September 16, 2007

Dear Evan,

At Borders last week, I was thrilled to find This House of Sky on the Great Biographies display, and your fiction highlighted on its own separate display. I have always believed that you are one of our great writers. I am so excited to see your beautiful work receiving this attention. Congratulations.

The last I knew, you were on your book tour. I hope you are back at home and settled into your own rhythms.

Without a Trace continues to hum along. I was not prepared for such a public eye on this book. I have my feet under me now, but am trying to figure out how to reclaim my writing life. The university offered me a new position as memoirist in residence, teaching just one course a semester - delicious.

I feel so honored, Evan, that you were
willing to attach your fine name to my book. Thank you, again.

With warm wishes,

Meredith
neither rhyme nor riesling
I must say I'm jealous that you have grown more (and more colorful) hair and can't eat enough to gain weight. While my hair loss seems to have plateaued, my waist line has not. I signed up at our gym for a weight-loss program over the holidays. For every pound I lose, $1 goes to charity. No pumpkin pie for me!

Finally, I must compliment you on your letterhead design. Very, um, cool.

We certainly missed seeing you, and can only hope that we'll get back that way one of these days. Meanwhile, if you find yourselves on the "West" Coast, we'd be very pleased to host a visit here.

All best, John

Nov. 1, 2007

Dear Evan and Carol-

So good to get your note, and we're very happy to hear the good news about your improved health. That was an ordeal - not just the chemo and transplant but also the six preceding years of wondering and worrying.

Thank you very much for the pictures! I don't think I have seen them before, but I do remember that evening. It's a delight to see you both laughing. Your book jacket photo is too sober for my taste (and memory).

Yes, I'm still in harness at slow Jones and, as you suspected, curious to see what Rupert will wrought. (Or is wrought only past tense?) Our unit, slow Jones Benders, is doing very well, so maybe we'll leave us alone.

Love and good wishes to you both, Marilyn
Neither Rhyme nor Riesling
WINE HUMOR BY NICK WADLEY

After training as a painter, Nick Wadley studied art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art at the University of London. For many years he headed the Department of Art History at London’s Chelsea School of Art. As a scholar, Wadley is best known for his work on the art of nineteenth-century France. He also writes about modern and contemporary art, and he has curated exhibitions and lectured in Europe, the United States, and Japan.

None of this anticipates Wadley’s talents for funny, fluid drawings and excruciating puns. His unique brand of cultured humor—featured in the publications and exhibitions of Vinopolis, a wine center in London, as well as in national newspapers and magazines—will delight anyone with a taste for paronomasia and Pinot Noir.

Pomegranate

CATALOG NO. 644
Oct. 12, 2007

Dear Ivan & Carol,

It was a pleasure meeting you both in Boulder. Wish I could have been there for the evening event. Here is a copy of my novel, The Last Canyon, about John Wesley Powell's 1869 trip down the Green & Colorado Rivers & through the Grand Canyon. Hope you enjoy!

Jack Verna
Pomegranate

Grant Wood (American, 1891–1942)

*Spring Turning*, 1936

Oil on Masonite panel, 18¾ x 40¼ in.

Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse

© Estate of Nan Wood Graham/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

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12 March '08

Dear Vince Reardon--

Sorry to say, I evidently want to be remembered by books I haven't yet written, and so I'm currently turning down everything that isn't connected to my daily word output, even when it's an achingly noble project such as yours. Time fidgets, as someone must have said. Here's wishing you good luck with all the other interviewees and the book.

Sincerely,
March 3, 2008

Mr. Ivan Doig
17277 15th Avenue, NW
Shoreline, WA 98177-3846

Dear Mr. Doig:

I'm working on a book called, "Legacy: How 50 Distinguished Americans Wish to Be Remembered," and I'm writing to see you -- the author of "This House of Sky," one of my favorite books -- would consider being one of the individuals I highlight. I would need about 20-30 minutes of your time by phone in the next month or two or three.

My questions are: 1) If you had the opportunity to write your obituary, how would you want to be remembered and why? 2) Did you have an important mentor? 3) Did you have a critical turning point, or crucial decision that set you on the path to the person you have become? 4) Do you have a regret or something you would do differently? 5) What historical or contemporary figure has left an enduring legacy? 6) Do you have one piece of advice to offer my readers on how to live a meaningful life, one worthy of remembrance?

