SCIENCE AND HEALTH
with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy
This 700 page book is the complete statement of Christian Science.
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
Write to Science and Health, P.O. Box 1875, Boston MA 02117
or Call 1-800-633-1300 Orders only
VISA®, MasterCard®, checks accepted or "bill me." $14.95 postpaid.
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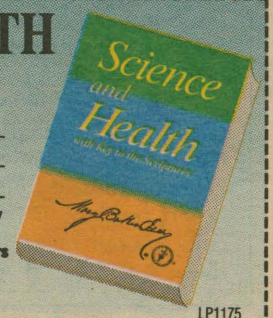
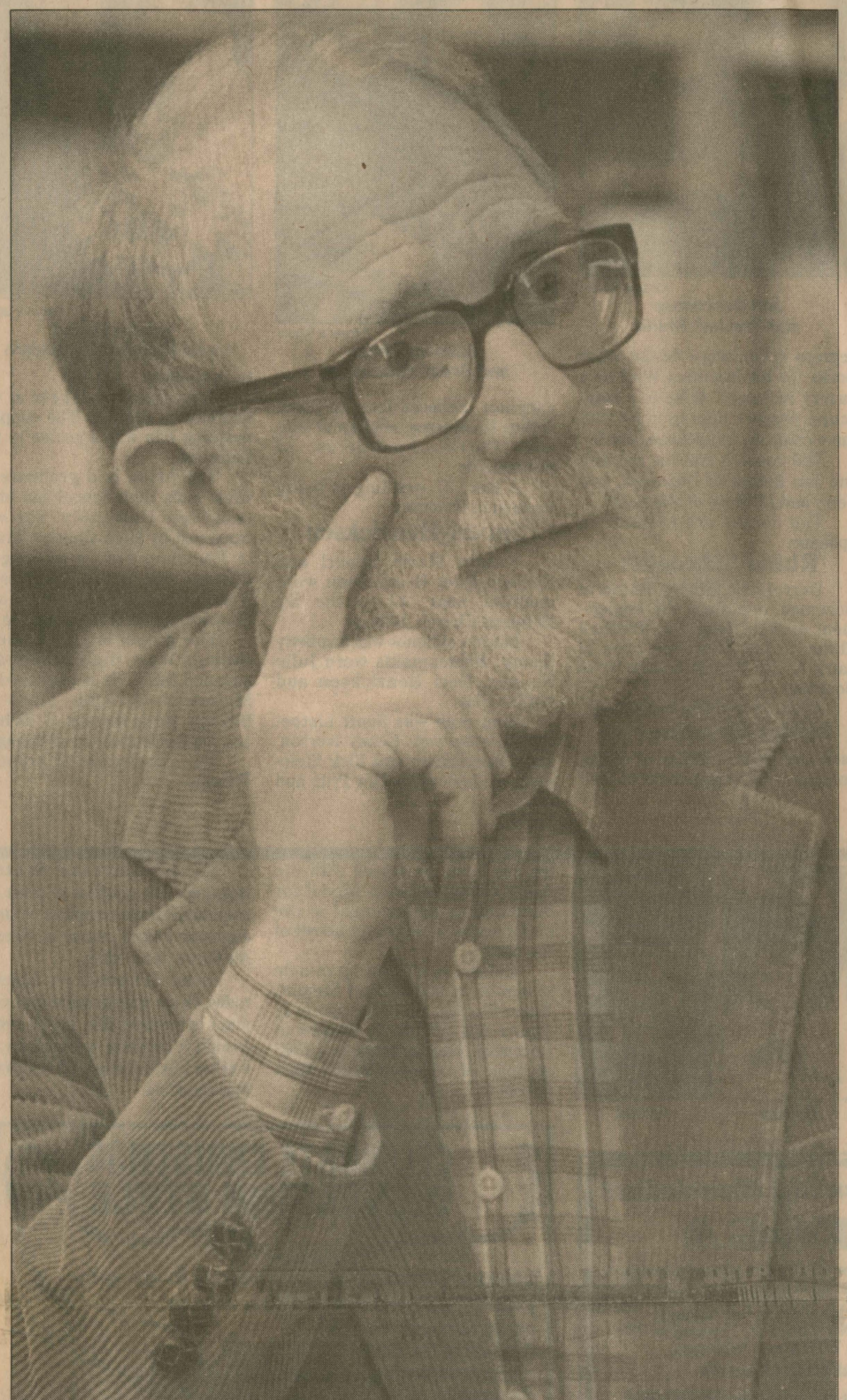
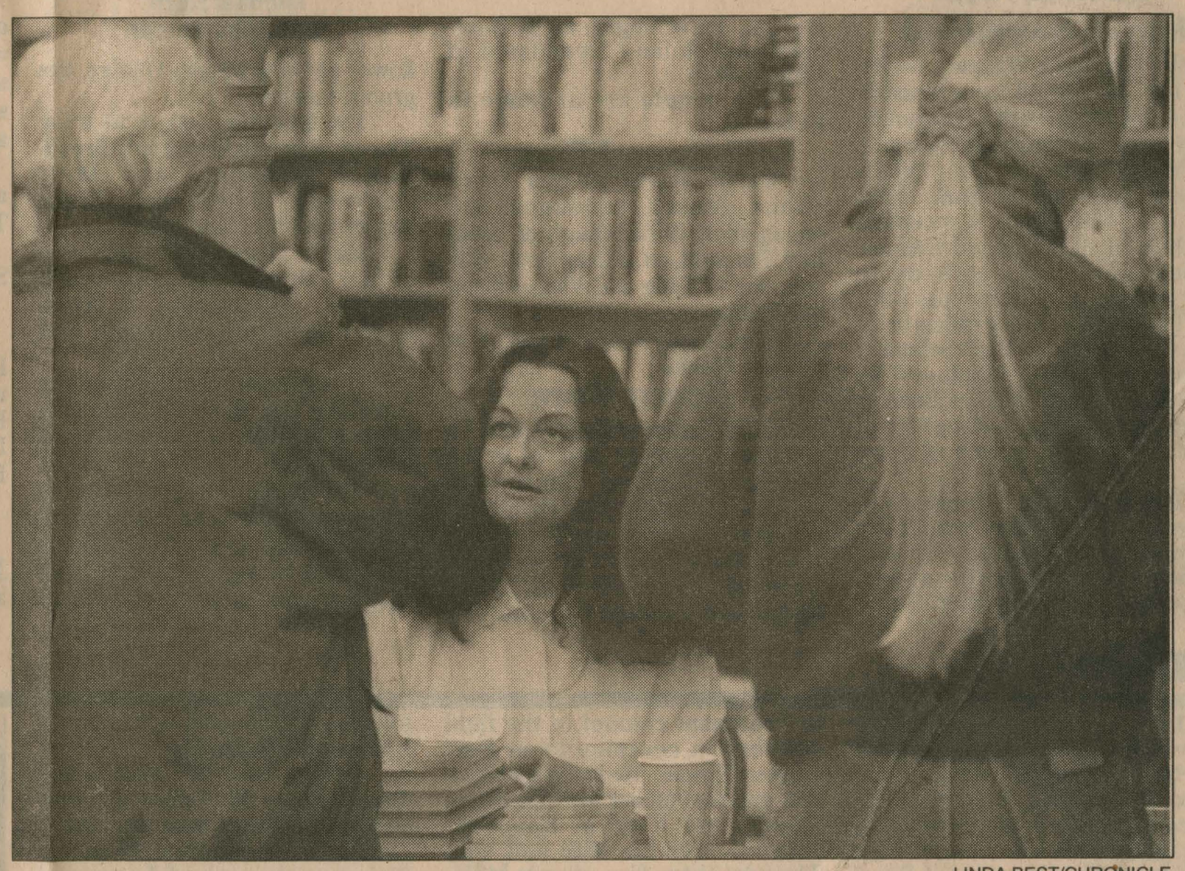




Big Sky Prose



LINDA BEST/CHRONICLE

Mary Clearman Blew autographs copies of her latest book at the Country bookshelf.

Writers are writers, Montanans or not

By ROB CHANEY
Chronicle Staff Writer

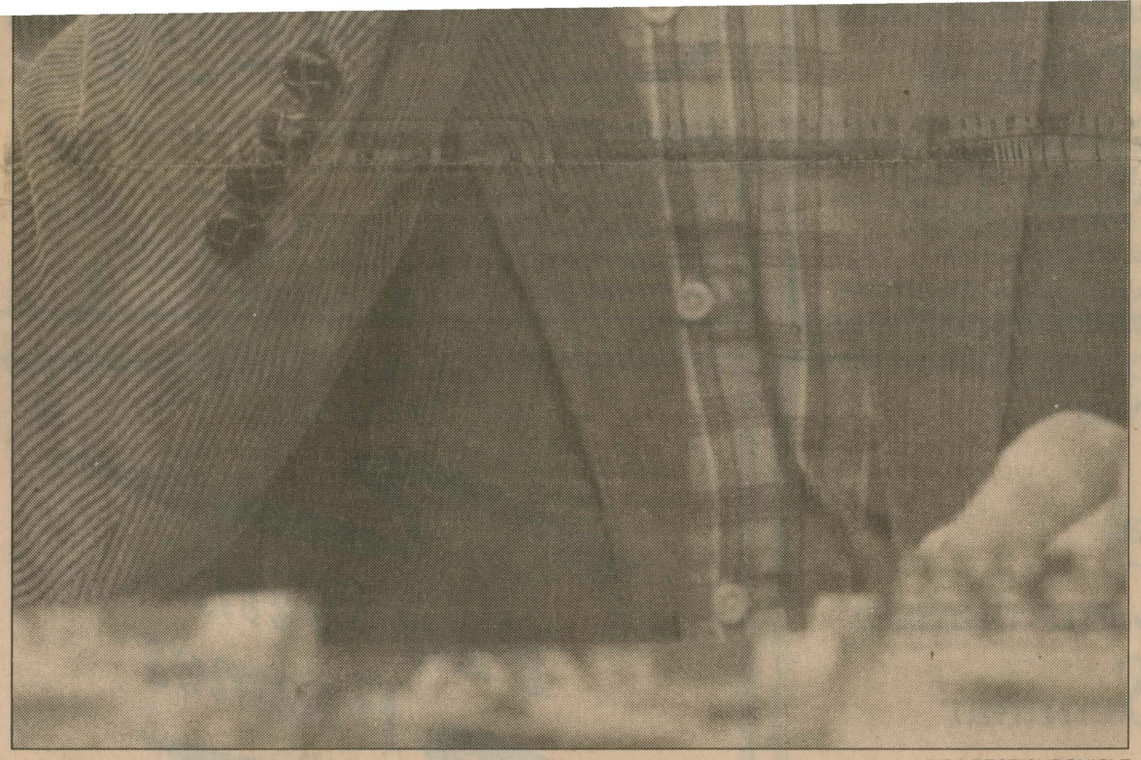
About the only thing going up faster than Montana resort property prices is the stock of the state's authors.

Which begs the question: who are Montana's writers? Authors such as James Welch, Linda Peavey, Ruth Rudner and Richard Hugo have caught the ear of the nation with their tales of Montana people, Montana places or just Montana thoughts. But what's the rule? Did they grow up in Montana, like Ivan Doig? Or just write popular books from a Montana typewriter, like Thomas McGuane?

House of Sky." The dry years resulted in many years crying in the wilderness before they developed enough of a following to make a living.

"But I don't buy the notion that if I hadn't been from Montana, I wouldn't be a writer," he said. "The stories I'm writing I don't think are especially about Montana. I'm writing about the larger community of life. Things like loving and losing and loving again."

Both authors agreed that Montana provides a wealth of information about a currently popular culture — cowboys and Indians, pioneers and robber barons. And most of it is still pretty fresh. Many of the features of the romantic Western life are still visible, from cattle branding to Indian pow wows to the wild, bleak landscape.



LINDA BEST/CHRONICLE

Ivan Doig talks about his latest book recently at the Country Bookshelf

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"The idea of wilderness as glamourous certainly hasn't hurt Montana at all," said Mary Clearman Blew, author of "All But the Waltz" and other collections of short essays and stories. "When I was a kid, Montana really wasn't glamourous."

When she started writing in 1970, the opposite was true. Magazines returned her stories as soon as they saw words like 'horse' and 'corral,' along with polite form letters saying "Sorry, we don't take Westerns."

"Easterners are much more knowledgeable about the Western writing scene than they were 20 years ago," she said.

"Both of us are pre-vogue writers," said Ivan Doig, who was appearing at a book-signing at the Country Bookshelf Saturday with Blew and is currently working on a prequel to his famous "This

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"In a way we're closer to history here than anywhere else," Blew said. "Where I lived in Havre there was a buffalo jump that goes back 10,000 years. Within 10 miles of my home in Idaho is the Nez Pierce Reservation. Two hundred years ago they were a nation. One hundred years ago they were almost wiped out. We're on the cusp of that living memory."

"It's what Montana provides in the way of story and lingo that furnishes a lot of what interests me to write about," Doig said.

Montana's early white history received a boost when WPA workers visited the state to record all the different lifestyles during the Great Depression. The Federal Writers' Files they created are stored at Montana State University. In them, Doig found

(More on **Writers**, page 24)

Bozeman bookstore pushes Montana authors

By ROB CHANEY
Chronicle Staff Writer

Montana bookstores must have grown from the same hardy stock as Montana books. Family touches, local history and against-the-odds survival tales are traits many of them have in common.

At the Country Bookshelf in Bozeman, Montana storytellers Mary Clearman Blew and Ivan Doig, Thomas McGuane and Dorothy Johnson stand dust-jacket to dust-jacket in the shelves and occasionally appear in person. As tales of the Last Best Place have grown in vogue, owner Mary Jane Disanti has struggled for 17 years to keep a roof over their heads.

The Country Bookshelf sells a wide variety of tomes, from travel to true love. A major factor of the store's success is its Montana and Western history collection, Disanti said. Between 100 and 200 of her titles are Montana books, not counting the Western history material.

"Our Montana section is Montana writing rather than people who live here and write," she said. "There are more and more authors who are moving around."

As one of the state's few independent bookstore owners, Disanti has the power to take a chance on books which need time to find an audience. While big chain bookstores like B. Dalton or Waldenbooks try to sell many copies of a few popular books, independent booksellers trade on having a much wider title selection and more personal service.

That comes across in the piles of Montana and Western books which line a special portion of her shelves. While such books have been published for decades, it's just been in the last few years that national interest has really focused on them.

"There's always this concept of the mythical West," she explained. " 'The Last Best Place' sold well all over the country. Years ago, the East was seen as the place to be if you were going to be culturally aware. But as the cities have more crime and become more and more crowded, the draw to be at the top of the corporate ladder has slipped. They're thinking about their quality of life more than they're thinking about making more money. 'The Last Best Place' said something that a lot of people were feeling."

And when they want to put the feeling into words, they come to the bookstore which has them. Disanti said a strong part of her business came from tourists seeking a bit of the West to take home.

"Lots of places east of the Mississippi can't get Western history books," she said. "They're a big market for them."

The other big advantage of being a bookstore in Montana is the affordability of it. Main street rents are low enough in Big Sky Country to allow a low profit-margin business like a bookstore to survive here if it's well managed. And Montanans seem to prefer trading in places where they get some personal contact, dovetailing with Disanti's management style.

"We get calls — 'will you look up a recipe and read it to me?' " she said. Sometimes it's a lot like a reference library. Or people will come in and say 'there's this book, I don't know the title, I don't know the author, but it's about ...' I like that because it's kind of like a puzzle."

The Easterners come both in person and through the mail. Disanti said she could make a huge addition to her business if she would open a mail-order desk, but she didn't want to give up the person-to-person nature of the shop. The personal touch is what appeals to Disanti more than anything but the books themselves.

Polly Renne started the bookstore in 1957. She turned down an offer of a used cash register, saying she already had a cigar box and would worry about filling that first. She told Disanti she didn't realize how prophetic that thought was, after she spent three years going in the hole. She claimed her goal was to make enough to eat lunch in a corner drugstore every day, Disanti said. Most of the time she was able to do that but not much more.

Marguerite Kirk ran the store next in a farm building on West Main Street where the Red Barn gourmet food shop is now. When she learned the town's first Catholic church was about to be torn down, she asked the wrecking crew if she could have it. They said OK and she moved the church building behind the barn to house a new store.

Disanti rented a home from Kirk for several years while going through college, and spent years badgering her for a job. She grew fond of the church's atmosphere, with its big fireplace and balconies on either end. After graduating from Montana State University with an English literature degree in 1972, she convinced Kirk to sell her the business.

In 1985, she moved the store to its current downtown Main Street location. Once upon a time the building housed a Hupmobile car showroom. The giant floor joists designed to support Detroit iron proved equally useful in holding up 70,000 books.

Popular literature and a "tremendous number" of children's books round out the collection, but the Montana and Western books remain popular. Disanti employs a staff of five full-time workers and several part-time people.

"I know I could sell it and probably make more money investing than I make now," she said. "But I really love this."



LINDA BEST/CHRONICLE

Mary Jane Disanti 's bookstore features books by Montana writers.

Bozeman women head to Argentina

Seven women from the West, including four Montanans, will travel to Argentina to teach civic groups there how democracy works. The Women's InterAmerican Network, a nonprofit organization, is sponsoring the 10-day democracy institute, Nov. 3 to 14. A series of workshops with democracy-building organizations in Argentina will be held.

Bozeman area delegates are Nikki Barer-Fink, rancher; Helen Kerr, chairwoman of Gallatin County's Democratic Party; and trip co-leaders, Dr. Carolyn Pinet, adjunct professor of Spanish at Montana State University, and Wendy Bay Lewis, executive director of WINet. After the trip, participants plan to develop a computer link-up to continue working on civic skills.

Writers/from page 21

mounds of details about the ways and means of settlers — down to the different ways people in different jobs greeted one another.

Those memories are fast losing touch with reality, they warned. Montana is becoming "economically ghettoized," Doig said, by a small population and a tough agricultural market.

"You can traditionalize yourself into oblivion," Doig said. "Montana can't be frozen in amber. But we hope it will keep its traditional soul."

They agreed just writing about Montana or living here wasn't the ticket to success. While Montanans do tend to support their local authors and other writers of local history, there just aren't enough of them to build a career upon, Doig said.

"There isn't that much of a national reading audience in America," Doig said. "But nobody's ever said 'you're from across the Mississippi, nobody's going to read your stuff.'"

SUE HART

Billings, Montana

Not surprisingly, since I live in and teach about Montana, my list is a little partial! (It is also unranked and cheats a little by counting three books as one--and by having a [three/four-way] tie occur.) So—

The Big Sky—A. B. Guthrie, Jr. For all the obvious reasons.

Dancing At the Rascal Fair: English Creek; Ride With Me, Mariah Montana—Ivan Doig's Montana trilogy, which sweeps readers through the early settlement years, through the tough times of the 1930s, to the 1989 Centennial year. Always beautifully—often poetically—written. A project that captures Montana on the printed page.

Tie: *The Girls From the Five Great Valleys*—Elizabeth Savage

The Corner of Rife & Pacific—Thomas Savage

Girls gives a voice to town dwellers—and to young women, a segment of the Western population not often heard from. *The Corner of Rife & Pacific* explores beginnings, settlement, Western "issues," etc. *Corner* was a PEN Faulkner Award nominee. (I know Elizabeth Savage would not have been happy about the "tie"—she saw her own

South Dakota Review

work as "entertainments"; her husband's as "important." I don't think Tom will mind, though.)

Also tied: D'Arcy McNickle—*The Surrounded.* A moving, tragic story of Native American life after white settlement of what was once Indian territory. (And how can I leave out James Welch, who writes of both the past and present of Indian life in such novels as *Fools Crow* and *Winter in the Blood?* This is just too hard. No wonder the *LA Times* called Montana "the literary capital of the country" in March of '89.)

I have not included Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It,* because you asked for novels. *River* has to rank at the top of any list of "best works about life in the West, though. And I haven't been able to make a case for Dorothy M. Johnson—although if you'd like a list of best short stories sometime, I'd certainly include her there. And there are a number of others I'd add if you increased your request to the *ten* "best"!



DONN FRY
Times book editor

Writers program 'suspended'

Our state is about lose, as Seattle writer Ivan Doig puts it, "a bit of literary elegance."

Word from the Washington State Library in Olympia is that it plans to "suspend" the Governor's Writers Awards program, an annual competition that has recognized 334 writers and small presses since it was founded in 1966. Also dropped is Governor's Writers Day, the day-long program of panel discussions, author talks and the reception in which the prizes are awarded.

And, unless you're a writer of regional history, travel, business, education or related fields of nonfiction dealing with Washington state, your book won't automatically go into the library's Washington Authors collection – unless you or your publisher donates it.

In other words, if Seattle author Charles Johnson's next novel wins the National Book Award – as did his "Middle Passage" in 1990 – it won't be added to the collection. Same goes for poetry, children's literature, cookbooks and popular nonfiction such as megaselling Seattle author Robert Fulghum's "Uh-Oh."

Blame tight times. Blame state budget cuts. And blame the refocusing of the library's mission as a result of a "State Library Strategic Plan" approved last September.

The ones you *shouldn't* blame are the maxed-out librarians who've struggled, with few resources and little assistance.

Boo

J.R.R. Tolkien: th

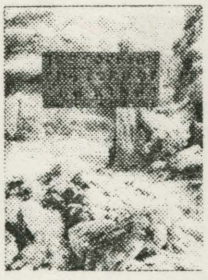
Birthday prompts special edition of fantasy classic

by Tony Daniel



"When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End announced that he would shortly be celebrating his eleventy-first birthday with a party of special magnificence, there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton."

So begins J.R.R. Tolkien's monumental fantasy, "The Lord of the Rings." Tolkien's American publisher seems to have taken these words to heart. Marking this past Friday's 100th anniversary of Tolkien's birth, Houghton Mifflin has brought out a finely crafted edition of "The Lord of the Rings," combining the epic's three parts into a single 1,193-page tome.

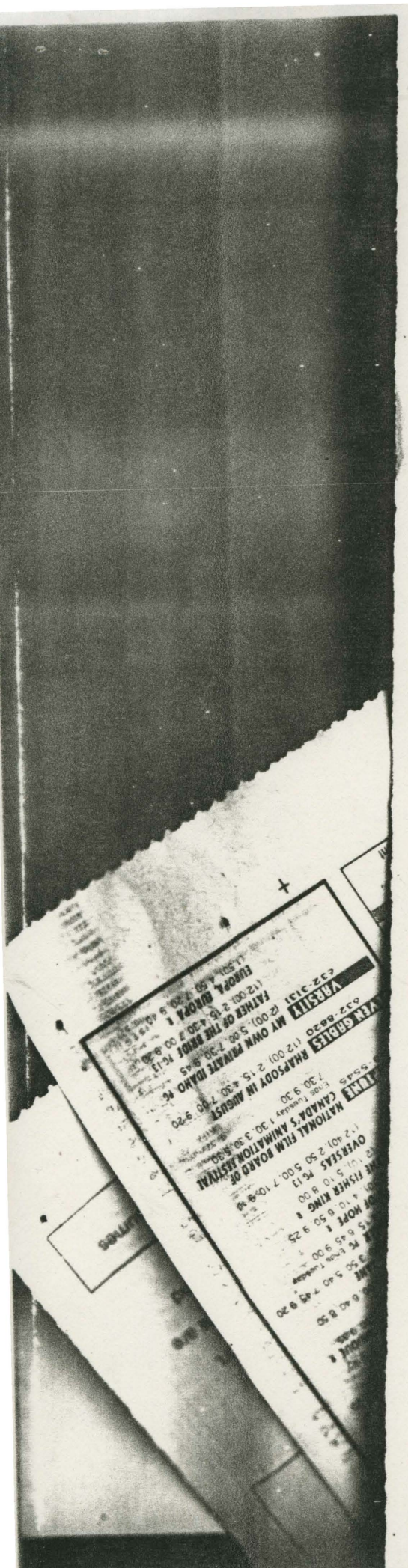


Unlike the hobbits, who give away gifts on their own birthdays, this volume will run you $60. But for the hefty price, you get a beautiful book, full of appendices and indexes, and graced with 50 sublime illustrations by Alan Lee.

"The Lord of the Rings" has come a long way since Tolkien began writing it with a dip-pen in 1937, on the backs of old examination papers at Oxford University, where he was an eminent professor of Anglo-Saxon.

Some critics have argued that it has come *too* far. Tolkien, who died in 1973 at age 81, has been accused of writing shallow characters too simple to experience inner conflict, and of including very few women characters at all. He's been lambasted for his bad verse, and the influential American critic Edmund Wilson once called the entire saga "juvenile trash."

Strong words, but are they fair? "The Lord of the Rings" is a book with a hobbit for a main character, after all. Hobbits are little people, shy of us "Big-Folk." They prefer warm, dry holes in the ground to houses, and a good meal and a crackling fire



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The ones you *shouldn't* blame are the maxed-out librarians who've struggled, with few resources and little assistance, to keep the program afloat through 26 seasons.

"No one really wants to see it end," said Gayle Palmer, senior librarian in the library's Washington/Northwest Room. "(But) there's a feeling that we aren't the best agency to administer the Governor's Writers Awards.

"We're stepping back from it at this point – though we're very interested in contributing the resources that we best can contribute."

That means, Palmer said, that her office intends to continue its annual bibliography of new books by Washington state authors. And an annotated list of all 26 years of Writers Awards – with biographical essays and a bibliography of each winning author – is still being assembled.

"What we've struggled with is producing the event," explained Palmer. "We simply don't have any resources, though we've done it all these years. As long as volunteers and staff have brought in tea and cookies, we've been able to do it.

"But over the years, it's become less accepted to ask the staff to do those sorts of things on their own time."

Palmer added that the Friends of the Washington State Library, an organization formed a few years ago to support the library and its programs, "hasn't evolved into a group that could take on the administration of the event and nurture it along."

The program's greatest expense has been the staff time needed to coordinate the competition itself. Typically, that involves collecting upwards of 300 books by authors who live or were born in Washington



parts into a single 1,193-page tome.

Unlike the hobbits, who give away gifts on their own birthdays, this volume will run you $60. But for the hefty price, you get a beautiful book, full of appendices and indexes, and graced with 50 sublime illustrations by Alan Lee.

"The Lord of the Rings" has come a long way since Tolkien began writing it with a dip-pen in 1937, on the backs of old examination papers at Oxford University, where he was an eminent professor of Anglo-Saxon.

Some critics have argued that it has come *too* far. Tolkien, who died in 1973 at age 81, has been accused of writing shallow characters too simple to experience inner conflict, and of including very few women characters at all. He's been lambasted for his bad verse, and the influential American critic Edmund Wilson once called the entire saga "juvenile trash."

Strong words, but are they fair? "The Lord of the Rings" is a book with a hobbit for a main character, after all. Hobbits are little people, shy of us "Big-Folk." They prefer warm, dry holes in the ground to houses, and a good meal and a crackling fire to miserable, wet adventures. Too cute for words, right?

Nevertheless, it is a hobbit named Frodo Baggins who is chosen to take the One Ring of Power – the embodiment of Evil in the world – to the edge of a volcano deep within the blasted demesne of Sauron the Dark Lord, and to cast it into the flames where its Evil will be consumed.

Aiding Frodo on his quest are the free people of the West – humans, elves (of the tall, noble variety), and dwarves. The good guys march grimly into hopeless battle, even as the Ring begins to bend Frodo's mind to malicious purposes. From the outset, Sauron seems bound to win and to take all of Middle-earth with him into an age of darkness.

The stakes are cosmic, and the conflict in the book is the conflict in this special world. For Tolkien, the milieu is the main character, far more than Gandalf the wizard; Aragorn, the exiled king; or even Frodo Baggins, the Ring-bearer. Middle-earth is not our own world, and Tolkien was never shy of calling his work escapist. What was important, he argued, was where the reader was escaping to.

Fantasy, at its best, "opens a door on Other Time," he said. "If we pass through, though only for a moment, we stand outside our own time, outside Time itself, maybe."

What we glimpse there is the eternal. Truth, even. But the road to truth is through craft. No one would call "The Lord of the Rings" madly inspired, but it is undoubtedly intricately crafted. Tolkien believed that such stories came closest to being "sub-creations," and their writers had the responsibility and the pleasure of the actual Creator when making them.

So what matters is not whether Frodo & Co. would be believable if plunked down in the middle of, say, "The Sun Also Rises," but whether they are true to their own imaginary setting. And they are. Within a world where Good and Evil occupy physical places on the map, Frodo is as [illegible] and complicated as Robert Cohn or Pedro Romero in Hemingway's [illegible] ically struggles [illegible]



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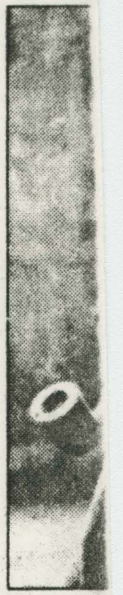

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The program's greatest expense has been the staff time needed to coordinate the competition itself. Typically, that involves collecting upwards of 300 books by authors who live or were born in Washington state and distributing them to the five- or six-person judging panel.

Palmer said such staff usage no longer coincides with the recent "strategic plan," which focuses the library on the primary client it serves under state law: the state government itself. Librarians will now spend more time developing computerized data bases of Washington-state information, drawn from a wide variety of sources, that can be tapped by the Legislature, state agencies or – for individuals – by other libraries around the state.

