

Dear Ivan & Carol —

Thanks for sending your good news. A fine reception for English Creek is just as it should be! (You almost had a review-winner in PEOPLE by Campbell Geeslin who is LIFE's copy editor. At least CG knows & admires your work. I just wanted him to shout it from the rooftops!) His space got squeezed 'round your pub date.) What next?

Yours truly was practically en route to Africa re "Starvation in the Sahel." The story is on a shelf, but I still hope to go. The flurry just put me behind the eight ball on Xmas preliminaries!

All best to you —

Let this Christmas be Merry
and all the year a Joy

As ever —

Jan

Janet Mason

Graywolf Press



Post Office Box 142
Port Townsend, Washington 98368
(206) 385-1160

December 17, 1984

Dear Ivan Doig,

We've ordered Terence O'Donnell's book, and I'll look forward to reading it. I'm taking a week off to read, later this month, and will add O'Donnell's book to the stack. It is good of you to think of us.....

I'll enclose our most recent catalog (though there's another one in the works), so you can see what we're up to now.

Take care,

Scott Walker

P.S. How wonderful to see rave after rave notice for English Creek! Well-deserved!

P.P.S. David Hartman just called the office. He says to say hello to you. The Imprint thrives.

8 Dec. '84

Dear Vic-- Scheffer

You and Beth truly went beyond any call of duty, in coming out in last night's weather to my booksigning at The Fine Print. This morning I did lay hands on the copy of Sky People I wanted to give you. I don't know anything about Jack Nisbet's work as a field biologist--you'll find in the bio note at the end that he goes down to the Farallon Islands--but he seems to me a gifted writer. He does have a book forthcoming about his Farallons work.

Also, let me try to clarify my last night's opinion of Al Runte of the UW history dept. I didn't mean to discourage you from talking to him; my old UW mentor, Vernon Carstensen, who was Runte's predecessor at the UW, seems to think Al's scholarship is sound enough. But Al has a reputation as being hard to be around--self-centered I suppose is the summary--and I find him that way myself, although he and I are quite amiable and do have lunch together every so often, when I can't get out of it! So, you might just be prepared for the fact that he's not automatically forthcoming. Also, I'm pretty sure he'll be tetchy if you don't know his own work, which seems to center on the thesis in the enclosed "forum" about national parks consisting of economically "worthless lands". I don't get the importance of the issue myself, but Al and his critics go round and round about it. Unfortunately I no longer have the Journal of Forest History material from July 1983 which this forum comments on, but the UW Forest Resources library takes the Journal.

One final thought: at a booksigning in Mt. Vernon a week ago, I met John Miles, who teaches environmental studies at Western Washington U. (He's written the Mountaineers book, Koma Kulshan, about Mt. Baker.) I don't know if he'd be a good source for you, but he did comment to me that he hopes to write a kind of history of the North Cascades.

Good to see you again.
Happy holidays to the Scheffers.

Jean

5 Dec. '84

Dear Comrade Timofiy--

Michael Conant whomps me upside the head for not making English Creek the carbon copy of Sea Runners; even lambasts the blurb on the back, and except for lack of space he'd probably have deplored the paper under the blurb. Larry Rumley launches Lucile McDonald at me, knitting needle extended, and she proclaims that nothing happens in my 339 pages except that somebody says something nasty every other paragraph. No, never for a moment did I doubt, Tim, that you'd come along, third and final of Seattle's Feared Gang of Three, and do a break dance on my literary corpus.

I'm trying frantically to remember Dan Chasan's deportment at those Pacific Search monthlies. Did he ever show sign of a sense of humor? (Yes, he must have, or he could not (a) have put up with those Pac S mystifications or (b) write the saga of WPPSS.) Will he descry the etymological significance of the fact that in English Creek there are five different spellings of sonofabitch? Will he plumb my soliloguy on the digging of an outhouse hole to the depth it deserves? Do they have packhorses on Vashon Island?

So okay, Appelo, run your g-dd--n review. Make my day.

p.s. Couldn't you just tell David English Creek is a new Anglo/Muskhogean restaurant?

Dear Dr. D:

I know what you're thinking: "Dam' Appelo runs forty pix of an acid-casualty-chaser-of-cheerleader-skirts with Donald Duck specs and Swiss cheese for brains, and no dam' graf on belles-lettres' sweetheart of the Rockies, the king of the file card mountain, Thucycdides in dungarees, the main man, me."

Whoa there. Muzzle that Peacemaker. Dr. Dan-Jacques Chasan, mythic coach of the Vashon Argonauts and alum of the storied point-to-pee triumvirate at Pacific Search symposia of old, has greatness in his hand once more. He's cracked your spine, and, proceeding according to his own unfathomable yet inexorable schedule, he is crafting a critical response to your novel, which we're by God going to get past David's anti-book-review policy if it takes defenestration to do it.

Congrats on your Book World huzzah. The only time I ever appeared in the Book World, it was in a misquote by my rushed pal Bruce Brown, who called me "a noted book editor" and had me saying the Northwest was "a literary territory incognito." Incognita to the Washington Post Book Terra, anyway.

Anyway, congrats again. Always knew you were more romantic than Stegner, more virile than Horgan. Keep it up (the good work, I mean).