Attached is a list of the individuals I've interviewed so far for the book and an article I wrote on the topic of "What is your legacy?" in the October issue of San Diego Magazine.

Kind regards,

Vince Reardon
Contributors to Legacy:
How 50 Distinguished Americans Wish to Be Remembered
[As of March 2, 2008]

Stacy Allison, first American woman to summit Mt. Everest
Robert Ballard, explorer and discoverer of the Titanic and the Bismarck
Benjamin Barber, author, "Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens"
William Bolcom, composer, recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Medal of Arts, three Grammy Awards
Greg Boyle, S.J., founder and director of Homeboy Industries, job placement program for former gang members
Dave Brubeck, pianist, composer, and jazz legend
Ken Burns, director and producer of documentary films, including "The Civil War," "Jazz," and "The War"
Daniel Callahan, co-founder, Hastings Center for Bioethics
Joan Chittister, O.S.B., a lecturer on issues relating to women, the poor, and peace and justice
Jack Coleman, recipient of Haverford College and champion of “blue-collar sabbaticals”
Jerry Coleman, recipient of Ford Frick Award of the National Baseball Hall of Fame for broadcasting excellence
Marva Collins, African-American educator and recipient of the National Humanities Medal
Charles Colson, former Nixon Admin. general counsel; current prison reformer and founder of Prison Ministries
Dalton Conley, professor of the Social Sciences and Chair, Department of Sociology, New York University
Richard Cook, whistleblower in the investigation of the space shuttle Challenger disaster
Leslie P. Cruise, Jr., recipient of Bronze Star and Purple Heart, parachuted into Normandy on D-Day
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, renowned psychologist and architect of the concept of “flow”
Thomas Doyle, priest who exposed child sexual abuse among clergy of Catholic Church in 1984
Ira Glasser, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) from 1978 to 2001
Jim Hall, guitarist, composer, and jazz legend
Frances Hesselbein, chairman of Peter Drucker Foundation and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom
Leroy Hood, biologist and recipient of the Lemelson-MIT Prize, the Kyoto Prize, and the Lasker Award
George Houser, co-founder of CORE; co-led first interracial Freedom Ride through the South in 1947
Dolores Huerta, co-founder with Cesar Chavez the United Farm Workers of America, AFL/CIO
Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, chairman of the American Red Cross
Mari-Luci Jaramillo, the only Mexican-American to have served as a U.S. Ambassador (Honduras)
Gene Kranz, former NASA flight director of Gemini and Apollo space programs
Maxine Kumin, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and author
David Lim, Port Authority officer who survived the collapse of Twin Tower No. 2 on Sept. 11, 2001
Patricia Limerick, iconoclastic historian of the American West at the University of Colorado at Boulder
Harry Markowitz, Nobel Laureate in Economics, 1990
Martin E. Marty, professor emeritus of the History of Christianity at the University of Chicago Divinity School
John McKnight, professor of Human Development and Social Policy, Northwestern University
John McWhorter, African-American linguist, senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, author of "Winning the Race"
Walter Munk, oceanographer and recipient of the National Medal of Science and the Kyoto Prize
Carol North, M.D., terrorism and post-traumatic stress disorder expert; Director, Trauma & Disaster, Dallas VAMC
Ellen Ochoa, former Space Shuttle astronaut; current NASA director of flight crew operations
Sharon Olds, Award-winning poet; professor at New York University
Arnold Palmer, golf legend
Ralph Rubio, Mexican-American chairman of Rubio’s Restaurants, a NASDAQ-listed public company
Dennis Smith, former firefighter, bestselling author of "Report from Ground Zero," & “Report from Engine Co. 82”
Roxanne Spillett, president, Boys and Girls Clubs of America
John Shelby Spong, Episcopal bishop (retired) and prolific author
Fredericka von Stade, world-class mezzo-soprano opera singer and recitalist
Frank Sulloway, visiting professor in the Department of Psychology, and author of "Born to Rebel"
Laura Tyson, economist and first female Chair of the President’s Council of Economic Advisers (Clinton Admin.)
Jeffrey Wigand, whistleblower whose actions prompted a multi-billion settlement against Big Tobacco
What's Your Legacy?

In his Teachings, well-known management theorist Peter Drucker recounted the story of a teacher who asked his teenage class, "What do you want to be remembered for?" Not a single pupil spoke up. "I didn't expect you to be able to answer it," he said, "but if you still can't answer it by the time you're 50, you will have wasted your life." We posed the question to a number of notable San Diegans, all over 50. From a Nobel Prize winner to a fish taco magnate, these accomplished lives have been anything but wasted.

