Ans
6-22-94

January 10, 1994

Dear Mr. Doig;

I'm sure you meet so many people you won't remember me. I'm the lady who told you at the book signing in Bozeman that you are next to Wallace Stegner on my scale of greats. After reading "Heart Earth" I'm reevaluating my scale! It was beautifully and sensitively written. I had the same feeling of being there I had with Stegner's "Wolf Willow."

Several things in your book caught my interest. The Prescott name is a familiar one since they also had a big sheep ranch in the Sweetgrass Hills north of Chester where I was raised. Allen Prescott at one time lived on that ranch and later his brother, Harold, lived there for many years. Your description of their actions was like those of his brother and wife.

And, while I'm not a celebrity chaser, my main reason for writing is your ancestry which includes Zettels. Being a genealogist that really piqued my interest since my mother was a Zettel, born and raised in Ontario, Canada. From my research, I know a lot about Zettels--where they came from in Germany and a little of what they were like. If your Zettels are related at all to mine, it must be from a lateral line several generations back. If you are interested in genealogy I will send you some of the information I have.

Again, thanks for a wonderful book!

Sincerely,

Helen Aaberg

Helen A. Aaberg
2200 W. Dickerson #77
Bozeman, MT 59715-6840

No copy received as of 6-22-94

Michael Kernan
2901 Boston St. #501
Baltimore, MD 21224
(410) 563-2734

Jan. 25, 1994

Dear Ivan,

I hear that my editor at St. Martin's Press is sending you an advance copy of my novel THE LOST DIARIES OF FRANS HALS, my first. I had told her how much I liked your work, which also uses the past in original ways. You might recollect that I interviewed you for the Washington Post a few years ago. I have since escaped.

Hope you enjoy it.

Best,
Mike

19 August '94

Dear Tom Lyon--

I know it smarts to be rapped in a review. That's always the regret, on a personal basis; but professionally, if we're going to be free to have our say in what we write, then the price of that intellectual right has to be the willingness to put up with others having their say about us.

Ours is a disagreement over what to present to the readers of the Oxford History of the American West, Tom, nothing more, nothing less. Clyde's preface aims the book at "readers who wish to be well informed, but not overwhelmed," and the Los Angeles Times similarly asked me to do a review with a "general" readership in mind. I would think those would be readers who had encountered some of the contemporary writers I listed, and so I was genuinely dismayed not find any of them there. My point simply was that if an essay in the most current definitive history of the West doesn't begin updating our literature to include works such as A River Runs through It (published in 1976) or Love Medicine (1984) or Bless Me, Ultima (1972), when does that updating ever begin? The Oxford History isn't likely to be revised for, what, another ten or twelve years? The passage of two or three decades before writers of such calibre even begin to be evaluated seems to me to evoke that old Morison-Commager situation, where Growth of the American Republic kept telling students Faulkner had no significance, on into the edition the year after his Nobel Prize. That was the "tradition" (which my editors trimmed out) I was saying I did not want to see happen.

As to the notion that my critical angle was motivated by pique at being left out--Tom, I am in your essay. Favorably, it seemed to me. My chiding paragraph in the LA Times review was not about Tom Lyon or Ivan Doig, it was about the proportions of a 33-page essay that didn't devote even a page or two to a significant generation of literary artists. Maybe we'll revisit this, around the turn of the century or whenever the Oxford History reaches revision, and see whether you say, hey, I wish I'd taken a look there at so-and-so, or I say, hey, the work of so-and-so on my list hasn't held up. Be that as it may, I hope enough time has passed since May for you to begin feeling the consolation that your side of this issue will stand in print as long as the Oxford History exists, while mine pretty quickly vanished when the newspaper got tossed out that same Sunday night.

sincerely,

655 Canyon Road
Logan, UT 84321
August 16,1994

Dear Ivan Doig,

I have your review of The Oxford History of the American West (Los Angeles Times), and I write now to protest your slamming of my chapter, "The Literary West."

My not dealing with contemporary writing in any detail apparently provided a tempting angle for the review: the other chapters all reflect the latest, revised understanding of the West, but Lyon's resolutely sticks with the past. But the very point of my chapter is that the modern, non-mythical understanding of the West began early indeed, literarily speaking. A reading of the chapter, as opposed perhaps to a survey of the names included in it, would show that environmental sensitivity, sympathy for ethnic diversity, and other deservedly honored modern viewpoints all had strong exponents in western writing, early on. The "post-frontier mind" that I discuss in Muir, Austin, Waters, and others is, in fact, something we of present society have yet to achieve on any wide basis.