Palmer is exploring two avenues to save the Governor's Writers Awards: either have the program administered by the Washington State Library Association, or make it part of an as-yet nonexistent Washington State Book Fair – presumably with the financial support of participating publishers.

But she welcomes other suggestions; Palmer's phone number in Olympia is 753-4024.

"I really do regret its demise," said Doig, a four-time winner of the award. "It's a loss to the reading public and to the state's writers. This budget cut is kind of nickel-and-diming us away from some classiness that this state has always had."

■ Donn Fry's column appears Sunday on the Books page of The Times

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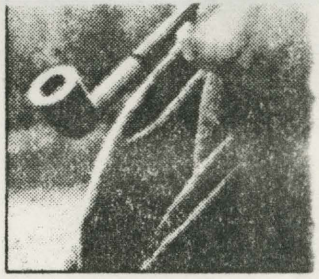
So what matters is not whether Frodo & Co. would be believable if plunked down in the middle of, say, "The Sun Also Rises," but whether they are true to their own imaginary setting. And they are. Within a world where Good and Evil occupy physical places on the map, Frodo is as believable and complicated as Robert Cohn or Pedro Romero in Hemingway's novel. Frodo heroically struggles into the heart of an Evil that is as real as any bullfight or love affair.

Tolkien's critics have misunderstood the whole enterprise he was undertaking. A fantasy story has its own rules – very complex and beautiful rules, when they are as well-wrought as Tolkien's. When we deny a fantasy story this, it automatically becomes stupid and, as Edmund Wilson would have it, juvenile.

But taken on its own terms, "The Lord of the Rings" is a masterpiece, and Tolkien's birthday is a cause for celebration. Who would have suspected that a mild-mannered



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"The Hobbit," but this is n
for children alone. Neithe
meant only for those se
escapism; the book can be
a level – but not for
imagination takes hold of

BESTSELLERS

Hardback fiction

1. "Scarlett," Alexandra Ripley
2. "Needful Things," Stephen King
3. "Almanac of the Dead," Leslie Marmon Silko
4. "WLT: A Radio Romance," Garrison Keillor
5. "The Kitchen God's Wife," Amy Tan
6. "Blindsight," Robin Cook
7. "Night Over Water," Ken Follett
8. "Crow and Weasel," Barry Lopez
9. "Wilderness Tips," Margaret Atwood
10. "All the Weyrs of Pern," Anne McCaffrey

Hardback nonfiction

1. "Me: Stories of My Life," Katharine Hepburn
2. "The Best Treatment," Isadore Rosenfeld
3. "Plausible Denial," Mark Lane
4. "Real Ponies Don't Go Oink," Patrick F. McManus
5. "French for Cats," Henry Beard
6. "Do Penguins Have Knees?," David Feldman
7. "Uh-Oh," Robert Fulghum
8. "Parliament of Whores," P.J. O'Rourke
9. "Andy Goldsworthy: A Collaboration with Nature," Andy Goldsworthy
10. "The World is My Home," James A. Michener

■ Last week's best sellers in the Northwest, as reported by Pacific Pipeline Inc., a regional book distributor based in Kent

ENTERTAINER

MAY 24-30, 1991

ALSO INSIDE:

A load of new movies:

- "Thelma and Louise"
- "Backdraft"
- "What About Bob?"

and more

THE BEST OF MISSOULA

Pushed as a 'major title'

Manning's book gets lavish attention

By GINNY MERRIAM
of the Missoulian

The 30,000 people expected to attend the American Booksellers Association annual convention at New York's Jacob Javits Center May 31 to June 4 will once again be treated to a flock of books and writers from an exotic location: Missoula, Montana.

Peregrine Smith Books, a small but strong Utah publisher, is pouring unusual attention – and money – into first-time book author Dick Manning of Missoula. Manning's non-fiction "Last Stand: Logging, Journalism, and the Case for Humility" isn't due until October, but the publishers feel it's not too early to start promoting what they expect to be a "major title" on their fall list.

"Dick is basically an unknown entity, but the subject he's writing about is well known, and it's been in the headlines," said publicist Steve Chapman in a phone interview from Smith's Layton, Utah, office. "It's a book about a lot of things that we as a publishing company are interested in. He's writing about things that deserve international attention."

Those issues include accelerated logging on private lands, log exports and American deforestation, Chapman said.

Manning will talk about his book at a national sales meeting, where reps will learn that Smith is hiring a Los Angeles publicist to line up media attention in New York and Los Angeles and radio and TV interviews around the country. On Saturday, Manning will meet booksellers at the Smith booth, where publicists will hand out 600 advance galleys of the book.

"We believe it's possible to launch writers from this region to national attention," Chapman said. "We think that Dick is a writer with a future ... We think he's got other books in him that we'd like to have on our list and launch to the world."

Also at the convention, Missoula's Jim Welch will be one of eight featured readers.

Publishers also will hawk upcoming books by several Missoula writers who won't be making the trip to New York: Milkweed Editions will push poet Patricia Goedicke's "Paul Bunyan's Bearskin"; Clark City Press of Livingston, a new release of Dick Hugo's mystery "Death and the Good Life" and Jim Crumley's "The Muddy Fork and Other Things"; and Milliken Publishing, "Mixed-Up Sam," illustrated by Missoula's Joe Boddy.

Missoula bookseller Barbara Theroux will travel to New York to accept a position on the ABA national board.

On our chart this month, Dee McNamer's February novel continues its strong showing at the top. Perennial favorite Patrick McManus' new collection of outdoor humor from Henry Holt & Co. bombed onto the chart shortly after its release, as did a new edition of Jim Welch's book of poetry from Confluence Press and Steve Smith's H.O. Bell biography from Pictorial Histories Publishing.

The recent death of Bud Guthrie put his Western classic "The Big Sky" on the sales chart and brought many inquiries about his other books, booksellers reported.

"Knowing him was probably the highlight of our book-selling experience," said Norie Koelbel of Great Northern Books. "He was a giant."

WESTSELLERS
Books of regional interest

Title / Author	Last Month	Months on Chart
1 Rima in the Weeds/ McNamer	1	3
2 The Last Best Place/ Kittredge & Smith, eds.	5	27
3 A River Runs Through It/ McLean	3	45
4 Real Ponies Don't Go Oink/ McManus		1
5 Montana On My Mind/ Sample & Mayer	7	38
6 Riding the Earthboy 40/ Welch		1
7 M is For Montana/ Shirley & Bergum	*	9
8 Dancing at the Rascal Fair/ Doig	12	31
9 Winter/ Bass	2	2
10 Ride With Me, Mariah Montana/ Doig	*	8
11 H.O. Bell/ Smith		1
12 The Big Sky/ Guthrie	*	1

* Returns to chart after at least one month absence.

NEW ON THE BOOKSHELF

Spring books have started to jam the shelves. Here's a sampling of what's new.

HarperCollins recently published A.B. Guthrie Jr.'s last book, **"A Field Guide to Writing Fiction,"** a selection of Bud's wisdom gained through decades of writing.

Atheneum just released two titles for young readers from Missoula authors: Peggy Christian's **"Old Coot"** and Barbara Corcoran's **"Stay Tuned."**

University of Montana English professor Greg Pape has a new chapbook of poems from Confluence Press, **"The Morning Horse."**

Crown Books has published a new Western adventure by Peter Bowen, **"Kelly Blue."**

Rick DeMarinis' new book of stories, **"The Voice of America,"** was recently published by Norton, and his **"The Coming Triumph of the Free World"** is a new Norton paperback.

Falcon Press released a new book from Gayle Shirley and Constance Bergum this week. **"A is for Animals"** follows their previous collaborations, "M is for Montana" and "C is for Colorado."

Lyons & Burford recently published a paperback version of **"Montana Spaces,"** a collection of writings about Montana by Western authors, edited by Bill Kittredge.

Holiday House recently published **"Where Food Comes From,"** a new collaboration between Missoula writer Dorothy Hinshaw Patent and St. Ignatius photographer William Munoz.

Billings writer Terry C. Johnston's new Western historical novel from St. Martin's paperbacks is **"Black Sun."**

"Growing Up Western" is a new collection of Western essays edited by Clarus Backes. It includes memoirs by Dee Brown, Bud Guthrie, Wallace Stegner and others.

Exceptional Books, Ltd. recently published **"On Flatwillow Creek"** by Linda Grosskopf with Rick Newby. It's the story of the Bar N Ranch near Grass Range, one of Montana's oldest and biggest ranches.

The Mountaineers Books has published a new collection of outdoors essays from Yellowstone's Paul Schullery, **"Pregnant Bears and Crawdad Eyes."**

John Fahey's history of a North Idaho mining company, **"Hecla,"** was published this month by the University of Washington Press.

Blue Heron Publishing has released the first new book from 84-year-old "Gentle Ben" author Walt Morey in 10 years. **"Death Walk"** is an Arctic adventure set in Alaska and written for young adults.

– Ginny Merriam

TOP BOOKS

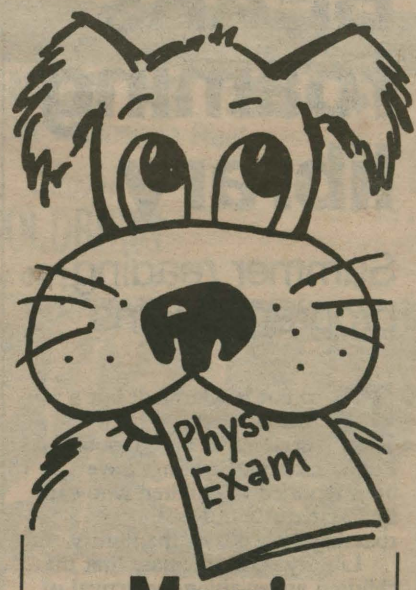
FICTION

1. Loves Music, Loves to Dance. Mary Higgins Clark. Simon & Schuster, $21.95.
2. The Firm. John Grisham. Doubleday, $19.95.
3. H is for Homicide. Sue Grafton. Holt, $17.95.
4. As the Crow Flies. Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins, $22.95.
5. The Seeress of Kell. David Eddings. Del Rey, $20
6. Heartbeat. Danielle Steel. Delacorte, $21.95.
7. The Seventh Commandment. Lawrence Sanders. Putnam, $22.95.
8. Aspen Gold. Janet Dailey. Little, Brown, $19.95.
9. Damage. Josephine Hart. Knopf, $18.
10. The Novel. James Michener. Random House, $23
11. Immortality. Milan Kundera. Grove Weidenfeld, $21.95.
12. Object Lessons. Anna Quindlen. Random House, $19
13. Crown of Columbus. Michael Dorris and Louise Erdrich. HarperCollins, $21.95.
14. Bright Captivity. Eugenia Price. Doubleday, $20
15. The Druid of Shannara. Terry Brooks. Del Rey, $19.95.

NON-FICTION

1. Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography. Kitty Kelley. Simon & Schuster, $24.95.
2. You'll Never Eat Lunch in this Town Again. Julia Phillips. Random House, $21.95.
3. There Are No Children Here. Alex Kotlowitz. Doubleday/Nan Talese, $21.95.
4. The Commanders. Bob Woodward. Simon & Schuster, $24.95.
5. Iron John: A Book About Men. Robert Bly. Addison-Wesley, $18.95.
6. Moving Pictures. Ali McGraw. Bantam, $20
7. Homecoming. John Bradshaw. Bantam, $18.95.
8. Financial Self-Defense. Charles Givens. Simon & Schuster, $22.95.
9. A History of the Arab Peoples. Albert Hourani. Harvard University Press, $24.95.
10. Wealth Without Risk. Charles Givens. Simon & Schuster, $19.95.
11. Life Is Too Short. Mickey Rooney. Villard, $22.50.
12. The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America. Nicholas Lemann.
13. I Had a Hammer. Hank Aaron with Lonnie Wheeler. HarperCollins, $21.95.
14. Sleepwalking Through History. Haynes Johnson. Norton, $24.95.
15. Illiberal Education. Dinesh D'Souza. Free Press, $19.95.

Publishers Weekly



Mom! Have you seen that doctor form I need filled out by tomorrow?

If your child needs a health physical in order to go to camp or participate in sports this summer, you're in luck!

Blue Mountain Clinic has been giving kids physicals for years, *and* at times that fit your busy schedule. At Blue Mountain, we pay attention to your child's physical needs and developmental progress. We also provide low-cost immunizations!

Call 721-1646 for an appointment.

BLUE MOUNTAIN CLINIC

You can talk to us.

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Primary Care of Men and Women
Prenatal Care • Vasectomy • Abortion
Allergy Testing • Weight Loss
Well-child Care

Professional Village, Suite 24
715 Kensington, Missoula
721-1646

Stressed out?



Who, me?

Ivan,

Congratulations!
Hope everything is
fine with you.

Gimmy

Comstock Cards NP-26

Printed in USA

30 June '91

Dear Ginny--

Well, sonofagun. Missoula's so hard up for writers that my occasional UFO appearances at the Oxford or the Missoula Club lunch counter qualify me as local bard, huh? Pretty easy money, so far.

Really, I did get a kick out of the award and the T-shirt; thanks for whatever hand you had in any of that. How's the newspaper life? Carol and I at least hope you're thriving.

all best,

Jim

30 June '91

Dear Theresa--

Just a line of thanks for so deftly immigrating me into the ranks of Missoula writerdom in your "Best of..." piece. As a friend in Dillon of all places used to say, a gift is no less welcome for being undeserved.

best wishes,

Complimentary Copy

Annual American West Issue

A BOOK MAGAZINE

VOL 11/ISSUE 5 • JULY/AUG 1991



LUCIA BERLIN
An Essay/Interview

The BLOOMSBURY REVIEW

Body & Soul
The Mysteries of Healing

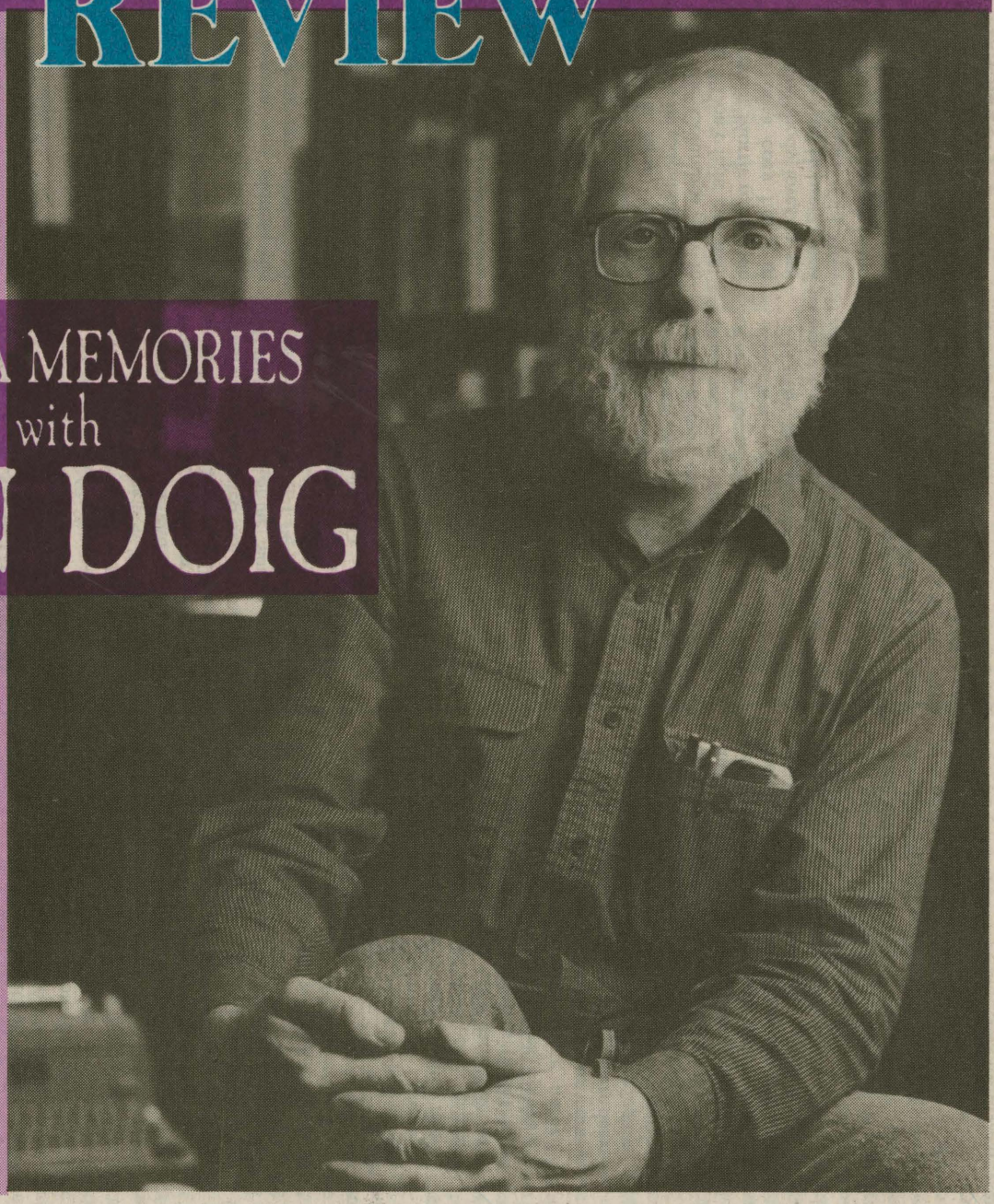
Designing Our World

MONTANA MEMORIES
An Interview with
IVAN DOIG

Interviews/Profiles
DAVID LEE
STEPHEN PETT

A.B. Guthrie, Jr.
A Remembrance

Regional Reading



Stories of

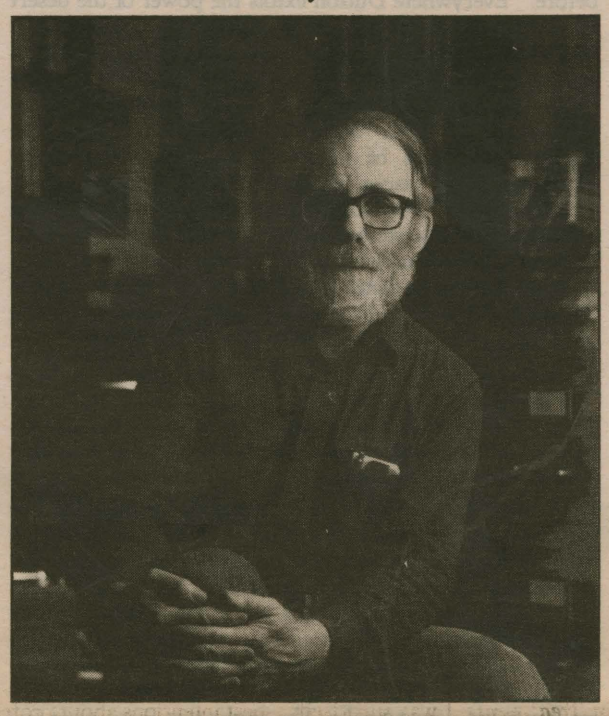
THE AMERICAN WEST

The Writers, Issues, History, Arts, & The Environment

Montana Memories

Ivan Doig

An Interview by Tom Auer



When *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* was published last fall, Ivan Doig no doubt breathed a deep sigh of relief. His much acclaimed Montana trilogy was complete. Ten years of research and writing about the McCaskills, a fictional family who had immigrated from Scotland to the Two Medicine Country of Montana late in the nineteenth century, had finally come to an end. His father had been a Montana homesteader, and his father's family had immigrated from Scotland to Montana. Doig labored long and hard to make his novels as realistic and true to the times as possible. He and his wife Carol traveled to Scotland, and spent months interviewing Montana homesteading families and researching homestead records in the national archives to make the novels ring true. Not coincidentally, the completion of the trilogy coincided with Montana's Centennial.

Doig has been writing about Montana for many of the twenty-one years since he left the Big Sky country, first for college, and later to pursue a career in wordsmithing, a livelihood not easily managed in his home country. Doig now lives in Seattle with his wife Carol, who teaches western literature at a local college. Montana and the Pacific Northwest are deeply ingrained in his work, though his novels concern much more than geography.

After graduating from Northwestern University with a B.S. and M.S. in Journalism, and later a Ph.D. in History from the University of Washington, he set his sights on newspaper and magazine work, which he did for ten years, writing freelance pieces for a variety of publications and working for the Rotarian magazine.

Doig's trilogy may be his best known works: *English Creek* (Atheneum, 1984), *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* (Atheneum, 1987), and *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana* (Atheneum, 1990) have all been well received by critics and readers. But his other works have also garnered some acclaim. His first book, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of the Western Mind* (Peter Smith, 1978) was nominated for a National Book Award and received a Christopher Award; *Winter Brothers: A Season at the Edge of America* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982) received a Pacific Northwest Bookseller's Award and a Governor's Award; his first novel, *The Sea Runners* (Penguin, 1983), was hailed by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the notable books of that year.

The late *Los Angeles Times* critic Robert Kirsh, wrote of *This House of Sky*: "The language begins in western territory and experience but in the hands of an artist it touches all landscape and all life. Doig is such an artist."

Doig stopped by the *TBR* office last September, when this interview took place.

The Bloomsbury Review: *Let's start at the beginning and talk about growing up in Montana and what made you decide to write books? You majored in electronic journalism in college, didn't you?*

Ivan Doig: I was a radio and TV major—never used it. And seeing the way television has gone, how thankful I am that I got lured off into newspaper and magazine work, and now books.

Let's see, growing up in Montana. My people were ranch hands, my dad was sometimes cowboy, sometimes sheepherder. My mother often worked with him as a ranch cook. And my grandmother, who ended up sharing in the raising of me after my mother died, she too was a ranch cook. And we sometimes did the western equivalent of sharecropping. My folks would run sheep "on shares," as we called it, which means we'd run them year-round, do the lambing, do the herding, whatever, for a certain share of whatever profit there was. Surprising the number of times it turned out there wasn't any. It's a pretty tough life.

My dad always preached education to me—of finding a way of life so that I wouldn't have to go through some of the things he had to, and trying to muscle out a life of ranches, always working for somebody else, usually somebody big who lived in Seattle or Minneapolis or somewhere.

But I can't remember when I couldn't read. My reading goes back farther than my memory. I was reading before I ever went to grade school. And so my interest in words, combined with my dad's propulsion and my own propulsion out of that ranch, sent me off into making a living with words, one way or another.

TBR: *History is a big part of your writing. Is it a life-long interest?*

ID: I suppose it is. I wasn't all that aware of it until I got to college. I went to journalism school at Northwestern and one of the thrusts of that journalism school was a lot of liberal arts. They really like to have their students take political science or history. So I ended up with enough history credits to have been a history major, actually. There were some excellent people on the faculty at Northwestern at that time. Ironically, I didn't take his course, but the great panjandrum of the West, Ray Billington, was still teaching his cowboys and Indians course at Northwestern, the guy who wrote the standard text that Patty Limerick and others are pulling to the ground now. He was on the campus all the while. I actually sat in on some of his lectures, auditing, seeing how things looked in other classrooms.

Probably the original impulse behind the writing, I would think, would be family storytelling. My dad was a good storyteller, and we had somewhat of a self-contained history. He was born on the homestead in 1901, and his parents had come over from Scotland no more than ten years before. And so the entire compartment of American history of the Doigs was readily available, either in his memory or what he had heard from his parents. So there was kind of an immediate feel back through three generations, the full scope of us being in America and in the West.

TBR: *Seems natural you would want to write about it.*

ID: It seemed like the thing to do. Then I made a U-turn back to history from journalism. I thought I was going to be a journalism professor, but I wanted to try and bring some historical perspective to teaching journalism. As I looked around at the graduate degrees in journalism at that time, they were either business oriented or communications theory oriented. I thought of playing on both of those houses, and I thought neither had anything to interest me at all. So it became kind of an excuse to spend three years getting the Ph.D. in history.

TBR: *What made you decide to switch to books? Were you tired of journalism?*

ID: I magazine freelanced for almost ten years after I finished the Ph.D. Even during the Ph.D., I kept on writing, one way or another, freelancing little Sunday supplement pieces. And I began writing poetry. The mind finds its own self-defenses against seminars, and so I wrote some poetry. Turned out, I did not take a journalism job, which eventually came open in Indiana. I stayed on, because my wife had her community college professorship by that point. We decided to stay on in the Northwest. And I said, "OK, I'll keep on with magazine work, and start tinkering with books at the same time," in whatever spare time I could find.

I really was infatuated or in love with magazine work. I'd wanted to do that ever since a freshman in college, I suppose, and I sold my first piece when I was a sophomore. At the time, I liked the format very much, 1,500-2,000 words, and doing something new every week or two. And so I did that for nearly ten years, a couple of hundred magazine pieces, from regional magazines in the Seattle area to short pieces for *McCalls* and a number of travel pieces for *The New York Times*, but it got more and more financially preposterous. Inflation set in. Even writing for *The New York Times*, a place where I got marvelous editing. I don't know how they managed to do it, but by telephone, they could look down their nose at you, and say, "It's a nice piece, it just needs a few fixes." And their few fixes would be three days' to a week's worth of work, and by god, they would improve the piece by 30 to 50 percent. They really knew what they were doing. But, they were paying a flat fee of 250 bucks with no travel expenses, either. That's not very much money, but all the prestige you can imagine, I guess. What would have been my best market, so to speak, was an utter financial dead end.

And I had been gathering the material for *This House of Sky*, and working on it, trying things out for it, and decided in late 1976 to take a chunk of time, do a manuscript sample of respectable length, maybe a third or a fourth of what I hoped the book would be, and really try it as a book writer.

A friend of mine in Seattle who'd been acting as my literary agent for the magazine stuff had never done any book stuff, but she undertook *This House of Sky* sample. And so in the summer of '77, Carol and I went to Montana and did the final research, went to all the places I had lived, and talked with a bunch of people and came home and wrote, finished up about the first 125 pages of manuscript in that sample. And in late '77, the agent sent them out half-a-dozen at a time to New York. We picked names out of *Literary Marketplace*, to senior editors, so it sounded like we knew what we were doing, and back began coming these remorseful, prestigious turn-downs. I've saved those letters: "This is really quite beautiful but we don't see any commercial prospect for it."

But the thirteenth editor was Carol Hale at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, and she wrote back, "I like this, I have to get clearance one echelon above me, but I'll let you know within a week." And within a week, she sent us a contract for *This House of Sky*. So it only took about three months of actually sending out manuscript samples.

TBR: *The book was quite a remarkable success, wasn't it?*

ID: It was nominated for a National Book Award, won a Christopher Award and various regional awards, yeah. And its total sale is 110,000, most of it in paperback. It continues to sell about 10,000 copies a year. It's in, I think, its twelfth printing. It sells quite a lot in college courses now—western lit courses, and northwest lit courses, and some biography and autobiography courses. So *This House of Sky* really wrote my ticket for me, and it became evident even to me, even to a stubborn Scotsman, that magazines no longer were anywhere in the ballpark.

TBR: *Having completed the trilogy, how does that feel? Is it relief or is there another book in there somewhere you wish you'd written?*

ID: I don't feel any gap. I'm glad to have that amount of work behind me, a ten-year mountain of research is what it amounted to. A lot of it was fairly difficult research. I knew *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* was going to be tough, simply because the homestead period in Montana was so broad and sudden that historians really haven't managed to swim their way through the real sense of the homestead boom in Montana, which was by and large a twentieth-century phenomenon, from World War I on. Most of the real sense of that exists in the homestead papers back in the National Archives, literally hundreds of thousands of homestead entries, or in the homesteaders' reminiscences.

TBR: *How did you go about that research?*

ID: Once you have the description of the land, and the name involved, all of a sudden here it comes. My own grandfather's homestead claim is about sixty-five pages of stuff going across ten or twelve years of official wishy-washiness. A lot of other people's are somewhat similar. I started interviewing people in '83-84 for *Rascal Fair*, people who'd been kids on the homesteads around World War I or even a little before. Those people are still alive, fairly old people. And I found a surprising number of them to talk to and gathered material from them, and from a good oral history project by the Montana Historical Society, and quite a number of letter collections or people writing reminiscences for their children, particularly people who had emigrated to this country, Danes for instance. I have a Danish character, Dick, who has a Danish grandfather. And so I was able to draw on some of that for the trilogy.

TBR: *Idiomatic language is a very important element in your books.*

ID: Actually, I see it as *the* element. The history and the characterization and so forth, those are all fine and obviously important to me, but I think the language is the constant orbit or magnetic force that has me doing all this. That's what really interests me constantly in the writing. History and characters, sure they're interesting, but what I enjoy more are the interesting turns of language as you deal with the history and characters.

TBR: *What made you decide to leave Montana? Many of your books are based there. You obviously love the land. But you haven't lived there for twenty-one years.*

ID: By the time I left, when I got on the train to go to college, I didn't know it was going to be for good, but in a sense, it was. I was back the next five summers working ranch jobs and so forth, but once I lit into that school of journalism in Evanston, pretty promptly, inoculated with ambition and sense of craft and wanting to get out and work with words, Montana faded pretty promptly for me then. The jobs weren't there, jobs still aren't there unless you're really willing to be professionally underemployed, if you're going to work in journalism. Some people who are doing it are pretty happy, some who are doing it are only semi-happy, I've discovered in talking with them.