— Vince Reardon

Tracy Jarman
Fire Chief, San Diego Fire Department
"Of course, I will always be remembered for being the city's first woman fire chief, but I hope I will be remembered for my integrity, professionalism and leadership ability during these challenging times."

Jerry Sanders
Mayor of San Diego
"As a good dad. And for my 35-plus years (and counting) of service to the people of San Diego."

K. Barry Sharpless
W.M. Keck Professor of Chemistry at The Scripps Research Institute; Nobel Prize winner
"For the importance of the click chemistry concept [the synthesis of drug-like molecules that can accelerate the drug discovery process] to mankind's endless need for better and cheaper medicines and materials."

Judy Walsh
President, Time Warner Cable San Diego
"As someone who looked for the good in people and situations, stayed present in the moment, let go of the stuff that didn't really matter, owned her choices and gave back to the world in some meaningful way."

Joseph Wambaugh
Best-Selling Author
"For being ejected from Pacers while mauling a cocktail waitress at my 99th birthday party."

Stephen Weber
President, SDSU
"I came to San Diego and Southern California believing that the future was being invented here, and wanting to make some small contribution to that process. That is how I would like to be remembered: working with great colleagues in a place pregnant with possibility, moving the human parade forward."

Cathy Anderson
CEO & Film Commissioner, San Diego Film Commission
"For the effective utilization of taxpayer dollars—for every $1 of taxpayer funds allocated to the Film Commission this year, we have returned more than $150 to the San Diego economy."

Father Joe Carroll
President, Father Joe's Villages
"He was a good priest, not a great one, just a good one."

Jerry Coleman
San Diego Padres Broadcaster
"As the greatest team player who ever lived. I've been involved with many teams, and what I've learned is: Teams win; individuals don't."

Bonnie Dumanis
San Diego County District Attorney
"As a catalyst for change in our community, a prosecutor who was committed to the pursuit of justice, and a person who did the right thing for the right reasons."

Gary Gallegos
Executive Director, San Diego Association of Governments
"As someone who helped make San Diego a better place by positioning the region to take advantage of future transportation innovations."

Jahja Ling
Music Director, San Diego Symphony
"As someone who brought a great variety of music with depth and excitement to the people of San Diego, whose hearts, souls and lives were touched and changed forever."

Douglas Manchester
Chairman, Manchester Financial Group
"A man who always created positive and wonderful memories for family and friends."

Ralph Rubio
Cofounder and Chairman, Rubio's Restaurants, Inc.
"First and foremost as a great husband, father and friend. Secondly, for making America a better place by introducing fish tacos to our culinary scene."
Dear Jim--

Been a few years since we had a conversation, all right, better than half a century's worth, hmm? Interested to hear you've turned novelist, it must be something in the WSS water. Sorry to say, I can't take a look at your work, for a couple of reasons--I'm always buried in my own work, and my lawyer would have a hissy fit if I ever looked at anyone else's material. But beyond that, let me give you a few thoughts:

--Self-publication, as I gather your book is, is really hard to make pay off, according to what I've heard from people who've done it and from booksellers. Bookstore owners are wary of self-published books in a couple of different ways, because if the book does sell well they're never sure if they can get more books in timely fashion from the author, and more often the book does not sell well because it hasn't had the advertising, reviews, and media attention that commercially-published book receive. If you haven't already tried it, I would think your better route would be to send your book or a manuscript of it to regional publishing houses and see if they like it well enough to publish. That would shift expenses for promotion etc. onto them, not you. There should be some publishers in the Helena yellow pages, and there are some in Minneapolis-St. Paul--one of those, Lexington-Marshall (actually in Shakopee, Minn.) published Blind Your Ponies, very much a Montana novel, my friends out there tell me. You can make multiple submissions, all at once--I think I'd try half a dozen and see what happens, then evaluate from there.