Yours in Questionable Taste,

Tim Appelo

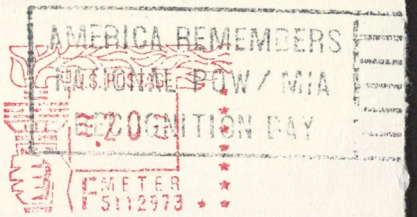
Dr. Tim

TA weekly

PUGET SOUND
ENETAI

1931 Second Avenue Seattle, Washington 98101





Ivan Doig
The Man Who Walked Through Time
17021 10th Ave NW
Seattle WA 98177

SEATTLE, WA

RUSSELL MARTIN
15201 County Road 25 Dolores, Colorado 81323
303-882-4775

12.4.1984

Dear Ivan:

Many thanks for sending along the good review from Pacific Northwest; and I'm too tardy in sending you a note to say thanks for having Atheneum send me a copy of English Creek. I read it in Europe on a recent trip, and reading about the Two Country in the Thirties from that distant perspective was a special treat. The book is pure pleasure, and I would guess that the news that it's the first of three is the one thing that will keep your readers from sadly lamenting the last page. When I was in New York, Gerry Howard (the anthology's editor) was sure hoping Penguin's paperback offer on English Creek would be successful. I think "fucking marvelous" was his quick review.

I've been asked to teach a course at Colorado College (my alma mater) next spring on contemporary western literature, and English Creek is on the reading list.

I hope we can cross paths sometime; best of luck and happy holidays in the meantime.

Russell

Dear Scott--Walker 3 Dec. '84

Yesterday I was signing books at the Oregon Historical Society's annual shindig, along with every other writer in the northern hemisphere. I chatted with Terence O'Donnell, asked him about the track record of his superb book, Garden of the Brave in War. Ticknor & Fields just sold the last of the 6,000 hardbacks, he said. How about the paperback, I asked. None planned, said he.

It'd be a crime against literature if that book went unavailable. I believe it's definitely in the class of books Gray Wolf is handling. See what you think, would you?

best,

10·21·84

University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59812

Ivan -

Many thanks for the graciously inscribed book written by my favorite Author - And what a superb book it is!! Henceforth you shall be known as "the Montana Metaphor" and if you write 1 stanza of verse we will have the Governor name you our poet laureate.

Arrived in Newtown after you had departed for Missoula, but will look forward to seeing you this spring. My best to Carol. —

Hamp.

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TERRY DAVIS, PROP.

~~487-0387~~
484-8308

Dear Ivan,

What an honor to have you send the books. Id make the same request of you, but my copies of Landscapes and Sea Runners are stored. I seem to be always in transition. Maybe this will be the year I find a permanent teaching job and get to settle in a place. When we meet again I will be carrying your work with me.

My best wishes,

Terry

26 Nov. '84

Dear Terry--

I much appreciate the inscription. May the VQ movie version make you big bucks.

Didn't realize you're in the market for a job, or I would have passed this along to you at Pipeline. While in Denver last month I heard, about third-hand, there may be a couple of openings at U. of Denver, which has a Ph.D.-in-fiction program of some kind. I don't know anybody there myself, but Clarus (he's a he) Backes, book review editor of the Denver Post, might know who to contact. If you're interested, I'd say call him, identify yourself and see what he might know, huh? Just a thought.

Happy holidays.

Jean

14 Nov. '84

Dear Terry-- Davis

Only took me the past 3 days, but I did find the Vision Quest bound galley in my sure-fire shelving system. Would much appreciate you signing it, if you wouldn't mind. I was chagrined to hear Viking has been lax about your current book, as I thought they were on the ball with Vision Quest. At least a Viking guy looked me up at the American Library Association convention in Dallas in summer of '79, I guess it was, pressed this bound galley on me and sang a lot of hallelujahs (deserved) about VQ.

Good news about the movie, which could be a dandy.

I wish we'd had more time to talk last Sunday, but am pleased we finally met and got to say something to each other. Those Pipeline affairs are hectic but instructive, in that we get to swap horror stories. The caribou Houghton Mifflin put on Craig's cover, my teensy type in English Creek, your rumbles about Viking--maybe our future is in a tv show, Publishers' Most Outrageous Bloopers.

all the best,

Ivan

Ivan

Tuesday, November 13, 1984 The Seattle Times D 11

Western author Dorothy M. Johnson dies

MISSOULA, Mont. (AP) — Dorothy M. Johnson, a Western taleteller famous for such books as "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," has died at her home in Missoula's West Rattlesnake Valley.

Johnson, who died Sunday, was 78 and had been ill for the past two years.

The author of "The Hanging Tree," "The Bloody Bozeman," "A Man Called Horse" and many other books, short stories and magazine articles had specified that the inscription on her grave marker be: "PAID."

"God and I know what it means, and nobody else needs to know," she said.

"Liberty Valance" and "The Hanging Tree" became Western movie classics.

Johnson was born Dec. 19, 1905, in McGregor, Iowa, and moved to Whitefish, Mont., with her family in 1913.

From 1944 to 1950 she edited a women's magazine in New York and then returned to Whitefish, where she became news editor of a local newspaper.

