road hymn of the tires
The poetry of distance.
- Traveling eastern MT in June '88 drought; long slow rhythms of crossing land, county lines, 7 (Miles City to Plentywood) in 1 afternoon; wildfires, Baker + Chalaka each in their own country & no other towns.
- Rhythm of land: none of eastern MT as dead flat plat as I expected; always at least ridges, buttes, draws; cliffs of Misouri + Y'stane Rs.
- Examples of berujen
- Rhythm defined from staccato of dense population.

G makes the point that where land has been farmed in Baker-Ekalaka country, it looks reassuringly tidy—the eye has been trained to respond and respect that kind of pattern order—even though plowing that prairie may be its ruination.

over
Yellowstone R. valley particularly impressive in the dry tan land all around it; would not be so striking, sayy, w. of the Cascades? Provides water, shade, wood, travel (highway now, as Lewis & Clark, and then steamboats). A wonderful drive because the road follows the river, instead of cutting it up like a snake (as freeway does to the Clark Fork).

C notes: people now even travel indoors, in a/c'ed rigs etc.; moving away from sense of the land.
--Miles City bartender Bobby (in The Hole in the Wall) told us he and his daughter did some riding in this drought heat on his dad's cattle ranch s. of Miles City, daughter commented that it wasn't as hot, out there riding, working, as being in town. (C took pic on Ek'a road of his'1 sign about old wagon route there, ruts still to be seen on hillside near.)

see Ekalaka cd 3 for perceived differences between Ek'a and Plentywood town configurations
walloping along (i.e., driving steadily fast)
Bugs were mooshed on the windshield of the Bago.
trucks and other traffic the Bago encounters.

(Bryan DiS's New Yorker pieces on trucks?)

describe the highway and other traffic.

--kinds of cars and license plates (tourists lessen after Labor Day? or more retired people noticeable?)

--other rigs: do a symphony of the kinds of motorhomes?

--truck patterns
show the Bago as a household: who does what chore, who has what habits, Jick's comparison to earlier households at Eng Creek and Noon Creek, or when he was in the Army?
web of shattered upper corner of windshield on passenger side is mentioned again, possibly after Leona joins them.
The various hums of the Bago's systems (vital systems)
RV details:

--twin "cockpit" seats, with platform between. Thus Jick is driver, Mariah cd ride shotgun in the other seat and watch for pic chances, while Riley works (cd be seat belted in) at table behind driver.

--Bago living wd be perpetually cramped for 3. (Jick after all bought it for just him and Marce.) Places to be are: at± either side of table (Mariah and Riley thus might have to work unwillingly facing each other), on couch behind passenger seat, or in bed at rear.

--windows to be opened: big sliding ones at table and couch, for cross-ventilation; smaller ones over stove, toilet and bed (on passenger side wall; rear window on Southwind does not open).

--Jick when he nukes himself a cup of coffee: sets microwave for 1½ min., puts in cup with instant coffee mixed with water, hits the start button; when the mic' bell dings (done), hits the door button.

--"I nuked a cup of coffee in the microwave..."

--cup receptacles: 2 in dashboard between driver and passenger; 2 others between them in a molded holding tray that sits on hump between seats.
camping procedure (with Southwind):
--hook up 110 v. system: big three-pronged plug into c'ground outlet box receptacle. Runs the refrig, microwave, interior lights, air conditioning; stove is only gas. If camped where there's no hookup, RV's generator has to be kept going to run these appliances. A switch at bottom of dashboard at driver's left puts the system either on 110 v. hookup or generator.

--water hose, from RV intake to campground spigot, keeps water pressure up in RV, without water pump having to run(?).

--sewage flexible pipe, like a huge Slinky, goes into c'grnd drain hole, then is fitted on (over toggles) to RV drain outlet and plugs are pulled to let out graywater (dishwater etc) and blackwater (toilet).

--pulling out step beneath side door.

C notes: definite age distinction in g rigs—younger people in poptop trailers or tents, 50s-70s in RV's—the outfit more elaborate the older the people. She thinks the older crowd prob'ly likes the c'grnd procedure not in spite of the chores (of hooking up) but because of them—giving the people something to do, something to be capable at.
Southwind's air conditioning unit is in middle of the rig on ceiling; makes considerable noise as it works. RV's generator also makes noise, and the rig has road noise; Jick et al. wouldn't be traveling quietly.

