

Dear Bob Hass--Just a line of thanks for (a) signing up the copy of Sun Under Wood for me when you were in Seattle, (b) the grace of your remarks when you were honchoing us at the ABA, and most of all (c), the greathearted job you've done as Poet Laureate. You've made better wordslingers of us all. Best wishes back in civvie life next spring.



Department of English
The University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59812-1013
(406) 243-5231
FAX: (406) 243-4076
Email: enkos@selway.umt.edu

September 23, 1996

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

Dear Ivan:

One of the high points of the academic year at The University of Montana is the awarding during spring commencement of honorary doctorate degrees to alumni and Montanans who have achieved significant recognition in their fields or professions. Annually a small handful of men and women receive such recognition. And the recognition often goes, I've observed, to alumni who have distinguished themselves in legal or scientific professions and have often made home elsewhere.

Missoula is home to outstanding writers whose achievements, stature and contributions to literature and culture are surely the equal of other professionals. At the top of that list, I think, stands **James Welch**, who was, incidentally, awarded a B.A. from this institution in 1965. I write to ask you to help me nominate Jim for an honorary doctorate.

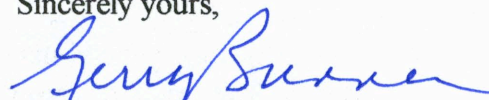
I've spoken with Jim. Though surprised and, I sensed, humbled by the idea, he has given me his okay to proceed. And he gave me your name as someone who knows him, his work and his achievements well enough to write a letter of recommendation in support of his nomination.

I should mention that the nomination procedures stipulate confidentiality, seeking to "protect the privacy of nominees" "at every step of the nomination and approval process." I confess that I don't know quite how to honor "complete confidentiality," if that means it was taboo for me to have violated his privacy by sounding him out on being nominated and by asking him for a list of referees. Nevertheless, I mention the importance of confidentiality so as to keep the matter as private as possible.

More important, I need to alert you to the calendar. Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Robert L. Kindrick, who will review the nominations, has asked that the nomination, complete with a candidate's resume and five letters of support, reach his office by October 11. So if you can send your letter to me, I'll happily assemble the package of nominating materials and hand deliver it by that date. If you can't get a letter by that date, please send it as soon as you can anyway, for the ratification process will continue through the college dean, the English department, the university president, the faculty senate and, finally the Montana Board of Regents; consequently, there'll be time to add letters that come in after the 11 October deadline.

Thank you for your consideration and help.

Sincerely yours,



Gerry Brenner, Professor

email: <koala2@selway.umt.edu>

Phone numbers: home: 406-549-4541 office: 406-243-4462

29 Sept. '96

Robert L. Kindrick
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
University of Montana
Missoula, Montana

Dear Provost Kindrick:

I've been asked to say something in support of James Welch in the nomination process for an honorary doctorate, and it's a role I do gladly. I assume that the university community well knows that Jim has a distinguished national and international reputation as a writer; in Montana terms, he has given his homeland not just several fine books but a towering one in Fools Crow, which I routinely cite as the greatest leap into the soul of our people that any of us of our writing generation is apt to achieve. I never meant a cover comment on a book more than when I said of Fools Crow that it's "a rare literary glory." In artistic terms, then, Jim is unquestionably due for honor. He's also been a consummate citizen, giving of his time--a writer's most precious commodity--for long service on the state parole board, for the committee work which produced the landmark anthology The Last Best Place, and for appearances in schools and other good causes.

So, that's the long of why I tout James Welch, and the short is that he is one of the Treasure State's living treasures.

sincerely,

Sheila S. Bender

128 North 82nd St. Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 783-6888 (206) 784-7023 Fax
SBender1@AOL.com

November 8, 1996

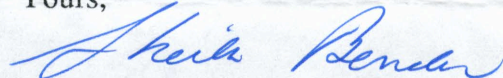
Dear Ivan,

I want to thank you again for your talks and readings and dinner company at Seattle University October 24. The students and professors are still talking about how much they enjoyed your visit and how much they learned. My students have continued to tell me that your statements about handling rejection, about verb searches, and about your commitment to writing and the language were very meaningful to them.

For many, your visit was among their very first opportunities to hear writers address them on the topic of creative, rather than academic, writing. They are quite inspired.