In 1953, she joined the University of Montana faculty.

She once told students, "One of the perils of going to the university is that you are liable to hear me tell you how to get on a horse three or four times before you graduate. Writers are like students — they sometimes have to learn things they don't even want to know. Getting on a horse was part of the necessary information I had to learn."

WATERGATE AND "CORRECT USAGE"

We may define STANDARD ENGLISH as the language used by most educated people, and in which the affairs of the country are carried on. According to this definition, the Watergate Hearings should display examples of Standard English. Is STANDARD ENGLISH also CORRECT English?

A few of the following statements would be acceptable to the most severe "purists." Others would not. If <u>you</u> accept the statement as <u>correct usage</u>, write <u>YES</u>; if not, write <u>No</u> in the space provided.

1. "The President called Dick Moore and I over." ..... _____

2. "I still stand four-square behind the statement that this was the most outstanding, most dedicated, and most able group of people with whom I have ever been associated and with whom I ever hope to be associated." H. R. Haldeman ..... _____

3. "I did not have those kinds of suspictions." -L. Patrick Gray ..... _____

4. "Do you know who she was in contact with?" - Wm. Shure..... _____

5. "Here's a human bein' that made a mistake..... Him and I have a very strong relationship." - Richard Kleindienst ..... _____

6. "I told him that if he was smart he'd do just like I do." - Henry Peterson ..... _____

7. "It looked to me like he would take the shock." - John Ehrlichman.. _____

8. "Who did you talk to on June 17th?" - Senator Baker ..... _____

9. "The President invited my wife and I to the reception." Senator Baker. . _____

10. "It had to do with we being brought up to date." John Mitchell..... _____

11. "They're not here just to hear you and I talk." - Senator Weicker

12. "Neither Mr. Haldeman nor I were criminally involved," John Ehrlichman . _____

13. "He brought in another man whom I found out was Liddy." Gen. Cushman _____

14. "No one else was responsible for that decision except myself." - Richard Kleindienst ... _____

15. "I remember him telling me about it." - L. Patrick Gray ..... _____

16. "Who had he handled assignments for in the White House?" Sen. Montoye _____

17. "The sense of the conversation between the three of us follows." John Ehrlichman ..... _____

18. "John, I don't know who you're talking about." - Henry Peterson..... _____

19. "I think you're a human like we all are." - Senator Gurney ..... _____

20. "He said he had talked to he and Mr. Haldeman." - Herbert Kalmback ... _____

21. "We interrogated persons whom he thought might have some information." - Ambassador Helms ..... _____

22. "I refer to Mr. ___ who I think is a much better lawyer than I. - Richard Kleindienst..... _____

Missoula, Mt.
November 12, 1984

Dear Ivan,

It was good to hear from you. I'm glad you remembered our bargain (your more than generous) and I really look forward to English Creek in an autographed edition.

Even your letter sounds pressed. I can't imagine that the "Whizzed" weekend must have been as you spoke to the History Conference, bought books at the UC Bookstore and visited with friends. Be sure and include us on your Spring trip!

I would like to continue with the Blackfeet — interesting stories, biographies, experiences around the theme of a scrapbook including pasted-in photographs and commentary done in white ink against a black page. I would enjoy jawing about the Two Med Country

Best wishes,

Bill Farr

Thanks again for your generous offer.

Dear Bill--

The book came, and looks just as good in our living room as it did in Jim and Lois's.

I truly do look forward to going through it with some leisure. Every glimpse I've had so far says it's a helluva job of work. And I see by your letter that like all us hopeless word-drunks, you're already thinking ahead to the next bender. The scrapbook idea sounds a good one, though do be careful with white print on black; I have some trouble reading stuff like that myself, and I'm catching some complaints even about the type size in Eng Crk. Maybe it's generational weakening of eyes or maybe people think they deserve legibility because of the cost of books these days, but for whatever reason they want to be able to actually read the damn things. Anyway, the book idea itself sounds super, and I'll be glad to talk if you'd like. We really do have hopes of a week of visiting in Missoula during Carol's spring break, particularly if we can dislodge Bevis from his house then.

All is well here. Except for getting whacked in the Seattle papers and the Missoulian--sounds like those who know me best have caught on to me, huh?--the reviews of English Creek have been great, along the lines of the pair I'm enclosing. We're also selling some copies.

Looking forward to seeing you in spring if not before. Winter well.

Ivan

4 Nov. '84

Dear Bill-- Farr

Didn't get a chance to see anybody but the Rattlesnake Creek gang when I whizzed through Missoula last weekend. But I did take a look at your Blackfeet book at Jim and Lois's, and I thought it was wonderful. (So do Jim and Lois, not so incidentally.) I think we once talked about swapping signed books. Have you got one around to sign up to Carol and me? I'll send you both an Inside This House of Sky and an English Creek--the latter in thanks for your advice on the Two Medicine country--in exchange.

Things are thriving. Full-page ad for English Creek in the NY Times Book Review today, and a review in the Washington Post comparing it to Robert Louis Stevenson and Kidnapped, of all unlikely bonuses--plus the enclosed, which was the first national review the book got. So far, so goddamn good.