In essence, I went to college as an economic refugee from Montana. I had an aging and ill father and grandmother, and I was an only kid. It didn't take too many smarts to see that somebody had better get an income in this family.

A point that's often missed, and I'm going to have to kick some historians in the shins or something, is that agricultural people didn't used to be covered by social security. It wasn't until, I think, the sixties that ranch workers and farmhands were brought under social security. They

(Continued on page 20)

INTERVIEWER: **Tom Auer** is the publisher of *The Bloomsbury Review*.
PHOTOGRAPHER: **Chris Bennion**. © 1991.

Stephen Pett (Continued from page 17)

only you can love, what is distinctive to you. Then, I think, writers should go on their way and do it.

TBR: *I was probably halfway through the book before I flipped to the back and saw that you had studied and taught writing. I had a sense of an author with a natural gift, a sense for sharp fragments, how to lay them out, how to make them fit in dialogue and so forth. I had this image of you as a rough-hewn guy, like you look in your picture, out in the woods. When I read that writing was your occupation, that you had studied it, I thought, "Ah, it's craft. He's sitting back and doing this with that editorial sense." It shifted my perception of you.*

SP: Well, I think all that work made it possible to make it less craft and more a spontaneous expression, a kind of imaginative experience. That's what it was all for. Every time I sit down to write I think, "I'm glad I worked as hard as I did because now I'm able to easily capture my imagination, to sort of plug into it."

In teaching, you can make too much of the question of craft, too much of the question of good writing instead of expression, instead of vision with integrity and individuality. I don't want writing to seem to any student of mine like something dry, like something clinical, like something that isn't spontaneous and immediate and alive, because that's what it is. And if school is going to take that away from them, they shouldn't be in school. And if they think they can remain individual and alive and brave, brave enough to say what they see or try to get at it, then they can go to school. They have to realize always that their teachers don't know half, or can't communicate half, of what they will eventually need to know to write.

I remember once I showed a story to Tim O'Brien when he came to Utah. And he gave it back with a lot of things crossed out and changed. I learned an incredible amount about economizing just from what he turned out. And I said, "My God, you mean I missed all that? How do you do it?" And he said, "Oh I've got this friend in Boston who reads everything that I do and gives it back looking exactly like this." And maybe workshops help to make connections too, establish friendships, the kinds of reliable readers that can tell you when you're not doing what you should be doing, or when you're doing it well, or how to make it better.

TBR: *Do you ever, when you're writing, put yourself in the place of the reader to see how it's working? Do you imagine the reader seeing you as the author behind the work?*

SP: I may after this, after going on this tour with this book—going public—because suddenly this book is a representation of me. I mean, it represents me in a certain way. I never thought that way before. It was this creation that had its own life that was something that would function independently from me. And I'm glad I looked at it that way. By the same token, I don't think for a minute that I ever could have separated myself from this enough in the writing to have had any clear notion of how it would really be read. You can only guess.

TBR: *Do you still like it as much as when you were writing it? Do you have the same sort of affection for it as when it was yours and only yours?*

SP: It's different. There are parts where there is a celebration of spirit and imagination and potential that's really wonderful, and I'm moved by that. I care deeply about that, and I'm glad that everybody holding this is going to know those moments. There are things in here that I think are pretty hard-hitting.

I'm thinking of Tom Wolfe's criticism that we're not dealing with real people on the American landscape. If I remember correctly, his criticism was that we're sort of missing the great issues of our time. I might argue we're missing some of the significant types of our time, characters of our time, the cultural aspects of our time.

TBR: *Truman Capote once said that he didn't like to read anything he'd ever written because he kept editing it, and I found it to be true; I can't read my book. I keep fixing it in my mind. When you look at* Sirens, *can you leave it alone?*

SP: I read a big chunk of it before we left on this tour, and I read the ending in the car on the way over here. It's really the first time I've read it when I couldn't change it, and that was an interesting experience. There were times when I wanted to go back and look at the original and see if, when they typeset it, they didn't screw up!

TBR: *How do you feel about the fact that it came out in trade paperback rather than hardcover?*

SP: I feel wonderful about it. I had been a big admirer of Vintage Books, and when my agent said they were interested in buying it I was thrilled to be in such wonderful company. I admire their writers a lot; I think being published in paper meant probably a larger first printing.

TBR: *You made Carlos a writer. Why? It was a leap for his character, in my mind. Not that it didn't work, but it was a jump.*

SP: It calls for the willing suspension of . . .

TBR: *Disbelief.*

SP: In an earlier draft I had him—as a kid in a program for delinquents—take a brief writing class and write some story about a kid who's on Mars or some damn thing. I cut that out because I felt like it didn't need to be pushed, and I didn't want to call attention to it either. I did believe that language, for him, had become almost his last opportunity to construct himself. At some point he says: The secret is to define yourself before somebody else does.□

Women & Aliens (Continued from page 1)

OSHA and EAP regulation (toxic wastes *are* being dumped into border rivers) and trade unions seem mainly to fear the continuing loss of domestic jobs. In spite of the president's effort to make opposition a token of radical bias, one is not convinced that the proponents of free trade have the people's interests at heart, Mexican or American, and the concerns that loom are well summarized by Nathan:

> *. . . more and more, late twentieth-century capitalism* everywhere *is basing its survival and growth on making people work for long hours at rock bottom wages without unions or occupational safety or decent housing or environmental controls—in other words, violating tenets of human decency and dignity whose enactment into reality and statute was part of the historical project of the past century. This spiralling descent into neo-barbarism suggests that to mind their countries' fortunes, both the District of Columbia and the Distrito Federal are beginning to depend on the same illegality they used to sniff at when considering the border. Does such a turnabout then mean that life on the lawless* frontera *is actually the avant-garde of our larger cosmopolitan* manana? □

Ivan Doig (Continued from page 9)

were deliberately excluded in the original social security act. So in essence, a lot of people, such as my family, had no pension in sight. You either had what you could save or what we used to call the poor farm, or you'd hope to have a kid with enough brains to go out and get some sort of living. That was still a factor in our lives when I went off to college in '57, that as far as we knew, no one was going to have any social security income. And that's really been overlooked, but it affected a lot of people, certainly of my parent's generation, and it affected a lot of people in my generation. One of the reasons we have these scars on our fingers is from scrambling to find jobs outside of Montana.

So I wasn't aware of all that much choice. Once I could see that I was going to make it somehow in journalism, I stayed with the jobs in newspapering and magazine work for a while. By the time we got to Seattle, my wife's job was in the picture. She's a community college professor. She's been at the same place now for more than twenty years.

TBR: *You dedicated your new book to Wallace Stegner. Is he a friend or an influence or both?*

ID: He's more influence than friend. We've only met face to face once. We correspond a bit. We have an odd loop of commonality. My primary professor in history, Vernon Carstensen, was Stegner's roommate back at Iowa State, I guess it was, in graduate school back there, and so *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* was dedicated to Carstensen. But it was primarily a matter of Stegner as being, by god, "statesman of us all" out here. He's written in so many fields, written across such a spectrum of the West, fiction and nonfiction, and has said so many of the things that we wish we could say, that somebody needed to say. And, by god, he has said them wonderfully. And I thought it kind of behooved me—as one of the rare western writers who was *not* a Stegner student—to stick in a dedication. It's been the most popular part of the book. A lot of people have commented on it. It's a bestselling dedication.

TBR: *Who are some of the writers of the American West whom you have strong feelings about?*

ID: Let me name a few and then say that I don't concentrate all that much on reading writers of the American West. I see myself in a kind of lineage, not literarily, but just personally, I guess, with Stegner, Mari Sandoz, and all the way back to Hamlin Garland—all of us having grown up in outback places, gotten out and become people who made a living at writing. As you know, it was homesteads in Garland's and Sandoz' and Stegner's cases. I'm one generation away from the homestead—my dad was born on one—so in terms of kinship, I go back to that. *Old Jules* (University of Nebraska) of Sandoz, I think, is a marvelous book, one that I read and reread. Stegner's *Wolf Willow* (University of Nebraska, 1980) is probably my favorite book of his. And *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917, University of Nebraska, 1979), I think, is a very fine, neglected book by Garland.

I have a poet friend in Seattle, Madeline DeFrees, who taught with Richard Hugo at Missoula. Madeline writes poems about "imaginary ancestors" [see review, page 7]. So if I would choose imaginary ancestors, it would be that trio, I think, purely from a professional point of view, rather from a literary theory point of view.

But the writers I think I read and look at are more writers out in, say, the old British empire. I've been reading Nadine Gordimer, for instance, and Thomas Kineally, and some of the other Australians, just to see how wild imaginations sometimes can get with the Australians. And the incredible sense of moral character that comes up off Nadine Gordimer's pages, of course. I've been reading Ismael Kadare, an Albanian writer whose work is starting to be published here. I was just knocked out by *Chronicle in Stone* (New Amsterdam, 1987), his first book. And I'm halfway through *Broken April* (New Amsterdam, 1990) right now. It's really good stuff. Language is what I'm after. Language, I think, is really the territory I read more and about. I go back and read Conrad and Faulkner.

TBR: *What about landscape and the elements of nature, which are also a big part of your writing? Any influences there?*

ID: Scholars and theorists may see more in it than I do, but I see landscape as a motherlode of metaphor for a writer. I found that in my two books set out on the Pacific Coast, that the ocean and the coast served somewhat the same way as the Rocky Mountain front in the trilogy and *This House of Sky.* There are these monumental facts of nature, weather pouring in over and around them and so forth, and it just seems to me marvelous chances to work with metaphor in describing the landscape.

I tend to preach a little bit against the notion of western writers as mainly presenting a sense of place. I think, by god, we're presenting some pretty good characters. It's true that landscape is in the work of a lot of very prominent western writers, but you get characters like Paul Maclean in Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It* (University of Chicago, 1976), characters such as Jim Welch's nameless narrator in *Winter in the Blood* (Penguin, 1986), and the characters in *Fool's Crow* (Viking, 1986). Louise Erdrich has communities full of some of the liveliest characters in American literature. It just seems to me that we're not writing travelogues out here, and the sense of place kind of obscures that a little bit.

TBR: *What are you working on next? What do we have to look forward to?*

ID: Well, an unexpected book back towards family territory. A book that is going to fit in ahead of the time frame of *This House of Sky,* looking at my mother's life. She died when I was six; she was thirty-two. I inquired around to what was left of the family at the time I was working on *This House of Sky,* did anyone have any letters or whatever? Nobody came up with anything. But four years ago, one of my uncles died, and I got a batch of letters from the last six months of her life, and the last six months of World War II, as well.

So here's my uncle Wally out on a destroyer in the South Pacific, and he gets these letters from my mother. There's a geographic shift down the spine of the Rockies. The letters start in Arizona, where my folks had gone in the winter of '44-45, for the sake of her asthma, and for my dad to take a job in a defense plant, an aircraft factory down there. These letters seem to me to show a family not really knowing what it's going to do, but making the decision somewhere in there *against* the sunbelt life. Back we go to Montana, back we go to her death as well.

What she's talking about in these letters brings up in me some half-memories, family stories and so forth that I think can make a short, intense, maybe edgy kind of book about a woman growing up in the West in the twenties and thirties, who happens to have been my mother.

TBR: *It must have been quite an experience to come across those letters.*

ID: Yea, it was pretty potent. Along with them are letters of my dad and my grandmother, after her death, as they began fighting over me. So the great sorrow of seeing what these people were going through at that time, that was pretty potent, yeah. But that's the kind of propellant that a writer wants. □

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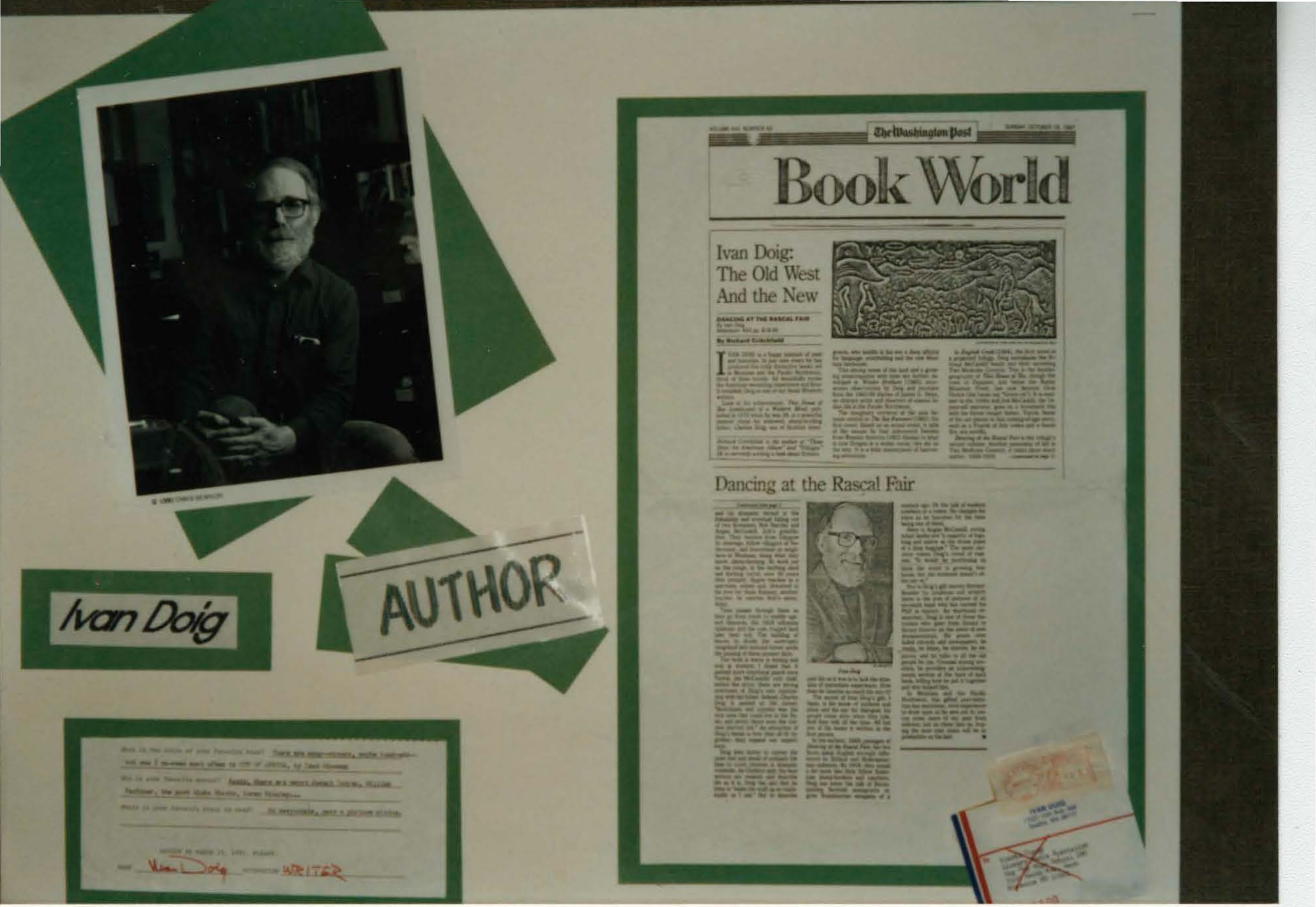

Ivan Doig
AUTHOR
The Washington Post
Book World
Ivan Doig: The Old West And the New
Dancing at the Rascal Fair
WRITER

24 Hours in Due East, S.C.

WHO DO YOU LOVE

By Valerie Sayers.
325 pp. New York:
Doubleday. $18.95.

By Howard Frank Mosher

OVER the past decade or so, a number of America's finest younger novelists have staked out fictional claims on out-of-the-way corners of the country. Sometimes referred to by critics as the "new regionalism," this fiction is, in fact, neither especially new nor, in any limiting or quaint sense of the word, regional. One thinks, for example, of the dark and decaying New England mill towns of Ernest Hebert and Russell Banks, of Cathie Pelletier's remote Canadian border terrain with its idiosyncratic clans of French and Yankee backwoodsmen, and of Ivan Doig's high Western plains, rich in historical lore.

"Who Do You Love," Valerie Sayers' third book set, like her previous novels "Due East" and "How I Got Him Back," in the appealingly named coastal town of Due East, S.C., is a book written in just this tradition. Perched on an off-the-beaten-track fringe of the Atlantic seaboard, Due East is a community of stately white houses with wide yards shaded by live oak and pecan trees, long-established family businesses catering mainly to the nearby Parris Island Marine base, and attractive beaches guarded by vast wetlands and scrub woods unspoiled enough to hold wildcats — not to mention rattlesnakes. With its lovely late-afternoon sunlight and seaside vistas and easygoing pace — the main topic of conversation downtown on an unseasonably warm fall day seems to be whether to turn on the air conditioners — it's a place you could fall in love with at first sight and settle down in for life.

Dolores Rooney, a wide-eyed young college student from New York, did exactly that back in 1946; and even now, 17 years older and only too well aware of Due East's grimy underside and moral shortcomings, Dolores is still full of affection for her adopted home: "Never mind the trailer lots on the way out of town, or the tacky cheap gas stations on the highway; never mind, just for the moment, the mean little plumbingless shacks on the islands, where they painted the doors and window frames blue to ward off evil spirits; never mind the rednecks five miles up the road. At just this dreamy moment Due East was so sublime that it was almost a spiritual, not a physical, place: even the brown marsh grass, squatting in brown mud at low tide, was beautiful."

Not that Dolores doesn't have her own share of midlife problems. The novel opens in November 1963, on the eve of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, with Dolores, 37 years old and pregnant with her fifth child, full of concern about her family. Kate, her precocious 11-year-old, is preoccupied with doubts about sex; for weeks now, she's spent hours a day conducting covert (and very funny) dictionary word searches, with maddeningly redundant results: "She'd

Continued on page 29

Howard Frank Mosher is the winner of the 1991 New England Book Award for Fiction given by the New England Booksellers Association. His most recent novel is "A Stranger in the Kingdom."

A Town That Sparkled



CHRISTOPH ABBREDERIS

Kate's father didn't come from Due East. . . . He'd chosen Due East. He'd grown up on a farm inland from Charleston, near a town called Shining Star. Shining Star was hot and dry and dull, Bill Rooney told his family: it was Due East that sparkled, the town and the islands and the ocean out beyond. When Bill Rooney set up shop on River Street, he made a systematic study of the local habits. He learned to wear a hat, and to buy a few good suits in Savannah whether he needed them or not. He spent an hour, at the least, in Ralph's every morning, stretching his fifteen-cent cup of coffee into a tutorial on the subject of crops (Due East rose and fell with tomatoes and cukes) and hurricanes and defense buildups (they had three military installations in the county, by the grace of God and Congressman L. Mendel Rivers).

From "Who Do You Love."

April 7, '91

from: Independent Observer
Conrad, Mt.

Montana born author writes about zest of the old west

by Charlotte Malloy
Shoshone News-Press
Kellogg, ID

Ivan Doig became a writer of western novels in the aftermath of Watergate, with the idea of making the publishing world a little more democratic.

By the time Doig sat down to write "This House of Sky" the story of his family's roots in the "secret and peopleless land" of southwestern Montana, he was fresh out of patience for the parade of dishonest politicians with best-selling books.

"Notoriety was getting its story told, but the actuality of long lives lived as best they could was not getting its story told," said Doig, one of more than 200 authors and scholars attending the Western Literature Association Conference which was held at Coeur d'Alene Resort. "I thought, 'By God, people such as my own deserve to have their stories told as well as the convicted felons who've been running this country.' "

With a half-dozen books now under his tough leather belt - including "Mariah's Book," due to be published next fall - Doig has been selected as this year's recipient

"It builds its own force by the accumulation of detail," he said. "You build the castle out of smaller stones."

Making frequent trips from Seattle - where he lives with his photographer wife, Carol - Doig revisited the once familiar sights and sounds of his native Montana. One by one, fading memories came to life. As he writes in the first chapter:

A certain turn in my desk chair, and the leather cushion must creak the quick dry groan of a saddle under my legs - and my father's and his father's. The taste in the air as rain comes over the city is forever a flavor back from a Montana community too tiny to be called a town. A man, the same alphabet of college degrees after his name as mine, trumps in a debating point during a party argument, and my grandmother's words mutter in me on cue that he grins like a jackass eating thistles.

Doig marks time for his characters according to a seasonal clock with hands that circle past planting, lambing and harvesting seasons with predictable regularity.

"You have, just by the truth of the calendar, what is important in each of those

"Those of us who are full-time writers don't have time to analyze ourselves - and not even sure we should," he said. "We have other books to write."

"I'm just trying to get the sounds of words on paper," he added. "I think my fingertips are more important than the murky swamps of the back of my mind."

Doig speaks proudly of his western heritage - particularly of his place in a lineage of western writers.

"There's a continuity of people having been born in these small, hard places, and who, by the thrust of their desire to get out, become writers," Doig said, his face decorated with a scholarly looking beard, his eyes looking out through a pair of horn-rimmed glasses.

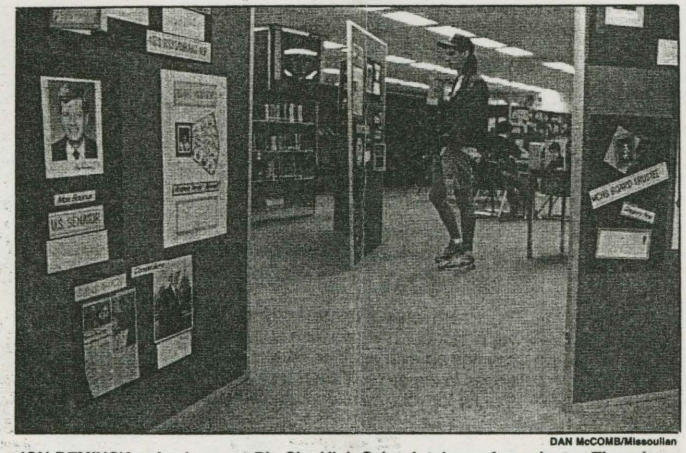
"We bring spicier ingredients to our books than people with calmer, saner backgrounds might," he said.

• *Around Missoula*
• *Legislative Digest*

MONTANA

Missoulian
April 19, 1991 B

When leaders become readers ...



DAN McCOMB/Missoulian

JON DEMINCK, a freshman at Big Sky High School, takes a few minutes Thursday afternoon to view the poster display in the school library.

What do the famous read? Big Sky students asked

By GARY JAHRIG
of the Missoulian

When it comes to favorite authors, Ivan Doig's name tops the lists submitted by notable Montanans such as Sen. Max Baucus and university President George Dennison.

But when asked to pick his own personal preference, the Seattle-based writer opts for the works of authors such as Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner and Loren Eisely. And as for book favorites, Doig makes it clear he has many.

"There are many — dozens, maybe hundreds. But the one I reread most often is 'Out of Africa' by Isak Dinesen," Doig writes.

Doig, Baucus and Dennison were among dozens of people who responded to a survey prepared by the Big Sky High School library staff in recognition of National Library Week. Participants were asked to select their favorite book and author as well as their favorite place to read.

"We wanted to involve the community in the school. This is one way to do it," said Big Sky librarian Gloria Curdy. "We wanted to show students that a lot of successful people are reading the same books students are."

Those responding to the survey included politicians, local business people, writers, athletes and former and current Big Sky students. Curdy and her staff mounted each response on a sheet of poster board with the subject's picture and other personal effects. The posters were then set up in the Big Sky library, where hundreds of students and adults have been viewing the display daily since Monday.

Along with Doig, other favorite authors garnering more than one mention included Ernest Hemingway, Stephen King, Norman Maclean and Mark Twain. James Michener earned kudos from state school superintendent Nancy Keenan and smokejumper Willis Curdy. Robert Ludlum scored top marks with Missoula County Commissioner Janet Stevens and Lady Griz basketball coach Ro

Books

(continued)

bin Selvig.

Favorite book picks ranged from high school board member Greg Fine's selection of Salman Rushdie's "Satanic Verses," to ex-Grizzly quarterback Grady Bennett's choice of "The Bible." Maclean's "A River Runs Through It" was cited by State Auditor Andy Bennett and 4B's restaurateur Jeff Hainline.

As might be expected, Montana's elected officials were as far apart with their literary choices as they often are with their political decisions. Given the choice:

■ U.S. Rep. Pat Williams, a Democrat, would read "Roots" or a book by Twain "under a tree outside."

■ Republican Sen. Conrad Burns would dive into "Against the Night" by James Minor. Burns listed convicted Watergate conspirator-turned prison evangelist Charles Colson as his favorite author and calls "home" his No. 1 place to read.

■ Baucus likes Doig and his book "Dancing at the Rascal Fair." The Democratic senator also tagged Maclean as a favorite author and his family's ranch near Helena or his office on Capitol Hill as his favorite reading places.

■ While Gov. Stan Stephens singles out no one author or book, the Republican rated Hemingway, William Buckley and Herman Wouk among his favorite writers.

"I read extensively. Everything from 'The Bible' to history, political science, fiction and nonfiction," Stephens wrote, saying that he tries to find time to read each day.

Curdy said most of the people contacted responded to the reading survey. Among the few no returns: Barbara and George Bush.

However, Curdy did receive a personal response from Vice President Dan Quayle's office. While Quayle did not answer the questions about his favorite reading habits, the vice president did send regrets that he would not be able to appear in person at Big Sky this week.

"We sincerely appreciate your interest in having the vice president participate in your upcoming program," said the letter that is included in the display in the Big Sky library. "Unfortunately, due to a heavily committed schedule he will be unable to join you. However, we hope that when planning future events you will again consider seeking Vice President Quayle's participation."

Big Sky High School

MONTANA POST

Vol. 27 No. 3 | Official Newsletter of the Montana Historical Society | Autumn 1989

Exhibit Celebrates 150 Years of Photography



If you had lived one hundred and fifty-one years ago, you would have had to hire an artist to draw or paint the likenesses of your loved ones. But the invention of photography in 1839 made realistic images available on an unprecedented scale and, as the technical processes were refined, increasingly available to the general public. Because of this fascinating new process many early Montana settlers could forestall their loneliness with pictures of their families in the form of daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, and tintypes.

Some of these early images and many of the photographs that Montanans later took and saved will be in "'Secure the Shadow Ere the Substance Fades': A Celebration of Photography," an exhibit at the Montana Historical Society this fall and winter. Photograph Curator Lory Morrow and Museum Curator Susan Near are preparing the exhibition from the Society's collections to commemorate the sesquicentennial of photography.

A letter from the Society's Archives shows how valuable early portraits were to their owners. In 1866, miner F. L. Kirkaldie wrote to his family: "I had the misfortune to lose my memorandum book, which contained all the family likenesses—I miss them very much—and if you

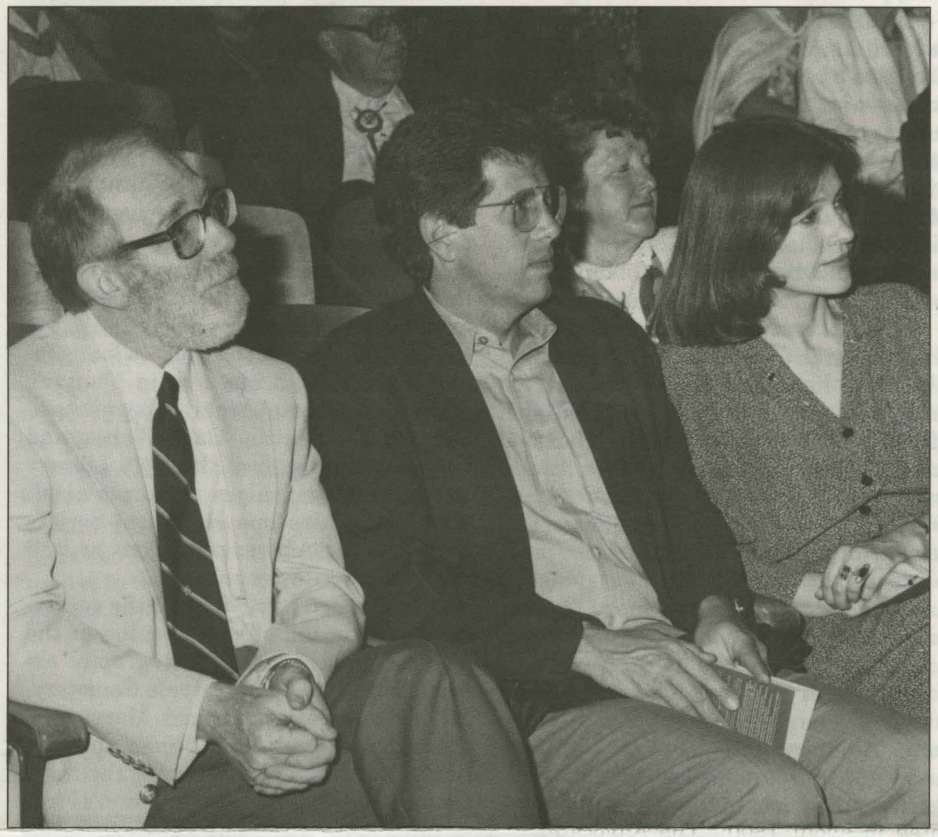
(continued on page 2)

Centennial West Program Continues with Community Forums

Over four hundred people from Seattle, Washington, to Vermillion, South Dakota, were in Billings, Montana, last June to attend "Centennial West: Celebrations of the Northern Tier States' Heritage," sponsored by the Montana Historical Society. Participants came from twenty-two states and one Canadian province to celebrate the statehood anniversaries of Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

This fascinating conference provided a singular opportunity for scholars, researchers, and artists to meet and share their insights with an interested citizenry. This fall, community forums will repeat this opportunity in eleven towns in the six Northern Tier states. Each program will begin with a multi-screen slide presentation illustrating the landscape and history of the Northern Tier. Three speakers with expertise on the history of the region will address one of the following topics: natural resources, Native American culture, political traditions, folklore, or art and literature that have been inspired by the region's landscape. The formal presentations will be followed by questions and discussion between the audience and the speakers.