I would have thought that Ivan Doig, of all people, would be open to an honoring of previous generations of writers. The author of Winter Brothers, to name just one work, seemed to recognize the living connections between eras. Perhaps, and this is an ungenerous thought I admit, you were simply pissed off or hurt someway at not being mentioned in my essay. If that is true, I might mention that I have indeed read your books and think you an excellent and important writer. I reviewed This House of Sky for the Western Historical Quarterly, praising it emphatically. As a member of the Western Literature Association's Executive Council, I voted for your being given the Distinguished Achievement Award, and as a reader for the Evans Biography Award, I voted for Heart Earth as the top choice. I mention all this as a kind of bona fides for my awareness of Ivan Doig. Several of the writers you list in your review are personal friends, and I regard their writing very highly. But I do not believe that the modern literary understanding of the West began only recently. If the editors of the Oxford History had granted more space, I would have treated contemporary writers, including yourself, with pleasure.

Sincerely,

Tom Lyon



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

October 6, 1994

Dear Ivan Doig,

I'm delighted that Milkweed Editions will be publishing Annick Smith's *Homestead* in the spring of 1995. I think that Annick's writing captures her vibrant personality and her passion for living deeply as well as fully. As you know, Annick has spent her life exploring various frontiers, learning their histories, and capturing the feel of places that most of us will never get to. Reading this book has been satisfying vicarious adventuring for an armchair traveler like myself, and an opportunity to listen to a wise, distinctive voice.

I appreciate your willingness to read *Homestead* and, if you are enthusiastic, to write a comment for the back cover. Your words would, I know, help us do our utmost to give Annick's book the launch it deserves. We would very much appreciate hearing from you by November 3, not quite a month from today, or of course sooner if that is possible.

With thanks and good wishes,

Emilie Buchwald
Publisher / Editor

Enclosed: manuscript of *Homestead*, fall 1994 catalog, return envelope

430 First Avenue North, Suite 400 / Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401–1743 / (612) 332-3192 / FAX (612) 332-6248

26 Oct. '94

Emilie--

In haste (I'm just back from a booktour) and with a cold (I'm just back from a booktour...), some words for Annick Smith if needed:

"Homestead is both keenly personal and resonant of that timeless story, westcoming. It instantly belong on the same honored bookshelf with Elinore Pruitt Stewart's Letters of a Woman Homesteader."

--Ivan Doig, author of Dancing at the Rascal Fair

regards,

Ivan

VALERIE MINER

3417 Holmes Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408

5 October, 1994

Dear Joan, Sorry we missed each other in Minneapolis - that we were on stage at the same time, in fact. My reading was scheduled before I left town in July! I was startled to discover this coincidence when I got back in Sept. Anyway, I hope you had a good time. I'm in South Bend down for a gig at U of Notre Dame. Next: New York!

Kingston, Ontario. I trust all's well with you & your book. It was a pleasure to meet you, to hear your reading & to knock heads together at Fishtrap this summer. I thought it was a splendid conference. Hope our paths (& not our bookstore dates) cross again soon. In case you get back to the Twin Cities, my phone number is 612-825-7440. Meanwhile, Happy days,

Valerie

9/27/94

Tim Sandlin
Box 1974
Jackson, Wyo. 83001
307-733-1212

Dear Ivan Doig,

My name is Tim Sandlin and I met you after a reading you gave in the Teton County Library. I'd just finished a novel and I was in that lobotomized stage you get in the first few days after you finish, and you read from *Maria Montana,* which, sitting in the crowd, I realized was the third book of a trilogy centered around the fictional town of Gros Ventre. Afterwards, I came up and introduced myself and said "Isn't it amazing, I'm writing a trilogy set in the fictional town of GroVont," and you said my town wouldn't even be the second, that someone before both of us had done the same thing.

Today, I completed the third book of the trilogy — *The Social Blunder* — which brings me to the purpose of this letter. I'd like to write a short introduction to this one and I'd like to put in a little of the history of the real GroVont that existed years ago fairly close to where I located the one I made up, and I'd like to put in about how this is the third fictional trilogy set in Gros Ventre, but I forgot the name of the person who wrote the first one.

I was hoping you could send me the name and perhaps a little about the books, if you know anything. If a letter is a hassle, you could call the number up at the top of the letter and leave it on my answering machine or call collect to 307-733-4617 and tell me in person.