--If you want professional evaluation of your piece of work, it'll cost you some dough, just as if you were going to a lawyer or doctor. I can suggest a couple of free-lance editors, well-respected professionals. The first one, Martha Kohl, I believe is at the Montana Historical Society in Helena--she hired on to help Nick Wylie shape up his biography of Thomas Francis Meagher. The other, Frank Zoretich, 3945 First NE, Apt. 1, Seattle 98105, phone (206)913-3972, e-mail frankz@mail.com, is a long-time journalist and fine writer in his own right. I'd try Martha, closer to home, first--although she may be too busy, and both she and Frank may not want to take on fiction. In any case, they're the free-lance editors I know about. All good luck with your project, Jim, whatever route you choose.
Dear Ivan,

My name is Jim Fuller. I knew you when you were a kid but, since that has been a year or two, I'm sure you don't remember me. Also, since it has been a year or two, I'm sure that you have learned that, when you suddenly hear from someone who hasn't been in touch for a long time, it means they are wanting something. So, I will get right to the point and not waste your time.

I have written a novel and had it printed. What I would really like to have now is a professional and unbiased opinion of it to help me decide whether to put more money into promoting it. I have been getting very encouraging feedback from people who have read it but they have nearly all been friends or family so none of them can be considered impartial nor are they professional. What I am asking of you is, if I sent you a copy of the book, would you consider reading it and giving me your opinion?

You could reply by mail at 698 Hwy. 360, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645 or, if you prefer to phone, the number is 406-547-2154

Most sincerely,

Jim Fuller
October 26, 2008
Ivan Doig
17277 15th Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan,

Just a note to tell you how moved, entertained, and jealous I was reading “The Eleventh Man.” What a spectacular novel! It’s so rich, so incredibly atmospheric – lots of military aviation research, wow! – and full of character. Love story, war story, a hell of a newsman as protagonist, and one of the most affecting, strong, honest women I’ve ever fallen in love with between the covers of a book. What more could a reader want? It’s a tour de force, which is to say, typical Doig.

Hats off and all best to you and Carol,

David
Dear Ivan,

You can’t imagine what it was like, lying on my cot by Nicks’ bed at the Mayo Clinic late one night, peering into my silly hand-held device and receiving this onslaught of emails from my bookseller friends, all forwarding me copies of your *Shelf Awareness* interview. You are without a doubt the kindest man in the universe but even you can’t begin to guess what it meant to me (although it no doubt says something about my ego that it would matter at a time like that). Somehow, it lifted me out of that hospital room and my fear and reminded me that there was more to life than that tiny space and piece of time.

And that act of kindness was on top of the great favor of agreeing to do the *Inkslinger* interview and to signing all those books. I know you’re immersed in your new book and hate being pulled out of it, and I will be forever grateful that you took that time. Mentioning my book took my gratitude to a place somewhere in the stratosphere. You certainly have done your good deeds for the year.

On the subject of your interview, I love your taste in books—but why am I not surprised? On a sad note, Jeannette Haien died about three weeks ago. I heard while I was at the Mayo Clinic. I wish I’d had time to forward your messianic comments on *The All of It* to her. Happily, she’d all but finished another novel, one set in the South and closer in tone to *The All of It* than to *Matters of Chance*). I keep expecting to see an obituary in the New York Times, but so far, nothing.

As to how the hospital stay went, it was scary and traumatic in a kind of pendular way—one day we were euphoric because the surgery had gone well; the next, paralyzed with fear that we had lost our son, that his personality had changed; then overjoyed because he made a joke about farts (that’s the real Nicks); then frightened that his left side wasn’t working, that he’d lose his ability to play basketball and run and swim and ride horses and pack food at the food bank—all things that make his life joyous, give it meaning; euphoric again as he began to walk, first with help, and then on his own, to use his left hand…. It’s been quite the ride. And that’s not even mentioning the seizures which took the same path—none at first, then, the day we left for home, three in two days, all bad, none since. What it all means we don’t yet know. But Nicks gets better every day and right now that’s all we care about.

On the bookstore front, your book is selling like hot cakes and the *Inkslinger* hasn’t even mailed yet. Between your book and Terry’s our holidays are made and the front page *Inkslinger* article, the signed copies, are going to make our customers delirious. I’m so grateful—for what you said in *Shelf Awareness* which means so much, for all you’ve done, and, most of all, just because I have the pleasure of knowing you and counting you a friend. Thank you, Ivan. Love to Carol. And have the rest of a peaceful year (at least if the elections turn out the way they’re tending).