Participants at the local forums will receive a book that has been published for those interested in the history of the region. Beginning with an essay on the history of the Northern Tier region by William L. Lang, former editor of *Montana, the Magazine of Western History*, the 48-page book presents an essays on each state's history written by a leading historian.



Ivan Doig, Michael Dorris, and Louise Erdrich read from their novels at the Centennial West program in Billings.

The remaining forums will be held in the following Northern Tier towns:

October 20, 21	Bismarck, ND
October 20, 21	Cody, WY
October 27, 28	Laramie, WY
November 3, 4	Tacoma, WA
November 10, 11	Grand Forks, ND
November 17, 18	Butte, MT

The Centennial West programs are free of charge and all members of the communities are encouraged to attend. For more information, write to Jennifer Jeffries Thompson, Education Department, Montana Historical Society, 225 N. Roberts, Helena, Montana 59620, or call (406) 444-4794.

MHS Accesssions

Photograph Archives

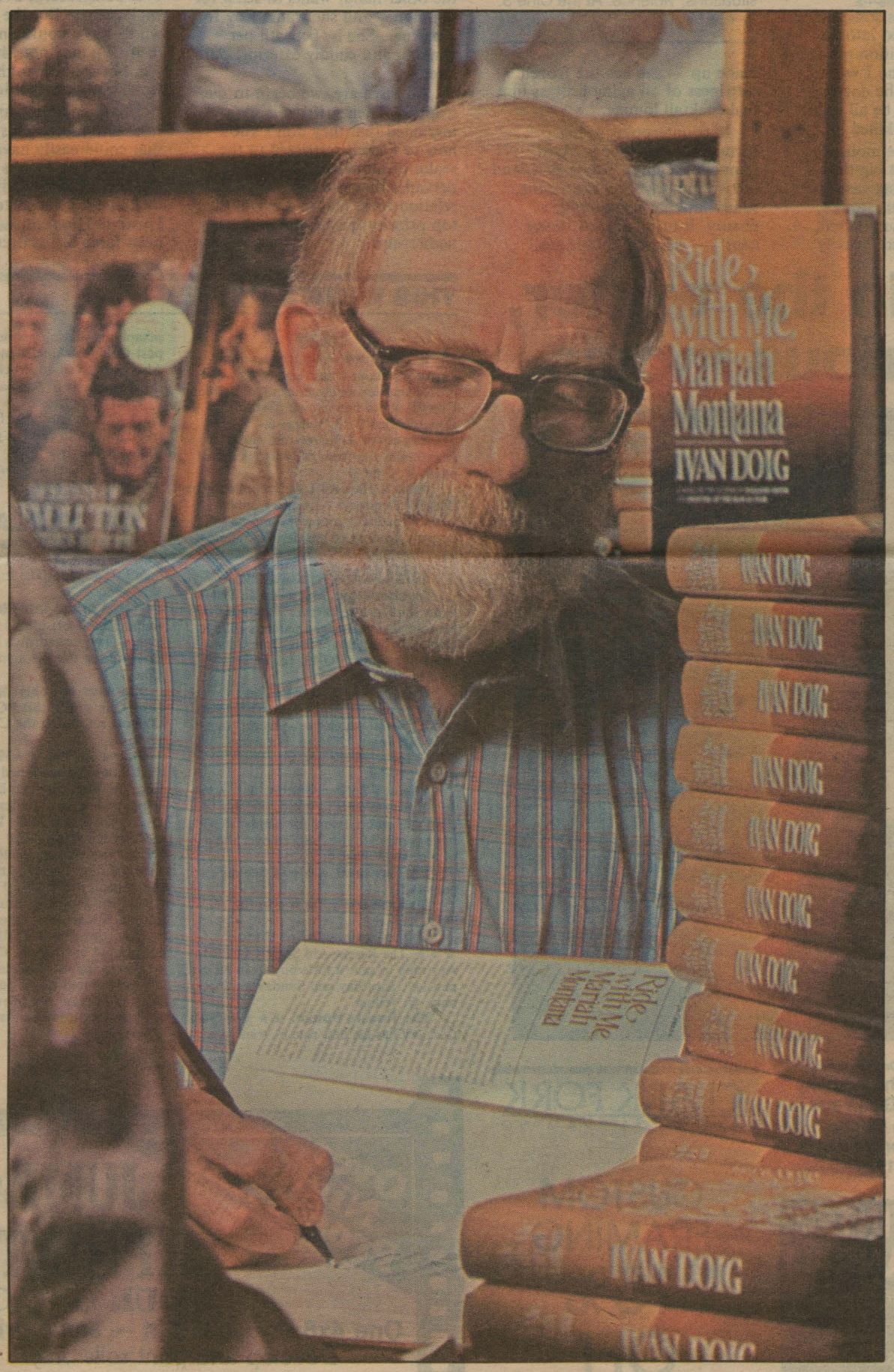
Lewis L. Yarlett *Gainesville, Florida*	95 photographs and negatives, views of schools, teachers, and children in Montana, 1920s-1950s
Richard Fox Maxwell *Coronado, Costa Rica*	305 photographs, views of Kendall, the Moore flume, drilling at Kendall mines, the Fox ranch, and 16 Mile Canyon, c. 1910
Faye Wiegenstein *Redford, Missouri*	11 photographs, views by J. A. Wintermute & Son and D. McMillion of Bimetallic mill, Granite and Philipsburg
Lauri Olsen *Bozeman*	170 photographs, mostly by A. E. Wartena, views of WPA activities in Montana, 1938
Rita Dorn for Henry Hansen's Estate *Las Vegas, Nevada*	18 photographs, construction of Fort Peck Dam, blasing and drilling Snake Butte, and hunting coyotes in northeastern Montana
Robert A. Reuther *Grosse Point Woods, Michigan*	19 photographs, views of Helena and surrounding area in the 1880s-1890s, some by photographers Arthur Canning and Ralph DeCamp

Archives

Charles C. Patton *Springfield, Illinois*	E. E. "Boo" and Edna MacGilvra letters, 1972-1981
Mary Jelinek *San Francisco, California*	Reminiscence by Fred Buck, "Experiences of the Fred Buck Family in the Helena Earthquakes of 1935" (including photographs)
Elmer L. Jones *Salina, Kansas*	Letter from J. C. Cooper to A. J. Willis, 1864
Mary Martinsen *Hardin*	D. W. Slayton letters, 1885-1886
Scott Steen *Butte*	KGIR (Butte) Fiftieth Anniversary interview tapes with Ed Craney and others
Chris Clancy *Livingston*	Montana Hunters and Anglers Project oral history interviews
Anna Zellick *Livingston*	Croatian Brotherhood records, Roundup, 1916-1980

Missoulian Feb. 1-Feb. 7, 1991

ENTERTAINER



ON THE COVER: IVAN DOIG, GOVERNOR'S AWARD WINNER AND AUTHOR OF, *'THIS HOUSE OF SKY,' 'ENGLISH CREEK,' 'DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR,'* AND *'RIDE WITH ME, MARIAH MONTANA.'*

THE GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR THE ARTS

NOTABLE CONTRIBUTORS

One group, four individuals win the state's prestigious honor

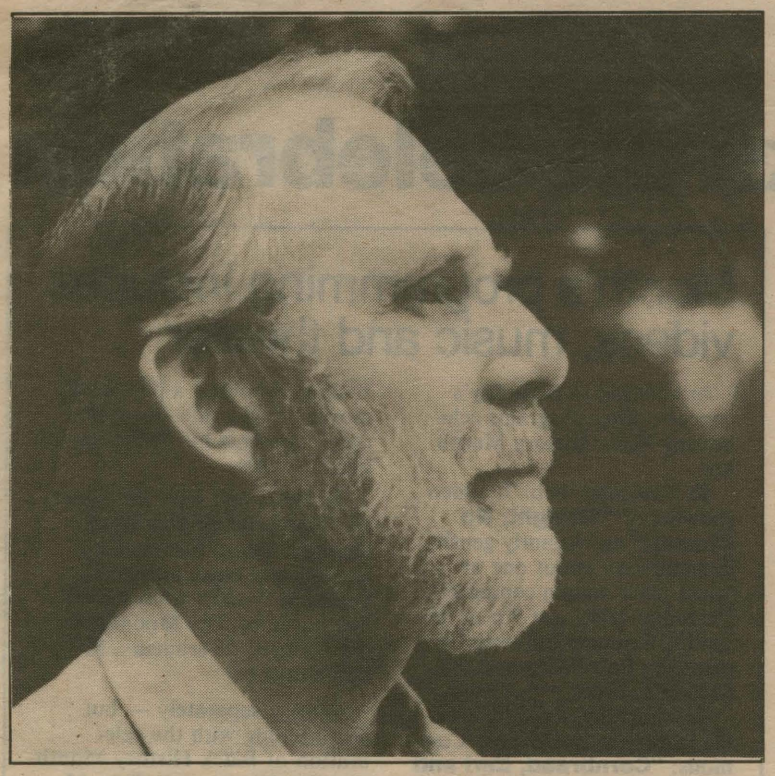
INSIDE

SOUTH AFRICANS ENTERTAIN AT UM

'DAYS OF THUNDER' AMONG NEW VIDEO RELEASES

WINTER BRINGS SOMBER MOVIES

ENTERTAINER ON THE COVER



Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig's sixth book, "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," sent him on a 50-city book-signing tour last fall that drove him to bandage a finger on his autographing hand. While his 1978 book "This House of Sky" put him on the writing map, "Mariah Montana" looks as if it will spell commercial success.

"Ivan has a growing audience," Susan Richman, Doig's publicist at Macmillan Publishing and Atheneum, said this fall. "As far as being important to us, he's one of the top novelists on the Atheneum list. This is definitely Atheneum's major novel for fall."

Doig, who's on the road researching his newest book project, grew up on a sheep ranch outside Dupuyer. He graduated from Valier High School, where, he once said, he was "an inept javelin-thrower." He earned undergraduate and master's degrees in journalism at Northwestern University and worked a few years as an editor before settling in Seattle in 1966.

His journalism training is "the muscle and sinew" of how he works, Doig has said. He relies on meticulous research and writes out of a Montana heart.

"The Montana I write about is pretty much a Montana I've lived in whether I'm in Ringling or Tierra del Fuego," he told the Missoulian this fall. "It's a bounding of memory and cadences of language and story that I grew up with that never goes out of me."



Mary Agnes Roberts

Thirty-two years ago, Great Falls had no symphony orchestra. Mary Agnes Roberts and five friends changed that.

"What inspired us was we all wanted a symphony in Great Falls," she said this week, "and several tries before had failed."

Back then, they charged 50 cents a concert. Today, the Great Falls symphony has a budget of $250,000 and 1,400 season-ticket holders. It often plays to sold-out houses in the 1,800-seat Great Falls Civic Center.

Roberts, who began as a violin player, then commuted to Missoula for cello lessons and now plays viola, also helped found the Montana Association of Symphony Orchestras. She was recently elected to her second two-year term as its president.

Robert said she volunteers out of her love of Montana.

"We have to have good libraries and museums and music," she said, "for our quality of life."



Lyndon Fayne Pomeroy

Lately, Lyndon Pomeroy's work has been tested by fire.

Twenty-eight or 29 years ago, Billings artist Stan Lynde bought one of Pomeroy's welded-steel sculptures. Sitting on the fireplace mantle, the sculpture was the only piece of art that survived when Lynde's house burned down last month. A 20-year-old sculpture of Pomeroy's had a similar experience in a Bozeman family's house fire recently.

"Had those sculptures been bronze, they would be just puddles now," Pomeroy said in a phone interview from his Billings home this week.

The work has come back to Pomeroy, who's cleaning it up. It's like a reunion with old friends.

"When I finish something, I don't want it around," he said. "I want it to go. But I like to go back to them 10 or 12 years later, just to look."

Pomeroy is also working on a commissioned piece of public art that will be installed in Omaha, Neb., a team of oxen pulling a plow. It's a large-scale work in which the farmer driving the team is eight feet tall.

Pomeroy has spent most of his life making and teaching art. But when he was growing up in Havre, an art career wasn't considered "an acceptable direction," he remembers.

He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in art, and he taught art at Northern Montana College and Eastern Montana College. But he returned always to his first love, making sculpture of welded steel.

"Steel is the contemporary medium," he says. "It is the medium of our time."

Pomeroy, who has sculpted full-time since 1961, created the miners panning gold on the walking mall in Helena and public-art pieces in Great Falls, Havre and Billings. His work has also been exhibited across the country, including Washington, D.C., and other Western states.

Pomeroy will travel to Helena next week to accept his award. Most of his family will be there, including his 86-year-old mother.

"I figured maybe eventually I might receive it by the time I was 85, if I didn't die first," he said. "They don't give them posthumously."

The New York Times

Book Review

March 3, 1991
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The One True Picasso

A LIFE OF PICASSO
Volume One, 1881-1906.
By John Richardson, with the collaboration of Marilyn McCully.
Illustrated. 548 pp. New York: Random House. $39.95.

By John Russell

FEW biographies in the literature of art have aroused more expectation than the four intended volumes of "A Life of Picasso" by John Richardson. Though sometimes despaired of by those who were most impatient to read it, Mr. Richardson's Volume One turns out to have been worth the wait.

A remarkable achievement on more than one count, it has the steady, unhurrying pace and the superabundance of detail that were the mark of biography in High Victorian days. It is warmed throughout by unforced private affection and by a veritable tumult of reminiscence. But neither hype nor adulation plays a part in it. The record is set straight, without bias, even where the buzzword "manipulative" is the only one that fits Pablo Picasso's treatment of others.

Not only Picasso himself, but all those with whom he came into close contact — friends, lovers, colleagues, nonentities and men and women of genius — are brought to rounded life. And if we sense here and there that Mr. Richardson has a score to settle with people, now dead, who did not further his researches, Picasso himself would have been the first to note that and to enjoy it.

Conversational in tone, the book musters and marshals a truly

Continued on page 20

John Russell writes frequently on art and culture for The New York Times.



Detail from a 1903 self-portrait, done in pen on paper, by Pablo Picasso.

ARS N.Y./SPADEM/FROM "A LIFE OF PICASSO"

Desert Storm and Then What? A Reader's Guide

By Fouad Ajami

AFTER Operation Desert Storm there will be an American imperium in the Middle East and we shall be healers. Such is the promise of what will come to pass when the guns fall silent. This is a return to an old theme. Pick up the American trail in Iraq and Kuwait and trace it back from today's expedition to the first American ventures into the Arab and Muslim realms. The themes recur, the history telescopes easily. Always there is the promise that over the horizon — two or three camel days away, as the Arabs of the desert would have once put it — there will be bliss: the distant power giving something of its innocence and optimism to a region burdened by its feuds and obsessions. And always there is the response of that world: dependence and resentment, attraction to the power from afar and the need to cover up the attraction and the dependence.

Fouad Ajami is a professor of Middle Eastern studies at the School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University and the author of "The Arab Predicament."

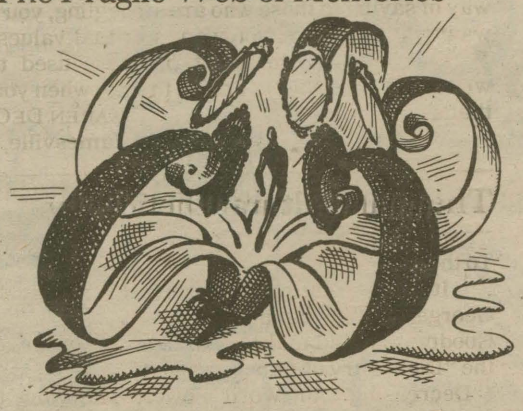
Americans don't know the realms of Islam with any great intimacy and authority. The United States has been an unsteady presence in that region: bursts of intense activism alternating with periods of benign neglect. We have tended to think of Arab and Muslim societies as places that the Europeans knew and understood. We stand in awe of the great craft of the British writers and travelers, of the curiosity that took Richard Burton, T. E. Lawrence, Gertrude

Continued on page 22

Richard Sennett in Search of the City/**3**

Noted With Pleasure

The Fragile Web of Memories



Our recollections of those we love, Alain Robbe-Grillet writes, are composed largely not of dramatic events but of shared pleasures and quiet moments. This passage on his mother is in "Ghosts in the Mirror" (Grove Weidenfeld).

The importance of things . . . obviously doesn't lie in their intrinsic significance but in the way they stick in our memory. And clearly, the strongest ties between people who are close to each other are above all forged of small, insignificant things. So I'm sure that throughout my childhood and long after I kept alive a dense network of tastes shared with my mother, which probably came from her, but also a solid though more intangible fabric of tiny events and minute sensations that we both experienced in the same way from day to day. I should mention, for instance, our mutual love of gardens and gardening, a marked gift for culinary invention, our fondness for making complicated, detailed plans in our head. . . . The most precious things we shared were certainly much more modest, without the slightest universal character. . . . I could take almost any detail at random, since what's essential is how you perceive them and above all how they are woven together.

Making Sense of the World

Beneath the modern obsession with facts and theories, Alvin Kernan argues, can be discerned the perpetual human search for meaning. This is from "The Death of Literature" (Yale University).

Meaning, not raw facts, is what humanity seeks, and society is a collection of kits or codes for processing raw facts into meaning. Ordering is one of the simplest and most durable human methods for finding or making meaning. Take a variety of things and put them in some kind of relationship, a simple sequence, a taxonomy, a hierarchy, or a cause-and-effect pattern, say, and they make sense, apparently for no better reason than the tautological one that order and relationship are felt by human beings to be meaningful. . . . So extensive are its charts, tables, structures, and classification systems that culture can be said to be composed of an extensive series of interlocking schemes of order. The ultimate aim of society might well be viewed . . . as assembling all these individual systems into a master system of knowledge, a unified field not of physical forces but of culture.

The Genuine, Spontaneous Thing

The way in which one writer's imagination is influenced by another is vividly caught by the novelist Kate Chopin, recollecting her discovery of Guy de Maupassant's work. Her essay is quoted in "Kate Chopin" by Emily Toth (Morrow).

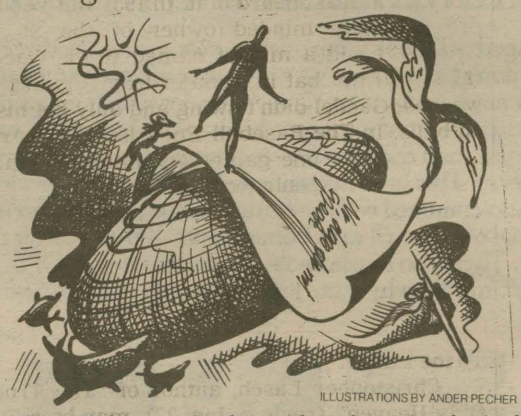
"About eight years ago there fell accidentally into my hands a volume of Maupassant's tales," Chopin wrote in September 1896, after the *Atlantic* asked her for an essay about herself. "I had been in the woods, in the fields, groping around; looking for something big, satisfying, convincing, and finding nothing but — myself; a something neither big nor satisfying but wholly convincing. It was at this period of my emerging from the vast solitude in which I had been making my own acquaintance, that I stumbled upon Maupassant. . . . Here was life, not fiction; for where were the plots, the old fashioned mechanism and stage trapping that in a vague, unthinking way I had fancied were essential to the art of story making. Here was a man who had escaped from tradition and authority, who had entered into himself and looked out upon life through his own being and with his own eyes; and who, in a direct and simple way, told us what he saw. When a man does this, he gives us the best that he can; something valuable for it is genuine and spontaneous."

Held Rapt by Language

Ivan Doig, in an essay on a beloved teacher, reminds us of an experience common to those in love with words: the influence of a mentor passionate about language. His piece is included in "A Special Relationship: Our Teachers and How We Learned," edited by John C. Board (Pushcart).

Day after day we would troop to the blackboard to take apart sentences for her, phrases chalked to one another like scaffolding, being shown how a clause dovetailed here, an infinitive did the splicing there, the whole of it planed and beamed together as her pointer whapped through a reading of the revealed sentence. For her the language held holy force, and she shuddered at any squander of it. In what must have been her fullest spate of forgiveness, she once apologized about one of the townswomen: *Once you get used to her split infinitives, you'll find she's a very nice person.* And so Mrs. Tidyman hovered at me from her heights of language, declaiming, rhapsodizing, unabashedly giving favor to any of us who seemed rapt. I was more than rapt, held by her whirligig of language and learning as if I were a ball swung on a tether.

Writing on Stones



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDER PECHER

Tim Robinson, in the midst of waxing lyrical about the Irish shoreline, pauses to remind himself that we err in projecting human qualities onto the natural world. This is from "Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage" (Penguin, paper).

The sea does not riddle, dolphins do not pray, the vagrant bird neither trusts nor distrusts Robinson, waves never sign anything; what I myself witness is my own forgery. One should forego these overluxuriant metaphors that covertly impute a desire of communication to non-human reality. We ourselves are the only source of meaning, at least on this little beach of the Universe. These inscriptions that we insist on finding on every stone, every sand-grain, are in our own hand. People who write letters to themselves are generally regarded as pathetic, but such is the human condition. We are writing a work so vast, so multivocal, so driven asunder by its project of becoming coextensive with reality, that when we come across scattered phrases of it we fail to recognize them as our own. □

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The New York Times

The New York Times Book Review, March 3, 1991, p. 31

Ivan: You may have missed this.

John C. Board
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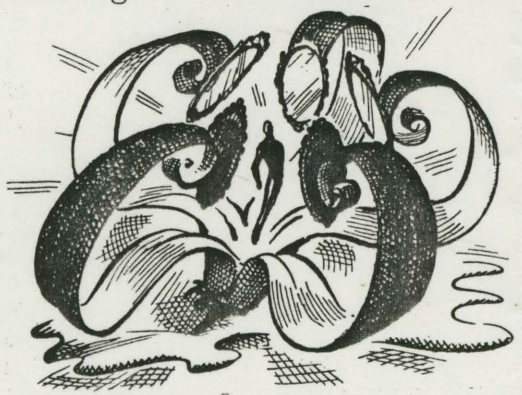
Noted With Pleasure

The Fragile Web of Memories



Our recollections of those we love, Alain Robbe-Grillet writes, are composed largely not of dramatic events but of shared pleasures and quiet moments. This passage on his mother is in "Ghosts in the Mirror" (Grove Weidenfeld).

The importance of things . . . obviously doesn't lie in their intrinsic significance but in the way they stick in our memory. And clearly, the strongest ties between people who are close to each other are above all forged of small, insignificant things. So I'm sure that throughout my childhood and long after I kept alive a dense network of tastes shared with my mother, which probably came from her, but also a solid though more intangible fabric of tiny events and minute sensations that we both experienced in the same way from day to day. I should mention, for instance, our mutual love of gardens and gardening, a marked gift for culinary invention, our fondness for making complicated, detailed plans in our head. . . . The most precious things we shared were certainly much more modest, without the slightest universal character. . . . I could take almost any detail at random, since what's essential is how you perceive them and above all how they are woven together.

nothing but — myself; a something neither big nor satisfying but wholly convincing. It was at this period of my emerging from the vast solitude in which I had been making my own acquaintance, that I stumbled upon Maupassant. . . . Here was life, not fiction; for where were the plots, the old fashioned mechanism and stage trapping that in a vague, unthinking way I had fancied were essential to the art of story making. Here was a man who had escaped from tradition and authority, who had entered into himself and looked out upon life through his own being and with his own eyes; and who, in a direct and simple way, told us what he saw. When a man does this, he gives us the best that he can; something valuable for it is genuine and spontaneous."

Held Rapt by Language

Ivan Doig, in an essay on a beloved teacher, reminds us of an experience common to those in love with words: the influence of a mentor passionate about language. His piece is included in "A Special Relationship: Our Teachers and How We Learned," edited by John C. Board (Pushcart).

Day after day we would troop to the blackboard to take apart sentences for her, phrases chalked to one another like scaffolding, being shown how a clause dovetailed here, an infinitive did the splicing there, the whole of it planed and beamed together as her pointer whapped through a reading of the revealed sentence. For her the language held holy force, and she shuddered at any squander of it. In what must have been her fullest spate of forgiveness, she once apologized about one of the townswomen: *Once you get used to her split infinitives, you'll find she's a very nice person.* And so Mrs. Tidyman hovered at me from her heights of language, declaiming, rhapsodizing, unabashedly giving favor to any of us who seemed rapt. I was more than rapt, held by her whirligig of language and learning as if I were a ball swung on a tether.

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Hello Joan,

These galleys have three more proof-readers to pass through, but wanted you to "fix" as you see fit — I hope not drastically.

Thanks so much —

If you wish, you could call in corrections: 1-800-654-1105.

Cordially,

Carolyn

P.S. Time is fairly short. Hear from you soon?

CAROLYN CUNNINGHAM • EDITOR

Dear Carolyn--

17 Nov. '90

Here are the fixes and minor updatings, I hope thoroughly undrastic. Could you send me two or three extra copies of the issue when it runs?

Thanks for your attention to my work; I hope you're thriving.

best,

Nov. 5, 1990
Ben Groff
4221 152nd St. SW
Lynnwood, WA 98037
745-8855

Ivan Doig
17021 10th Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan:

Congratulations on the publication of your new novel. I look forward to the pleasure of reading it. I recently noticed yet another favorable review of your work in the New York Times Book Review.

I'm writing to tell you that I had offered my profile of you two years ago to Montana magazine, for reprint. They were interested, and are finally going to publish it (barring last minute emergencies) in their January 1991 issue. They will use Mariah Montana as the hook. Minor changes will be made from the text that appeared in Pacific, to reflect the passage of time and the fact that Rascal Fair is no longer the new thing.

make pipes in article when she calls?

Carolyn Cunningham, editor of Montana (1-800-654-1105), tells me she or someone there will probably contact you soon about photos for the story.

I thank you again for allowing me to interview you and write the story. As for myself, it has been a year since I left the earth of free-lance journalism for the outer-space of fiction writing. That is really what I always wanted to do. I was not comfortable as an invader of lives. I have my ups and downs of hope and discouragement, but my first published fiction appears in the current issue of Alaska Quarterly Review, and another story has been accepted by Crab Creek Review. Still, don't look for my name any time soon in the New York Times Book Review.

(3 1/2 yrs old by now!)

Thanks again for your past cooperation and the pleasure of your acquaintance.

- ask her: Harrison Lane rev?

Yours,

Ben Groff

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Eloan Doig
17021 10th Ave N.W.
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11/1/30

Dear Mr. Dorn,

I received your message regarding corrections to the interview. The changes have been made + the article is set for printing.

Thanks for all your help. I look forward to the feminine viewpoint companion to *This House of Sky*.

Best Wishes. L. O'Brien

LINDA O'BRIEN-NIEHAUS
18210 W Spring Lake Dr. SE
Renton, Washington 98058
(206) 432-7104

Phoned ans to her message machine 10/31/90, told her to call me Mon. Nov. 5 if anything further needed.

Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177

October 28, 1990

Dear Mr. Doig,

Enclosed is a copy of the interview I am submitting to Writer's Northwest Handbook. I trust you'll find it satisfactory. However, if you do see a problem, please don't hesitate to call.

I enjoyed our conversation and am only sorry more of it couldn't be included in this piece. 1,000 words always turns out to be such a small chunk.

Thank you again for your time and courtesies.

Best Wishes,

LO

Linda O'Brien

Linda O'Brien

An Interview With Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig may well be the quintessential Northwest writer. He brings our past to life, populating a realistic West with characters who struggle through their day to day existence by balancing passions, dreams and responsibilities. Doig's books carry the stamp of authenticity. They are tightly-plotted testaments to his belief that in order to write about a region, "you have to learn its skin and language and soul."

All of which translates into planning and hard work. "I tend to think of situations and chronologies early. In the current book, Ride With Me Mariah Montana, it was the situation of putting three people of a couple generations in a motorhome and turning them loose in Montana during the Centennial year. Dancing At The Rascal Fair is putting people aboard a ship in Scotland and sending them to Montana. Alongside of this, is thinking about chronology, which is often an outline for me. English Creek takes place within one summer in Montana. Winter Brothers is one winter on the coast. Dancing at the Rascal Fair deliberately expanded to cover thirty years. So situation and chronology are early considerations, and on the planks of that stage come the characters."

Doig's affinity for the land and its language, and his commitment to historical accuracy are the cornerstones of his work. "To me, getting the details right puts an intrinsic rightness to the book. The notion that care in small things

translates to care in greater things is one of the benefits of research."

To Doig research is not an isolated part of the writing process. "It's akin to an actor's performance. Is the time spent memorizing not part of the performance? No, I think it is. And a writer's research is maybe akin to that--to an actor learning his part.