And, for all of us, talking with Carol was a great pleasure. The two of you charmed the faculty and students, and I am so pleased you were able to be this year's first Writers Reading Series speaker.

Yours,


Sheila Bender

14 Oct. '96

Dear Tom--

Nifty to hear from you. On the other hand, what a remarkably bum source of advice this household is on your Moritz Thomsen quest. We know of The Farm on the River of Emeralds, but as one of those gonna-get-around-to-reading-that-someday classics, ~~and~~ beyond that, nil. Reaching out into general territory, here are a scant few suggestions that come to mind:

--Nicholas O'Connell, who did a good anthology of interviews with Northwest writers (but alas, not your man MT), is working on some kind of history of NW literature for his Ph.D., I think. Nick may have come across something on MT; I only have Nick's phone number, not his address--(206)284-7121.

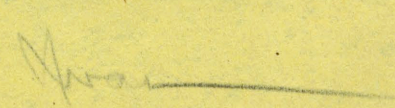
--The University of Washington, Manuscripts & University Archives, Box 352900, Seattle WA 98195-2900, has had a good system of cross-referencing; i.e., they might be able to tell you not only if they have any Thomsen family stuff (maybe you've already checked?) but where Moritz shows up in anybody else's papers.

--On the U. of Washington Press for any eventual dealings you may have on your festschrift, let me volunteer a bit of observation if you won't say that I said it. It's a press that ultimately does very nice work, but it is also known as slower than the wrath of God, in getting things into print. I've had friends who spent 2-4 years waiting for their stuff to emerge into print.

Funding, aiya-yi, funding. The local awards I'm aware of are ruthlessly that, local--King County Arts Grants or some such. I suppose you could try the Washington Commission for the Humanities, although as I savvy it the state commissions are set up to help projects within each state--i.e., the Arizona Humanities folks would be the ones for you? I dunno, but I think I'd check with AZ first, find out what the guidelines are. Beyond that, Tom, I just don't know of any funding chances hereabouts; the NEA is the place that came through for me.

Now that I've muddied the waters sufficiently for you...yup, congrats on marriage and step-hood, which you'd told us about. Sounds good. All is OK with us, Carol teaching tooth and nail, my own self starting the next novel for Simon & Schuster (aiming for '99 publication). I trust Andre Bernard got in touch with you about his festschrift (getting to be an epidemic, isn't it) for Lee Goerner? As to what you're up to, I really like the sound of your Jose Marti book. Go, go.

In haste if not in wisdom...may see you in Tucson again some winter lunchtime. Best from us both.



TOM MILLER
P.O. Box 50842
Tucson, Arizona
85703

October 7, 1996

Ivan/Carol Doig
Seattle, Wash.

Hi, gang --

Time for my biennial letter to you guys. This time instead of me giving casual comments about this quadrant of the country, I'm asking advice from yours. Are either of you familiar with the name Moritz Thomsen (1915-1991)? He was the author of four books, Living Poor, The Farm on the River of Emeralds, The Saddest Pleasure, and My Two Wars. (The first of those was -- and still is -- Univ. of Washington Press, the second, Houghton Mifflin and Vintage, the third, Graywolf, and the last -- just three months ago -- Steerforth.) At the age of 48, in the early 1960s, he joined the Peace Corps, was sent to a miserable coastal village in Ecuador, and except for a brief return after his PC years, never came back. His books are brilliant memoirs -- at the risk of the vulnerability that goes with literary absolutes I'd say he was one of the great American expat writers of the 20th century.

I got to know him when I lived in Ecuador fifteen years ago to research The Panama Hat Trail. Paul Theroux came to know him when doing likewise for The Old Patagonia Express. (Moritz is about the only person PT liked between Texas and Borges, but that's quite another matter.) Moritz suggested to us that we correspond -- PT & I -- which we did, especially after M died of a combination of cholera and emphysema in a one room flat in downtown Guayaquil. We have come up with the idea of a tribute book -- a festschrift, if you will (a word I've known now for four or five weeks) -- that will contain the following: essays and biographical profiles about Moritz (including by PT and me, some who knew him at various stages of his life, agent, editor, anecdotes from acquaintances, etc.), excerpts from his writing, and most of all, letters he wrote. He wrote voluminously, but more to the point, letters that were amazingly literary, lyrical, intimate, vicious, sometimes nasty, full of almost insufferable integrity, cantankerous, funny, and pure.