All my best,

Besty Burton of The King’s English
October 14, 2008

Dear Ivan:

Your letter did reach us here in Arkansas where Carol and I have been fulfilling our academic duties since the summer of 2002. This relocation to the barely trans of the trans-Mississippi West slowed our work on Granville's biography, but we got the job done. Thanks so much for your wonderful endorsement. It means a great deal to Carol and me. Also it's great fun to know that Granville is part of your fictional character, Samuel Sandison.

Carol and I do feel very good about our book. We spent an extra eight months or so revising the full draft that we produced while at Yale as visiting scholars. Thank goodness that Yale didn't have us teach; we just had to write and we found the time when we got back to Arkansas State to do our revisions. Now that the book is due to appear, we've set up a book tour to Montana in mid-November. If the snow is not too deep, we have talks scheduled at the Montana Historical Society, at Montana State University (and Countryside Book Shelf) and then at the University of Montana's O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West. How could we resist having Carol O'Connor give a talk at a center named in honor of Carroll O'Connor?

Our paths may cross sooner than you might think. We will be in Seattle for the Organization of American Historians national conference from March 26 to 29. We may show up early or stay late and we'll see if we can do a reading at Elliott Bay Books. If you and Carol are in town, let's do try to get together.

Carol sends her warmest greetings to both of you.

Faithfully yours,

[Signature]
July 24, 2008

Ivan Doig
c/o Rebecca Saletan
Publisher, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
215 Park Avenue South, 12th floor
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Doig,

I’m pleased to be enclosing a copy of the bound manuscript of Clyde Milner and Carol O’Connor’s forthcoming biography of Granville Stuart, AS BIG AS THE WEST, which Oxford is publishing this November. I’m hoping that you might have a chance to read it and, if the spirit moves, offer a comment that we can use. I know that Clyde and Carol would be really pleased.

I’m sending the manuscript rather than a bound galley for purposes of speed. We will have bound galleys in a couple of weeks; but the production deadlines for the jacket are rather tight. In other words, not only am I asking for a favor, but one with a time deadline!

Most of all, however, I hope you have a chance to read the manuscript. I’ll follow with a finished copy in due course. In the meantime, if there’s anything I can do, don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Grateful thanks and all best,

[Signature]

Timothy Bent
Executive Editor
Timothy.Bent@OUP.com
212-726-6402
Dear Timothy Bent--

Some words for Clyde and Carol, along with my congratulations on finishing up Granville Stuart:

The story of Granville Stuart--Montana cattle king, high-toned vigilante, bookman extraordinaire, self-conscious pioneer and memoirist--is one of the unlikely wonders of western history, so strange it has to be true. Blessedly leaving no scrap of Stuart’s record unexamined, Clyde Milner and Carol O’Connor have comprehensively pieced together this complicated and conflicted life, to the benefit of us all who seek to savvy this glory-driven prairie forebear.

--Ivan Doig, author of The Eleventh Man

And a bit of a favor, please: would you send along to Clyde and Carol the enclosed letter, inasmuch as I don’t have their address.

Best wishes, and I hope the book does well.
Dear Clyde and Carol--

Hey, you got Granville captured in the pages. Fullest congratulations. Tim Bent likely has let you know by now that I've pitched in a quick but I hope hearty blurb.

Just wanted to let you know that since the first of the year, I've been working on a Butte novel with a secondary character who has some of Granville Stuart's characteristics—the book mania and the vigilantism in his background, at least. I call him Samuel Sandison, and I'm making up his personality and late-life circumstances without any real reference to Granville's, but I couldn't resist the template of the ex-cattle baron running the Butte Public Library. The novel is actually something of a sequel to The Whistling Season, and the star and narrator is the schoolteacher from that book, Morrie Morgan—but he keeps butting up against Sandison, no small man to butt up against. So, between us, we're stirring up the Stuart ghost pretty good, hmm?

Been a long time since we crossed paths, particularly in that memorable Seattle stay of yours. Carol and I hope all is well with you, and continued good success in capturing history.

Sincerely,
11 August 2008

Dear Jack--

I'm really swamped, with my next book (The Eleventh Man) coming out in a matter of weeks and the promotional chores that go with that, plus getting any writing done on the next next one and tending to the ongoing success of The Whistling Season; all in all, rather than take on your Guthrie biog and drive us both crazy by not getting to it, I'd better say an honest 'No can do,' this time around. I hope the book does well by you and Bud Guthrie; Nebraska is a good outfit.