"You have to cast a broad research net and find details. A lot of archival research goes into my books. I try to be as imaginative as possible about where to look. There's a brief mention early in English Creek of auction sales of farmers and ranchers who had gone bankrupt. What would those have been like? I talked to a historian friend who said to look at the records of the Montana agency that took over when all the banks failed in the 1930's. Those state guys had to go out and inventory the properties the banks held. There were listings of what kind of harness, what kind of plow, what kind of kitchen equipment those ranches possessed, so there's an exact picture of what was on a ranch in the mid 1930's.

"A lot of my research is done by going out and listening to the people of the area I'm writing about. For characters, I've often gone back into historic photo files and collected faces. In English Creek there's a kid named Ray Heaney who's described as looking more like his face had been carved out of a pumpkin than born. That kid is from a Dorthea Lange photo from the depression years. A kid from somewhere out in Oregon, with an absolutely winning face, a cowlick and great incised dimples. I've never seen that kid but he existed for me in that photo."

During the past ten years Doig has immersed himself in writing about a century of western existence. At what expense? "One of a writer's decisions has to be what he can take on. What his time and energy will allow. One of the things I've had to do as a supposedly successful novelist is turn my back on journalism. Sometimes that's frustrating, because I can't clone myself to do some of the topical writing I'd like to do. I wrote a couple of hundred magazine pieces during the ten or so years I was a full-time magazine freelance writer, and probably 40 or 50 of those were ecological pieces. That was my inning to speak to the ecological issues of this area. My greater effect, these days, seems to be in the longer, slower process of writing books."

Reminiscing about the role of regional markets in his career, Doig says, "The markets that were available to me through the late 60's and 70's were a place to flex writing muscles and try some things out. Economically the markets were pretty dismal, and that's one reason I turned to books.

"Regional publishing has something to offer, but I'm not sure it always offers it quickly and amply enough. I was a writer out here for twelve years before This House Of Sky was accepted by an editor in New York, and my memory is that only one regional publisher ever came around and asked me 'Hey, are you thinking about doing any kind of book, ever?' And that was after the manuscript had already begun making the rounds nationally."

With the success his career has seen, it's hard to imagine Ivan Doig with regrets. But there's always hindsight. "If I had

one thing to change about my freelance period, it would be to be tied less to trying to get published and make money out of it, and to work more on manuscripts and the craft of writing. I wish to God I had worked on a novel at that point. I wish I'd done more poetry than I did.

"Given what I tend to see as the severe economics of regional freelancing, I think I would urge people to say, 'This isn't going to pay me anything anyhow, why don't I write for the love of it? Why don't I take a short story course? Why don't I write some poetry?'

"Behind all this is the assumption that people are going to be working seriously and professionally." With a PH.D in History, a journalistic background, more than twenty years experience in "this ink-stained craft", plus six critically successful books to his credit, it's obvious this is the standard Doig sets for himself. And one he lives up to, admirably.

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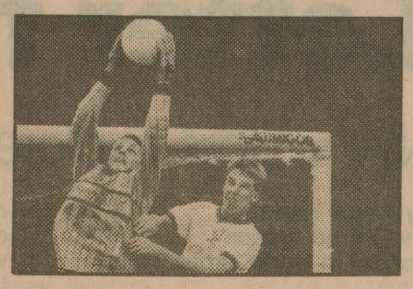

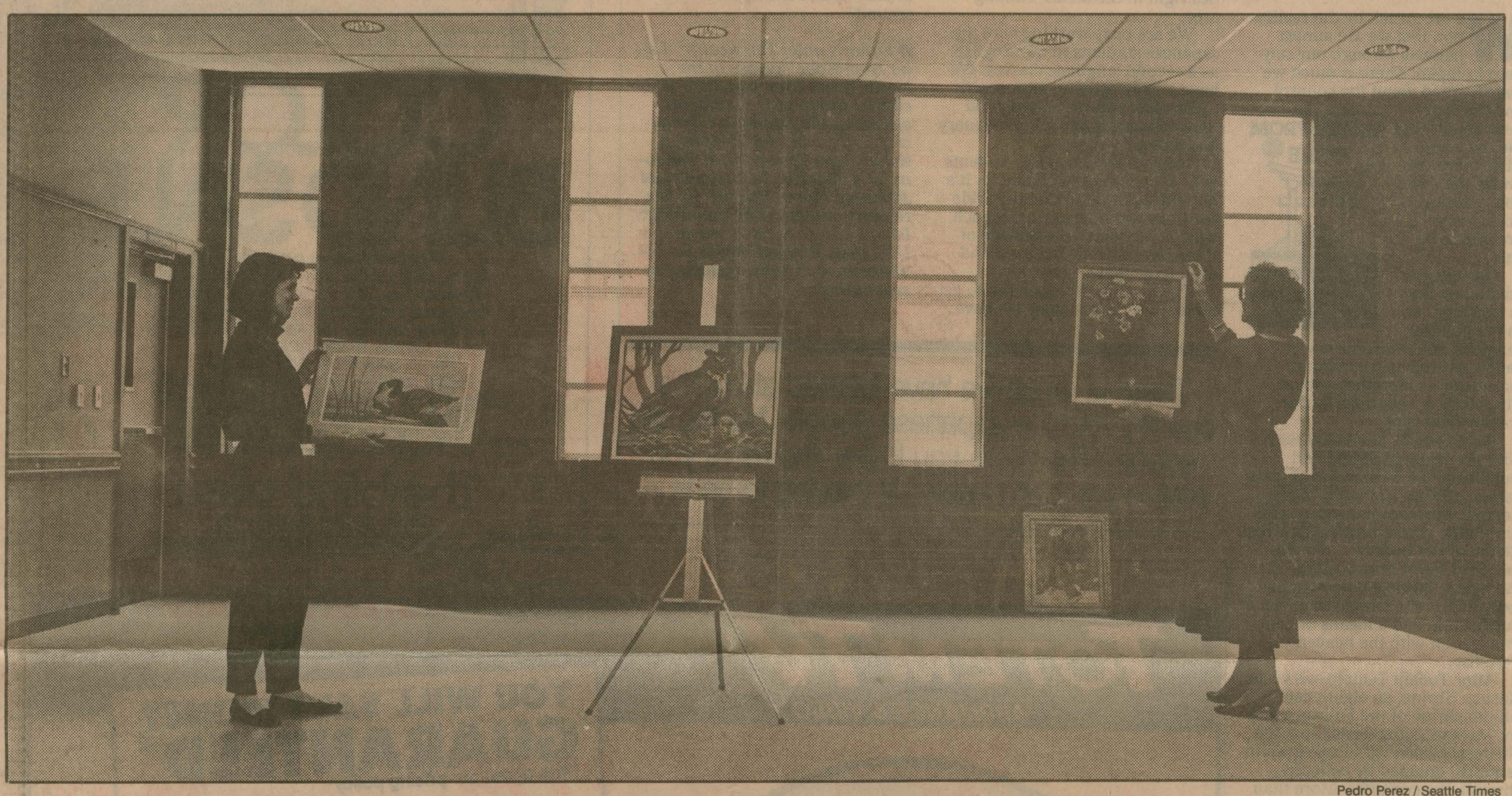

Pedro Perez / Seattle Times

Ros Bird, Shoreline Arts Council president, left, and Barbara Wills, a local artist, prepare for the three-day celebration opening the Shoreline Center.

Variety of events to mark Shoreline Center opening

by Ninia Carpio and Ron Judd
Times North bureau

■ SHORELINE

"In the night, in mid-dream, people who are entire strangers to one another sometimes will congregate atop my pillow. . . . A face from grade school may be twinned with one met a week ago on a rainforest trail in the Olympic Mountains. . . . different, yet how readily acquainted."

– From "This House of Sky, Landscapes of a Western Mind"
– Ivan Doig

When Shoreline novelist Ivan Doig reads passages from his first book, as scheduled tomorrow evening to help christen the new Shoreline Center, listeners are expected to hear how he sees his recent Puget Sound experiences blending into remembrances of a Montana childhood decades ago.

And the themes he writes about, Doig said – intertwining past, present and future – reflect what the new center can become for the community.

"It will be a celebration of the past and the future trying to live together," he said. "I hope maybe the Shoreline Community Center reflects that for this whole North End."

The readings of Doig and poet David Wagoner, scheduled in the center's theater at 8 p.m. tomorrow, are part of a three-day community bash with a host of special activities formally opening the Shoreline Center.

From open swim and soccer games to talent shows, art galleries and artists' demonstrations, various community groups have organized activities to inaugurate the community gathering place.

The Philadelphia String Quartet, sponsored by the Shoreline Senior Activity Center, is expected to open the series of events with a 1 p.m. show tomorrow. A show featuring Shoreline performing artists, presented by the Shoreline Arts Council, is to close events starting at 8 p.m. Saturday.

The center occupies the remodeled Shoreline High School, which closed 10 years ago when district enrollments declined. Voters approved $6 million in building bonds to convert the school to a community center.

In addition to community facilities, the center houses the School District's administrative offices, as well as conference rooms, a state-of-the-art television studio and a high-tech "classroom of the future." The center's buildings all are wired with fiber-optic connections and are considered a national model for schools planning to use computerized telecommunications in classrooms.

The center also includes the Shoreline Senior Center, which continues a longstanding relationship with the school district by moving from the aging Paramount Park Elementary to the new location.

Overall, the center – which will still be owned by the School District – reflects the district's dual mission to educate children and serve the community at large, school officials say.

It could also turn into just what its name suggests: a focal point for the Shoreline area, said novelist Doig, a Shoreline resident for 20 years.

"Shoreline has no real home," he said. "I would hope (the center) would, kind of, be a home for our minds, for the artistic instincts of this neighborhood."

Indeed, said Morry Hendrickson, producer of the upcoming gala show of Shoreline professional talents, the center could be home to about 60,000 residents who have no single community identity.

And the Saturday evening fina-

Please see **CENTER** on F 3

Shoreline Celebration kiosk

■ Here is the schedule of events for the three-day Shoreline Celebration, marking the dedication of the new Shoreline Center. The center is at Northeast 185th Street and First Avenue Northeast. All events are free, except for the pancake breakfast on Saturday ($2.50 for adults, $1.50 for children younger than 12). For more information on opening events, call the Shoreline School District at 361-4412.

Tomorrow
Noon: Washington Association of School Administrators annual community recognition luncheon, in the Shoreline Room.
1 p.m. – Philadelphia String Quartet, in the theater.
5 to 9 p.m. – Open house, King County Pool.
7 p.m. – Art gallery grand opening, Highlander and Spartan rooms.
7 p.m. – Arts reception, Shoreline Room.
8 p.m. – A literary evening with readings by David Wagoner and Ivan Doig, theater.

Friday
2 to 8 p.m. – Art gallery open, Highlander and Spartan rooms.
7 p.m. – Indoor soccer tournament, season finale, gymnasium.
8 p.m. – Shoreline talent showcase, theater.

Saturday
7:30 to 10:30 a.m. – Pancake breakfast, Shoreline Senior Activity Center.
9 a.m. – Fun run, Shoreline stadium.
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. – Shoreline Center open house, self-guided tours. Alumni Room opening. Art gallery open.
10:30 a.m. – Shoreline Center dedication ceremony, Shoreline Room.
11 a.m. – Opening kickoff, King County soccer fields.
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – Youth soccer competition, Hillwood and Shorelake soccer teams.
11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. – Technology open house, in IMC, Technology and Community rooms.
1 to 5 p.m. – Artists in action, Community rooms.
1:30 to 3 p.m. – Regional soccer challenge.
1:30 to 3 p.m. – Free public swim, Shoreline Pool.
2 p.m. – The Cherry Berry Bird and the Giant Jelly Belly, theater.
8 p.m. – Shoreline Gala, Shoreline professionals in performance, theater.

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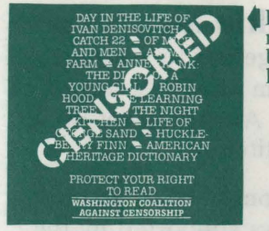

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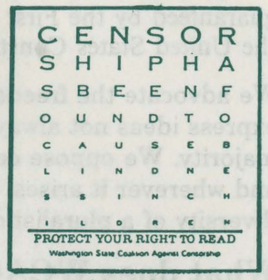

"Censorship has been found to cause blindness in children"

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Our videotape uses dramatic narration to present personal and professional comments regarding censorship in public schools. Videotape cost is $50.00 (plus $5.00 P & H). Indicate format: VHS or Beta. (For WCAC member groups and affiliates, the cost is $21.00 + $5.00 P & H.)

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Designed exclusively for WCAC by Seattle cartoonist Tom Whittemore, these ten striking images carry hard-hiitting messages on the dangers of censorship. Printed on heavy white stock (8½" x 11"), they reproduce beautifully for booklist and newsletter fillers. (See examples inside).

Washington Coalition Against CENSORSHIP

FOND OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT? WE NEED YOUR HELP.

CENSORSHIP INCIDENTS ARE ON THE INCREASE. LIBRARIANS AND EDUCATORS ARE UNDER ORGANIZED ATTACK. PUBLISHERS ARE CAPITULATING TO PRESSURE TACTICS. ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS BEING REDUCED AND DENIED DAILY. FOR MORE DETAILS AND HOW YOU CAN HELP, READ ON. SHARE WITH FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND CO-WORKERS.

SOME MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

American Association of University Women of Washington
American Civil Liberties Union of Washington
Artist Trust
Community College Librarians and Media Specialists
Humanists of Washington
Northwest Feminist Anti-Censorship Task Force
Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association
Puget Sound Council for Review of Children's Books
Puget Sound Council of Senior Citizens
Seattle Librarians Local 2083
University Friends Meeting
Washington Education Association
Special Libraries Association, Pacific Northwest Chapter
Washington Library Association
Washington Library Media Association
Washington Organization for Reading Development
Washington State Council of Teachers of English
Washington State Young Adult Review Group
Women in Communications, Inc., Seattle Professional Chapter

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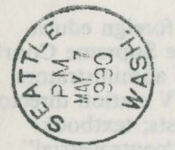


Ivan Doig
17021 - 10th NW
Seattle, WA
98177

No book is safe:

School books under fire include: *Of Mice and Men, Catch 22, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Diary of Anne Frank, Catcher in the Rye, The Martian Chronicles, The Learning Tree, Where the Sidewalk Ends, Brave New World, Romeo and Juliet, Forever* (and others by Judy Bloom), the *American Heritage Dictionary, Being Born, Understanding AIDS,* and *Your Immune System.*

No medium is safe:

The U.S. government restricts foreign educational films; encouraged by the Supreme Court "Hazelwood" decision, school administrators censor student publications; TV station directors eliminate scenes from broadcasts; textbook publishers remove potentially "controversial" chapters that deal with values or science texts that discuss evolution. Locally, challenges have been directed at Halloween programs, displays of unicorns, book lists, videotapes, recordings, and magazines such as *Playboy, Playgirl, Rolling Stone, Cosmopolitan, Ms., MAD, National Lampoon, Jr. Miss,* and *Life.*

No forum is safe:

Individuals and groups seeking to restrict the flow of information and access to materials direct their attacks at public libraries, school classrooms and resource centers, bookstores, theaters, and video sales and rental outlets.

School censorship is increasing in Washington:

Our public schools are being held hostage. Washington ranks third in the nation for attempts to censor or restrict materials in our public schools. Organized groups with this sole purpose are proliferating with funding and advice from national pro-censorship organizations. Often aligning themselves with the National Citizens for Excellence in Education/Association of Christian Educators, the Eagle Forum, or Concerned Women for America, they are responsible for many challenges. These orchestrated efforts are at least partially successful in over one-half the cases we monitor.

Just a few of many incidents in 1988-89: The Vancouver school board, dominated by pro-censorship members, banned *Just Hold On,* by Scott Bunn, from all libraries in the district and has created a special library committee to review all materials for possible sexual content. During two years, the committee has placed many books on "restricted" shelves, including *Being Born, Make the Most of a Good Thing, You!, The Structure of Your Body, Understanding AIDS,* and *Your Immune System. Being Born* was restricted for its one-time use of the word "penis."

In Tacoma, complaints have been made that schools are indoctrinating children in "New Age spiritualism," "Eastern religion," and occultism. Curricula under attack includes confidence building programs, the PTA's "I Am Somebody and So Are You" program, and "Natural Helpers," a peer counseling program designed to prevent teen suicide.

In Mukilteo, Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* was attacked for profanity, violence, and racial bigotry and removed from required junior high reading lists.

In Snohomish, objections to *Rolling Stone* and *Life* magazines resulted in the removal of two issues of *Life* from school libraries. Students may only obtain specifically requested photo-copied pages from *Rolling Stone.*

In Sedro-Wooley, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* has been under fire.

State-mandated AIDS instruction materials are under attack in many districts.

What can you do to help fight these censors? Support WCAC.



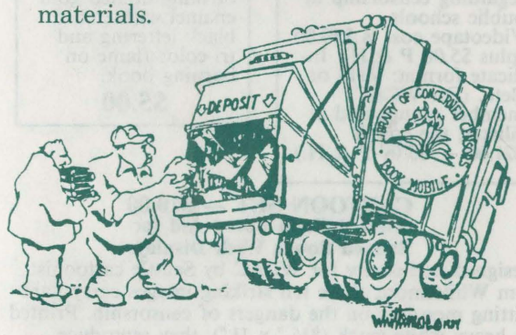
The Washington Coalition Against Censorship is a group of organizations joined together to preserve and protect the freedom of expression guaranteed by the First Ammendment of the United States Constitution.

We advocate the freedom to learn and to express ideas not always supported by the majority. We oppose censorship whenever and wherever it arises. We support the diversity of a pluralistic society.

What does WCAC do?

Delegates from WCAC member organizations meet regularly to exchange information and develop preventive and defensive strategies. We also:

- maintain a Statewide Clearinghouse of censorship challenges and information.
- provide speakers knowledgeable about various censorship issues.
- answer calls for help from school districts, concerned parents, students, and teachers across the state.
- write op-ed pieces, issue press releases, and network with the print and electronic media.
- produce and sell educational products, such as T-shirts.
- write, edit, and publish educational materials.



School Censorship: An Emergency Response Manual

WCAC has compiled an emergency response manual designed to help parents and other concerned citizens protect the intellectual freedom rights of students in public schools. It represents several years of work undertaken by numerous individuals and organizational members of WCAC.

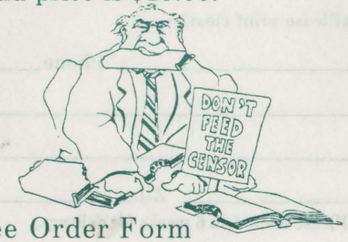
The manual defines censorship in its various forms and provides specific guidance on what parents and other citizens can do to ensure their schools are prepared before the censors arrive. Three of the most common censorship scenarios are addressed, with specific action recommendations.

Other chapters address the following topics:

- Who are these opponents of intellectual freedom and what do they want?
- Who are our allies?
- Political and legal realities.
- Media – friend or foe?
- Common questions and answers.

Over 40 pages of references and appendices provide the documentation needed to support the never-ending defense of intellectual freedom.

Parents, teachers, students, administrators, and groups concerned about preventing and counteracting censorship in their public schools will find this manual invaluable. Postpaid price is $15.00.



Order these cartoons and seven others (suitable for framing – 8½" x 11"). See Order Form

The Olympian 1/14/90

From Upper

Reading Room

Ex-teacher snaps up fiction

Former Olympia High School French and English teacher Mary Farrington's choices of reading are catholic.

That doesn't mean this bibliophile reads religious tracts. She chooses both fiction and non-fiction when she takes time from her activities as a member of the Olympia School Board and as a volunteer with the Area Agency on Aging, the Salvation Army, Concern for Animals and as a peripatetic American abroad in England and the Continent.

With her roots in Montana – she's a native and graduate of University of Montana – Farrington eagerly snaps up new fiction of Ivan Doig, a fellow Montanan now living in Seattle. Much of Doig's writing is set in the Big Sky state, and his newest work, the third in a trilogy and tentatively titled "Mariah," will hit bookstores in the autumn of this year, Doig wrote recently to Farrington.

In Doig's "Winter Brotlers," the author wrote of early-day settler James Swann's diaries - it was Swann who, for one holiday meal, cooked and devoured a crw in lieu



Mary Farrington

Likes all kinds of books

of a Thanksgiving turkey. And it was Doig who wrote of his own life and experiences in "This House of Sky." Doig took his doctorate in Western History at the University of Washington and, according to former Washington State Library Washington Room librarian Nancy Pryor, when Doig's thesis was reviewed, the university savants agreed that "it was too good to have been written by an historian!"

Canadian resident Robertson Davies, whose writing also dips into familiar settings of Eastern Canada (as a newspaper columnist), writer of fiction and nonfiction and a playwright. He is also an essayist – creator of the fictitious Marchbanks. "No detail introduced in Davies' work is too unimportant to note and remember," ss Farrington, adding that "he avies) always resolves those dets."

Recently read? She just read the w adventures of Renko Arkady Martin Cruz Smith's "Polar ar." The novelist who first aulored " Gorky Park" spins out nother tale of skulduggery. She's ot yet read John le Carre's "Rusia House," nor Irving Stone's Depths of Glory," a fictional biogaphy of French impressionist ainter Camille Pisaro, but they're n her list.

The oldies continue to be the goodies to Farrington who's partial to rereading her favorites – French existentialist Albert Camus (''The Myth of Sisyphus'', "Noce,""The Strangers") and the thee French writings of Marcel Pagnol (the Broadway play ''Fanny' with Leslie Caron, Maurice Chevalier and Charles Boyer) and other stories which became films – " Manon of the Spring" and "Jean d'Morette."

– Robin Koenninger

Dear: Obviously there is not the Sunday paper Alamo called
helpers to unwind much - Good to see you
Vern

HOOKED ON BOOKS

The avid readers of Seattle love a good mystery

By M.L. Lyke
P-I Reporter

Curl up with Jim Nelson in the study of his West Seattle home.

"It's 10:30 at night. I worked eight hours at the Montlake Library, had dinner with my wife and stepson, played a little music and did some chores. I'm sitting in my book-filled study, in a clunky but comfortable recliner under a 250-watt reading lamp. I've got a bottle of ale, a few bits of chocolate and the new P.D. James.

"I am in heaven."

The drink might be coffee and the chair a living room sofa or kitchen stool, but the heaven Nelson describes is one familiar to scores of P-I readers who wrote to tell us what, exactly, Seattle is reading.

Of the more than 300 letters we received (Seattle's reputation as a reading city is no exaggeration), nearly a third were from readers with an unquenchable thirst for mysteries. And many respondents, even non-mystery readers like Nelson, were nose-deep in "Devices and Desires," the new whodunit from British master P.D. James that is the top-moving book at many Seattle libraries and bookstores.

MYSTERIES FAR and away bagged the genre prize. Some fans said they should know better but just couldn't resist following the bloody trail of an unsolved murder. Even the head of the Seattle Public Library system admitted she was hooked. "I love mysteries myself," said City Librarian Liz Stroup, who favors local writer J.A. Jance.

She's not alone. Jance, who unravels her J.P. Beaumont mysteries in familiar Seattle settings, tied for first among favorite authors with P.D. James and Tom Clancy, the espionage writer whose "The Hunt for Red October" has been adapted to an edge-of-the-seat, big-screen thriller.

Other top-rated writers were Agatha Christie (mystery), Dick Francis (mystery), Robert Ludlum (espionage) and Stephen King (horror-occult).

And yes, romance writer Victoria Holt received a substantial share of votes, as did pop fiction writer Danielle Steel.

But don't kiss off Seattle readers as



Doubt cast on newborn treatment

The New York Times

Babies born at full term and in good health probably do not need to be treated if they develop signs of jaundice, researchers say.

In a recent study, pediatricians at the University of California at San Francisco and William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich., analyzed more than 25 previous studies on the incidence of jaundice in newborns and found no evidence that the condition leads to low intelligence, hearing loss or neurological problems in full-term healthy newborns.

"Much current treatment for jaundice in this well-baby group appears to be unnecessary and can produce adverse effects," said Dr. Thomas B. Newman, an assistant professor of pediatrics, epidemiology and biostatistics at the University of California.

"The extra hospital days are expensive, stressful to parents and painful for the child, who must repeatedly have blood drawn for testing."

JAUNDICE RESULTS when bilirubin, a toxic compound created when old red blood cells are broken down, builds up faster than the liver can get rid of it.

It can give the skin or eyeballs a yellow tinge and in severe cases can lead to brain damage or death. But it is common in newborns, whose immature livers often need a few days to adjust to life outside the womb.

The levels of bilirubin in the bloodstream that point to a dangerous outcome are in dispute. Standard texts suggest treatment if the level is 12 milliliters to 14 milliliters per deciliter of blood, but Newman said treatment was probably unnecessary in healthy babies unless the level was higher than 20 milliliters. Levels above 25 milliliters usually indicate the need for an exchange transfusion, in which the infant's entire blood supply is replaced.

Jaundice occurs in more than half of all newborns and is the most common cause of prolonged hospitalization after birth. The condition is especially common in babies born prematurely and seriously affects 1 to 2 percent of full-term babies. Newman said doctors overtreated jaundice because recommendations in textbooks were based on the risks to much more

Other top-rated writers were Agatha Christie (mystery), Dick Francis (mystery), Robert Ludlum (espionage) and Stephen King (horror-occult).

And yes, romance writer Victoria Holt received a substantial share of votes, as did pop fiction writer Danielle Steel.

But don't kiss off Seattle readers as lightweight escapists just yet. Like Nelson, most respondents keep more than one book going at a time. And like Nelson, two of the writers that might be found within arm's reach are Raymond Carver, the Northwest author who died in August 1988, and celebrated Russian playwright-short story writer Anton Chekhov.

OTHER FAVORED literary writers include sophisticated contemporary novelists Anne Tyler ("Breathing Lessons") and Margaret Atwood, author of another current novel-turned-movie, "The Handmaid's Tale." And a surprising number of respondents said they liked to read and reread Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, John Steinbeck and Thomas ("hankie please") Hardy.

Readers lap up non-fiction, too. Carried along with mysteries and thrillers onto the bus in the morning and into the bedroom at night are historical tomes, philosophical essays and biographies.

In fact, P-I readers rated biographies second overall only to mysteries. And

See **BOOKS**, Page C2



DUANE HOFFMANN/P-I

hospitalization after birth. The condition is especially common in babies born prematurely and seriously affects 1 to 2 percent of full-term babies. Newman said doctors overtreated jaundice because recommendations in textbooks were based on the risks to much more sickly babies.

Also, the ease of treatment has promoted "a better-safe-than-sorry approach," he said.

NEWMAN and Dr. M. Jeffrey Maisels, chairman of the department of pediatrics at William Beaumont, presented their findings at a meeting of the Western Society for Pediatric Research in February.

In the 1960s the treatment of neonatal jaundice was revolutionized when doctors discovered that blue light, acting through the skin, could change bilirubin into a water-soluble form more easily excreted.

Phototherapy treatment has made exchange transfusions, a much riskier treatment, necessary only in extreme cases.

Phototherapy is generally considered safe and relatively harmless, but Newman argued that the treatment often needlessly alarmed parents and could interfere with the earliest stages of breast-feeding and other steps in developing the mother-child bond.

Slice of life

B.C. gives Hawaii a hand with ukuleles

The Associated Press

LANGLEY, British Columbia – Taking ukuleles to Hawaii sounds about as misplaced as shipping coals to Newcastle.

But that's what 25 Vancouver-area students, ages 9 to 19, are doing this week.

"Even though the ukulele is the key instrument in their society – it's as Hawaiian as the grass skirt – the school authorities over there want to learn the Canadian teaching methods we use which are so successful," said Peter Luongo, vice principal and music specialist at Alice Brown Elementary School.

The school has become so skilled at teaching the four-stringed, guitarlike instrument that word has reached Hawaii.

The ukulele, introduced from Portugal into the Hawaiian Islands about 1879, was first used in Canadian schools in the maritime provinces about 20 years ago to teach music, he said.

The students have played in concerts across Canada. They will pay for most of their 10-day trip to Hawaii, which begins Thursday.

How they rate

Following are top record hits as they appear in this week's issue of Billboard magazine:

Top compact discs

1.	Nick of Time	Bonnie Raitt
2.	Forever Your Girl	Paula Abdul
3.	. . . But Seriously	Phil Collins
4.	Alannah Myles	Alannah Myles
5.	Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation 1814	Janet Jackson
6.	Soul Provider	Michael Bolton
7.	Cosmic Thing	The B-52's
8.	Basia	London Warsaw New York
9.	Girl You Know It's True	Milli Vanilli
10.	Cry Like A Rainstorm	Linda Ronstadt



NBC

Jane Pauley interviews comedian Louie Anderson on her prime-time special "Changes" tonight at 10 p.m. on Channel 5.

'Changes' launches Pauley on a new path



John Engstrom

Television

Jane Pauley's prime-time show "Changes" – her first special since she smiled bravely and bid us goodbye on the "Today" show – airs tonight and one thing is very clear: She's no Deborah Norville.

Pauley, whose Midwest homespun edges will never unravel, gives us a soft, caring look at four people or families who have changed their lives in significant ways.

They're the kind of warm interviews we don't get from Norville, the new queen for "Today" whose canned smile and calculated approach have earned her the nickname "the stewardess" among NBC insiders.

Unfortunately, Pauley's no Larry King, either.