We hope to come to Missoula for spring break, last week in March. Will give you a bad time if we do; give us a call if you pass through here.

best,

John Wideman

4 Nov. '84

The day the Denver gang took over the NY TIMES BOOK REVIEW--
Janet on p. 13
me on p. 5
and thee on p. 1

A thousand thousand hurrahs, John. You've just played and won in the Madison Square Garden of book reviews.

Hwan

3 Nov. '84

Dear Kip--

Many thanks for the signed poster. It's truly an inspired piece of work. I first read about it in a short Associated Press story in the New York Times, then saw a small b-&-w reproduction in a Seattle paper called The Weekly; sorry, but I don't know the date of either appearance.

I appreciated your loan of the slides, and am sending them back in this padded packaging of my book. I'm afraid I don't know any advice to offer, except that a trip to New York to meet publishing house art directors in person might be beneficial. (Your Liberty poster might--should--be a good introduction there.) And on marketing, I would think your friend will have to find a distributor to get his books into the stores; the best opportunity likely would be a regional meeting of booksellers--Barbara Theroux at the UM book store would know of these, which are held a time or two a year. I think you'd find a list of wholesale book distributors either in Literary Market Place or American Book Trade Directory (which also has info on every book store in America).

Good luck with it all, and may your work prosper.

regards

Ivan Doig

Kjj Querton
1429 Main #7
Missoula, Mont. 59801

Dear Ivan

It would be of intrest to me to find out where you saw the poster. In Seattle perhaps? I confess I don't read books as often as I should. I am an avid fan of potery and enjoy writting as a hobby, fever though I can't spell as well as a professional must. I got as in creative writting because my teacher had compassion on me!

I am excited about reading your book, Mary Sue was estatic you were coming, and was very impressed with your writting skill.

For fun I've written a pome on the other side.

Enjoy the poster

Kjj Querton

P.S. (over)
I also illustrate book covers I have included some slides of my work If you know of some use for my work please contact me.

I have a friend who had me illustrate 4 of his books, he is having trouble marketing as he has published his own book could you give me some useful information?

Please return the slides in self addressed envelope Thanks.

Seeing Syrup

Glazed in Rose
Night is Scene
Resting purple
On the green

Sweet and Soft
Violet May
Iris eyes blink
Ashen gray

Yet -
Yellow Orchids
Flutter by.
Petals Hanging
Threw the Sky
Siping Rainbows
Fresh baked Dyes)

Songs of Colors
Harmonize
Springing
Waterfalling
Surprise
Humming birds
Prick paradise

Rising Fingers
Giant Spires,
Silouetts in
Hallows Rise
Spreading Splendor
Through

Threw the eyes

Atmospheric Saints
arise to Mist our
Is
Haunt our souls with
Mysteries.
Drawing Night with
pencils & Graphite

Taste the Music in the sky
Never mind the Reason Why.
If my Heart
Could no longer eat
Cotton Candy Sunset Treats
Ashen gray my Iris
Too Turning my heart
Razor Blue.

Crystalin frost Etched
Art has Frozen
In joy -
ment
Outside Pains
Smart

Only where agony's
Jolted away:
Ecstacys Prison
Poisons happy days

See Oh Heart and Hear my
Fear
Digest the Symphony
Played by Tears

Fear you will never
Eat its Truth
Though you waist not Unspent Youth

Fear you will
Not know it's Joy -
Afraid to Live
But your Peace
Distroy

Rest ... Oh Heart
And Brave aching
Darts

Bloody A Rose,
Knights
Royal Blue
Wounds will Heal
If Hope
Stabs
Threw!

9/20/84

Dear Ivan Doig:

Thank you very much for your kind words about Natural Acts. Especially gratifying to me because I'm a large fan of This House of Sky--and not purely because I've spent some long afternoons in the bars of White Sulfur Springs.

I'm grateful for your time and your generosity.

Sincerely,

David Quammen

Quammen
307 S. 8th Ave.
Bozeman, Mt.
59715



Frederic Baraga, Michigan, 1835

Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue N.W.
Seattle, WA.
98177

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Nick Lyons Books

Ivan Doig
17021 10th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98177

August 16, 1984

Dear Ivan Doig:

David Quammen gave me your name as someone who might be interested in seeing the manuscript of his new book NATURAL ACTS, scheduled for publication this spring.

We are extremely proud to be publishing this extraordinary collection of essays; trade interest in it has been early and marked.

If you can find the time to read it, and if you like it well enough to give us a brief comment we can use on the jacket or in our promotion, we would be very pleased.

Thank you for your time, and we hope you enjoy this remarkable new voice as much as we have.

Sincerely,

Margot Page

Margot Page
Publicity Director

31 West 21 Street New York, New York 10011 212·620·9580

27 Aug. '84

Dear Margot Page--

Some words for David Quammen:

David Quammen confesses himself "not a scientist. I merely <u>follow</u> science." But science as tracked by him has a real hunter on its trail. Be it tropical mosquito or Montana dinosaur, Quamman seeks and looks and asks and ponders until he can whoop out an exultant "Gotcha!"

regards,

Ivan Doig



News from Nick Lyons Books

DAVID QUAMMEN is a science/outdoor writer and a novelist. He wrote TO WALK THE LINE (Knopf, 1970; Pocketbooks, 1972) while he was an undergraduate at Yale. THE ZOLTA CONFIGURATION was published by Doubleday in 1983. A novella, URIAH'S LETTER (Wampeter Press), is forthcoming.