Hastily but sincerely,
Aug. 5, 2008

July 19, 2008

Ivan Doig
17201 10th Avenue, NW
Seattle, WA 98107-3708

Dear Ivan Doig:

It seems like I am always asking you for something, and I don't like doing that because I know you are busy. But Nebraska is publishing my Guthrie biography and has asked me to get a blurb. No one is better known in terms of literature about Montana than you, and I would be very grateful indeed if you would consider writing one for the book. I would get down on my knees—but I don't think I would be able to get back up. I think it is very readable—I don't write scholarly prose, but tell the story.

Yours sincerely,

Jackson J. Benson
Box 695
Soda Springs, CA 95728
530-426-3457
jjbenson1@cox.net
Dear Mr. Doig,

I am writing to you as a fellow child of the northern plains and a published novelist (Mavis Fawcett Columbine/Ballantine, 1996). My agent, Jean Naggar, has begun submitting my new manuscript, Dakota, Or What’s a Heaven For, to trade publishers, and although editors have found the “writing to be very elegant and beautiful,” with “period and psychological details [that are] wholly convincing,” all told in a “powerful, forthright voice that pulled [the reader] right into the heart of the novel,” the “however” to follow more often than not has to do with the novel being “tough to market.” The fear seems to be that a novel set on the plains of Dakota will have difficulty finding a wide readership. Jean has suggested that having advance quotations from like-minded writers whose success has proved that there is a reading public for good fiction set in the northern plains might be just the nudge needed to convince an editor who likes the book to take a chance.

So here comes the request, and I make it knowing full well just how costly it can be for a writer to take time away from his work to do a stranger a favor. Would you be willing to read the manuscript of my novel, with the possibility of providing an advance quote in mind? Of course, having read the book, were you to be at all uncertain about its merit, I would expect you to decline to provide a comment.

Peter Ho Davies, author of The Welsh Girl, has generously called Dakota, Or What’s a Heaven For a “Midwestern Middlemarch...a vibrant, teeming work, filled with feeling, intelligence and ultimately, grace.” It is historical fiction/literary fiction set in 1873-1883 in Dakota Territory. It is a story of transformation, of those who become “Dakotan,” and of those who cannot or will not. Dakota interweaves the public and historical events of the time and place (frontier politics, the construction of a transcontinental railroad, the regional phenomenon of “bonanza farms,” and the influx of immigrants) with an unexpected love story.

It is always a mistake for a relatively unknown writer to compare herself to someone who has achieved a significant level of accomplishment, but I do think that you will find something to appreciate in the sensibility that I bring to my work. I grew up on a farm in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. The nearest town, where I went to school through the fourth grade in a two-room schoolhouse, had a general store, a grain elevator, a blacksmith shop, and a population of 32. (Unfortunately, it is no longer as prosperous.) I have a Ph.D. in English, and currently teach in the English Department at the University of Michigan.

So, if this is something that you can do, then please write back to the address below, or email me at bkmashar@umich.edu, or call 734-428-7267, and I will get the manuscript to you. If this is not something that you can do, then thank you for your time, thank you for your books, and I wish you all the best in the future.

Sincerely,

Brenda K. Marshall
13494 Schleweis Road
Manchester MI 48158
2 May '08

Dear Brenda Marshall--

Ordinarily I'm able to pitch in some good words a few times a year on manuscripts such as yours, but right now I am just swamped with work—even with the best of intentions, it's taken me weeks to get this note off to you.

So, while I can't do you any direct good, please feel free to tell Jean Naggar the sales figures on my novel The Whistling Season as ammunition with publishers that people do read prairie fiction—fifty thousand copies in hardback, over one hundred thousand in paperback thus far. I hope I have a chance to read yours one day.

Best wishes,
Dear Eric--

Belated thanks for passing along the Bob Stevens letter about Majaor Jordan's diaries. I did get into the book during one of my research swoops through the GF Public Library, and there's a scene in the book where a couple of my characters end up consorting and drinking with the Soviet air force contingent in Fairbanks, but I deliberately don't go near the possible espionage angle Bob suggests--my own storyline was plenty to handle. If you're in occasional touch with Bob Stevens, please do thank him for me for the suggestion, it's just that it's not up my alley.

