

Author To Author

*When I think of Ivan Doig, the first word that comes to mind is courage. In each of his books, Ivan had the courage to stay close to the material he knew and loved best: the American West, especially his beloved Montana. Ivan was – and is – the laureate of the Rockies and the Plains, the remote, hardscrabble ranches, the tough cow towns and tougher-still mining towns, and the incomparably resourceful and independent-minded men and women who called this country home. Ivan, for his part, referred to himself as a “relic.” To me, as a reader and writer myself, he’s a hero. His early memoir *This House of Sky* reads like the very best fiction and his fiction reads like nobody else’s ever did or will. From start to finish, Ivan had the courage to stay true to himself and his land in a way most novelists, including this one, could only marvel at. What can we now say about this brave, eloquent, endlessly generous man and writer? Thank you, Ivan Doig, for sharing your vast and beautiful and unsparing territory with us, and for preserving it, and its people, forever. Thank you.*

Howard Frank Mosher

Holiday Season 2015

Dear Friends

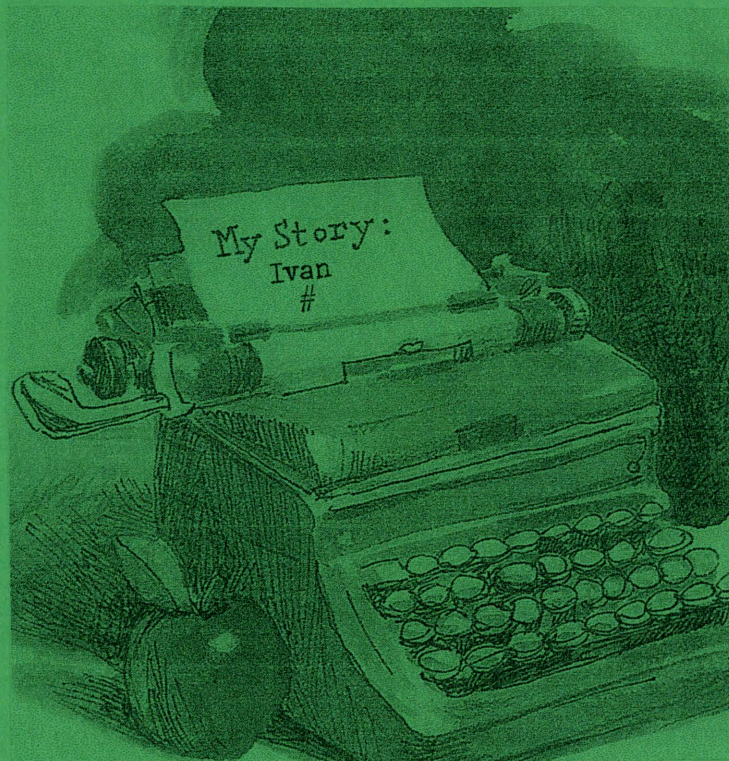
Many of you already know that the tear in the eye of Mrs. Santa this season is for Ivan, who died April 9 of multiple myeloma. Eighteen of us spread his ashes on Dungeness Spit, where the two of us loved to hike and did so more than a hundred times. It was a bright sunny day and we all felt better commemorating his life and imagining his spirit set free.

Ivan being Ivan, he finished another novel, *Last Bus to Wisdom*, in the last months of his life, and it was published to strong reviews on August 18. It was his 16th book, the last four of which he wrote after his diagnosis. Until the last six months, we lived a fairly normal life, albeit punctuated by many medical appointments. Our friends have been heroic during the last months of his illness and since, and I'll never be able to thank all of them adequately.

In the end, his mind still was clicking, and he left behind a folder for the next novel he intended, *Great Divide*, and also a folder of other book ideas. But the body simply was worn out by the disease and the powerful drugs used to fight it.

I have been busy, with the expert guidance of Betty Mayfield, a talented librarian friend, working on Ivan's extensive papers -- more than 100 shelf feet of notecards, drafts and much much else. Montana State University won the archive by pledging to put all of it online and they already have made a good start at digitizing. They also will integrate elements into English, history, geography and American Studies curricula. And so Ivan's extraordinary collection will have a new life.

Ivan would want me to wish you all the best for the holiday season and beyond, and I gladly do so as we celebrate a life well lived.



With every good wish,

Carol