Where CNN's King uses his chatty-neighbor demeanor to pry into the most painful personal decisions, the sensitive Pauley holds herself at harm's length with her subjects.

On "Changes," airing at 10 p.m. on Channel 5, Pauley tells us what happened to these people but not nearly enough about how. And that is the more crucial issue.

Pauley has said she wanted to provide "hopeful" stories, but mere feelings of hope can quickly turn back into mope for those who are troubled and depressed because they can't see a way to do things differently.

"Changes" simply isn't going to change your life. A few road maps for getting from here to there would last longer and do more good.

Take Pauley's piece on Frank Morgan, an alto saxophonist recently rediscovered by the world of jazz at age 56.

Morgan, a musical prodigy at age 17, started squirting heroin into his veins in his 20s, and his prison time eventually totaled 30 years.

But Morgan met a woman, an artist, on one of his furloughs. She fell in love, stayed by him when he relapsed, and today they're married and living in New York, where he's finally fulfilling his early musical promise.

Pauley gives us the grim pictures from his past and the happy events of his present, but beyond a few sentences, we get little of how and why this man and woman made such a remarkable journey together.

The problem is much the same for two other Pauley interviews, with comedian Louie Anderson and with a Boise, Idaho, couple who struggled with a 15-year-old daughter out of control. The program's fourth interview was not available for previewing.

About the rotund Anderson we learn nothing that wasn't revealed in his talk-show appearances to plug his book about his alcoholic father – except that he's selling his million-dollar home in Los Angeles, and that

See **TV,** Page C3

Books: Seattle has lots of reading addicts

From Page C1

history – straight up, not the fictionalized kind – had more total votes than either romance or suspense thrillers.

Even quantum physics has its place among P-I readers' hearts. Bookstores report heavy local sales of Stephen J. Hawking's highly digestible "A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes" – a book librarians say they can't keep on the shelves.

Hawking's book is one that P-I respondents are reading right now. Here are some others:

"Bonfire of the Vanities," Tom Wolfe; "Cat's Eye," Margaret Atwood; "Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution," Simon Schama; "Clear and Present Danger," Tom Clancy; "Devices and Desires," P.D. James; "Love in the Time of Cholera," Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

Also: "Foucault's Pendulum," Umberto Eco; "It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It," Robert Fulghum; "The Power of Myth," Joseph Campbell; and "The Shell Seekers," Rosamunde Pilcher.

AND HERE ARE some of your favorite books of all time, including, again, "Bonfire of the Vanities," "Love in the Time of Cholera" and "The Shell Seekers":

"All I Ever Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," Fulghum; "A Cold Sassy Tree," Olive Burns; "The House of Spirits," Isabelle Allende; "Having Everything Right: Essays of Place," Kim Stafford; "The Joy Luck Club," Amy Tan; "Lonesome Dove," Larry McMurtry; "The Magus," John Fowles; "Pillars of the Earth," Ken Follett; "The Thorn Birds," Colleen McCullough; and "Yellow Raft in Blue Water," Michael Dorris.

Also on the all-time list were several books by Northwest writer Ivan Doig ("Winter Brothers," "English Creek," "House of Sky"); Canadian writer Robertson Davies ("The Rebel Angels," "What's Bred in the Bone," "The Lyre of Orpheus," "The Salterton Trilogy"); American novelist John Irving ("Cider House Rules," "A Prayer for Owen Meany"); American novelist-travel writer Paul Theroux ("The Great Railway Bazaar," "Riding the Iron Rooster: By Train Through China"); and the entire series of "Star Trek" books.

JUDGING FROM the mix, reading appears to be a balancing act for Seattle's devoted book populace, which checks out four times as many books at the library as "bookish" towns like Boston and spends almost twice as much on books as readers nationwide.

"I usually have two books going at a time, what I call hi-octane and regular," wrote Virginia N. Barnett, a Bainbridge Island reader who mixes her Tony Hillerman Navajo detective mysteries with the philosophical fiction of Davies or literary travel writings of Bruce Chatwin.

Other respondents call their yin-yang approach to reading "quickies vs. meaty books," "light reading vs. heavier stuff," "mind-stretching books vs. novels," "good books vs. fun books."

Such duplicitous habits make for an eclectic mix on home bookshelves. How eclectic? On the same line under favorite authors, one reader listed Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Elizabeth Taylor.

"It's a very broad market," says Joel Scannell, head book buyer at Tower Books on lower Queen Anne Hill, who isn't the least surprised when serious readers come in asking for "some good trash."

"We have to be ready to offer a lot more than just commercial literature. We offer Danielle Steel and Tom Clancy and Tom Robbins, but we can also sell Milan Kundera ("The Unbearable Lightness of Being"), Raymond Carver and Gabriel Garcia Marquez."

The buyer at The Elliott Bay Book Co., the top-rated bookstore in our reader write-in, sees similar patterns. "Some people come in and buy a book of poems, a cookbook, a self-help book and one European intellectual history. We find that a lot," said Rick Simonson.

Simonson said literary fiction is Elliott Bay's strongest suit, along with children's fiction, a booming genre that readers made clear is no longer just for kids.

One couple wrote that they like to read children's books aloud to one another at bedtime. Many readers said they collect and regularly reread classics such as A.A. Milne ("Winnie the Pooh"), Beatrix Potter ("The Tale of Peter Rabbit") and Lewis Carroll ("Alice in Wonderland.")

Some other finds:

■ Book readers who wrote to us are not great TV watchers. A few don't even own TVs, and a number are downright hostile toward the medium. "Death to television! Long live the printed page!" wrote Brian Burhans of Seattle.

■ A surprising number of readers keep complete lists of everything they have read, many on computers. One reader nearing age 70 said her list helped her keep from rereading books. Another sends her list out with Christmas cards.

JoAnne Johnson of Seattle, who said she read 125 books last year, keeps a list with a star rating system. "I'm a hard grader. Very few of my books get four stars." Who rates? Alice Munro, Anne Tyler and Rita Mae Brown, among others.

■ Many readers swap books with friends, relatives, members of their reading groups or spouses. Wrote Sherry Niehaus of Edmonds, who shares her Robert B. Parker mysteries with her husband: "We read the same books at the same time. He'll start reading and rip out chapters after he is done so I can read them. You really can't offer the book to anyone else afterward, but we both 'get our fix' at the same time.' "

■ Many respondents were retirees who had no trouble filling the extra hours in a day. Wrote Virginia N. Barnett, Bainbridge Island: "I am in my late 70s, and one of the pleasures of old age is in *finally* getting around to some great book or other that has been on the must-read list for, say, 50 years, like 'Kristin Lavransdatter' (a trilogy of historical novels by Sigrid Undset)."

■ We didn't ask, but more than 50 readers told us that their favorite bookstore wasn't a bookstore at all, but the public library. "My favorite bookstore? The public library, of course. I don't need to own books, just read them," wrote Trish Davis of Tacoma. Library regular Russell Brown of Brier put it this way: "The price is always right."

Readers who responded to our questionnaire ranged from a 13-year-old devotee of fantasy writers C.S. Lewis and Piers Anthony to an 87-year-old with a taste for Stephen King. One mother even sent in a list of her 9-month-old's favorite books. Professions included accountants and auto mechanics, real-estate brokers and actors, students and lawyers.

The number of books read per month varied from one (usually a "meaty" read) to 30 (generally a slew of "quickies" such as Gothic romances and thrillers), with the average hovering at six. Most reported higher consumption during gray winter months.

"I find that probably 90 percent of my reading is done on dreary overcast days in the winter," wrote Jim Corcoran of Seattle. "As soon as the sun peeks out, so do I."

The NW climate is perfect for bookworms

By M.L. Lyke
P-I Reporter

Readers around Puget Sound go after words like predators after prey, devouring newspapers and magazines and anything else constructed of print and paper before moving on to their main meal: books, books and more books.

A number of the more than 300 book lovers who responded to our survey said that, if desperate, they would read anything they could get their hands on, including matchbook covers, catalogs, junk mail and cereal boxes.

"I would probably read the paper on the bottom of a bird cage if there were nothing else available," wrote Elizabeth Nordstrand of Seattle, who even reads fliers left under her windshield wipers. "I read while I'm cooking and while I'm taking a bath. I read during meetings and at red lights while I'm driving. I read to the detriment of my housework, and frankly, I'd rather read than interact in a meaningful manner with my children."

Many described their relation to books as an addiction.

"The sensation of reading is so exquisite, I crave more and more. It's similar to chocolate," wrote Gretchen Olson of Seattle.

"For me, reading is more than a passion, it's an obsession, an addiction, a craving, a fixation, my rage and my religion," said Robert L. Herschkowitz of Bellevue.

One book lover admits to paying excess baggage fees when she goes on vacation so she can lug along an extra bag of books.

There's more:

■ "When I get near the end of the book I'm reading, I start getting nervous and line up the next one. I haven't been caught in a doctor's office without a book since I forgot years ago and found nothing but old Reader's Digests to read," wrote Donna G. Barnes of Seattle.

■ "My books are like a security blanket to me. I cannot stand to be without current reading material," said Eve B. Woods of Edmonds.

■ "This last fall, I purchased my winter wardrobe: two pairs of jeans, two pairs of shoes, a sweater and a Mickey Mouse sweat shirt. Since that time, I have spent well over $350 on books. Probably much more. Books are my passion," wrote Anne-Grace Scheinin of Seattle, who had to move to a bigger house when she ran out of shelf space in the old one.

■ "Someone once asked me my idea of a good time and I said, 'Going to the library.' This elicited a snort of laughter tinged with disbelief. But it's quite true. I love books, I love reading, I love learning and I love it all enough to have finally broken down, overcome my vanity and gone to the eye doctor for reading glasses," said Wendy John of Seattle.

■ "I've never understood what people who don't read do with themselves. In the bathtub, do they just sit and stare at the walls? On long, boring car trips, do they watch the scenery? What if there isn't any? What if the TV breaks down? Or when they're sick? What do these people think about?" questioned Linda Dreke of Maple Valley.

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SEATTLE REPERTORY THEATRE
The Cherry Orchard
by Anton Chekhov
After almost a century, this story of a Soviet family facing major change remains a startlingly modern and original work, illustrated with warmth and humor.
♦
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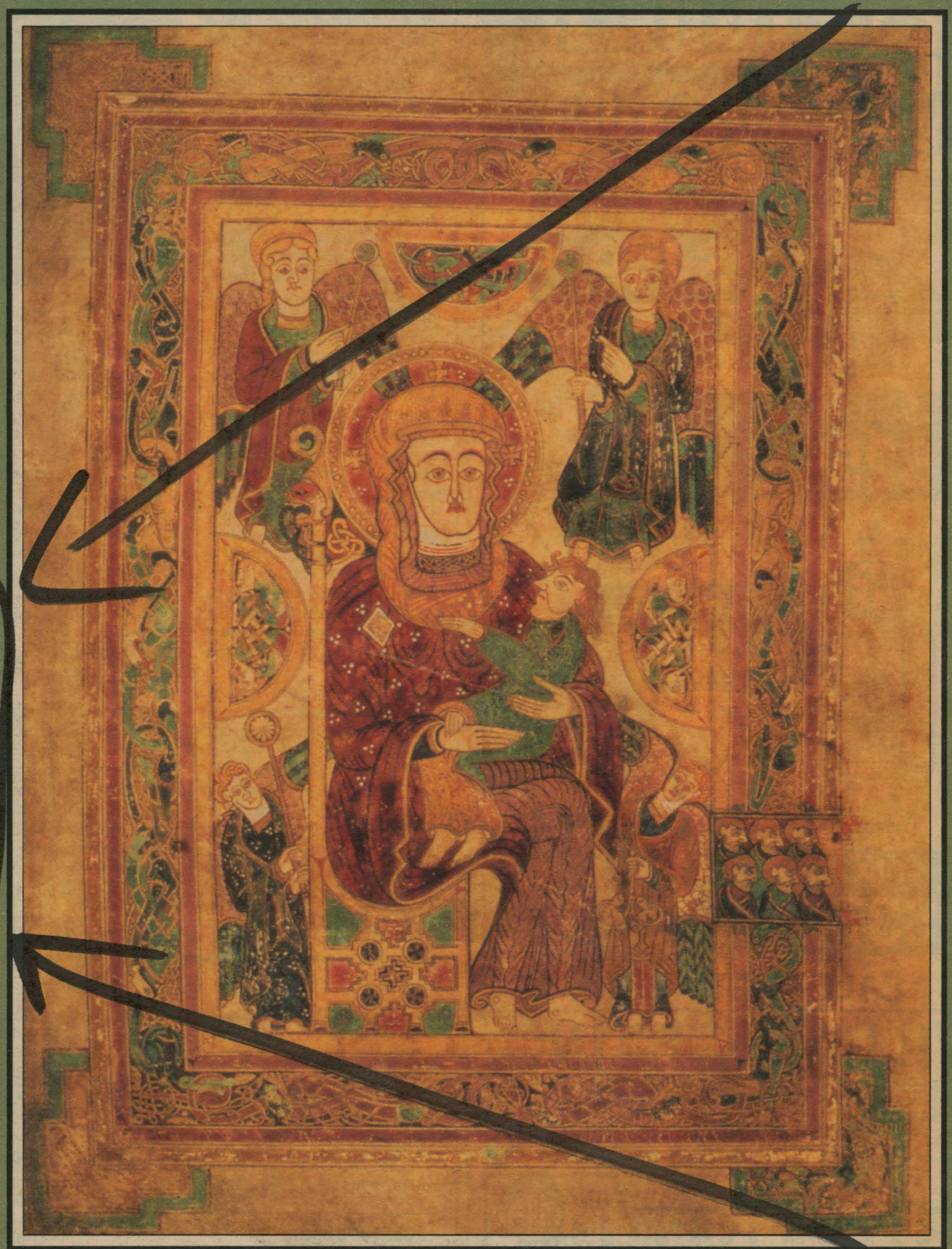
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH MAGAZINE

November 26, 1989

Holiday Books

The Book Of Kells



See p. 24

Inside: ■20 Years Of Books ■Children's Books ■Mysteries ■Science-Fiction ■And More

Post-Dispatch reviewers picked many more favorite books than we have the space to describe here, so turn to today's book page in the Everyday Section for more suggestions. Also, in this section, see Poetry and History (Page 21) and Drama (Page 30).

If you can't find the book you want in a bookstore, or you'd like to browse through lists of the titles available, there is a new reference that may help considerably. "The Reader's Catalog," edited by Geoffrey O'Brien and published by Jason Epstein (Reader's Catalog Inc., $24.95), lists 40,000 books currently in print. Although the editors suggest you check your bookstore first, they do provide an address for mail orders, plus 800 and fax numbers where you may place orders directly. The cost is the regular retail price, plus a shipping fee that starts at $3.

The lists have been compiled by writers, editors, scholars and others involved in the book business. The result is a wide selection in most of the 208 categories. But even so, there are a lot of gaps. After all, 40,000 titles is only a sampling of the books available; some large bookstores have more in stock. But for those who want to shop at home, or who do not have a good bookstore nearby, it will be a godsend. □

— Clarence E. Olson

(Continued from Page 6)

Robert Boyd

My favorite books include guides to opera and instruction books on golf, computer books and volumes of literary criticism, but the novels and stories of Saul Bellow, who has been to the second half of the 20th century what Faulkner was to the first half, have made a difference in my life.

"Mr. Sammler's Planet" (Penguin, $6.95) changed my life in two agreeable ways. First, it shows an acute intelligence at work on problems of sympathy and conscience, concluding that however bad the human dilemma may seem, the solution is not beyond the reach of the human spirit. That was powerful encouragement for an aspiring teacher.

Second, my review of it (in 1969) marked the beginning of a long and pleasant relationship with the Post-Dispatch. Bellow has since partly renounced the optimistic humanism that informed "Mr. Sammler," though the stories in **"Him With His Foot in His Mouth and Other Stories"** (Penguin, $4.50) radiate an unmistakable kindness. "A Silver Dish," which appears in this volume, is a perfect short story both in its structure and in its gentle essence.

Darker in tone, and starkly naturalistic, **"The Dean's December"** (Washington Square Press, $4.50) sets Bellow's growing distrust of democratic processes in education and government against the manifest inhumanity of the totalitarian regime in Romania. The book's conclusion is grim, but its telling is memorable.

Recently, **"More Die of Heartbreak"** (Dell, $4.95) and **"A Theft"** (Penguin, $4.95) have taken on the very serious question of what kind of effective action is possible on the personal level as well as on the level of international relations. The latter presents Bellow's most fully realized and sympathetic female character.

Carl R. Baldwin

In the 38 years I have been reviewing books for the Post-Dispatch there have been many excellent works, but two of the best examples of the writer's art have been published in 1988 and 1989 — **"Dancing at the Rascal Fair"** by Ivan Doig (Atheneum, $18.95, Harper & Row, $8.95 paper) and **"The First Salute"** by Barbara Tuchman (Knopf, $22.95, Ballantine, $16.95).

Doig tells the story of pioneer days in northwestern Montana in a lyrical style that can only be appreciated by a careful reader. He projects the Scottish burr in the speech of his protagonist with a sentence structure that implies it, and he builds his absorbing story to a smashing climax.

No history I have read provides a more accurate perspective of the complexities of the American Revolution than Tuchman's "The First Salute," with the rebellious American colonies sustained first by Dutch smugglers and later by French forces. American success then led to the French Revolution, a result on which King Louis XVI had not counted.

> In "Stories in an Almost Classical Mode," Brodkey probes his memory like a sore tooth, and it's sometimes as painful.

Nancy Schapiro

In **"Stories in an Almost Classical Mode"** (Knopf, $24.95, Vintage, $12.95), Harold Brodkey probes his memory like a sore tooth, and it's sometimes as painful. Brodkey grew up in University City and has an established literary reputation, but this is the first major collection of his work.

Stephen Hawking, a world-renowned physicist and a victim of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis who communicates with the use of only three fingers and a computer, has nevertheless written a book, **"A Brief History of Time"** (Bantam, $18.95), that is a model of lucidity, fine writing, original thought and daring speculation.

Poet and short story writer Josephine Jacobsen, at the age of 80, has published a volume of new and selected stories, **"On the Island"** (Ontario, $18.95). One can never predict where her stories are going, but when they get there there's always a shock, a completely satisfying one.

Jim Creighton

An easy choice: Anthony Powell's 12-volume social comedy **"A Dance to the Music of Time,"** which qualifies because the last three (though not the best) of these delightful novels appeared in the '70s. I've reread the "Dance" four or five times, and each time has been just as entertaining as the first. A four-volume edition is available from Little, Brown ($24.95 each).

Colleen Kelly Warren

If you missed **"The Wind In The Willows"** as a child, you can still enjoy Kenneth Grahame's gentle tale of Ratty, Mole and Toad of Toad Hall as an adult. I've read it to each of my children; it continues to delight. It's available in many editions, but mine is from the Grosset & Dunlap Illustrated Jr. Library ($6.95).

"A Confederacy of Dunces" (LSU, $16.96, Grove, $9.95) by John Kennedy Toole is the only "grown-up" book I've read three times — and I didn't even review it. This hilarious picaresque novel of Ignatius J. Reilly's misadventures in New Orleans has achieved cult status; at least, it has with me and a select circle of my more off-center friends. I have only to open the book at random to laugh out loud, which is reason enough to recommend this fine Pulitzer Prize winner as my favorite novel.

Lynn Theodore

In **"The Handmaid's Tale"** (Fawcett, $4.95), Margaret Atwood imagines the possibilities — sexual, political and domestic — if fundamentalist fanatics were to overthrow the U.S. government and make women slaves. Suspensefully and poetically, the handmaid Offred narrates the story of her secret life.

"The Greenlanders" by Jane Smiley (Ivy Books, $4.95) is a family saga set in 14th-century Greenland, which may put some readers off, but it is one of the most beautiful, unforgettable novels I have *ever* read.

"You Must Remember This" by Joyce Carol Oates (Harper & Row, $8.95 paper) is a fascinating novel about things we like to think don't happen in nice families — suicide, incest, abortion. A 15-year-old girl and her half-uncle, an ex-prize-fighter, are drawn into a love affair that nearly destroys them both.

Glynn Young

I've spent hours rummaging through my bookshelves, narrowing down what are, from my perspective, the very best or most memorable books from the last 20 years of publishing.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's three-volume **"Gulag Archipelago"** (Harper & Row, Vol. 1, $5.95, Vol. 2, $4.95, Vol. 3, $3.95) leads the list, perhaps because of the huge investment of time made in reading this account of the Soviet labor camps — an investment still worthwhile.

For sheer artistry of writing style, three novels stand out. Jon Hassler's **"Simon's Night"** (Ballantine, $3.50), a wondrous novel of old age; Lawrence Thornton's **"Imagining Argentina"** (Doubleday, $16.95, Bantam, $7.95), an American author's fictional account of the years of the military dictatorship in Argentina; and Mario Vargas Llosa's **"Conversation in the Cathedral"** (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, $12.95), a marvelous story of Peruvian society in the 1950s, which led me to spend time reading and rediscovering the works of William Faulkner.

Howard Schwartz

"One Hundred Years of Solitude" (Avon, $4.95), the history of the imaginary South American town of Macondo, brought Gabriel Garcia Marquez the Nobel Prize. Pablo Neruda called this novel the greatest book in Spanish since "Don Quixote."

"The Complete Stories" by Franz Kafka (Schocken, $22.50, $11.95 paper) includes all of the essential writings of our most essential modern author, except for his novel "The Trial."

KCTSeattle 9

July 10, 1989

Dear Friend:

Back by popular demand, KCTS/9 presents four of Producer Jean Walkinshaw's award-winning programs for your summer viewing enjoyment. We thought you'd like to know that these special encore presentations are returning to our broadcast schedule in August. We invite you to supplement your summer viewing with this rich variety of cultural and performance documentaries, which showcase some of Jean's best work over the past several years.

YOUNG STORYTELLERS IN RUSSIA
Airs Saturday, August 5 at 10:00 p.m.

This one-hour documentary follows a group of Northwest youngsters on an odyssey to the Soviet Union as they participate in a unique cultural exchange program, Young Storytellers for Peace. The group visits Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa to meet and share stories with Russian children.

WINDSINGER
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This is a half-hour documentary that profiles Gary Smith, once an active outdoorsman, folksinger and environmentalist, who is now handicapped by multiple sclerosis. The program follows his return to Canyonlands, Utah, the inspiration for many of his songs. It is a touching yet strong glimpse of one man's life and purpose as seen through his music, dialogue and rapport with nature.

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WINTER BROTHERS is a magnificent evocation of the Pacific Northwest and its history, based on the historical narrative by Northwest writer Ivan Doig. The program intertwines the diaries of James Gilchrist Swan, a colorful early settler on the Olympic Peninsula, with Doig's own journal.

KITARO
Airs Monday, August 21 at 8:00 p.m.

KITARO captures the first North American concert tour of Japanese synthesist/composer Kitaro, focusing on the evolution of the relationship between the international superstar and his newly assembled band of six American musicians. The documentary uses a montage of spectacular nature photography and the artist's music, which consists of serene, melodic electronic compositions.

For KCTS/9,

Jane Sheridan

Jane Sheridan
Community Relations Manager
443-6709

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MARSHALL J. NELSON
(206) 628-7733

June 20, 1989

Mr. Ivan Doig
10721 - 10th Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan:

I was pleased to see that you have the dubious honor of being included on Esquire's "Fame Tree," but low enough to retain your integrity.

My other famous author client, Mark Helprin, is much higher up, but he is from New York. I couldn't find Frank Herbert, but he is dead.

Welcome back,

Marshall

Marshall J. Nelson

MJN:bjw
Enclosure
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(206) 622-3150

MARSHALL J. NELSON
(206) 628-7733

June 21, 1989

Mr. Ivan Doig
10721 - 10th Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan:

Here's something else to hang on your "Fame Tree." I suppose it would mean more if I knew who Cahill & Company was, but at least they said nice things and used a decent picture.

I remain impressed, but not yet awed.

With all due respect,

Marshall

Marshall J. Nelson

MJN:bjw
Enclosure
0018D

CAHILL & COMPANY



Reader's Catalogue for Spring 1989

GREATEST LIVING AMERICAN WRITERS

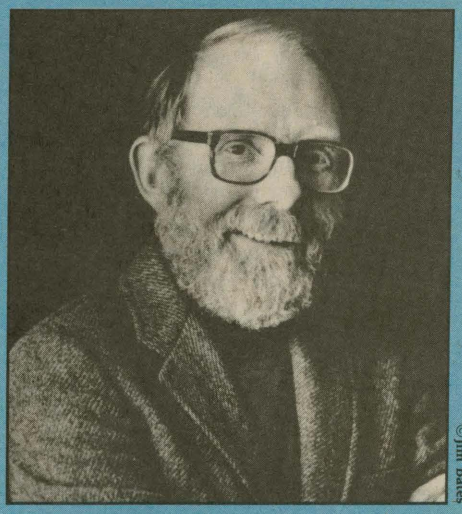
Ivan Doig

There is a distinctive grandeur of both sweep and style in Ivan Doig's remembrances and fictional recreations of his heritage in the rugged highlands of Montana that imbues the reader's imagination with something essential of that vast land, even if it remains for most of us unseen of eye. Doig himself describes the impetus of his writing—to capture for readers "an eloquence of the edge of the world." He succeeds perhaps beyond his fondest ambition. In a mere decade this magnificent writer has produced four novels and a memoir. Each is elegantly crafted, so much so that we are tempted to offer them all. We settle for two *This House of Sky* is a memoir of the Doig family's migration from the Highlands of Scotland to the majestic ridges of the Rocky Mountains, and of his own youth there amid a people rich in memory, personality, and pilgrimage. *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*, his latest novel, explores his region's history through three generations of his own people, from the Scotland of 1889 to the recent past. The very title evidences a transplanted Scots tradition. Singly and especially together, these great stories depict the utter interpenetration of a fierce, stubborn, and determined people and a last-frontier land of vast vistas, enormous demands, and astonishing rewards.

Two paperbound volumes:

This House of Sky
No. ID9825 $5.95

Dancing at the Rascal Fair
No. ID1819 $8.95



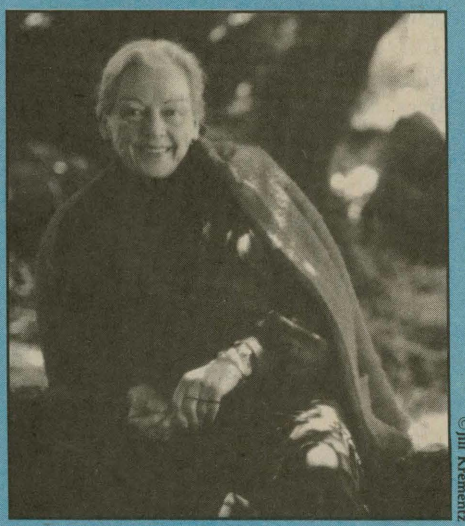
©Jim Bates

M.F.K. Fisher

SISTER AGE
By M.F.K. Fisher

M.F.K. Fisher does not spare us. She takes on her subject with courage, she wrests from it all she can, and she tells us what truth she has learned—no more, no less. Her unflinching gaze, her steady bravery, her unrelenting insistence on the right word, the just phrase, these have made her our greatest living prose writer. Most of that writing has been about food and place. This book, her best, is about growing old. It is made up of fifteen "stories," epiphanies really, in which Mrs. Fisher tells us everything she knows about a difficult subject. The meaning of the title? The author begins, thus: "St. Francis sang gently of his family: his brother the Sun, his sister the Moon. He talked of Brother Pain, who was welcome and well-loved as any other visitor in a life filled with birds and beasts and light and dark. It is not always easy for us lesser people to accept gracefully some such presence as that of Brother Pain or his cousins, or even the inevitable visits of a possibly nagging harpy like Sister Age. But with a saint to guide us, it can be possible."

Paperbound: No. 3856 $5.95



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For KCTS/9,

Jane Sheridan

Jane Sheridan
Community Relations Manager
443-6709

WALTER WALKINSHAW *Suite 4400* *1001 Fourth Avenue Plaza* *Seattle, Washington 98154*

June 9, 1989

send chat ham fishing bk?

Dear Ivan:

If not already brought to your attention, you will be interested in the volume The Washington 1989 by George H. Tweney, written for The Book Club of Washington in connection with the State Centennial.

It is a "bibliographical and critical guide to a selection of highly significant books published before 1959 that trace, as the historian Charles Snowden expressed it, '...the rise and progress of an American state' from pioneer days to centenarian."

One of the books included in this volume is James J. Swan's The Northwest Coast. The commentary refers specifically to your Winter Brothers. A copy of that comment is enclosed.

What a great press clipper I am for you!

Regards to you and Carol,

Walt

Walter Walkinshaw

WW:mjf
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Enclosure

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98177

not be construed to be a "literary" man, this author feels safe in being a Washington resident). There is an overall general sketch of the Territory, and also a county-by-county description. Soliday states this pamphlet is "extremely rare." It is also listed in the Washington American Imprints Inventory, No. 186.

74

SWAN, JAMES G.

The Northwest Coast; or, Three Years' Residence in Washington Territory, by James G. Swan. (Washington Territorial Seal) . . . New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, Franklin Square, 1857.

[i]-xiv, [xv], [xvi blank], [17]-435, [436 blank], four pages of publisher's advertisements, blank leaf. 19.4 x 12.3 cm. Frontispiece, folding map tipped in opposite page [17], 28 illustrations listed including map and frontispiece. Dark brown blind stamped cloth, also noted in black cloth, backstrip lettered in gilt.