Why am I telling you this? Moritz was raised in Seattle, his family going back a century or so, was a filthy rich robber baron family well-known there for a generation or so. (It was from this obscene wealth that M ran away to South America, and it was his lifelong battle with his father in Seattle that comprises one of the two wars in the most recent book.) I'm told that in (some) Northwestern literary circles he is considered a writer if not of, at least from the region.

We haven't yet shopped it around to publishers because we'd rather have it half-whipped in shape before looking for a publishing house. It's going to be a hard enough sell as an odd literary effort about an unknown writer as is. But as its primary editor, I have started to consider alternative sources of funds. ("Primary editor" is being polite -- PT agreed to contribute an essay

and lend his name to it, tha's all -- but I can't complain, since I know my task from the gitgo.) The funding is needed at my end to underwrite the editorial process (now taking up a fair amount of time and out-of-pocket expenses) and expenses for my own essay (which will require a trip to Ecuador). And this got me to thinking: Since M was from Seattle, perhaps I should apply to some agency in your city or state that awards grants for literary projects -- a city arts council, or state arts commission, or library, or even a humanities council, or a private foundation. It may be that something there considers out-of-state projects that dwell on city or state literature.

What do you think? Do any funding sources, public or private, occur to you? Is there a person who knows literary grantsmanship in Seattle to whom you could refer me? (I would probably be asking for \$5K-\$7.5K, modest as these things go, I'm told.) I should add that although Univ. of Washington Press was -- and still is -- a publisher of his, we're not yet prepared to approach publishers, as I said before, and I don't know that U Wash. would be one we'd seek out right away.

To the social page: At the moment, and through October 26, I'm at a writers/artists colony in the Adirondacks. It does wonders for my productivity -- I was here once before, and completed more final draft writing and serious writing in four weeks than I normally do in four months. And the surroundings -- such a wonderful change of pace!

My major project these days is not Moritz Thomsen, although at times it may seem so, but rather, a departure from previous efforts: a book on José Martí's life in New York City, 1880-1895. It was a remarkable era in New York, and for the country as a whole, Martí was a key figure in the literary bohemian underground (he rented a flat in Chelsea), and he spent virtually all of his time either writing -- essays about his new adopted country, manifestos against Spanish rule in Cuba, poetry, fiction, etc. -- and organizing for Cuban independence -- raising funds, forming a political party, gathering a junta, shipping arms, speechmaking, etc. No one's ever written on this era of Martí, and although he's a virtual unknown in the U.S., he's probably second only to Simón Bolívar as a Pan American figure in all countries south of Oklahoma. (Also, I'm looking for a paperback imprint to bring out a collection of 25 years worth of pieces about the Southwest and Latin America as well as The Panama Hat Trail, which just drifted out of print.)

And youzeguys? This is quite the fine season in the Northwest, as I recall from my month on Widby Island five years ago. I hope things are going smoothly in your quarter of the country. My other social news - after being happily and actively unmarried for 45 years I married a woman I met in Havana a few years ago. Now all of a sudden I have two stepsons, early twenties, both graduates of the University of Havana, both of whom still live there. So we visit at least once a year, and still live in a p.o. box in Tucson (above address). The wedding, you'll be happy to know, took place at the Cochise County Courthouse in Bisbee. A healthy change of pace for me. (And now the Rolodex section of the letter: new home phone: 520-321-4231; new office phone: 520-325-3344; fax: 520-325-3388; in the Adirondacks for three more weeks: c/o Blue Mountain Center, rte. 28, Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812.)

Hope to hear from you soon -- all advice well received and greatly appreciated.

dragos
CM

RUTH KIRK

P.O. BOX 5610

LACEY, WASHINGTON 98503-0377

98509-5610
360
(206) 438-3569

WRITING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

August 2, 1996

Hi Joan -

Would you be willing to sign this ~~book~~ book and mail it on to Ethel Annear? She's a neat lady: N. Dakota born, just east of the Little Missouri Badlands; ranch wife living on T. Roosevelt's old Elkhorn Ranch property; one-room school house teacher. Now she's widowed and living alone on some of her father's property near Killdeer (where the P.O. is still in a soddy, I think; it least it was when we lived in the Badlands with the NPS).