Tie-back curtains on all windows; also, blinds to be let down.

2 vent lids in roof, one in middle of ceiling between table and couch, one over toilet. When rain squall broke at Miles City KOA, we scrambled to close those 2 hatches—rain was coming right in. (C was startled, wondering what was wrong with rig, when rain began coming down on her; instant weather gauge.)

C suggests: my characters wd use the rig as a kind of day van, eating and drinking in town whenever possible to get themselves some space. Also, it's noticeably more pleasant, more sense of the country, when the systems (such as a/c) don't have to be running; birdsong at dawn, for instance—robins, cooing of doves.

Breeze, even a slight one, thru the rig is really nice.

Front and rear (head and tail) of rig get hotter; Riley could comment abt preferring to be at table in middle, "in the belly of the beast."
train whistle moaning, at Miles City KOA: cd wake Jick, somewhere along High Line or in eastern Mont. The sound goes on longer than you ever expect, rising, slacking off—kind of talking across miles. (The sound is in intervals, too, such as: woooh woooh woooohwooh
closet space wd have to be apportioned, w/ Mriah's photo gear the main factor: she'd stash it above dash (if Bago has comptmt there) or in comptmt above couch, or both. film in the refrig, in way of Riley's beer. 3 door shelves of S'wind refrig, thus: liquids on bottom, film on middle, condiments on top.

wd need to travel light on clothes (just jeans, shirts, hats, boots; avoid'g laundry as much as possible, as well as storage lack).

shower: nobody wd bother with rig's little handheld gizmo if they could get in, say, KOA swimming pool. (Jim Healey, summer he roughnecked in Sidney oilfields, lived in his pickup, used muni swim'g pool as his shower--said he left a ring around the pool each time.)

Riley cd prefer bars and swimming pools as places to dig up info; Mariah wd like more photogenic poss'ties.

they habitually lunch at Hardee's? (constant litter of fast food plastic cups in the rig, around driver's area)

S'wind design has 4 mirrors, in probable attempt to give feel of spaciousness; forever encountering yr reflection, any way you turn, at rear end of rig--Jick thus sees his bearded self constantly.
--bed measurement: 6 handspans wide (approx 54"), 8+ h'spans long (74 or 75"
So, it's just barely long enough for 6-footer; also, it's angled at inside bottom edge to allow passageway to toilet area, so a tall person trying to gain space by sleeping crosswise actually loses space.

Table: 4 h'spans plus 2 thumbs plus ext. 6" wide: approx 38" (actual 39"
2 h'spans plus ext. 6" wide: approx 24" wide (25"

set of dials above refrig inc. thermometer, which read 90 at bedtime 6/23/88, Miles City KOA

People would be perpetually bumping rumps in tight space at rear of rig where bed-toilet-kitchen begin to coincide.

S'wind interior 7'7" wide; 6'4" high, but air conditioner hangs down 21/2" in center of rig; people over 6' are going to bump heads on a/c, lights etc. worst bed is the fold-down over the driver/passenger seats;

abt 12" clearance between body and ceiling, hard to get in and out of.
Bago, 21 June

- on I-94, w.r.g. Colstrip turnoff, I way smooth enough to write @ table behind + driver; mouse-typing, also OK - Riley cd write on laptop machine while fick has Bago on cruise control. Person cd also map on bed of course.

22 June, Miles City KOA: grove campground is in grove of big old cottonwoods beside the Tongue River; trees likely 75' high. But in not particularly strong wind a branch as big around as my thigh and 15' long crashed down at the next row of sites from ours; a widowmaker. In a real storm, the cottonwoods would produce terrific deadfall.

--Bago campground procedure: hook up elec'l cord to get the systems operating on elec'y instead of generator; hook up water hose and turn on c'ground spigot to provide constant water pressure; put slinky waste hose into sewer drain, let out blackwater (toilet) and graywater (dishwater & shower).

--the woman, in retired couples traveling by RV or trailer, is like landing officer on aircraft carrier, directing the driver/husband with arm motions how far to come back etc.
Riley: col do italyst lyrical descpn of road journey, in 2-3 graphs done on his laptop (not nelly a column) as counterpoint to Jack's descpn while driving.