Things are looking pretty good for the book--*The Eleventh Man* is the title--at least until it actually hits the bookstores sometime after Labor Day. It's the lead title on Harcourt's fall list, and they rounded up a nice blurb from Scott Turow, and so on. I stuck pretty close to WWII details, but dolloped on fictional ingredients for the sake of the story--brought in women pilots (WASPs) to ferry P-39 fighter planes as far north as Edmonton, for instance, which as far I know never happened at all. And people in Great Falls are going to wonder where in the hell Treasure State University is supposed to be. (I 'fess up in the acknowledgments that I put it about where CMR high school is.) The Hill 57 scenes, on the other hand, I milled right out of Tribune stories and other investigative pieces of the time--there's a very strong descriptive piece by D'Arcy McNickle in one of the folders at the Montana Historical Society. Anyway, the past three years of my imagination in residence in Great Falls during WWII is off my desk and on its way into the world, and I've started a sequel to *The Whistling Season*. I hope things are going well in your own researching and writing universe; the Tribune has meant a lot in my life ever since I was a kid at my dad's elbow in the White Sulphur bars, poring over the baseball box scores.

Best wishes.
Ivan Doig  
17277 15th Ave. NW  
Seattle WA 98177

Dear Ivan,

One of our readers, Bob Stevens of Helena, was fascinated by the topic of your next book because he remembered reading a book by an American military officer in Great Falls who strongly suspected that the Russians were smuggling diplomatic secrets out of the country on the DC3s we were giving to the Russians.

Bob’s full letter is enclosed.

I checked with our library, and there is a copy of From Major Jordan’s Diaries by George Racey Jordan still on the shelves and available for checkout.

Incidentally, Wayne Arnst says copies of The Whistling Season are virtually flying off the bookshelves. Congratulations.

Cheers,
Dear [Name],

I just finished The Eleventh Man — what a wonderful job you did in pulling the reader in and along on the tragic journey from front to front. And what a twist at the end to spare Ben!

I was very familiar with the story of MSC’s Starter Line, but that didn’t prevent a lot of tears as the deaths followed one after the other.

One of the nurses at St. Vincent Hospital had my copy now — I just bought another one to take to the Yellowstone Council of the Weathermen’s Annual Christmas Giveaway Program. A lot of the members are WWII veterans and I knew they’ll be hoping to receive it!

Best to you! Carol [Surname]
Dear Ivan,

I’m a Butte native, descended from Cornish tin miners on my father’s side and Irish copper miners on my mother’s. In 1993, after a 25-year-long absence, and against all expectation, I moved back to Butte—and stayed. That’s where I live today. Well, more precisely, East Walkerville, truly a place apart on this island-ruin I call home.

I’m also an independent writer. Have been for a long time. My primary relationship is with *Harper*’s, where I’ve been a contributor since 1995. One of the pieces I wrote for the magazine concerned the social and environmental consequences of industrialized hard rock mining in Butte. That publication led to a collaboration with Pam Roberts, of Rattlesnake Productions, in the making of a pretty ambitious feature-length documentary film about the Mining City.

We spared no expense, shooting on super 16 mm and hiring highly talented people to help us. (Our composer won an Academy Award for his work in feature film. My co-writer is an Academy Award nominee, for his doc on Waldo Salt, the legendary screenwriter, as well as a successful director, his best-known picture being *Desert Bloom*, with Jon Voight. Our sound design, editing, and effects were done at Skywalker Studios, George Lucas’s post-production facility north of San Francisco. The Irish actor Gabriel Byrne narrates the film. I could go on, but you get the gist, I’m sure.) It’s been a long haul. But I’m happy to report that the film is completed. We call it “Butte, America.”
The world theatrical premiere will take place in Butte on January 17th. Afterward we’ll hold screenings elsewhere in Montana and in selected cities across the U.S. and overseas. We’ll also show the film in festivals throughout the country and abroad. And there will be broadcasts on both Montana and public television.

In advance of the release, we’re asking certain people whether they’d be willing to review the film in DVD format and, should they see something they like, provide a line or two that we can use in promotion and publicity. If this is for any reason undesirable or undoable, Ivan, no sweat. I’m sure you receive requests like this all the time. But if you’d be willing to take a look at “Butte, America,” we’d be quite grateful. I always insist on candor, whether giving or getting criticism, so you’d be under no obligation to fudge or, for that matter, to say anything at all. I have a hunch that’s not how you do things anyway.

Would you do me the kindness of replying by email (edwincdobb@gmail.com) or phone (407-782-6329)? We’re working within a pretty tight schedule.

Thanks for your consideration.

Cheers,

[Signature]