He was a Rhodes Scholar in 1970, has a graduate degree in literature from Oxford University, and has been a Montana river guide.

He writes the column "Natural Acts" for Outside Magazine, which recently won the National Magazine Award for "General Excellence," and he regularly writes for The New York Times Book Review.

His work has also appeared in Smithsonian, Audubon, Rolling Stone, Science '81, Christian Science Monitor, TriQuarterly and others.

31 West 21 Street New York, New York 10011 212·620·9580

5 June '84

Dear Claire--

It's a hectic time of year, but I have managed to get to Sky People, finally. Feel free to use the following comment:

> In Jack Nisbet, an unsung corner of the West has found its troubador. His north-of-Spokane tales of disgusted dairymen and hopeful miners, of white ravens and dancing grouse, ring with the spirit of the legend of the Sky People--"the time when men and animals lived together as equals."
>
> --Ivan Doig, author of _This House of Sky_ and _English Creek_

I'd appreciate having Jack sign me a copy of the book when it comes out. Best of luck with it.

regards

QuartziteBooks

May 23, 1984

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 - 10th Avenue N. W.
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mr. Doig,

We are publishing a small book of natural history essays -- short stories, really -- by Jack Nisbet of Chewelah, Washington.

We think it is excellent. Although we are a small outfit, we are devoting our resources to ensure Sky People is produced properly and read thoroughly. We believe it will introduce readers to a corner of the Northwest they have never known.

Your observations about Sky People would be very much appreciated. Your own work has influenced Nisbet and the book will interest many of the same readers who enjoyed This House of Sky.

With your permission, we would like to use your remarks to tell people about Sky People. We apologize for sending the book in manuscript form and without invitation but, as ever, we are working under looming deadlines.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Claire Beckham

Claire Beckham
Publisher

P.O. Box 1931 · 306 Pine Street Plaza · Mount Vernon, WA 98273 · (206) 336-3345

QuartziteBooks

NEWS RELEASE

July 1, 1984

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

For more information: Claire Beckham
Kris Molesworth

The natural history and intriguing characters of northeastern Washington State are the subjects of Sky People, a small volume of stories by Jack Nisbet to be published this month by Quartzite Books.

A native of North Carolina, Nisbet visited Stevens County in 1970, carrying an English Literature degree from Stanford University. Fascinated by the natural environment of this secret area, he stayed.

Nisbet writes a natural history column for The Chewelah Independent and spends part of each year as a field biologist on the Farallon Island National Wildlife Refuge off the coast of California. Yet, the many hours working as a local stone mason, car-

(MORE...)

P.O. Box 1931 · 306 Pine Street Plaza · Mount Vernon, WA 98273 · (206) 336-3345

penter and farm hand provided him with the rich understanding of rural people so evident in Sky People.

Sky People is a friendly, perceptive look at the people, plants and animals of Stevens County and how they evolve together. It follows the arrival of two college boys to a new land, their education in the arts of water-witching, dairy farming and local Indian legends. As Nisbet's understanding of his new environment grows, so does the reader's.

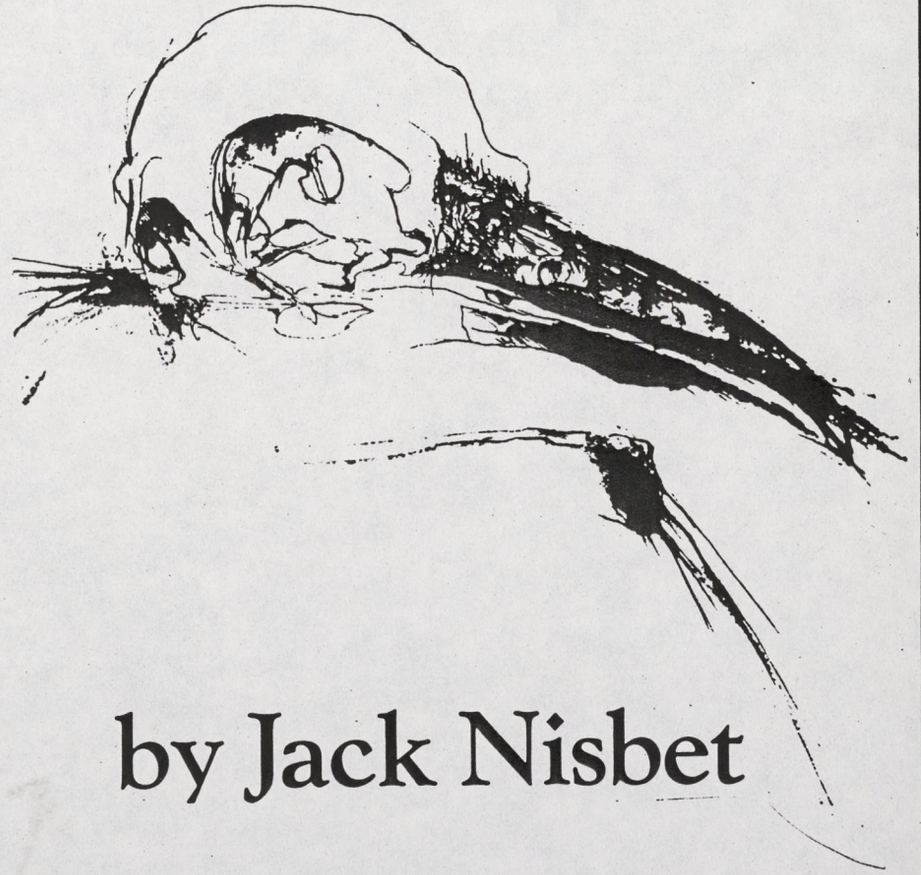
Sky People was produced in the Northwest by Quartzite Books, a publishing company in Mount Vernon. The book is $5.95 and can be found at local bookstores or by writing Quartzite Books, P.O. Box 1931, Mount Vernon, WA 98273.