- powder snow in dark timber, seen from Deer Lodge to Butte on Apr '89 drive.
- centerline dots & dashes
formed. Weather within the motorhome, though, was heavy and electrical,

I'd done did what I could to add to the atmosphere just as I'd hoped. I made a little contribution of my own when we whisked through the little town of Clyde Park and I asked if there was a brass plaque on the schoolhouse saying Riley Wright slept here.
Once the sun was up, Mariah and Riley were too, I could tell by the sounds of flushing and toothbrushing within the Bago. That's the trouble with dawn, it doesn't last. Reluctantly I left the quiet morning outside in the campground and climbed back in the motorhome for breakfast with the warring tribes.

And found both of them on their best behavior. Oh, still several
Jick does most of the cooking; Mariah occasionally; and Riley's specialty is something weird. (also dishwashing)
At Sicilian, 5 July '89: 20 Airstreams are parked at freeway pull off, staging area for those who want to travel together.

- Thicker stream of Airstreams, Sicilian to Helena, tugged by every campyall. Bulbs of silver as they approach 24/7 way.

Tioga camper towing small car
March
rugs: Blue Bird Wanderlodge (like medium-sized bus)
- have been go for a cruise (in Billings?) in a Kentucky couple in
site next door, in the small car c sign, Greider Shipping cart

Kampirt Trailer (sugahh)
Dolphin (from Idaho) RV
Airstream trailer - silver; convention in Bayzeman; on tour with like covered
Volkswagen Westfalia Vanagon (pop-up top like junky hole's)
13 Airstreams, shiny, shining like silver wagon train, stopped c shales of 1-90,
35 min. w of Billings, 6/26/89
The Airstreams pulled by Corv'l coupes (after Labor Day, pick out the only retired
couples in Airstreams)
Airstreams pulled by Chevy Suburbans predominately
Jamboree camper touring small Nissan c Trailers at least
Airstreams, 5 July '89, on way from Bayman Conv'n in Bayzeman, traveling in
groups, spaced, evenly, deliberately in departure times.
10 Airstreams @ once in Wolf Creek rest area over
T'an'tm* rnilnfi

COLUMBUS (AP) — Two truckers were killed Tuesday when their semi-trailer loaded with liquid nitrogen rolled off Interstate 90 near Columbus, the Highway Patrol said.

The victims were identified as Jerry H. Mitchell, 55, of Evanston, Wyo., and Jerry L. Rice, 51, of Ogden, Utah.

Patrol Lt. Jack Gaughan said a small amount of vapor leaked from the tanker but did not pose any threat.

Both men were thrown from the cab and it was unknown who was driving, the patrol said.

Mitchell died at the scene and Rice died a short time after the 2 a.m. accident in the Stillwater County Hospital.

Gaugen said chemical and disaster experts were called in to clear the tanker without leaking any more of its contents.
Morning after morning it was saddle and ride.
Jick sees cross-country bicyclists from the Bago, in gaudy Spandex pants—-as if they'd painted their bodies from the waist down.
gopters wing across hi way: ride hits me one:
- tail in air like antena
- pops up to here a la
Montana driving: br. Bago @ 55+ mph, pickups & horse trailers (2 horses in them) pass us.
Honda Gold Wing m'cycle (c'pic in l'Youn)
blocks under Bago (to level it up)
the three of them in the Bago as a household: describe how they divvy chores etc.
Whoever laid out the restroom stops (on Montana freeway), you can tell where he had diarrhea—short distances between in Wolf Creek, huge distances some other areas.
Old age and treachery will overcome youth and skill. (T-shirt)
Spandexterous, skid lids in place,

(if they meet up with a bike brigade, such as the Yaak-Alzada bunch)
bumper stickers: use as Montana detail/commentary? (go thru mall parking lots; watch downtown streets.)

--Cowgirls need love too.

--Help keep Montana green. Shoot a developer.

- A ❤️ BOWLING, where else can you get shoes so cheap?
Instant Asshole—Just Add Alcohol (on ballcap)
my adaptation: Calf ropers do it in front of their horses

- Bego passed by pickup pulling horse trailer, going to rodeo?
- or Kevin Freiw's pickup, in EJ?