The book will bring her real pleasure, as it has so many, and your signature will make it an absolute treasure.

Hope all is well with you & Carol and that you're now having respite from your book tours. I'm working with Austin Post on a re-issue of the book Gleason Lee. Also with Dick Daugherty on a re-issue of Exploring Washington's Past.

May our paths cross one of these days.

Warm regards -

Ruth

6 Aug. 196

Dear Ruth--

Copy of sky duly signed and sent to your N. Dak. friend.

We're starting to catch our breath around here after the booktour, but only starting. Maybe paths can be crossed this fall. NW Bookfest? Gov's Writers Awards ceremony? Of all things, I'm emceeding the latter; who knows, you might yet see me introducing the acts in a nightclub near Lacey.

all best,

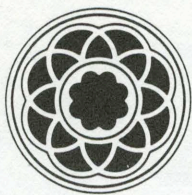


A M E R I C A N
B O O K S E L L E R S
A S S O C I A T I O N

EST. 1900

Thanks for
helping to make
our annual
convention a
success.

B. Loh



Department of English

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

Tacoma, Washington 98447

(206) 535-7210

FAX NO. (206) 535-8320

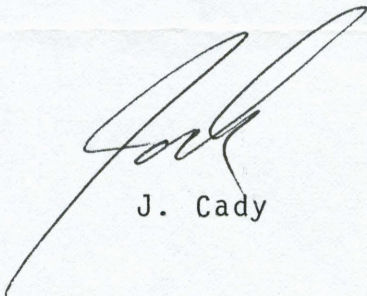
Dear Ivan,

I hope this finds you well and working; and I also hope it finds you in a jolly mood. I'd like to invite you to read at PLU this fall. You could have any Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday evening in October. Our readings go from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The dollars are modest, not because we're cheap, but because we're broke. We could pay three hundred dollars, and will be glad to do it. There's an additional advantage: we have a great bookstore. The man who runs it will order your books and have them for sale after the reading. Then, it's his custom to keep a healthy supply of the books in stock. He doesn't return them all.

I enclose an envelope for your reply, because I know too well what an annoyance it is to be interrupted in the middle of work. Please think it over carefully. You are especially welcome here.

Other matters. All goes well. The Carols are, I'm sure, working too hard because they always do. I'm butt-deep in a piece of nonfiction that's already over three hundred pages and climbing; and I still have the fond hope of getting a draft before the first of September. Never did nonfiction before. It is kind of fun, but requires a pickiness about facts - 'you mean you can't just make up the facts?'. And, I've got a short story book coming from Arkham house this fall. Life is good, and I do hope all goes as well for you.



J. Cady

17 July '96

Dear Jack--

Damn, wish we could have done the reading last spring when I was on the bookstore trail for BUCKING THE SUN. (Mes culpa, not youa culpa; the publisher's publicity people had asked me about doing anything in Tacoma, and on the basis of some wan bookstore experiences there in the past I nixed trying anything there, without tumbling to PLU and you.) I'm already committed to more stuff in October (mostly the NW Bookfest and the Gov's Awards ceremony) and the rest of the fall than I should be, and took a vow to close down the calendar so I can get going on the next book. So, I guess no go this time around, but maybe another time?

Hey, nonfiction in your prose style ought to be a dandy result. Memoir, is this? Will look forward to it, whatever 'tis. All is well with us except I need about four more hours in the day to get back to the writing. Best to the Carol there, from the one here and mineself.

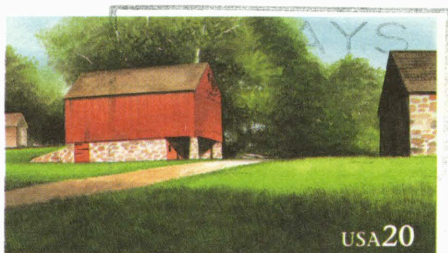
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Dear Mr. Doig,

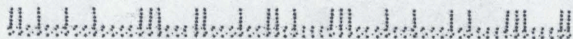
Thank you for having your
Publisher send Bucking the Sun
to me. I shall read it & read
it, I'm sure, with pleasure.
Good luck with it.