* * *

Cover - rough dummy.

SKY PEOPLE

by Jack Nisbet



SKY PEOPLE

by Jack Nisbet

***

As Fritz swaggered through the wide range of elements he was used to locating—well water, broken pipelines, oil, hardrock minerals—my attention began to wander. He abruptly broke his line of travel, marched straight up to me and thrust his stainless steel rods against my chest. I played with them for a moment, trying to get the feel, before he spun me around by my shoulders and directed me over the black plastic hose that ran to our s[illegible] two rods, held loose in my hands, definitely [illegible]

"Everybody's got [illegible] more than others," Fritz remarked, as I st[illegible] those two silly rods waving back and forth in front [illegible]ce. "You can feel the pull, but it's a matter of [illegible]ing the feel. Now I'm practiced at it, and like to look [illegible] different things. Has anybody ever tried witching that pile of quartz up there for a little gold?"

Book summary here

5 May '84

Dear David Long--

Ed Harkness recently passed along the signed copy of HOME FIRES--thanks very much. It's been hectic here recently--a death in my wife's family--but the spring has improved with the presence of Jim Welch, teaching at the U. of Washington. Kittredge will be through town in about a month on his way to a gig in Alaska; his book of stories, WE ARE NOT IN THIS TOGETHER, already has gotten a lot of ink out here, though I've yet to see an actual copy.

I hope your work is going well. Maybe our paths will cross one of these days, in Kalispell or elsewhere.

best, and my appreciation

may 9, 1984

Dear Ivan Doig,

Your letter came as a splendid surprise; This House of Sky holds a place of honor on my Montana bookshelf. You're correct that Coyote is set on a reservation very much based on Belknap, and Coyote Ground is indeed the Missouri Breaks south of the Little Rockies. My 1975 collection, Buffalo and other stories, is also set in that area. Since it has been out of print for a year now — but is supposed to be back in print next fall — I've taken the liberty of sending you a copy separately. I'm at work now on a non-Indian novel set in Havre; not sure I'll ever move too far from that area.

Thanks,

Wayne Ude

11 May '84

Dear Wayne--

Thanks for the prompt answer. I'll try to tuck Buffalo... at least into the footnote on that Ft. Belknap mention.

I'll definitely look forward to the Havre novel. I spent some time out there, talking to guys who'd weathered the Depression and the grasshoppers and so on, hoping to use a bit of it in my 1930's novel coming out this fall; but it just didn't fit, too far east of my home area (Dupuyer). I do remember that everybody I talked to had a story, or maybe 15 or 20.

best wishes,

5 May '84

Dear Mr. Ude--

Please excuse a letter from out of the blue, but I'd like to check with you a reference I want to make to BECOMING COYOTE. I've been asked to write an article for Montana: The Magazine of Western History, and in it I'd like to mention as "prime literary territory" the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, the setting for Jim Welch's two novels and yours. Am I entirely right to include BECOMING COYOTE as a book that takes its setting from the Fort Belknap, and on south past the Little Rockies to the Missouri-brinking country? All I'm trying for here is a geographical fix, rather than literary analysis; if your novel is kin to Jim's in Fort Belknap lineage, what a productive literary site that reservation has been.

I should tell you I liked BECOMING COYOTE a lot, after being touted onto it by Dean Vaupel at Bearpaw Books in Havre. I'll look forward to any future work of yours.

thanks, and best wishes

Box 2808
Sitka, Alaska 99835
April 23, 1984

Dear Ivan:

I want to thank you once again for the stimulating and inciteful conversation here in Sitka, and for the really fine Hugo book you sent up afterward. Both contacts have been important for me and have helped to set directions in my thinking. I've also enjoyed thoroughly my readings of your work, and found a very special affinity for WINTER BROTHERS. This relates both to the fine writing and to the life experiences of Swan. It all brought vivid feelings for the country along that shore, where I spent a lot of time poking into nooks and surfing cold waves during the time I lived in Seattle.

The enclosed is my latest book, an exploration of nature as it is understood by the Koyukon Athapaskan Indians of interior Alaska. Although this book's approach doesn't represent the direction I want to go, its content is very close and important to me. I am moving increasingly toward explorations of the human relationship to nature, but I want to do it more through my own thoughts and experiences than those of people I've worked with as an anthropologist.