- spirit 7. Amen (amen: We're Comin' Back! Count On It!)
freeway: broken white line between lanes, ahead the takes solid, then breaks into solid, then becomes dashes - More code of road

- freeway as allele: bring a gray parent

- April 59-Miracle-Billings drive: snow causing freeway signs. Wet car blot out parts of words on signs: "V high"

- Riley comment on road-sign glyphs: knife and fork, seed etc.
April '89, from Livingston until I turned off @ Big Timber for lunch @ Country Pride, I was followed by a semi- at comfortable precise interval. If I speed up or slowed a few mph, so did he. Tendency to string yourself on distance that way, to want a moving object steadily ahead to travel in tandem c.

- same truck, from Powder River entry, was gallant: seeing a bicyclist ahead, trucker swung over into my lane so as not to hit him a backwash of road spray. (mucky day)
- truck had red mont. truck license
At someplace on freeway was this's a rumble strip, when it makes some smart crack pitch fork. Bago drift it's r. wheels onto shoulder 7. road; 'tires make an arch... arch sound like a barking seal, ironic applause for K-stay.
trucks idling @ rest stop

chrome mug mugs
heard on KBOZ, April '89 Monday-Buttepromo:
a branding party - everybody was bringing their branding irons & soon
brands were all over - some enterprise (probably a bar) was holding
as center'd celebration.
insert some scene of Bago life: into Helena morning?
Riley nukes a thermal cup? (his favorite thermal cup?)
bar soap in Bago's washbasin is always black from newsprint on Riley & Mariah's hands
joggers and doggers, seen in a park somewhere
the Bago gets dinged
RV scenario:

Jick goes to swim in pool at a KOA (as we did in Miles City) and watches kids playing:
—girls are cannonballing and bellyfropping at deep end; 3 or 4 of them, with rules that one watches while the others perform and if they can make her laugh, she has to do inventive or silly dive. Dives inc: I'm-a-tree, standing at pool edge and toppling (maybe with other contestant making a quick chopping motion at ankles); boogying, with index fingers in air; grabbing ankles in classic cannonball.

—boys meanwhile are aggressively playing tag or keepaway or diving for pennies at other end of pool.
RV scenario:

—a wasp or hornet or bee begins flying around while Bago is on the road, as a fly annoyed us driving from Glendive to Miles City. Difficult to swat in moving vehicle.

—have the bee emerge from a/c vent, Jick or whoever is driving sees it come out, thinks "Uh oh, trouble."
Bowmans Corner - 116 mi to Helena, 38 to Lincoln

- up over 1st hill since arises after long, curved (swoop back) road ahead
  (C’s pic begins) Confront S. mtns, after parallelizing them
- fia begins change of country here; he must pass thru
- streets of town look - seems - in - front
- small u turn past a hill n. of new road; rifle glimmers from wagon
- mtns begin to encircle you; arms around you
- sway back mtn moves off to n. (as road swings)
- rocky ridgelines (pic) letting road earn
- sputtering in mtns ahead - wind pass in
- Deberon’s surge of a healthy meal; (pic of butter s. along n.)
- sparse trees on hilltops, branches wide as opened arms
- cattle tracks, white / red
- headwinds in field, after Wolf Cr. cutoff
cross-country off a dead grove of pine W road

- part highway section house road at the up, it gets rougher

- smell of pine forest in car?

- rocky faces of mtns disappear, during climb to pass

- high ridges of timber, you don't go thru, no dramatic mtns to pass

- lupine amidst green bushy road

- mtns look you (midld terrain of pass)

- road in 4wd curves up to summit

- record cold spot (all caps): coldest official temp ever recorded in
  calif & us occurred at a mining camp near here Jan. 20, 1954,
  when temp dropped to 70 degrees below zero

- over summit before you know it
- suddenly in a wide valley of willow & sage (after summit)
  - sage country in near to sick
  - low-timbered ridge as if remaining part of mtns - bizness end
  - we sent out to face plains
- got gages it as favorable sheep country (before Lincoln)
  - sage clumps remain sent of sheep
  - cannon pit filled & sage now, instead of cheatgrass etc.
  - sagebrush flat
- stops at Aspen Grove camped to peer
- sagebrush flat (valley bottom) continued, alt to Lincoln
- Rembrant of Lincoln cave
- Len's part of sign
- after Lincoln, sage flat again but c homes now, until B & K foot canyon
- B & K Canyon wooded, c dark shiny curves of river
- clear cut c Z's of roads, like surgery on ravaged body
- B & K curves as of touching base at sides of valley, going to other
- clear cut in canyon, c Z's of log'g roads
- entry opens and into big basin after B & K Canyon: ranches, hay fields
- mtns to m. as regular as big dark tents (at start from valley floor)
- sudden big cliffs home: B & K again
- occasional white water in
- after Sidney to road, smaller ridges
- B & K: black mamba of a river
Encounters the two can have:

--highway work; flagpersons

--car wreck

--rest areas: truckers, retired couples in RVs

--schoolbusses

--service stations (amt of gas)

--broken windows from sagehen and from Riley locking the keys in.

--horse trailer whipping back & forth ahead of Bago.
A running theme is Riley having to add—pad, really—eventual Bago repairs into the trip's expense account. The sequence:
--dented hood from being butted by buffalo
--hubcap lost after he fixes the flat tire
--cracked windshield where pheasant hits it
--broken rear window after he locks the keys in at surrender site
--something after Leona joins them: R nukes a thermal cup in the microwave? or leaves something hooked up as they pull out of campground site? (snaps, say, the sewer hose; they hear a thwop as Bago begins to pull out; Riley had to duct tape it back together in the meantime)
accumulated stuff fly up from the dashboard as Jick swerves or brakes to try avoid pheasant?

---dashboard can be a frontier of housekeeping: the 3 of them keep the back of the Bago in reasonable order, in self-defense, but the dashboard accumulates.
RV details:

—Miles City KOA, lightning storm abt 10:30 pm June 24 '88; in the heat I was on the couch and C on the made-down table bed, and lying there I could see the lightning's white sheets of light, then count to see how far off the strike was.

—characters could say:

Riley: God's strobes. (remember blues song x abt the Titanic, heard on Noah Adams show: "God moves on the water...one more time.")

Jick: God's autograph (from Joaquin Miller poem:..."the awful autograph of God.")

Mariah: God's flashbulbs ("Smile, Riley. You're on Cosmic Camera.")
bed-making: Jick insists on doing it promptly (with Riley's help?) in Bago; carryover from doing so at home, a mark of regularity in life after Marce's death. --Leona then helps Jick make beds, after she joins the Bago crew?
- Bago hits a dunk
  " " sagehen
I fiddled around at the Bago, making sure (air in tires OK, etc.)
The kitchen air filled with silence, slow and heavy as sagebrush smoke.

WinnieBagg
slap up a meal-cook (see in Misiones I)
(Braugher, 31)
Sage hens are such turkeys.

--possible use: sage hen hits the windshield of the Winnebago.

--Mariah Montana, ornithological expert, said today... (Riley mannerism)
tovers  (leftovers; phrase from Hazel Bonnet)

- Jack piping meal in W'lago; they are for out in E. Montana?
On the gravel road the Winnebago was like a fat person trying to walk a thin line. Pretty approximate. Ordinarily I'd have come to town in the pickup, but Maria wanted to look over the Winnebago bathroom for darkroom possibilities.
get high-centered

Oh, just great. All we needed was to get this rig high-centered, out here 40 miles from nowhere. (Nez Perce memorial?)
The 00 was in disgrace now.

can?

Bago
--"...I in my heart repeated the prayer of Cervantes' simple hero, 'God bless the man who invented sleep.'"

p. 158, Annals of Wyo., v. 5, #4, June 1929

"Pretty good invention, sleep. " (Rickey & Jock sharing bed)
Riley was a wild sleeper.

I do my dreaming awake.
Put 'er down in the glory hole. (shift into lowest gear)

" " " " the granny hole.

" " " " 2" grandpa.
scene of Riley locking keys into Bago. R unlocks Bago, drops keys into sidepocket of coat, changes into heavier coat, leaving coat with keys in Bago on the seat, and carefully locks the door. Jick, unbelievably:

"You didn't just do what I think you did—did you?"

Riley gaped at me, then slapped his sidepocket, then spun and peered in the Bago window at the coat with the keys were actually in. "What, Jesus," he said softly. "Maybe somebody will come along."

"Yeah. In a big saucer full of Bago keys."

--They use turkey basting bag on broken window, appropriate.