Graff 4046; Howes S1164; Smith 10044; Soliday IV-813

There was an English edition published in the same year, but no known priority between the two editions. Harper's published a reprint edition in 1869, and an edition with an introduction by W. A. Katz was published by Ye Galleon Press of Fairfield, Washington in 1966. Swan's original manuscript diaries and notes are in the Archives Section of the University of Washington Library, and in 1980, the Seattle author Ivan Doig, did a very interesting autobiographical book interspersed with excerpts from the diaries. This book was entitled *Winter Brothers.*

James Gilchrist Swan was one of the first—and most colorful—of the pioneers and settlers of the Seattle and Olympic Peninsula area. He was also an author, journalist, teacher, lawyer, probate judge, naturalist, historian, a collector for the Smithsonian Institution, and one of the foremost authorities on the wild life and

Indian tribes and customs of Western Washington and the Olympic Peninsula. With all his faults, Swan may be considered one of the great men of Washington Territory in its early years, but by the time of his death he was almost unknown. His book, *The Northwest Coast,* often improperly described as a guide for immigrants, is instead, one of the great classics of Pacific Northwest Americana.

75

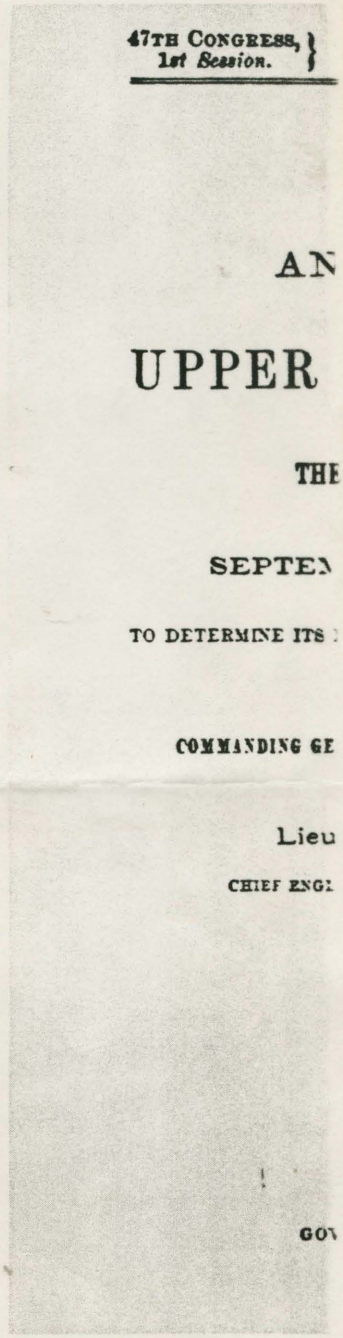
SYMONS, LIEUT. THOMAS W.

Report of an Examination of the Upper Columbia River and the Territory in its Vicinity in September and October, 1881, to determine its navigability and adaptability to steamboat transportation . . . By Lieut. Thomas W. Symons . . . Washington, Government Printing Office, 1882. Senate Ex. Doc. No. 186, 47th Congress 1st Session.

Blank leaf, title page, verso blank, [1]-133, [134 blank], 135, "Map of the Upper Columbia River . . .", [136 blank], 25 unnumbered leaves of maps, folding map tipped in, "Portion of the Map of Military Department of the Columbia showing location of River Survey Sheets," blank leaf. Tan paper wrappers, front wrapper reproducing title page lettered in black. 23 x 14.5 cm.
Soliday IV-820

A facsimile edition of this book was published by Ye Galleon Press of Fairfield, Washington in 1967. Biographical material on the author was added to this edition.

This little known work is a study of the upper Columbia River and the great plain of the Columbia. It is not only a survey in the engineering and reconnaissance sense, but is also a highly readable personal document that contains a good deal of history added in a low key way. Lieut. Symons later became a distinguished engineer.


47TH CONGRESS, 1st Session.

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No. 75. Title page
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JUDY T. VAN DEEN

295 S. Harrington Rd.
Coupeville, Wash. 98239
(206) 678-5958





Mr. Ivan Doig
17021-10th Ave. N. W.
Seattle, Wa. 98177

Judy VanDeen Memo

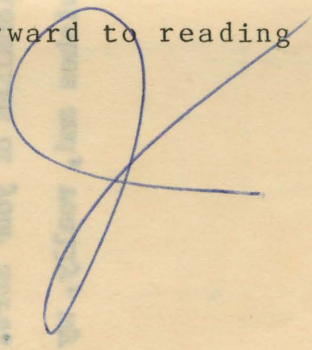
September 22, 1989

To: Ivan Doig
From: Judy

Enclosed is the Chicago Tribune article which you wanted returned.

Thank you for your cooperation and I hope you will be pleased with what I have written. The printed information you sent was very useful. The interview was delightful.

Look forward to reading your new book.

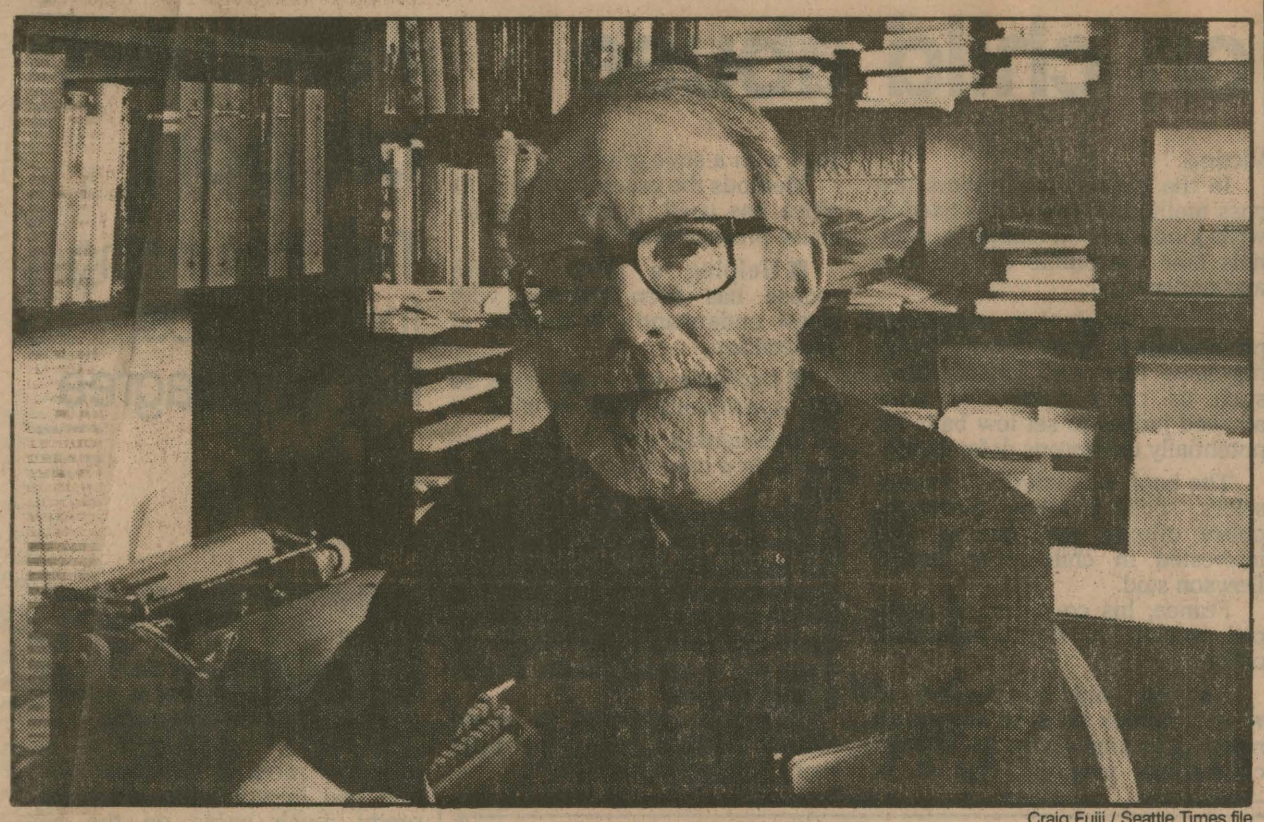


26 Oct. '89

Dear Judy--

Very nice job in the article on me yesterday. It's good to meet up with professionalism of your sort.

best wishes and, really, my thanks.



Craig Fujii / Seattle Times file

Every morning at 7 a.m., Ivan Doig resumes writing in his Innis Arden home office.

Writer goes to great pains to portray the real Old West

FACES OF SHORELINE



JUDY VAN DEEN
North Times columnist

The Old West – the *authentic* Old West, not the stereotyped one familiar from television and romanticized novels – is being kept alive in a quiet, wooded area of Innis Arden.

"In the typical Western, nobody ever milks a cow or plants a spud," says Ivan Doig. "I try to tell how the West was really settled, by plain people who were farmers, ranchers, miners – ordinary people. People afflicted by deadly flash floods, excruciating droughts, blizzards and forest fires, who survived."

Doig has five published books about the West to his credit, and a sixth on its way. His first, "This House of Sky," published in 1978, tells of the harsh life in Montana, where he was born and grew up; of his family who, after nearly a century, never owned land but were always hired hands; and of hardships that forged character.

"In our family no one had gone beyond the eighth grade. My father urged me to climb out of the harsh trap," Doig remembers. "As soon as I could make a choice, I chose to work with words."

He prepared himself for that career by earning his bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism at Northwestern University; and he prepared himself for his specialty by earning a doctorate in history from the University of Washington.

Every morning at 7 a.m., Doig is in his office in the home where all the books have been written. He will remain there until 4 or 5 p.m.

The room is lined with books. There is a filing cabinet, and numerous metal card files filled with research notes bearing labels such as "Dialogue" or "Montana Lingo." There's a collection of slides taken in Montana – and every day in the mail he receives the Great Falls Tribune, which he scours for useful material.

When he's not writing from his own experience, research is the key to Doig's work.

"Nothing comes out of the blue," he says. "It comes out of the person you are and way you live. In writing fiction, or nonfiction, I write about what I can imagine, or find out."

Doig's wife, Carol, teaches communications and a course on Northwest writers at Shoreline Community College, and he says their decision to move to Innis Arden to be closer to her work was a good one.

"I'm not a writer that thinks badly of the suburbs," Doig says. "This suburb has a lot to offer. People go away during the day, it's quiet, uncluttered, tucked in the

lose its magic for him. The three books of a soon-to-be-finished trilogy – "English Creek" (1984), "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" (1987) and "Ride With Me Mariah Montana" (a working title), to be published Labor Day 1990 honoring Montana's centennial – all are set in that state and follow the McCaskill family.

Unpretentious and with the rugged look of a Scotsman, Doig can't deny his heritage. He is highly disciplined, compiling his books slowly and meticulously, reworking until the words shine.

"It took me six years to write "Sky" – however, I was working a full-time job," he says. "After I had about a quarter of the book completed, I started sending it to publishers, trying to get one interested. On the 13th try, an editor with Harcourt Brace Jovanovich gave the work the go-ahead. It was kinda nice."

The other books have averaged about 2½ years each to write. In the early days when a new book was published, he and Carol would put copies in the back of the car, take them to Montana and distribute them to bookstores all over the state. Today, he says, "I go to book signings, on national tours and have interviews on public radio and in newspapers."

The movies have even shown some interest, with "The Sea Runners," telling of four men's escape from a Russian prison in 19th-century Alaska, under option. Doig considers that a phantom project until the option is picked up, though – and if it does go further, he plans to have nothing to do with script writing.

"I gave birth to the 'child' in the typewriter and sent it out to the world," he says of his book. "Now I have to set it free to face other people's visions."

Of his own style of working, Doig says, "I take words and sculpt them into something that is a joy to read. Each book has its own meaningful period. I shift things about to get new moves – a dance, feeling my way toward the end."

Now, closing in on a February deadline for his current work, he is looking forward to enjoying a sabbatical with Carol in the Southwest, his first since 1972. But even then, Doig admits, he won't be leaving his craft behind completely.

He doesn't plan any intensive research while he's traveling, he says. "But I always have a pad and pencil on me – just in case."

■ Judy Van Deen's column on Shoreline people and places appears the fourth Wednesday of each month in the North Times Today.

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"Nothing comes out of the blue," he says. "It comes out of the person you are and way you live. In writing fiction, or nonfiction, I write about what I can imagine, or find out."

Doig's wife, Carol, teaches communications and a course on Northwest writers at Shoreline Community College, and he says their decision to move to Innis Arden to be closer to her work was a good one.

"I'm not a writer that thinks badly of the suburbs," Doig says. "This suburb has a lot to offer. People go away during the day, it's quiet, uncluttered, tucked in the woods and a short walk to view the Sound and the mountains."

The location also provides a good base for research, and he does a lot of basic work at the community college – where he says he finds "wonderful dervish librarians."

He also travels back to Montana on research, and while he has no desire to live there again, Doig says the Big Sky country will never

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IN THE NEWS

Ivan Doig receives achievement award

■ Seattle writer Ivan Doig is this year's recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western Literature Association. Doig, whose next novel, "Mariah's Book," is due next fall, received the award at the recent WLA Conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

VOL. 83 NO. 75 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1989 2 SECTIONS, 30 PAGES 25 CENTS

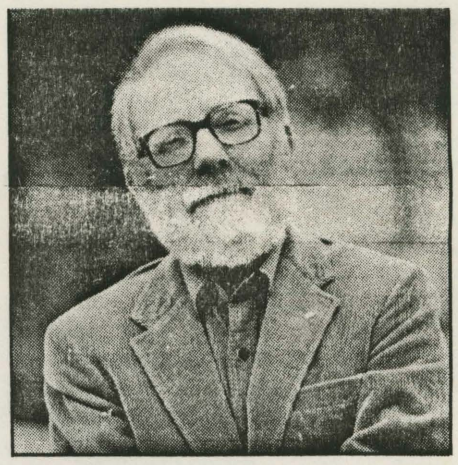
Author Doig portrays honesty in humanity

By CHARLOTTE MALLOY
Staff writer

Ivan Doig became a writer of western novels in the aftermath of Watergate, with the idea of making the publishing world a little more democratic.

By the time Doig sat down to write "This House of Sky," the story of his family's roots in the "secret and peopleless land" of southwestern Montana, he was fresh out of patience for the parade of dishonest politicians with bestselling books.

"Notoriety was getting its story told, but the actuality of long lives lived as best they could was not getting its story told," said Doig, one of more than 200 authors and scholars attending the Western Literature Association Conference which ends today at the Coeur d'Alene Resort. "I thought, 'By God, people such as my own deserve to have their stories told as well as the convicted felons who've been running this country.' "



Ivan Doig

With a half-dozen books now under his tough leather belt — including "Mariah's Book," due to be published next fall — Doig has been selected as this year's recipient of the WLA's Distinguished Achievement Award.

See DOIG, Page 9▸

DOIG

CONTINUED from Page 1

"This is like my Academy Award," Doig said, admiring the framed certificate representing nearly two decades of work capturing the personalities, ideologies and landscapes characteristic of the West.

Leaning back comfortably in his chair, his feet propped on a coffee table, Doig, 50, spoke respectfully and affectionately about the characters — both real and fictional — who people his books.

"A lot of history was compressed in the lives of these people, like my grandmother," he said.

Outgoing and unpretentious, Doig demonstrates the same genuine interest in humanity face-to-face, as he does on the printed page. Accosted by a pair of fellow writers, Doig immediately turned in his chair to face them squarely — kneeling into the upholstery and leaning forward to prop his arms on the railing that separated him from his two old friends.

Despite his zest for real life, Doig finds fiction easier to write. Six years of research and soul-searching went into "This House of Sky" before it finally was published in 1978. To reconstruct his childhood, Doig jotted memories on file cards, which he kept in the black vinyl notebook he calls his "personal, infinite, hand-sized computer."

"It builds its own force by the accumulation of detail," he said. "You build the castle out of smaller stones."

Making frequent trips from Seattle — where he lives with his photographer wife, Carol — Doig revisited the once familiar sights and sounds of his native Montana. One by one, fading memories came to life. As he writes in the first chapter:

A certain turn in my desk chair, and the leather cushion must creak the quick dry groan of a saddle under my legs — and my father's and his father's. The taste in the air as rain comes over the city is forever a flavor back from a Montana community too tiny to be called a town. A man, the same alphabet of college degrees after his name as mine, trumps in a debating point during a party argument, and my grandmother's words mutter in me on cue that he grins like a jackass eating thistles.

Doig marks time for his characters according to a seasonal clock with hands that circle past planting, lambing and harvesting seasons with predictable regularity.

"You have, just by the truth of the calendar, what is important in each of those lives in each of those months," he said.

Doig finds scholarly interpretations of his work interesting, often useful, and occasionally amusing.

"They're talking about me this very afternoon as a Calvinist," said Doig, who joked that perhaps he should attend the session to learn something more of the label's possible implications.

"Those of us who are full-time writers don't have time to analyze ourselves — and not even sure we should," he said. "We have other books to write."

"I'm just trying to get the sounds of words on paper," he added. "I think my fingertips are more important than the murky swamps of the back of my mind."

Doig speaks proudly of his western heritage — particularly of his place in a lineage of western writers.

"There's a continuity of people having been born in these small, hard places, and who, by the thrust of their desire to get out, become writers," Doig said, his face decorated with a scholarly looking beard, his eyes looking out through a pair of horn-rimmed glasses.

"We bring spicier ingredients to our books than people with calmer, saner backgrounds might," he said.

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The State of America's Rivers

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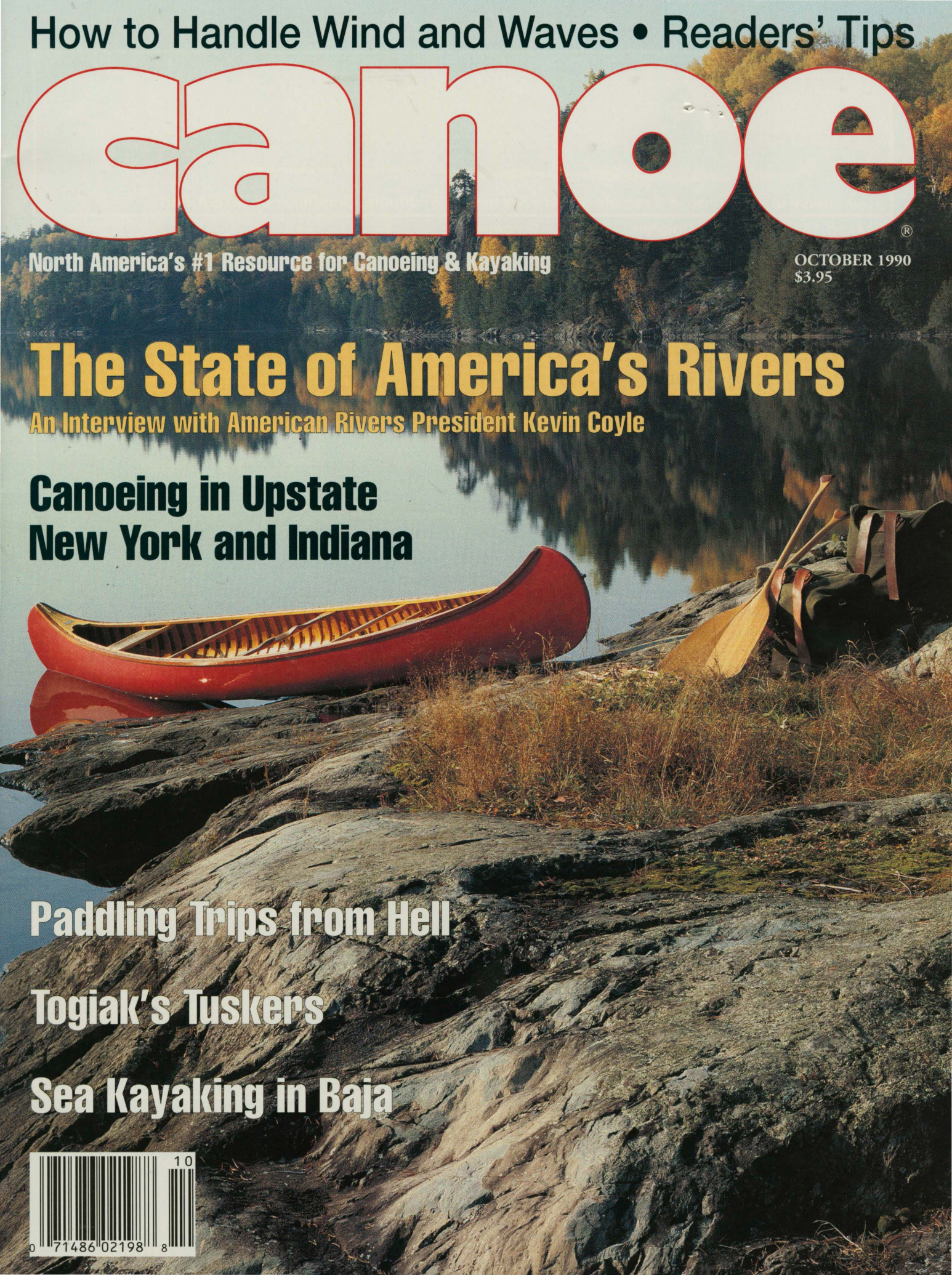
Canoeing in Upstate New York and Indiana



Paddling Trips from Hell

Togiak's Tuskers

Sea Kayaking in Baja

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Time to Change Our Tune

I recently had the good fortune to be able to combine a day of river running with an evening of river music and the pursuit of a good cause: a Mason Williams concert to raise money for the protection of the Icicle River Canyon in the Washington Cascades. One of his selections was a Woody Guthrie song, "Roll on Columbia," written in the early '30s, commissioned by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). As an employee of the BPA, Guthrie was to write several songs, all meant to promote public power.

It was odd, this juxtaposition of an event designed to protect a riverine environment, and Guthrie's song which celebrates the damming of the Columbia for power to "turn the dark to daylight." Williams was quick to suggest that, were Guthrie alive today, he might cringe at what has been wrought in the time since.

I realized that as times have changed, so certainly has our view of conservation, the environment, and the sanctity of our rivers. Power to satisfy an expanding continent was the inspirational message of Guthrie's song, but a major unstated objective was creating jobs at a time of national economic hardship. Nothing much has changed on the latter point, it would seem. Right now, politicians and the media are trying to convince us that a simple confrontation exists: the preservation of the spotted owl and its habitat versus timber industry jobs; take your choice.



"OF TIME AND RIVERS FLOWING"
COURTESY OF MASON WILLIAMS

That's dangerous thinking. The BPA did not put over 500 dams on the Columbia and its tributaries *just* to annoy canoers and kayakers. People — yes, that's you and me — wanted and needed the electricity. Weyerhauser doesn't chop down trees in order to rid the skies of owls; lots of people simply want wood houses, magazines, and toilet paper. Management guru Peter Drucker writes that companies do not exist to make a profit, but to *meet a customer need;* jobs and profits are the product of success at that endeavor.

Perhaps we need to examine not only the way we live, but the economic incentives which invite destructive modes of consumption. We could impose a tax on all things wooden and wet, but first, maybe our policy makers need to look at how we set value on two of our most precious assets: water and timber. It occurs to us that both water and trees are free *at their source.* Yes, timber cutters are charged so-called "stumpage," but the cost is based on market demand, without regard to the tree's ecological value; i.e., its value if left in place. Water is likewise "free." Users pay only for the value added by pumping, damming, diverting, or processing, without a cost computed for its untapped or pristine state. Is it possible that our elected representatives have for years been rewarding our votes with the distribution of free water and trees, throwing in forty acres and a mule for good measure?

We are not bomb throwing environmentalists here, and not every river can be saved (some are, in fact, more valuable as fuel for agriculture or industry). But each of us certainly needs to take a closer look at how we live our lives and consume our resources. Forget about George's lips, too. A tax on the true value of water and trees might keep more of our rivers flowing and owls flying. So might a few less shuttle cars.

That's food for thought as you turn to Bart Parrott's interview with Kevin Coyle, the new president of American Rivers, in this issue.

Dave Harrison

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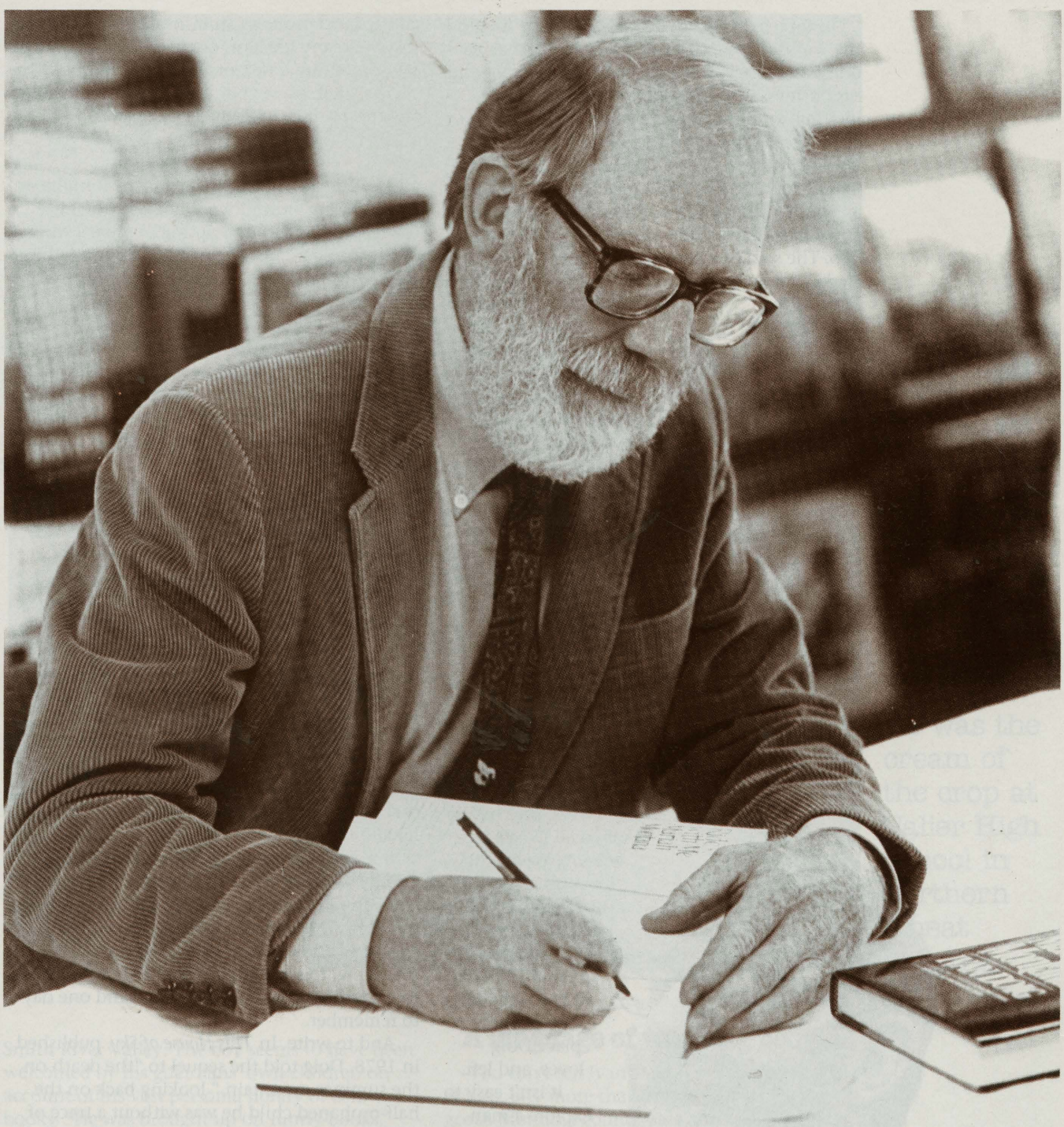


Doig

A Montana soul

by Ben Groff, photos by Wayne Arnst

Editor's note: Last February, Ivan Doig was awarded the 1991 Montana Governor's Award for the Arts in Literature at annual ceremonies in Helena.

Ivan Doig may be the son of a cowboy, but he is not one to jump two-fisted into an interview. He'd rather be writing books.

Doig is telling me about the time he was invited to speak with a group of literature students who were reading his work. He was introduced, he says, as "the man behind the words." He gives me a flabbergasted stare, and the story seems to be over.

"So?" I prompt. "How did you respond?"

"I said 'Huh?'" He drops his mouth wide open in mock speechlessness, and with that, the story *is* over.

Doig

In fact, he does not believe that he *is* "behind the words," nor that he should be, nor that anyone should care. Doig is a businesslike man, and his business is to create books that are lovely, moving, and true. If there is anything antithetical in that, it is lost on one of the West's finest fiction writers.

The man behind the words has a ready laugh and wary eyes, an open heart but a careful brain, and a face that is oddly uncertain between the two. The soul of a poet and the mind of a clerk—not an unusual combination for a writer. Whatever the mix, it has been a successful one for Ivan Doig.