Right now I'm working on a series of television programs (PBS) entitled MAKE PRAYERS TO THE RAVEN, based on the material in this book. It will take over a year to film (finishing next fall), so the programs won't come out through the magic tube for quite a while. We hope to end up with four half-hour programs for regional audiences, and if all goes well an hour one for national broadcast. It is an exciting but extremely stressful project, enough to make you look fondly upon the quiet and independence of writing at your desk, sneaking off alone to explore the forest and coast.

I'm also editing and writing a chapter for a book about interior Alaska, commissioned for Alaska's 25th anniversary of statehood. The writers are all from scientific disciplines -- geology, paleontology, archaeology, culture history, and ethnology. My goal is to make it an edited volume with some semblence of continuity and flow. The editing is really fun, a good exercize for me and hopefully an education in writing for non-academics by a bunch of dedicated academics (I'll have to insist on being excluded from that classification, though).

Although these projects are interesting and even fun, I must admit I've taken them on for the simple purpose of making a living. This gets frustrating after while and I'm plotting seriously to find a way to write for myself rather than as a hired hand. Easier said than done when there's a need to buy groceries and fishhooks.

Taking a lead from your comments about the practice of writing, and from your good example in WINTER BROTHERS, I've made it a point to write every day. My principal means right now is a journal that I hope will be the basis for a book in a year or two. It's a great exercise and it gives me the perfect excuse to go out after new experiences along this wild coast.

My skiff forays go farther all the time into stretches of the coast I haven't seen and places few people ever see because their boats are too large. Because I surf here I've always got my wetsuit on board and can swim ashore through the breakers. This lets me walk on shoreline that doesn't often have footprints on it. The skiff is pretty well fixed for survival stuff, so I'm less likely to lose my life than the boat -- a risk well worth the rewards.

Well anyway, the journal gets fed by these experiences. But most of all it makes a chance to wander around with words and do things you wouldn't dare try if anybody else was going to see it. I feel a bit strange admitting that I'm writing a "journal" because this seems to have become a new fad for exploring your own soul. Not at all what I've got in mind, and if I did I'd be tempted to quit because someone's telling everyone they should write journals now, like an intellectual's hoola hoop craze.

Next thing I hope to do is find some sort of fellowship so that I can really have a chance to expand my education and move in a different direction with writing. I've got a couple in mind, but hope especially to find something that's set up to help academics interested in doing work outside their discipline. I've realized that I'll never be able to develop if I'm always doing womeone else's work, so perhaps this is the best chance. I'd especially like to do three things: (1) do self-directed study in approaches to writing about nature and the human relationship to it, (2) learn and learn and learn about writing, and (3) combine this learning with my own experiences as an anthropologist and a crawler through wilderness into some writing -- a book or two.

We shall see. The "journal" writing has crystalized my thinking on the need to find a way, and this seems a good way. Failing that I believe I will opt for some serious poverty (I've already achieved some fairly respectable poverty and grown sccustomed to it),and try to run the same course. My academic friends raise their eyebrows and say that's a looney idea, but I don't think so. Better that than living in someone else's prison while life rolls on by.

Sitka remains as beautiful as ever and the more I see of it the more I find here to love. We've had a great spring -- flowers in our yard by the last week of January and everything pretty green right now. Awoke to a real shock this morning, though. Heavy snow was falling, the daffodils were layed over with the stuff, and the whole place was a mess of slush. It's melting now at noon but the northwest wind still blows whitecaps all over the bay and there's a good chill in the air. No wonder the alders hold back their leaves for so long.

This letter is going on and on, but I've meant to write it for months and have wanted to send the book as a little expression of thanks. It would be great to see you again if you should come back this way, and I know that many people here would love the chance to hear another reading. Everyone here agreed that the reading last year was just excellent, and of course your books are widely read and passed around here in Sitka.

I trust you are at work on new things and look forward to reading the next. Meanwhile, very best regards to you and many thanks for the inspiration you have provided.

Best always,

Dick Nelson

1 May '84

Dear Dick--
I much appreciate getting the book. I've only managed to glance at it, because Carol teaches a course every spring in cultural communication and she glommed it.

Sounds as if you're keeping busy, and I'm glad to hear about your journal diligence; more power to your arm, as the Irish say. Be not embarrassed by the soulful aspect of writing a journal. Thoreau wasn't.

All is well here, though April was a helluva busy month. But I've come out of it awaiting the galley proofs for my Montana novel, English Creek. Am looking ahead to publication of that, this fall, and part of the summer in Scotland as a start toward the next novel. May get to Alaska in '85; I hope our paths cross again.

best,

THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE
RIVER CAMPUS STATION
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14627

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

April 7, 1984

Dear Ivan —

Many thanks for your card of 27 March. Bart Queary and his mates at COCC are good folks, running a school that is admirably well-suited to the area, and contributing greatly to its cultural awakening — but in fourth Ply don't do very well in the "fast lanes" of administrative traffic, and I honestly don't know whether Ply will ever manage to bring off "Landfall". I think that if given a decent four-year run it would "grow up" handsomely, and I hope Bart does find the foundation money he needs and that you and I can converge there, staff-wise, if we haven't done so elsewhere. (In a letter last winter, I proposed tongue-in-cheek that Bart invite the Bhagwan to sponsor the Workshop — happily he didn't pick up on the suggestion. What a subject for a Nathanael West-style satirical novel: have you visited the Rajneesh ashram? I have a personal invitation from Ma Prem Sheela herself to come over for a satsang, but I balk at orange clothing ...)