R: "It is a turkey basting bag. No use, okay?"

"Main strength of ignorance," I said. "You already proved one. Now let's see how strong you are."

"Surely to Christ"
Frank Zoretich as source on living in RV?
pedal to the metal
iron—slang for tire chains, as in Bill Lang's story of young tow truck drivers trying to pull out his entire n'hood of snowed-in cars: "Give her some iron!" (i.e., race the rear wheels)
bumper sticker:
Answer My Prayer: Steal This Car

possible variation:
Make my day: hit this car, I wanted a new one from you anyway.
Aim High in Life

Sob us In Sight to Further off

Than You Think
parent: you're gonna see stuff that'll make you poop your pants.

(scenery)

such a Walkman in ears
joggers and doggers
Jick cd be reading some book throughout the trip.

--Lewis & Clark journals?

--Wolf Willow?

--Travels with Charlie?
Bagonauts

Bagonauts again, we...

We the Bagonauts...
Blue air of argument trailed behind (the Bago expedition).
Bago, 21 June

Things to check 1 object of configuration in S'wind & Winnebagos:

fold-down bunk above cab seats that Mariah cd take? (Jick & Riley in main bed in rear corner (passenger side) of RV) The couch, along side of coach from behind passenger seat to middle door, cd be scorned as too narrow.

--compare Winnebago floor plan with Southwind diagram on other side of card.

--character we need occasional night in motel to really stretch up; use this when MT go to motel to make love

OTHER RV's in Miles City KOA;

--Westfalia, with pop-up top like Tiova cabover camper
--Monaco, 40', with sumptuous, with spotlight on back (motor home)
--Taurus trailer
--Vanguard motor home
--Cruise Air " "

campground detail, in cool of early morning at Miles City KOA:
little girl swinging barefoot in a swing, all by herself.
make note of bumper stickers.

If you don't like the way I drive this, stay off. Otherwise, ask first!! Too hunt & fish on Private Land.

Single & #1!!

A Clean Car & A Sign Of A Nice Mind

I'm endorsed by Smith & Watson.

I drove for Lobkens.
car with pots of cactus in rear window, mf for heat from sun.
hitchhikers at freeway entrances?
possible bumper sticker, derived from Tannahill Weavers joke:

I ♥ bowling

Where else can you get a pair of shoes for 75¢?
T-shirt mottoes from Steve Duin column, Oregonian NW Mag, 21 Aug. '88:

Dear Auntie Em--
  Hate you.
  Hate Kansas.
  Taking the dog.
    --Dorothy

I may look normal to you but the ugly truth is: I am NOT OF THIS EARTH
U.S. govt vehicles - Fords, Broncos etc. - have distinctive white license plates - call them "whitetails"?

- do interstate trucks (or buses) have enough license plates from different states to make a "fruit salad" like mil. battle ribbons?
Finally I got out the necessary:

"Well, hell, okay then. Sitting in a Winnebago is something I guess I can manage to do. As long as nothing physical or mental is required, I can give this a try."
I did not want the Bago (to wander on gravel road)....
pots of cactus in rear window of car
- Trucks stopped @ top of a pass (e.g. Butte) for drivers to sleep, check tires etc.
  (as at top of Siskiyou, etc.)
in-state (license) plates

Jick cd wonder, when Indian rider on Northern Cheyenne resvtn waves back at the Bago, whether the in-state plates made that more or less likely to happen.
the sound of rain on the Bago, and use of windshield wipers, during August travels
is the Bago window they have to break out at head height?
thinking and driving: add a line for Jick about how things come to mind as you sit and go across the miles?

---use this with the card, maybe in the Bago file, about the Bago's cargo of memory?

The Winnebago (carrying) a cargo of memories (family bkgd haunting Jick).
1 Feb. '89: When Bill Lang was here a few wks ago we reminisced abt Stan Davison, and Bill remembered Stan was always worried about the roads (in winter). So were Fred and Theresa Buckingham (at Lewistown MHS conference), and for that matter so were my folks. In short, native Montanans tend to worry about the roads more, perhaps from memory of bad storms, people in trouble etc., than the younger immigrants do; Those Times is good on this, the terrible sneakiness of weather. Have this as a characteristic for Jick as the centennial trip goes into Nov.? 
Domestic arrangements.