The 51-year-old Montanan, transplanted these 20 years and more to Seattle, has carved a comfortable literary niche for himself based on nationwide critical esteem and sales that are brisk if persistently regional. But that last word is one he flips into advantage. Granted, *Dancing at the Rascal Fair,* his fifth book and third novel, was marketed in 1988 specifically to boost Doig's following in those populous reaches where the average reader doesn't know a buckrake from a bellwether. Even so, *Dancing* is all Doig, set in the northern Rocky Mountain country where its author grew up.

It is that land of his birth, that connectedness to a place where he no longer lives, that has inspired all Doig's best writing. Promisingly, his most recent novel carries the intoxicating title, *Ride With Me, Mariah Montana.* It is a wandering look at the place Doig loves, and left.



It isn't easy to explore a man who has written beautifully about himself, and then stood aside from his work as if it were all the most ordinary stuff in the world. He can joke that "my life is an open book," but his eyes say something different. They say the books are on the shelf, leave your money in the till and feel free to draw your own conclusions.

Roots

The conclusions start in central Montana, in the high, dry Smith River Valley, in the little town of White Sulphur Springs, where a woman of the local ranching gentry remembers a thing Ivan Doig barely does—a time when his mother was alive.

In 1943, when Ivan was four, his father Charlie headed the haying crew on the Buckingham Ranch. "Charlie was very genial, very Scotch, very opinionated," recalls Theresa Buckingham, a lively septuagenarian. "You know, you can tell a guy by the way he wears his hat, and his was always cocked."

Charlie was a top hand, and Charlie loved Berneta. Small and frail, Ivan's mother "had a nice mind," in Buckingham's phrase. She also had asthma, so she darkened her little sidehouse on the Buckingham Ranch to keep it cool, and read to the children through the heat of the afternoon.

That would be the Buckinghams' girl, and Ivan. Even then he was quiet, and no quick study. "One day I was in the kitchen cooking, when he came up and told me did I know he could count? He went one...two...three...four... on his thick little fingers, so slowly and laboriously, and my Susan was so much the quicker that I thought she must be the smarter. I sure had *him* figured wrong."

But time moved neither laboriously nor slowly, bringing them too soon to a night when the asthma killed his mother in a herder's cabin in the Bridger Range, with six-year-old Ivan in the other bunk to hear the cessation of her breathing, to see a lantern suddenly lit, to chill to his father's tear-choked voice—and one day to remember.

And to write. In *This House of Sky,* published in 1978, Doig told the sequel to "the death on the summer mountain," looking back on the half-orphaned child he was without a trace of self-pity, but a hard-won joy in what he calls his "gift-passage into a grown-up world"—his life at the side of that job-hopping, beer-drinking, wise-cracking, fiercely-loving son of the sagebrush named Charlie Doig. He writes memorably of nowhere saloons and tough-luck homesteads, of small-time losers and smaller-time winners, of the cobbled-together "brink of a family" his father endured for the sake of his son.

After his mother died, "Ivan lived from pillar to post," Buckingham recalls, shifted constantly house to house among a colorful assortment of town families in order to attend school in White Sulphur while his father hired out as a sheep hand in one corner or another of the



Ivan Doig mingled with guests at the Myrna Loy Center in Helena following his acceptance of the 1991 Montana Governor's Award for the Arts in Literature.

He was the cream of the crop at Valier High School in northern wheat country.

Smith River Valley. The boy seems to have been welcomed by his guardians' own children on account of his vast personal library of comic books. "He was brought up on funny-books," said Buckingham. "Charlie got him all he wanted."

Doig refuses to acknowledge any reservoir of pain dammed up behind his memories of those times, but Buckingham may have a clearer recollection. "He was so lost," she said simply. "A lost little boy."

"I wasn't really aware of that," he claims. "What we were really aware of was getting by. Finding a place for Dad to work, a place for me to live. Quotidian realists." He laughs, the kind of laugh that is like a shrug of the shoulders.

A boxful of comic books; no mother, but a stack of fantasies—that, and a sense beyond remembering of having been read to by a sweet woman in a cool and darkened house.

A language of working people

You can't tell Ivan Doig is a writer by looking at him, any more than you can look at the gorgeous Montana countryside and tell that it kills people.

In his writing, the land and the language feed each other. He fashions a tough and knotty prose full of the language of unschooled, loose-tongued working people, folks who use their brains to feel with.

"My people were poor in money, rich in words," he says without noticeable pride.

He was the cream of the crop at Valier High School in the northern wheat country when he turned his back on Montana and went away to Northwestern University, near Chicago. There he got his bachelor's degree and a master's in journalism, plying that trade in heartland Illinois for four years before returning West in 1966—not home, but to Seattle and the Univer-

sity of Washington, where he sweated out a Ph.D. in American frontier history before turning full-time to the rigors of free-lance writing.

It poses a bit of a riddle why this wordsmith with Montana at the heart of him chose early on to keep it at arm's length. The answer begins in economics, and ends in death and defeat.

First came the revelation that he hated the hired-hand side of sheep ranching, then the grateful awareness that he loved words, and finally acceptance of the sad fact that there were few jobs for a young writer in Montana.

But there is more to it than that. The West as a metaphor is all over Doig's writing: a heartless bigness and a going away, a cutting loose, a setting free—to what? "The most unfree souls go West, and shout of freedom," observed D. H. Lawrence, and Doig, born in the West, has long since put that home to east of him.

Doig

Leaving the past

There is only one reason why Americans have ever followed the setting sun—to leave the past behind. The unforgiving distances, the extremes of weather, the living always between a promise of success and the imminence of catastrophe, the hard foothills that after three quarters of a century gave his Scottish immigrant family nothing more marketable than character—all seemed to culminate for Ivan Doig in the slow dying of his father, from emphysema, in the early '70s. He now goes back, but only to visit.

In Seattle, he lives a well-regulated life with his wife, Carol, whom he met at Northwestern. Born and raised in New Jersey, an enthusiastic west-comer in her own right, she has taught journalism and communications for 20 years. She and Ivan are similar in outlook and attitudes, vocal inflections, favorite quotes, and the contention that they have not had a serious quarrel in their entire married life.

The Doigs are no workaholics, and reserve weekday evenings for reading, and weekends for quiet socializing or the occasional jaunt to some isolated Puget Sound beach. Both grew up as only children and have chosen to remain childless, although Ivan's prose has lingered lovingly on the intricate bonds of family. "We *are* the family," he says reluctantly. "Carol and me."

Ivan Doig the man is unswervably determined not to be pretentious about Ivan Doig the writer. He speaks briskly of the writer's need to "risk emotion," meanwhile brushing as much as he can of it out of his speech. His wife says he's just a thoughtful person who ponders every question so hard that his thoughts get lost in the circlings.

"It's the Scotch in him," says William Kittredge, a friend and fellow writer from Missoula. "The poetry is clearly inside, but wherever it lies it takes a long route coming out."

An agile quipster with a gift for mimicry, Doig does not flaunt a jocular manner. What he flaunts is a sort of dogged cheerfulness. When I checked my impression out on him, his voice became steely and stiff. "I think I'm dogged, and I'm cheerful, so I guess that adds up, yeah."

Then he softened, and circled back. "I think," he added, "that is probably Montana, in a sense."

Suburban druid

Ivan Doig is stacking wood.

It is almost summer, a drowsy day of Puget Sound mildness when no wind ruffles the leaves of a tree-lined Seattle neighborhood, and you can almost hear the creek water trickling through the green crease of spruce and vine maple that gives signature, with a small brush-stroke of unobliterated topography, to the living-place of this self-described "suburban druid." Beguiling weather, yet Doig has a habitual eye on winter, and his expression beneath the baseball cap emblazoned "Doig Bros. Grain Merc." is all November.

You know, you can tell a guy by the way he wears his hat, and this guy wears his way down low across the forehead, dead level.

As he stoops to the job, blue jeans and an old work shirt conceal what might be the awkward curves of an unhorsed cowboy, something lean, tense, and smaller-than-expected in the build. But from the neck up, he is a lumberjack with hornrims. The beard is the main thing, full-face and the color of hot coals ashing over.

He ushers me into his study, and begins describing for me the realization of every writer's dream—critical acclaim for his first book, plus the sales figures to carry it along—in cautious language that seems unwilling even yet to risk breaking the bubble.

This House of Sky was nominated for the prestigious National Book Award, and enabled him to do whatever he pleased for an encore. There followed *Winter Brothers*, *The Sea Runners*, and *English Creek*, the first Montana novel. "Doig's is a remarkable achievement," notes Harold Simonson, Professor of English at the University of Washington. "In less than a decade, a reputation placing him atop the Pacific Northwest's literary Mt. Olympus."

The question of regionalism—whether he only "counts" in the Pacific Northwest—is a vexing one, that may be a source of strength as well as a great limitation to the ambitious writer. "Every writer is a regional writer," points out Tom Stewart, Doig's editor at Atheneum, publisher of his first three books. "Joyce was a regional writer. Proust was a regional writer."

A bigger country

"Those of us whose books draw on a region," sighs Ivan Doig, "we hope we're writing about a bigger country—Life!" Then a sudden laugh. "Of course, we all want to be regional writers, but to sell cosmically!"

He sells less than cosmically, to be sure. Until recently, he admits, his career was "entirely underwritten" by his wife's teaching. The aggressive marketing of *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*—and, even more so, *Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*—was a frank assault upon the best seller lists (and he made it, regionally) but it isn't easy for a writer who occupies uncertain middle ground between the fashionably high-brow authors and those facile fantasists who sell like toilet paper in the supermarkets.

He is a punctual creator, this former sheep-herder, hay-raker, journalist and historian—a creature of ingrained work habits. His books are meticulously researched, carefully calendared, and cushioned from the ebb and flow of inspiration, which he prefers to keep corralled in large gray file boxes on his shelf labeled "Dialogue" and "Montana Lingo." Deriding the romantic view of writing, he calls himself a craftsman, not an artist, and he is proud of it.

"I do like to think that if you work the craft as well as you can, it tends toward art—aspires, reaches toward art. But I don't need self-discovery, I'm already here." A burst of laughter to deflate that balloon. "No, writing is an act of discovering the possibilities of language."

It is a tribute, then, to his craft, or art, whichever you prefer, that his firmly managed books seem inspired.

"Why not?" he shrugs. "We're lots of things in life. We're bundles, not single reeds."

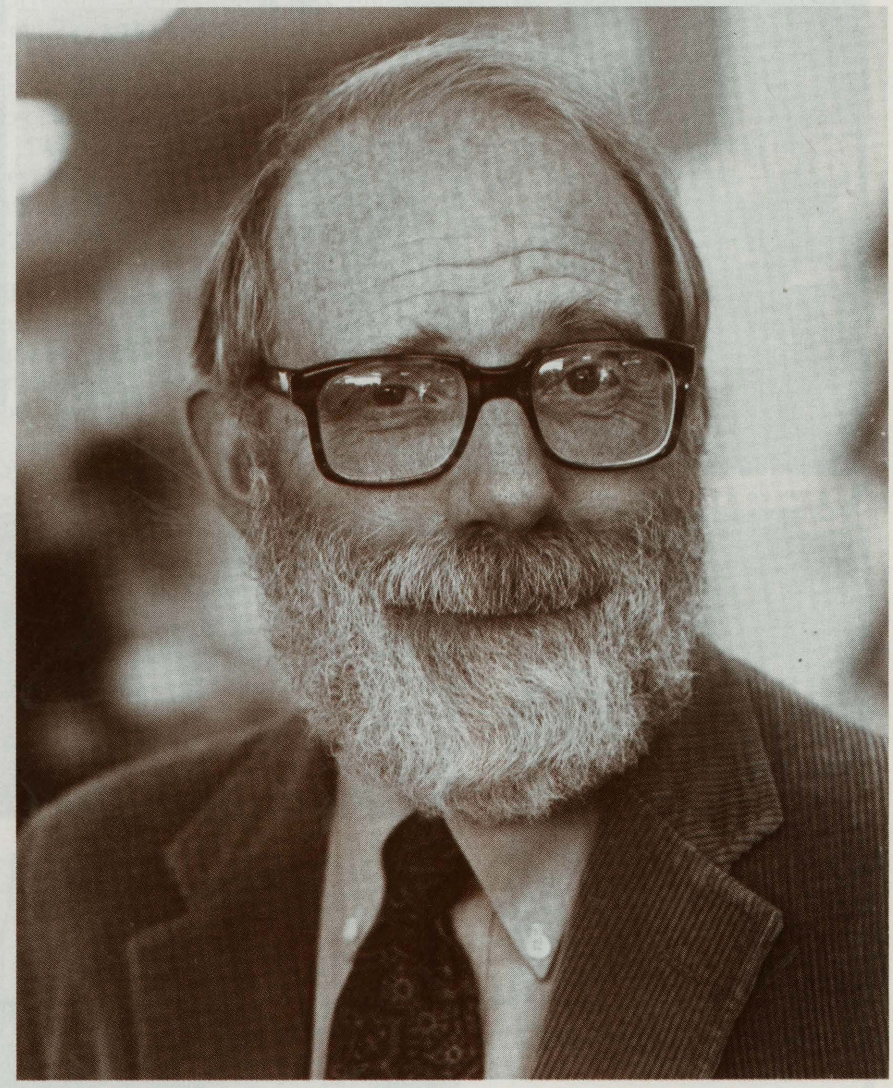
"But you're very methodical."

"*That's* inspiration." He lifts his head in a chuckle and the light makes sudden mirrors of his hornrims.

The poet John Berryman has written of every writer's yearning to be "back from wherever, with it said." Ivan Doig smiles wistfully and allows as how there's something even sweeter, which is, to say it again. To that end, every morning around sunrise, he seats himself at a typewriter and circles back. He worries over the pages like an engineer over an equation, dreaming his careful dreams in a room his mother would have loved, because it is cool and shaded. His typewriter faces west.

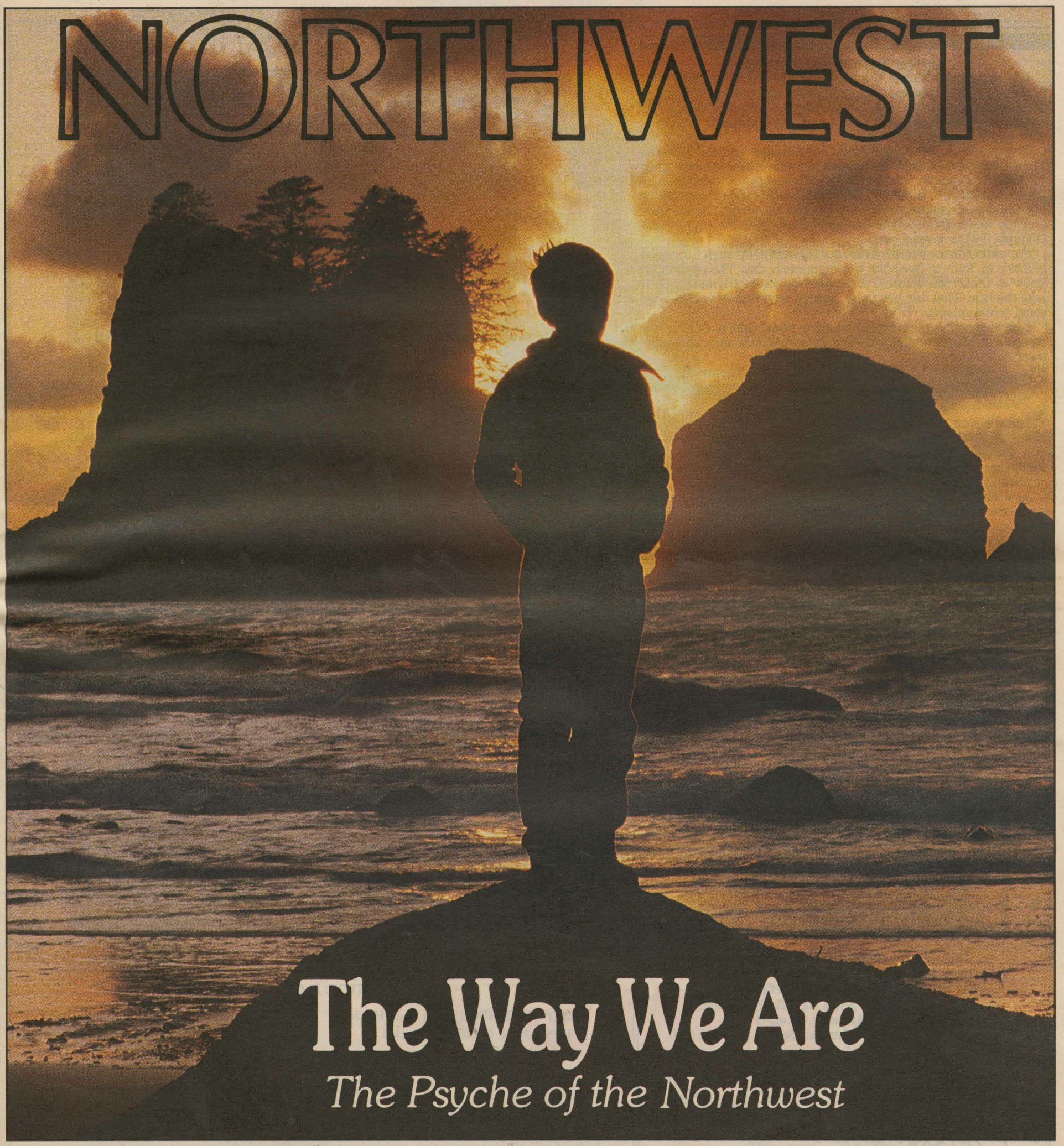
Ben Groff, a free-lance writer living in the Seattle area, has written about mountaineering and literature for a variety of regional and outdoor magazines.

Deriding the romantic view of writing, he calls himself a craftsman, not an artist, and he is proud of it.



Ivan Doig's first book, This House of Sky, *was nominated for the prestigious National Book Award.*

NORTHWEST



The Way We Are

The Psyche of the Northwest

Inside: An Excerpt of Ivan Doig's New Novel • Kramer on Berry Ecstacy

McCoy

Written by Ivan Doig
Illustrated by Rene Eisenbart

The place is the Two Medicine country of northern Montana. The time is late summer of the war year 1917. The narrator, Angus McCaskill, and his son, Varick, long have kept away from each other because of a bitter family dispute, but now with "the war reaching over the horizon to find us" Angus can't resist watching Varick perform in the Sunday bronc riding at a ranch on Noon Creek.

He was there atop a corral pole with the other young Sunday heroes when I arrived. Varick, whom I had come to lay eyes on before the 11th day of the next month made him 18 years of age. Before he became war fodder.

He saw me across the corral as I dismounted. I gave him a hello wave, he nodded the minimum in return, and with public amenities satisfied, we left it at that. Maybe more would eventuate between us later, but I did not really expect so. No, today I simply was bringing my son my eyes, the one part of me he could not turn away from on such a public afternoon as this.

Quite a crowd in and on the corral by then, and I found a place on the opposite side from Varick. Men *hello*ed and *Angus*ed me in surprise as they passed.

"Angus, good to see you here," Pat Egan called out as he came over to me. "Heard about our special attraction, did you?"

When my blank look said I'd heard no such thing, Pat told me that after the bronc riding there was to be a bucking exhibition of another sort. "Some guy from Fort Benton brought over this critter of his. Claims he's trained the thing to toss any rider there is. Our boys are going to have to show him how real riding is done, don't you think?"

Away went Pat, as he said, to get the circus started. Across the pole arena from me, the Withrow lad had climbed onto the fence beside Varick. "How you doing, Mac?"

"Just right, Dode. How about you?"

"Good enough, if they got some real horses here for us."

"They're rank enough, probably. I see you're dressed for the worst they can do, though." Dode Withrow was always the dressiest in a crowd, and for today's bronc riding he sported a pair of yellow-tan corduroy trousers with leather trim at the pockets, new as the moment. Except for his habit of dressing as if he owned Montana he was an engaging youngster, of a sheep-ranching family that had moved to the South Fork from the Cut Bank country in the past year or so. I perched there, watching Varick and Dode, listening to their gab of horses. Aching at the thought of how much of Varick I had not been able to know, these years of his climb into manhood.

Shortly the afternoon began to fill with horsehide and riders. Even just saddling each bronc was an exercise in fastening leather onto a storm of horse. The animal was snubbed to a corral post by a lasso tight around his neck while the saddlers did their work. Any too-reluctant horse or a known kicker was thrown onto his side in the corral dirt and saddled while down. The rider would



poise over him and try to socket himself into the saddle and stirrups as the horse struggled up. It looked to me like a recipe for suicide.

My throat stoppered itself when I saw that Varick had drawn one of the saddle-in-the-dirt rides.

"Watch out for when this bugger starts sunfishing," I heard Dode counsel him, "or he'll stick your head in the ground."

Varick nodded, tugged his hat down severely toward his eyes, and straddled with care across the heaving middle of the prostrate pinto horse. Then said to the handlers: "Let's try him."

The pinto erupted out of the dirt, spurts of dust continuing to fly behind his hooves as he bucked and bounced, querously twisting his spotted body into sideway crescents as if determined to make his rump meet his head. While the horse leapt and crimped, Varick sat astride him, long legs stretched mightily into the stirrups. My blood raced as I watched. What son of mine was this? Somehow this bronc rider, this tall half-stranger, this Sunday centaur, was the yield of his mother and me. I was vastly thankful she was not here to see our wild result.

When Varick had ridden and the other braves of the saddle tribe had taken their turns at rattling their brains, Pat Egan hollered from beside the coral gate: "Time for something different, boys!"

Pat swung the gate open, and in strolled a man and a steer.

At first glimpse the Fort Benton critter looked like standard steer, red-brown, haunch-high to a horse. But when you considered him for a moment, this was a very veteran steer, indeed — years older than the usual by not having gone the route to the slaughterhouse. An old dodger of the last battle, so to say. He was uniquely calm around people, blinking slow blinks that were halfway toward sleep as the onlookers gathered around him. The circle gave way considerably, however, when he lifted his tail like a pump handle and casually let loose several fluid feet of manure.

For his part, the Fort Benton man was a moon-face with spectacles, a sort you would expect to see behind the teller's wicket in a bank instead of ankle-deep into a corral floor. The fiscal look about him was not entirely coincidental. He was prepared, he announced, to provide $25 to anyone who could ride this steer of his. He also would be amenable, of course, to whatever side bets anybody might care to make with him about his steer's invincibility.

At once, everybody in the corral voted with his pockets. All the young riders wanted a turn at the steer, or professed to. But the Fort Bentonian shook his head and informed the throng that was not how steer riding worked; it was strictly a one-shot proposition. One steer per afternoon, one rider per afternoon: What could be more fair? Then he set forth the further terms of steer riding, Fort Benton mode: The rider had to stay astride the steer for a total of three minutes in a 10-minute span.

Somebody spoke up: Surely the steer impresario didn't mean three minutes straight, uninterrupted, aboard the animal, did he?

He did not. The rider could get off and on again any hundred number of times he wanted to during the overall time span. Did he need to add, he added, the steer would be glad to help the rider with the offs?

What about a hazer, to even the odds for the rider getting back on?

The eyebrows lifted above the moon-face in surprise. But the Fort Bentonian allowed that one man hazing on foot maybe wouldn't do lasting harm to his cherished pet.

At last the terms of the contest were as clear as tongue could make them. Someone called out the next conundrum:

"Who's gonna climb on the thing?"

Faces turned toward Varick and the Withrow lad. Varick looked at young Withrow, and young Withrow at him. "Toss you for him, Dode," offered my son.

"Heads, Mac. Let her fly."

The silver dollar that spun into the air, I tried to exert to come down heads — not to send danger toward another man's son, simply away from my own. Name me one soul who could have done different. But I had my usual luck where Varick was concerned.

"You got on the wrong pants for riding a male cow, anyway," Varick consoled Dode after the coin fell tails. Then, "I guess I'm ready for this if your steer is, Mr. Fort Benton."

Varick and his adherents gathered around the steer. The steer blinked at them. As Dode Withrow approached with the saddle, someone moved from behind the steer to watch. The steer's right rear leg flashed, the hoof missing the pedestrian by an inch.

"Now, now, McCoy," the Fort Bentonian chided his pet. "That's no way to act toward these boys." He scratched the steer beween its broad eyes as if it was a gigantic puppy, and it stood in perfect tranquility while Dode and the others saddled and trussed. The kick had done its work, though, as now both Varick and Dode, who was going to be his hazer, knew they would have to avoid the steer's rear area during the corral contest.

Dode Withrow gripped the halter with both hands at the steer's jaw while someone passed the halter rope up to Varick. He took a wrap of it in his right hand and put his left into the air as if asking an arithmetic question in a classroom. He called to Pat Egan and the Fort Bentonian, the two timekeepers:

"Let's try him."

The moon-face boomed out, *"Go, McCoy!"* and the

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steer writhed his hindquarters as if he were now a giant snake. A giant snake with horns and hooves. Varick's head whipped sideways, then to the other side, like a willow snapping back and forth. Then the steer lurched forward, and Varick whipped in that direction and back.

MURRRAWWWW issued out of McCoy, half-bellow, half-groan, as he and Varick began storming around the circle of the corral. It was like watching a battle in a whirlwind, the steer's hooves spraying the loose minced dirt of the arena 20 feet into the air.

I watched in agony, fear, fascination. So I wanted to know about Varick's Sunday life, did I? We spend the years of raising children for this, for them to invent fresh ways to break their young necks?

At about McCoy's dozenth MURRRAWWWW, Varick continued left while the steer adjourned right.

"That was 51 seconds!" Pat Egan shouted as Varick alit in the corral earth.

His words still were in the air when Dode dashed beside the steer to grab the halter rope. As he reached down for it, the animal trotted slightly faster, just enough to keep the rope out of reach. Dode speeded up. McCoy speeded up even more, circling the corral now at a sustained pace that a trotting horse would have envied. As the seconds ticked by in this round race between Dode and McCoy, it became clear what they used for brains in Fort Benton. Before the considerable problem of climbing onto McCoy and staying on there was going to be the trickier problem of catching him each time.

Varick by now had scrambled to his feet and joined the chase. "I'll cut across behind the bugger, you run him around to me," Dode strategized in a panting yell.

He started his veer behind McCoy. Sudden as a clock mechanism reaching the hour, McCoy halted in his tracks and delivered a flashing kick that missed Dode by the width of a fiddlestring.

But while McCoy was trying to send his would-be hazer into the middle of next week, Varick managed to lay hands on the halter rope and hold the steer long enough for Dode to gain control of the halter. Time sped as Dode desperately hugged McCoy by the head and Varick remounted; then the writhing contest was on again. The steer bounced around the arena, always in the same direction, with the same crazy seesaw motion, and I thought Varick was beginning to look a bit woozy. Then MURRRAWWWW again, and my son flew into the dirt another time.

"Another 46 seconds!" shouted Pat. "That's 5½ minutes," chimed the Fort Bentonian.

Away went McCoy, away went the puffing Dode after him, in a repeat race until Varick managed to mount again and the bucking resumed.

They rampaged that way, McCoy and McCaskill, through three further exchanges, man onto steer, steer out from under man. Each time, Varick's tenancy atop McCoy was briefer; but each time added preciously toward the three-minute total of riding, too.

Now McCoy sent Varick cloud-chasing again, and I half hoped my stubborn son would find enough sense to give up the combat, half-wished his heavy plummet into the arena would conk him hard enough that he had to quit. But no, never. Varick was one long streak of corral dirt, but he was onto his feet again, more or less. Gasping as if he'd been running steadily in tandem with McCoy ever since their bout began, he cast a bleary look around for his adversary. Over by the corral gate Dode Withrow had McCoy by the halter again, snugging the animal while urging Varick: "Now we got the bugger, Mac! One more time!"

The steer casually studied young Withrow, then tossed his head and slung Dode tip-over-teakettle into the expanse of fresh green, still-almost-liquid manure he had deposited just before the riding match commenced. The dazzling corduroy trousers and most other fabric on Dode abruptly changed color. While he slid and sloshed, the steer started away as if bored. But Varick had wobbled close enough to grab the halter rope as it flew from Dode, and now somehow he was putting himself aboard McCoy again.

The steer shook him mightily, but whatever wild rhythm McCoy was cavorting to, Varick also had found. The clamped pair of them, creature and rider, MURRRAWWWW and gritting silence, shot around the corral in a steady circle, if up-and-down isn't counted. Varick grasped the halter rope as if it was the hawser to life. McCoy quit circling and simply spun in his tracks like a dog chasing its tail. Varick's face came-went, came-went....

"Time!" yelled Pat Egan. "That's three minutes' worth! And still half a minute to the limit!"

"Whoa, McCoy," the Fort Benton man called out sourly. At once the steer froze, so abruptly that Varick pitched ahead onto its neck. With a great gulp of air, Varick lowered himself from McCoy's back, held out the halter rope and dropped it.

Blearily my son located the figure, manure-sopped but grinning, of young Withrow.

"Dode," Varick called out, "You're awful hard on a pair of pants." NW

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Home Plan

Vaulted ceilings, a raised master suite and individually covered garden patios highlight this 1,557-square-foot single-level house.

The formal living and dining rooms directly off the main entry hall offer 10-foot-high ceilings, stained glass windows and garden surroundings.

A two-car garage, with an optional half-bath/utility room, leads directly into the kitchen area. The kitchen and breakfast nook provide direct access to the centrally located family room.

The raised master suite includes a spacious walk-in closet, a large private bathroom and a hot-tub deck. The additional two bedrooms also have access to a covered patio.

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