By the way, my editor at Henry Holt, Marian Wood, thinks you are pretty much the best writer around. She's remarkably loyal to her writers, so much so that I've never heard her say anything good about a writer she doesn't handle except you and William Goldman. So, if you are ever in the market for a new editor, I would suggest her. She's very good — I think. She's the only editor I've ever had, so I have nothing to compare her to, but everyone tells me she's very good. And Holt is real supportive of books written by Westerners.

Good luck in your work. I hope you make it back through Jackson again soon.

Sincerely,

Tim Sandlin

7 Oct. '94

Tim, hi--

Sorry for the delay in responding, but I've been on the bookstore trail to the Midwest and beyond. The other "Gros Ventre" author was H.L. Davis, who won a Pulitzer for Honey in the Horn; I don't know, though, that he used his town (based I think on The Dalles, Oregon) in a trilogy; you might take a look at H.L. Davis: Collected Essays and Short Stories, U. of Idaho Press, p. 11+, for info. While I'm at this, in case it's any ammo for your piece, the pronunciation for my fictional town is "GROVE-on," in line with the Montana habit of tongue which pronounces Choteau "SHOW-toe" and Wibaux "WEE-boe." And my Gros Ventre is based only into the actual geography of Dupuyer, Montana, not the community of Dupuyer, which is only about 75 people; I put together my GV from slides of period buildings from all over northern Montana and a few from Wallace, Idaho, and flat-out made up places such as the Medicine Lodge saloon.

Good luck with the piece and the trilogy finale. Yup, you're right, Marian Wood is the real goods.

best,

Dear Richard--White

Thought you might get a kick out of this retrospective on your Phil Donahue mode. All credit and/or blame is due Carol.

All is well here, although it'll be weller when I get off the Midwestern bookstore trail at the end of next week. Bill Cronon and I are to have a beer together next Tuesday--thanks for electronically midwifing that.

See you sometime this fall, we hope. Best to Bev.

from ALVIN M. JOSEPHY, Jr.

Box 62
Joseph, Oregon 97846
August 19, 1994

Dear Ivan –

What a lovely package arrived from you yesterday – just the thing! In a couple of weeks, Betty and I would have been scouring the pages of the Books on Tape catalogue for this year's candidate for listening en route back to Connecticut, and this does it! Thank you so much from both of us for your kindness and thoughtfulness. It is just great to have it.

We so enjoyed our visit with you and Carol, and hope we'll see one another before too long.

Meanwhile, keep at that computer (or typewriter!). We're waiting eagerly for your next one.

With all the best – as ever,

Alvin Josephy

Regnts 16-75

Teresa Jordan • Star Route Box 87 • Deeth, Nevada • 89823

June 1, 1994

Dear Ivan

Vintage has just released the paperback edition of Riding the White Horse Home. I am going to be reading from it at Elliott Bay Books at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, July 1. I'll also sneak in a few poems from my new anthology, Graining the Mare: The Poetry of Ranchwomen, just released by Gibbs Smith.

It would be wonderful to see you. Please come -- and bring friends!

Yours,

Teresa

Any chance we might be able to have dinner beforehand? It would be wonderful to visit —

(702) 752-3250



We've moved again
(but FINALLY to a permanent address!)

Hal Cannon and Teresa Jordan
Star Route Box 87
Deeth, NV 89823
(702) 752-3250

Please let's not lose touch . . .

Ivan – Heart Earth is wonderful, wonderful. Thank you for bringing it into the world –

T.



Ivan Doig
17021 10th Ave
Seattle, WA 98177



Denali National Park

Wildlife

THE WILLOW PTARMIGAN HAS FEATHERS THAT CHANGE COLORS TO FIT THE SEASON, ALLOWING IT TO BLEND IN WITH THE SNOW OF WINTER, AND THE BROWNS OF SPRING, SUMMER AND FALL.
PHOTOGRAPHER: TOM BRAKEFIELD



SEATTLE WA
3/25/94
1994

Ivan & Carol,

Thanks for the nice call. All is going well. We received printing already, and may be going to third. Nice article in Newsweek about the book this week. Congrats on your award for Heart Earth! Take care

Eric

#13888

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Printed in Japan

Ivan & Carol Doig

17021 10th Ave N.W.

Seattle, Wa.

98177

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BOSTON BRANCH
Country
Kettchen
BAKERY
C.W.

Jan 1, 1994

Dear Mr. Doig,

Your book arrived ala Angells and it is a delight. We don't ordinarily read much, but this was a special treat. We are "books on tape" folks. I paint and listen while Liz sews and listens. Again "thank you" for giving the world your special talent and making us all a little happier.

Happy Trails,

Chuck + Liz Wysocki ♡

Lilac Point Glen. 1979
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