Jack Benson

Jackson J. Benson
9428 Haley Lane
La Mesa, CA 91941-6803



IVAN DOIG
17021 - 10th NW
Seattle, WA
20197



20 March '96

Dear Jean--
Walkinshaw

Terrific piece of work on the Columbia. Where you found those people we don't know, but the mosaic of characters and voices was just great. Walkinshaw at her most producer-y. All congrats.

affection,

BRANDT MORGAN
941 Calle Mejia #210
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505/988-7673

January 20, 1995

Dear Ivan,

Your address and phone number have been sitting in my Rolodex file unused for more than ten years. This year I figured there must be a good reason I haven't tossed the card, in spite of time and distance. And there is. In fact, there are several reasons: (1) I still have fond memories of my interview with you for the *Seattle Weekly* some 15 years ago. I can even remember you saying with satisfaction, as you looked out the window just beyond the table where we were sitting, "There's quite a flow of birds through here." (2) I have even fonder memories of the few times we got together in the U District to compare notes and talk shop. And (3) I just can't bring myself to throw away the address and phone number of a famous writer.

So greetings, Ivan, to you and Carol in the Great Northwest — from me and my five-year-old boy, Travis, in the Land of Enchantment! So much has happened since our paths diverged. Perhaps some day we'll have occasion to catch up over a cup of coffee at a U-District cafe. Meantime, much joy to you both.

Best Wishes,

Brandt

18 March '96

Dear Brandt--

Duly but a bit belatedly noted that you're still ensconced in Santa Fe: Carol and I were through there a couple of times this winter. So, the cup of coffee might be a meal at Tomasito's sometime.

All is well here, except for the mountain of winter's mail I'm trying to tame. New novel coming out in May, mucho traveling and booksigning until mid-summer.

Sounds as if you're making the life you want, there in the City Different (as an Albuquerque friend says it, "Saunta Fey", but Carol and I like the place and of course are riveted by the saga of the Jaramillos). Congrats to you. That's a goodlooking son. Seriously do hope we can cross paths down there sometime; you're on file too.

Richard Manning

11000 Sleeman Gulch
Lolo, Montana 59847
406-273-6102 voice/fax
manning@paw.montana.com
February 8, 1996

Ivan Doig
17021 10th Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan,

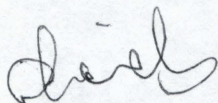
You probably haven't heard reports back from *Winter Brothers* for awhile, but then I don't know why not. A good book lives on and on and is bound to double back on one through the years.

Maybe it affected me so much because the setup was just right. I found out about it while reading Robert Pyle's *Wintergreen*, an encounter arranged because I've agreed to write an essay for Ecotrust about Willapa Bay. This at a time when writing is something of a sore subject for me. My third book issued in the fall and did not make me instantly rich and famous as I just knew it would. I'm banging out more and more words trying to get my few points across at a time when fewer and fewer seem willing to read them. Our species is overrunning its habitat at a pace visible even here in Montana. And it is winter here, so naturally I spend the afternoons moping and brooding as to whether I want to go on.

Then I spent a couple of days following you following Swan through other winters. The going on suddenly seemed a forgone conclusion. I finished the book on the afternoon of my 45th birthday, and now it seems to sit right there as pivotal as the pin on a hinge.

I read too many books and too seldom say I'm better off for having read another, but this time I am. And if not me, maybe Willapa, where I'll spend the rest of this winter trying to make sense of a place. In the end, I guess, nice work if you can get it.

Sincerely,



18 March '96

Dear Dick--

Am just home from a winter away, and trying to tame the mail. I greatly appreciated your missive about Winter Bros, and like the prospect of your writing about Willapa--Carol and I drove past there lately and it's still muckily magical. As to how we writers can keep on keeping on, I dunno, except to just keep doing the words. Stegner somehow hung on to optimism; I think I'm less so than he was, but I find a lot of refuge in the work of the writing. Language is a kind of territory to me, and so that's at least a thing I can do something about. The world, though; tough, and I guess it always will be. Anyway, good fortune with the Willapa project, an intrinsically fine thing.

best,