I'm delighted to hear about the completion of English Creek, and my unwitting contribution of "rubberings" to it. Imagine an entire novel, set up as a series of "rubberings"! I look forward to the book, not for this piece of shared lore, of course, but for more of what you are doing so well!

Best regards,

Jerry Ramsey

— Sorry I didn't get to hear your Oregon Hist. Soc. talk. Amy (Jon and I will be in Modoc in July; if you're in the territory then, please come by.

Gene Autry
5858 SUNSET BOULEVARD · P. O. BOX 710 · LOS ANGELES · CALIFORNIA 90078

February 22, 1984

Dear Mr. Doig:

I have your recent letter regarding the town of Ringling, Montana.

In response to your query about whether I ever worked as a telegrapher at the Ringling depot, the answer is no I did not, nor did I ever work for the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. All of my service as a railroad telegrapher was spent in Oklahoma.

I do appreciate your interest in this matter, and I hope this information is helpful.

Most sincerely,

Gene Autry

Gene Autry

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue N.W.
Seattle, WA. 98177

8 Feb. 1984

Dear Mr. Autry--

I wonder if you can spare a minute to help me with a point of history. I grew up in a Montana railroad town named Ringling, and have written about it in a 1978 book titled This House of Sky. Ringling is such a tiny, obscure place--although the songwriter Jimmy Buffutt did pass through and write a tune called "Ringling, Ringling" a fewyyears ago--that I'm the only one who keeps track of its history. Recently I met a retired railroad telegrapher from Roundup, Montana, who insisted to me that you spent a brief stint of your career as a telegrapher at Ringling. The line through there was the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. Does the fellow have his facts right, and if you ever did work at the Ringling depot, when would it have been?

Sorry to bother you, but the only way I know to separate myth from fact is to ask the guy who knows.

best regards

Ivan Doig



[North Adams, Washington, D.C.]

25 January '84

DEAR CAROL + IVAN

SORRY – I'M LATE
IN WRITING TO THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION.

HOPE ALL IS
WELL, THANKS FOR
LISTENING

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

– Noel

Watercolor by John Low 1983 ©
MINNESOTA PUBLIC RADIO, INC.
St. Paul, Minnesota



handwritten answer, 11 Oct. 184

WHICH IS ALL TO SAY THAT YOU HAVE IN ME ONE DEVOTED READER. THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR GIFT OF PUTTING WORDS TOGETHER WELL.

SINCERELY,

Carol J. Blinn

CAROL J. BLINN

AN AFTERTHOUGHT - IF YOU EVER HAVE A DESIRE TO SEE A SMALL PIECE OF YOURS IN A SPECIAL HAND DONE EDITION, YOU MIGHT LET ME KNOW. I AM A COMMERCIAL AS WELL AS PRIVATE PRESS PUBLISHER.

13 SEPTEMBER 1984

DEAR IVAN DOIG,

I HAVE A MONTANA-BORN FRIEND WHO RETURNED THERE THIS SUMMER FOR A REUNION WITH SCHOOL FRIENDS. WHILE VISITING, SOMEONE PRESSED YOUR *THIS HOUSE OF SKY* INTO HER HANDS. SHE ALMOST ABSORBED IT THROUGH HER PORES, SO HOMESICK IS SHE FOR THE COUNTRY AND SO ANGRY THAT HER WORK KEEPS HER IN MASSACHUSETTS. KNOWING MY LOVE OF GOOD BOOKS, SHE PASSED YOUR BOOK ON TO ME AND I HAVE BEEN FILLED WITH YOUR LIFE AND SKY AND WORDS EVER SINCE. MY LOCAL BOOKSELLER THIS MORNING LOANED ME HIS READING COPY OF *ENGLISH CREEK*. IT IS ALL I CALL DO TO WORK THROUGH THE DAY AND GET HOME TO BEGIN THE FIRST PAGES. I HAVE ORDERED *THE SEA RUNNERS* AND *WINTER BROTHERS* AS WELL.

VIRGINIA SPIDERWORT

Tradescantia virginiana

The generic name honors John Tradescant, a botanist and gardener to Charles I of England. The Spiderwort family includes herbs with flowers that bloom for one day only. Printed & hand watercolored by Carol J. Blinn.

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23 October 1984

Dear Ivan Doig,

Your letter was much appreciated. I want you to know that I am doing my part to convince your Atheneum editor that your books only need time here - This House of Sky will be given to all my friends for Christmas. Atheneum must stop thinking of your work as regional and should start promoting it as fine literature.

Yet it all takes time. This business of trying to be known - I shall do what I can in my small corner of New England.

With all good wishes,

Carol Bly

VIRGINIA SPIDERWORT

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The generic name honors John Tradescant, a botanist and gardener to Charles I of England. The Spiderwort family includes herbs with flowers that bloom for one day only. Printed & hand watercolored by Carol J. Blinn.

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